



2019-2024

# STRATEGIC PLAN



## First 5 Lake Commissioners:

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# About First 5 Lake County

## Our Vision

*One day Lake County's success will be measured by the wellbeing of its youngest children.*

## Our Mission

**First 5 Lake builds the early childhood systems and supports needed to ensure Lake County's youngest children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed in school and life.**

## Our Core Values & Practices

CORE VALUE	PRACTICE
Child and Family Focus	We place the needs of children prenatal through 5 at the center of our work and we do so in culturally and linguistically effective ways.
Inclusive Collaboration	We value and respect the input of each other, our fellow community members and partners. For the good of children and families, we seek out diverse opinions and always ask ourselves, "Whose voice is missing at this table?"
Efficacy & Accountability	We invest in high-quality programs that use promising or evidence-based practices, maintaining the highest standards. We measure our efforts and outcomes, submit to an annual independent audit, comply with Brown Act requirements and conduct business with transparency.
Meaningful Partnerships	We work in partnership across sectors with public and private agencies and organizations to maximize impact and reduce duplication whenever possible.
Integrity	We engage in open communication with a willingness to discuss difficult issues with honesty and fairness. We set aside self-interest and focus on the needs of children and families.
Sustainability	We prioritize sustainable investments and focus on achieving and sustaining positive outcomes for children.
Positivity	We promote a strengths-based approach that highlights the potential of children & families, our commission and our community.
Equity	We examine funding opportunities with an equity lens to ensure that we are achieving measurable results for children and families most in need of services and supports, removing barriers whenever possible.

## Proposition 10

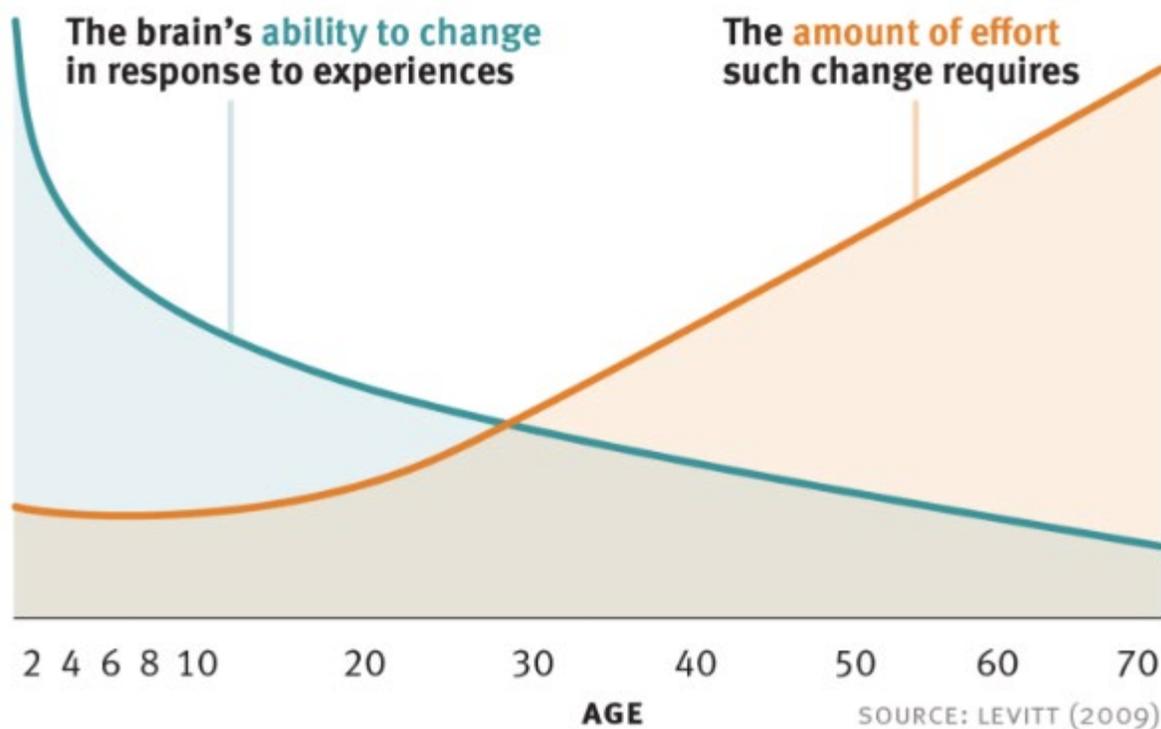
In November 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, the California Children and Families First Initiative (First 5), which added a 50-cent per pack tax on cigarettes and tobacco products. Eighty percent of the tax revenue is disbursed to the 58 counties in California to **promote the early health, learning and family support for children from the prenatal stage through five years of age.** First 5 California augments County-specific efforts with statewide mass media campaigns, education for parents and providers and research and evaluation activities.

