



SYSTEMS OPTIMIZATION & SUSTAINABILITY (SOS) COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Date: March 18, 2026, Time: 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Commission Members: Érik Fernández y García (Chair), Eric Guerra, LaWanda Wesley

Advisory Committee Member(s): Carolyn Curtis, Heidi Keiser *Alternates:* Kairis Chiaji, Darsey Varnedoe

Staff: Julie Gallelo, Erin Maurie, Maria Hammill

This is an In-Person Meeting for Committee Members

Location: First 5 Sacramento, 2750 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 330 Sacramento, CA 95833.

Community/Public May Join by Zoom: <https://saccounty-net.zoomgov.com/j/1608233821?pwd=gwjihV3b5OXDBDumEVVtsYcqyCaNpW.1>

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment on Off-Agenda Items
3. Approve Minutes for December 17, 2025
4. Policy and Advocacy Briefing
5. Strategic and Implementation Plan Updates: Parent Survey Results
6. Equity In Action Committee Update: Capacity Building for Grantees
7. Committee Member Comments
8. Future Agenda Items: Cancel Next Meeting April 15, 2026
9. Adjourn

SYSTEMS OPTIMIZATION & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Draft Minutes

December 17, 2025: 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Members: Érik Fernández y García, LaWanda Wesley (Chair), Eric Guerra

Advisory Committee Member(s): Carolyn Curtis, Heidi Keiser *Alternates:* Kairis Chiaji, Darsey Varnedoe

Staff: Julie Gallelo, Erin Maurie, Maria Hammill

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:06 a.m. A quorum was established. Present: LaWanda Wesley, Érik Fernández y García, Carolyn Curtis. Absent Eric Guerra, Darsey Varnedoe Heidi Keiser, and Kairis Chiaji attend via zoom and were unable to vote.

2. Public Comment on Off-Agenda Items

None.

3. Approve Draft Minutes for October 22, 2025

Moved by Érik Fernández y García and seconded by Carolyn Curtis. Item approved.

4. Policy and Advocacy Activities

The Committee discussed and approved the 2026 Policy Priorities. Further discussion continued on the potential impacts of the federal bill HR.1. Moved by Érik Fernández y García and seconded by Carolyn Curtis. Item approved.

5. Equity In Action Committee Update: REDI Grants

The Committee reviewed and provided comments on the Equity in Action grant recommendations for the three tiers of funding totaling \$4,172,410 to 35 entities.

6. Committee Member Comments

No comments.

7. Future Agenda Items

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Erin Maurie, Communications and Policy Director
First 5 Sacramento Commission

**First 5 Sacramento
Systems Optimization and Sustainability (SOS) Committee
Policy and Advocacy Briefing**

Policy

Various budget hearings on March 19th will focus on impact on budget of H.R. 1. February 20th was the last day to introduce legislation.

First 5 Association budget asks:

1. F5A Behavioral Health Services budget ask of \$25-\$100M [Bill Text - AB-2704 Children and youth behavioral health: services.](#)
2. Fee Schedule modifications with the desire to increase reimbursements/uptake for behavioral health providers serving 0-5ers.
3. CDPH did not take any of the F5A suggestions into account for the Behavioral Health Services ACT Population Based Prevention Program Plan.

Recommending support on:

- AB 1981 (Aguiar-Curry) – Rate reform conversation, true cost of care, puts out there the timeline and cadence that CDSS should be reporting back to the legislature and will hopefully increase accountability and transparency.
- AB 1996 (Bonta) – establishes an advisory council to evaluate policies affecting child poverty and well-being and report to the legislature.
- AB 2092 (Bonta) – Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS), establishes CDSS as the lead agency with the statutory authority to manage the ECIDS. Creates an interagency taskforce to oversee data governance, with the aim of integrating siloed information from various state agencies serving children from birth to age 5.
- ACR 120 (Ávila Farías) – Designates January Positive Parenting Awareness Month.
- SB 902 (Grayson) – electronic signature allowable for child care forms, technical fix that will help ease burdens on families.

Advocacy

2026 Advocacy Day

First 5 Association Statewide Advocacy Day is April 14th. Commissioner LaWanda Wesley, Julie Gallelo and Erin Maurie will represent First 5.

Chose Children Campaign

As we move toward the 2026 governor's race, this coalition of infant and early care associations is focused on one clear priority: making the well-being of young children a top issue for every candidate. Families across the state are facing daily challenges around childcare, health care and affordability. The goal is to elevate these realities and ensure that the next administration is ready to address them with real solutions.

A Choose Children communications toolkit was distributed to all First 5s: [Partner Toolkit - Google Drive](#). Additional information about the campaign such as videos, policy platform and polling results are available at www.choosechildren.org.

Read Across America Day

Child Action, Inc, organized a reading day at parent leader, Maria Lopez's Family Child Care Home. We were joined by Assemblymember Maggie Krell and a representative from Senator Ashby's office. Maria Lopez was recently appointed as the Chair of the Advisory Committee and is also a member of the Equity in Action Committee.

Cannabis Tax

Child advocates have filed a lawsuit against the California Department of Cannabis Control (DCC), accusing the state of abandoning the promises made to voters when cannabis legalization was approved under Proposition 64 in 2016. Advocates say these actions have undermined two central commitments made to voters: that legalization would protect children and fund prevention programs. Plaintiffs include our local Youth Forward organization who were instrumental in passing a similar funding stream, Measure L, for the City of Sacramento.

