

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**State Funding Grab Impacts 72 Percent of First 5 Riverside Programs**

(APRIL 13, 2011) RIVERSIDE, CA — In light of a loss up to \$30 million due to recent state legislation, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission has had to dramatically reduce funding for young Riverside County children and their families for the next fiscal year.

The Commission approved staff recommendations to reduce or eliminate existing contracts considered for extension through June 30, 2012 during its meeting today. About \$19.3 million in contract extensions were approved. This is \$19.1 million less than the contract base amount in fiscal year 2010-2011.

Forty-seven out of 65 current contracts with agencies throughout Riverside County are affected. Eleven contracts will be eliminated. The rest will be reduced between 1 and 67 percent.

Virtually all contracts would have ended this fiscal year. Yet the Commission decided early to maintain funding as a new strategic plan and funding process is developed. Consideration for extensions of funding for each current contract was based on reduced funding, relevance to new strategic plan priorities and project performance.

“The Commission was faced with some extremely difficult choices,” said Harry Freedman, executive director of First 5 Riverside. “As a result of the State’s decision to take away funds from local commissions, many much needed services will no longer be available for Riverside County’s youngest children. The extent of the impact on our children will certainly be great.”

Last month, Gov. Jerry Brown signed AB99, a bill to divert \$1 billion in Proposition 10 funding from First 5-supported programs statewide. This means up to \$30 million in funds taken from First 5 Riverside.

The Commission is expected to further evaluate how many initiatives can be funded in the future under its proposed strategic plan, which is expected to be finalized next month.

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*First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission, is a division of the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services. It is funded by Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues. Established by the County Board of Supervisors in 1999, First 5 Riverside supports early childhood development through educational outreach, partnerships and funding for early education, health and child care services that benefit children, from prenatal to age 5, and their families. Research shows that support helps children develop a strong foundation for success in school and throughout their lives. For more information about First 5 Riverside programs and other funded services, call 800-266-3880 or visit [www.rccfc.org](http://www.rccfc.org).*