## First 5 Lake Commission

The local Commission consists of nine members who have the authority to administer and allocate Lake County's Prop. 10 funds. Commissioners represent county government, public health, social services, education, early care and family advocacy.

# Why the First 5 Years?

In the earliest years of a child's life, the cognitive, physical, social and emotional foundation is laid for a lifetime. These first five years are a period of peak brain development with more than one million new neural connections forming every second!<sup>1</sup> There are many things that can help to maximize growth during this important developmental window, such as: supportive, responsive relationships with caregivers, access to quality early education, and regular prenatal and pediatric health care. There are also many things that can derail development during this critical period, such as: toxic stress resulting from extreme poverty or Adverse Childhood Experiences, insecure attachment, and poor nutrition.



Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

[www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu)

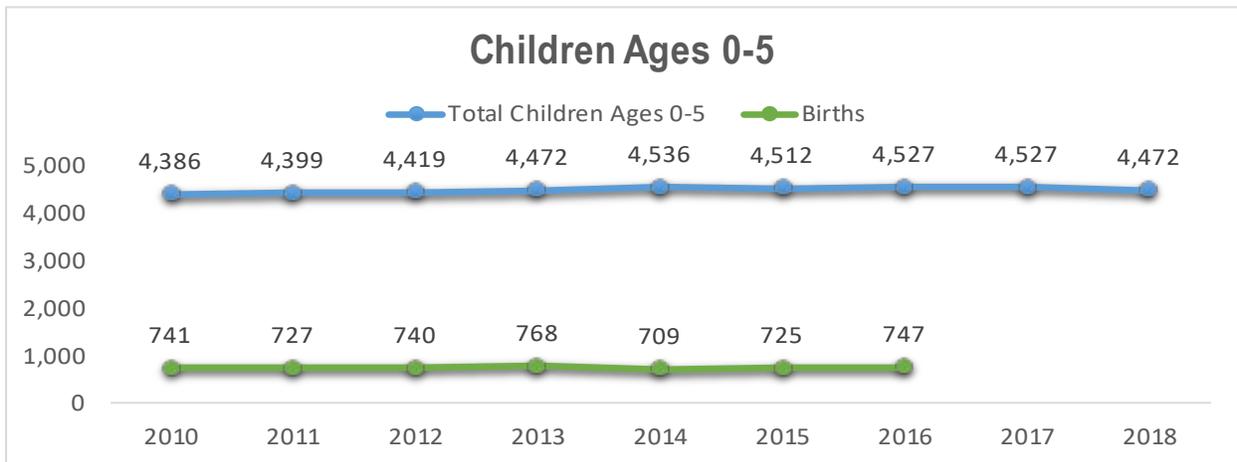
These early years of rapid development are the critical time to invest in services, networks and systems that will have the most benefit to children today and carry on with lasting value into the future. The First 5 Lake County Commission is committed to growing in knowledge of the needs and boundaries present in our community that either prevent or limit our children's ability to thrive, as well as the evidence-based and innovative emerging practices that can promote effective and lasting change. We believe we can make a difference and this strategic plan outlines how we will go about affecting change in the next five years.

<sup>1</sup> Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, "Five Numbers to Remember About Early Childhood Development," <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/five-numbers-to-remember-about-early-childhood-development/#cps>

# Lake County's Unique Strengths



Lake County's landscape includes the largest natural freshwater lake in California, rolling hills, vineyards, pear, apple and walnut orchards, olive groves, parks, the world's largest geothermal field and the cleanest air in the state. **It is a beautiful place to live** with many opportunities for outdoor recreation such as fishing, boating, kayaking, paddle boarding, birding, hiking, and cycling. While Lake County has experienced several natural disasters in recent years, there remains **a strong sense of resilience and community** among residents.



