



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
December 16, 2011

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**California Wins \$52.6 Million in “Race to the Top” Funding to Improve Early Education System**

*First 5 California Early Learning Programs Centerpiece of Winning Grant Proposal*

The U.S. Department of Education announced today that California will receive more than \$50 million in federal “Race to the Top” funding to improve the state's early childhood education programs. California was one of only nine states to receive the funding in large part due to the success of its statewide early learning initiatives supported by First 5 California, a state agency that promotes education and health services for children ages 0 to 5.

A major point of differentiation between California and the 35 states applying for the Early Learning Challenge Grant was First 5 California’s programs to improve pre-kindergarten teacher effectiveness, known as CARES Plus, and another providing preschool in mostly low-income neighborhoods, Power of Preschool (PoP). These First 5 California programs will link with existing state and federal efforts to enhance and improve early learning systems in the state.

“This marks a major win for the children of California,” said Kris Perry, First 5 California’s executive director. “I applaud the First 5 State Commission and the 58 local commissions for their leadership and proven innovation in developing and implementing the early learning programs that made us competitive for these funds.”

The federal grant will go toward the development of a rating system expected to help improve the availability of high quality early learning services.

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**About First 5 California**

At First 5 California, we fund programs that educate parents, grandparents, caregivers, and teachers about the critical role they play during a child's first five years. Since our creation in 1998, we've supported millions of families with programs and services designed to help more California kids grow up healthy and ready to succeed in school - and in life. For more information, please visit [first5california.com/parents](http://first5california.com/parents).

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