2026 Parent Survey Results: Themes Sorted by Weighted Score

	TOTAL	Weighted	Scaled
Health & Wellness: Child development (screening, supports for special needs, etc.)	591	1267	2.14
Health & Wellness: Support from someone for prenatal, postpartum, and newborn wellness (in-home visits, coaches, phone calls, etc.)	539	1121	2.08
Health & Wellness: Family and community enrichment (play, arts, nutrition, exercise, etc.)	508	1054	2.07
Parent Learning & Supports: Emergency child care (daytime & overnight)	447	885	1.98
Health & Wellness: Service and benefit connection (help connecting to services)	397	837	2.11
Parent Learning & Supports: Parent learning (education about parenting)	358	731	2.04
Support for Professionals: Quality child care providers (support & professional development)	331	674	2.04
Support for Professionals: Child care advocacy (for better policies & more funding)	345	672	1.95
Parent Learning & Supports: Community-based information sharing (info about services & events for kids)	344	657	1.91
Parent Learning & Supports: Parent networking and connections (connecting parents for fun & support)	310	625	2.02
Changing Systems: Systems coordination and improvement (to create better access for families)	315	605	1.92
Support for Professionals: Career / internship opportunities (for working with young children in health & social services)	293	571	1.95

(see definitions below)

2026 Parent Survey Results: Themes Sorted by Weighted Score

Changing Systems: Public opinion & policy change (advocate for better policies & more funding)	288	546	1.90
Support for Professionals: Racial equity / cultural responsiveness training (for anyone working with young children)	231	429	1.86
Changing Systems: Parent advocacy and leadership development (voices for change)	169	295	1.75

Score Defintions

TOTAL is the total number of times a Theme was selected
Weighted takes into account whether the Theme was selected 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, where 1st gets 3 points, 2nd gets 2 points, and 3rd gets 1 point
Scaled divides Weighted Score by TOTAL Score and can range from 1 (if every selection was 3rd) to 3 (if every selection was 1st)

Themes that Emerged from 2025 Parent / Caregiver Focus Groups: Basis for 2026 Parent / Caregiver Survey

Health & Wellness

Child development: screenings to support healthy development, resources and connections to specialists for families with children with special needs

- Examples: Information about healthy developmental milestones; access to screenings; playgroups and support groups for families with children with special needs; connection to and follow-up with specialists.

Family and community enrichment: activities to engage children in play, arts, exercise, nutrition, being outdoors

- Examples: Playgroups; pop-up playgrounds; stipends for Parks + Rec slots; support for more family-friendly events; advocacy for safer recreation spaces; cooking classes; advocacy for access to higher quality food

Support from someone for prenatal, postpartum and newborn wellness: individualized, caring support for pregnant and postpartum families as they become parents

- Examples: In-home visits, coaches, doulas, peer supports, phone calls to parents of newborns

Service and benefit connection: help families get connected to the benefits and services that exist – things like health insurance, child care subsidies, food and housing support, financial support

- Examples: Help for families to find providers, make appointments, handle waitlists, complete eligibility forms and applications, support families with barriers to accessing benefits + services

Parent Learning, Support & Connection

Parent learning: Community-based education spaces for parents like workshops, classes, or learning circles that explore topics like:

- Examples: Prenatal development, pregnancy care, postpartum wellness, newborn care (breastfeeding, sleeping, routines), general child development, positive parenting across a range of behaviors

Parent networking and connections: opportunities for parents and families to gather together and support each other

- Examples: Parent conversation groups, peer support groups (for fathers, single moms, mental health etc.); parent social gatherings; mentorship with elder peers or a buddy-pairing system like Big Brothers-Big Sisters for parents

Community-based information sharing: increase access to information about services and events for children and families

- Examples: Telephone number and/or website with early childhood resources in one place; community outreach coordinators; partnership with libraries; more marketing and advertising

Emergency child care: quality care that's there when you need it most, both for daytime and overnights

- Examples: Urgent, emergency, and respite care when needed – for instance in case of parent illness, childcare provider illness, parent job interview, parent stress / distress / overwhelm, etc.

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Changing Systems

Parent advocacy and leadership development: support parents in being voices and forces for change for their children and communities

- Examples: Parent Leadership Training Institute; Parent Academy for Civic Engagement (PACE); micro-grants for parent-led community building activities; Incentives for completing certification programs or training

Systems coordination and improvement: improve the way the health/ education/ and social service systems work so that children and families have better access to quality, affordable care

- Examples: Work with providers and administrators (hospitals, health plans, government agencies, etc. on topics like: birthing friendly hospitals; improving referrals and access to physical and mental health services for families; reducing barriers to accessing Well-Mom and Well-Baby services; language supports when accessing public services

Public opinion & policy change: advocate for more government policies and dollars that support families with young children

- Examples: Advocate for local and state policy change on topics like: increasing funding for early childhood; minimizing red tape that interferes with access to and eligibility for essential benefits; increasing economic supports for families; reducing infant and maternal health disparities

Support for Professionals

Career / internship opportunities: support career training and career advancement for those working in social service and health jobs with young children

- Examples: Internships/apprenticeships for parents; scholarships to support educational costs for members of marginalized communities wishing to pursue advanced education related to working with young children and families

Quality child care providers: professional development and supports for child care providers

- Examples: Training, coaching, and/or healing resources for childcare providers; technical support for meeting quality standards and running childcare facilities

Racial equity / cultural responsiveness training: training for anyone working with young children and families (health, education, social services)

- Examples: Training; clear standards of care; promote language supports for families; prioritize hiring staff from the communities they serve; help professionals be more accountable to families

Child care advocacy: work to shift policies and funding so we can increase salaries for providers and improve access, affordability and quality of early learning and care

- Examples: Sacramento County Child Care Coalition; support for community-driven campaigns directed at government and businesses; advocate for better wages for early educators