Source: California Department of Finance. January 2018



While the birthrate across California as a whole has been dramatically declining in recent years<sup>2</sup> (*the rate of births in 2017 was half the rate of 1990*), the number of Lake County births have grown or remained relatively steady. According to projections from the California Department of Finance<sup>3</sup>, the percentage of growth of Lake County public K-12 school enrollment from 2016-17 to 2017-18 was expected to be the fifth highest increase in the state and is expected to continue to outpace other counties in the years ahead. **By 2026-2027, Lake County is expected to have the highest percentage of K-12 enrollment growth of any county in the state (13.84%).**



**Community partners have pointed to the following additional unique strengths that make them proud to live and work in Lake County:** an involved Native American tribal community, the Sheriff's Youth Activity League, a collaborative spirit, a close knit community of families helping families, a passion for improvement, plenty of "grit" and resourcefulness, diversity, no traffic, youth sports, an active arts community, and the feeling that we are poised for progress.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/California-birthrate-plunges-to-lowest-level-in-a-12923521.php>

<sup>3</sup> State of California, Department of Finance, *California Public K-12 Graded Enrollment and High School Graduate Projections by County, 2017 Series*. Sacramento, California, December 2017.

# Lake County's Unique Challenges



**NATURAL DISASTERS** - Residents of Lake County experienced **seven sizeable wildland fires and two floods between 2015 and 2019** resulting in the loss of over 5% of available housing and leaving roughly 60% of the land burned.



**SOCIAL ISOLATION** – Higher than average numbers of Lake County residents experience risk factors of social isolation such as **domestic violence<sup>4</sup>, economic struggles<sup>5</sup>, disabilities<sup>5</sup>, geographic barriers and transportation issues**. These risk factors each come with their own complications and concerns, but the underlying barrier of social isolation is concerning because of its correlation with the likelihood of child abuse.



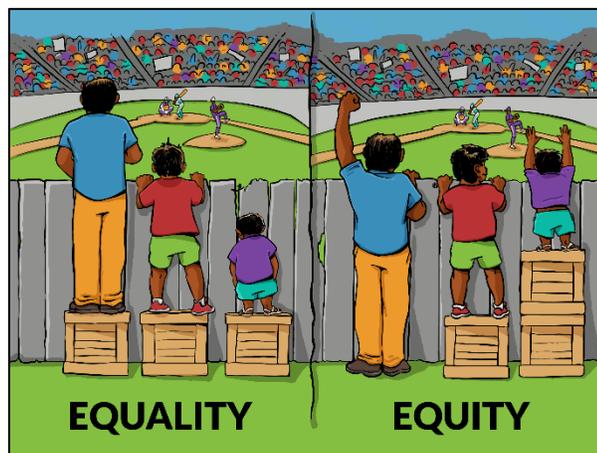
**CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT** – The rates of reports and substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in Lake County have been significantly **above the state average<sup>6</sup> for the past 20+ years**.



**THE CALIFORNIA COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS<sup>7</sup>** assessment has ranked Lake in the bottom five of California counties for overall health outcomes since the first statewide ranking in 2010. Fifty percent of the score that makes up the health ranking is attributed to premature death rates caused by heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease, injuries and accidents, and stroke.

**EQUITY** – Equality is treating everyone the same. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. As is true in every community, certain groups within the Lake County may require additional support to ensure success.

-  **12.7%** of public school students are **English-learners**
-  **31.5%** of Lake County children live in **poverty**
-  **63.6%** of **Native American** children in Lake County live in **poverty**.



<sup>4</sup> Source: California Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/crime-statistics/domestic-violence>

<sup>5</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (Dec. 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Source: Webster, D., et al. California Child Welfare Indicators Project Reports, U.C. Berkeley Center for Social Services Research (Jun. 2016)

<sup>7</sup> Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings & Roadmaps [http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/sites/default/files/state/downloads/CHR2019\\_CA.pdf](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/sites/default/files/state/downloads/CHR2019_CA.pdf)

## Community Input

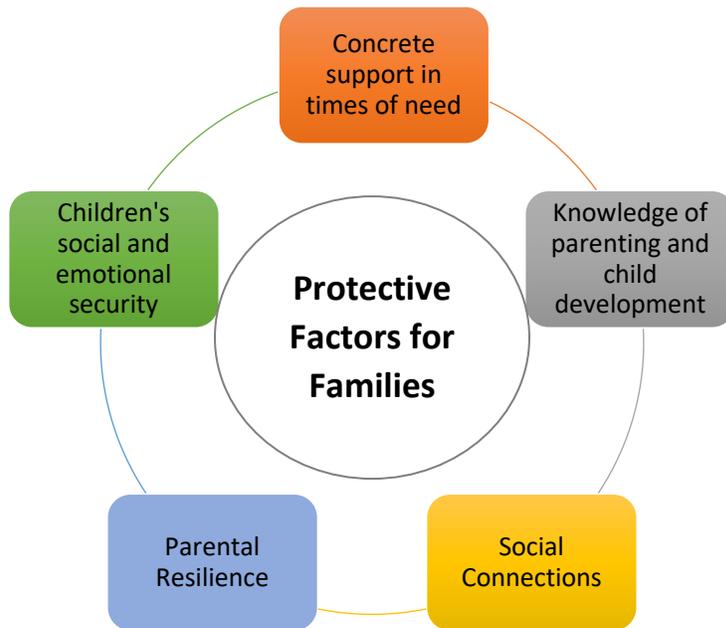
On April 25, 2018, the First 5 Lake Commission gathered with 30+ parents, foster parents, grandparents, and community partners from Lake County Departments of Social Services and Public Health, Lake County Office of Education, Lake Family Resource Center, Upper Lake Unified School District, Sutter Lakeside Hospital, Redwood Community Services, Easter Seals Bay Area, Health Leadership Network, Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Mother-Wise, and Lake County Libraries to envision together the next five years for Lake County’s children. The full-day session was facilitated by First 5 Lake Executive Director, Carla Ritz, and included a time of reflecting on the advantages, accomplishments, trends and challenges experienced in Lake County in recent years followed by guided activities to draw out the group’s collective wisdom about what it would take for every child in Lake County to have the best possible start in life and thrive and what might get in the way of achieving that vision. The summary of the group’s consensus around these topics is:

KEY VISION ELEMENTS	POTENTIAL ROADBLOCKS
Earliest Possible Connection to Resources	Fragmented Community Visions
Basic Needs are Met	Non-Discretionary & Limited Resources
User-Friendly Service Delivery	Impacts of Remote Impoverished Community
Access to Comprehensive Health Care (mind & body)	Prevalence of ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
Access to Quality Early Education	Fear-Driven Perceptions

First 5 Lake will use the community’s collective insights above as a guide in selecting programs and services to fund, in prioritizing its messaging and advocacy efforts, and in measuring its effectiveness over the next five years. In order to meaningfully focus its efforts toward achieving this collective vision, **the Commission has adopted the research-based Strengthening Families Protective Factors<sup>8</sup> as the strategic framework best suited to the needs of the community and the goals of the Commission.** The Protective Factors Framework explains both the “why” – “Why are these vision elements necessary?” “Why must these roadblocks be removed?” – and the “how” – “How will we work toward the vision?” “How will we remove or work around these roadblocks?”

<sup>8</sup> Information about this framework and the research behind it can be found here: <https://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies>

# Framework for Positive Change



**The work that First 5 Lake undertakes between 2019 and 2024 will be rooted in the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework. This means that:**

- With each decision made, the Commission will reflect on the impact the decision will have on Lake County families' concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, children's social and emotional security, parental resilience and social connections.
- Programs we fund or support will include in their scope of work the ways in which they will strive to increase protective factors for building communities and in the families they serve and how they will measure those outcomes.
- Commissioners and First 5 Lake staff will actively promote the Protective Factors for Building Communities (healthy community beliefs and clear standards, Caring and supportive community connections and networks, and Community-based opportunities for participation) and report regularly on progress and challenges.

**Protective Factors are based on the premise that:**

Children, families and community form a dynamic collective support system.

External factors, coming from neighborhood, community, school, family, caregivers and/or peers are primary causes for most of children's learning, behavioral and emotional challenges. Protective factors act as buffers to these risks by helping to build families that are strong and connected and communities that are caring and responsive.

The child is at the center of the framework. Healthy development of children is not only accomplished by direct services to children but also through strengthening families and building communities.

# Goals and Strategic Priorities for 2019-2024

First 5 California has established four “Program Result Areas” for local County Commissions to use to standardize their reporting of expenditure and service data to the State. By doing this, Lake County’s data can be aggregated with data from the other 57 counties in California demonstrating our collective impact. **The First 5 Lake Commission has reviewed the priorities of our community and the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework and decided upon the goals, strategic priorities, and desired outcomes that follow, categorizing them within First 5 CA’s program result areas.** The Commission’s target population for desired outcomes are all families with children prenatally through age five, with a desire to focus special attention on those in crisis or in potentially isolating situations for greater equity. Examples include but are not limited to: children with special needs, non-English-speakers, families living in poverty, families living in remote areas, foster/resource families and children within foster care, single parents, parents commuting out of county for work, families with mental health disorders or substance abuse issues, and homeless families.

## IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

**Goal #1:** Increased access to parenting education, meeting the diverse needs of all Lake County parents of children 0-to-5.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Focused attention on parents in potentially isolating circumstances and parents in crisis situations. Increased outreach prenatally and in the first year of life or at the earliest possible resource connection.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Parenting knowledge and skills are enhanced to support children’s healthy development and social-emotional wellbeing.

**Goal #2:** Family networks of support are strengthened and enriching social connections are increased for all Lake County families with children 0-to-5

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Focused efforts on serving families in potentially isolating circumstances and families in crisis situations. Increased outreach prenatally and in the first year of life or at the earliest possible resource connection.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Families with young children are socially connected – developing and maintaining positive relationships that provide concrete, emotional, informational and spiritual support.

## IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

**Goal #3:** Increased access to high-quality, developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed child care and early education for all children 0-to-5.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Focused attention on: 1) Improving the quality of existing child care and early education settings, 2) Providing support and information about high quality practices for new sites as they open, 3) Providing training to educators in Protective Factors, parent engagement, trauma-informed care, cultural competency and special needs.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Increased academic and social-emotional school readiness for all Lake County children.

Families are increasingly educated about and supported in fostering interactions that help children develop the abilities to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate emotions, and establish and maintain relationships.

## IMPROVED CHILD HEALTH

**Goal #4:** Increased access to health and therapeutic services benefitting all children prenatally through age five.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Focused attention on prenatal and perinatal care, universal screening for developmental delays and timely referrals for early intervention, physical and behavioral health services.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Children are born healthy and experience optimal physical, behavioral and developmental health.

## IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

**Goal #5:** Increased access to an integrated, strategic and user-friendly service delivery system that is continually adapting to enable our community to give all children the best possible start in life.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Focused attention on reducing fear and mistrust, and normalizing service seeking, through common messaging, collaboration, promotion of the Protective Factors for Families and Communities, trauma-informed care and cultural sensitivity, and movement toward shared common indicators of success.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Families receive needed services from trauma-informed, culturally competent, collaboratively networked service providers.

The reduction of child abuse and neglect and the increase of family resilience become common indicators of success.

Under this Strategic Plan, collaboration among First 5 Lake and its grantees will be key to successfully achieving an even more integrated consumer-oriented service system than currently exists. It must be noted that Lake County is well known for the high level of coordination among its agencies, public and private, and easy consumer access has been a long-standing goal among service providers.

## Funding Criteria

The annual Proposition 10 revenue is decreasing on average by 3-5 percent each year. With decreasing revenues, First 5 Lake County aims to maximize investments by focused, intentional funding. Decisions as to what First 5 Lake will fund toward improved family functioning, child development, child health and systems of care will be determined, in part, by the extent to which each investment is consistent with the following criteria:

1. **Sustainability**
2. **Promising or Evidence-Based Practice**
3. **System Integration**
4. **Alignment with the Protective Factors Framework**
5. **Collaborative Partnerships**

## Evaluation Process

First 5 Lake has employed an evaluation process since its first funded programs. Each funded program is required to participate with the First 5 Lake Evaluation Consultant in the development of its own logic model that in turn is reviewed by First 5 Lake's staff. A Scope of Work and Program Budget reflect more specific activities to be implemented to achieve the proposed goals and outcomes. Regular monitoring of each program's work toward accomplishing stated goals is conducted through site visits and quarterly reports. At the conclusion of the fiscal year, an evaluation report is prepared by the Evaluator and presented to the Commission for its review and approval. The purpose of this report is to examine the extent to which programmatic goals are met. The evaluation process is not intended to be punitive in nature. Rather it is intended to be a learning experience to determine what methods, techniques and activities have been the most and least effective in creating positive child and family outcomes. This in turn allows for growth and innovation.

### **First 5 Lake's evaluation is designed to:**

- a. Inform learning and decision-making
- b. Guide program development, implementation and continuous improvement
- c. Document funded partner and Commission impact and effectiveness
- d. Support accountability to the community regarding the use of First 5 funds

## Roles

**First 5 Lake Commission (as a whole):** Steward of Vision, Mission & Values, Steward of Funds, Grant-Maker, Overseer of Effectiveness, Advocate, Investor in the Data Environment, Change-Agent, Communicator/Educator, Creator of Policies

**Commissioners individually:** Contributing Community Leaders, Sources of Information, Advocates

**Executive Director:** Overseer of Operations, Contributing Community Leader, Source of Information, Advocate, Promoter of Systems Integration, Ambassador

**Evaluation Consultant:** Assessor of Programmatic Effectiveness, Consultant for Programmatic Improvement

## Planning for the Future

The Commission's available capital resources are limited to its monetary funds. Since July 1, 2014, First 5 California has included First 5 Lake in its Small Population County Funding Augmentation policy. Accordingly, First 5 Lake will receive an annual base allocation of \$625,000 through June 30, 2021, regardless of expected fluctuations in Prop. 10 revenue. This additional funding is not guaranteed after 2021 and thus, every year the Commission will review and adopt a Long-Range Financial Plan taking into consideration the implications of current and proposed policies, programs and assumptions, needs, trends, opportunities and potential shortfalls. This Plan is available to view on our website.

# Join Us

The First 5 Lake Commission and its partners strive to have the greatest positive impact possible on young children and families in Lake County, but we cannot do this work alone. We urge those in our community to join us in this effort. **How can you be involved?**



**Attend a meeting, call, or stop by our office!** All of our regular meetings are open to the public and include opportunity for public comment. A schedule of meetings can be found at [www.firstfivelake.org](http://www.firstfivelake.org). Our offices are located at 1173 Eleventh Street in Lakeport, CA, and office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. We can be reached by phone at 707-263-6169.



**Follow us on Facebook** at <https://www.facebook.com/First5Lake/>.



**Educate yourself about the issues that matter most in early childhood:**

- Prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Healthy Attachment and Bonding
- High-Quality Child Care and Early Education
- Early Screening for Developmental Delays
- Positive Parenting
- Comprehensive Health Care Beginning in the First Trimester
- School Readiness



**Advocate for the needs of young children in Lake County –**

- In your home/family, by committing to being a stable and nurturing parent/grandparent/aunt/uncle who is always learning and growing in your role
- In your neighborhood, by encouraging safe practices and connectivity;
- In your community, by volunteering with programs that support strong families, a clean environment, and child-friendly activities;
- In your city/county/state government, by informing elected officials about the greatest needs of children and paying attention to policies and legislation that may affect families.



**Commit to making a positive difference in the life of one child each day.**

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*“Starting at birth and continuing throughout life, our ability to thrive is affected by our ongoing relationships and experiences and the degree to which they are healthy, supportive, and responsive or not.” Harvard Center for the Developing Child*

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**Additional Sources of Information:**

First 5 Lake – [www.firstfivelake.org](http://www.firstfivelake.org)

First 5 California – [www.first5california.com](http://www.first5california.com), [www.ccfc.ca.gov](http://www.ccfc.ca.gov)

First 5 Association - <http://first5association.org/>

Zero to Three – [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

Children Now – [www.childrennow.org](http://www.childrennow.org)

Kids Data – [www.kidsdata.org](http://www.kidsdata.org)

California Healthy Kids Survey - <https://calschls.org/>

Harvard Center for the Developing Child - <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

The Child Abuse Prevention Center – [www.thecapcenter.org](http://www.thecapcenter.org)

California Family Resource Association – [www.californiafamilyresource.org](http://www.californiafamilyresource.org)

California Budget & Policy Center - <https://calbudgetcenter.org/issues/child-care-preschool/>

California Dept. of Public Health - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/Pages/default.aspx>

California Dept. of Social Services - <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources>

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/features/healthychildren/index.html>

National Fatherhood Initiative – [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

The Heckman Equation - <https://heckmanequation.org/>

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