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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eat, Move & Grow Healthy: First 5 Riverside Urges Use of Childhood Obesity Prevention Strategies

(March 17, 2011) RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CA — During National Nutrition Month, First 5 Riverside is promoting a host of recipes, tips and resources at www.eatmovegrow.org to help parents tackle challenges incorporating healthy alternatives in their child's diet.

This is part of continued efforts to fight childhood obesity, a serious health problem that one in three children in the United States has or is at risk for encountering.

“Obesity in children causes health problems that aren't typically seen until adulthood like high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and elevated blood cholesterol levels,” said Dr. Pamela Luna, a First 5 Riverside health administrator. “The affects negatively impact children for years, including their success in school and beyond.”

Studies show that healthy eating habits and exercise can improve a child's self-esteem, ability to learn and overall health. First 5 Riverside has funded early educator and parent workshops on healthy eating through the Riverside County Department of Public Health Nutrition Services and Family Service Association. It currently funds programs in the desert region of the county to deliver nutritious emergency food and improve the nutritional quality of foods in child care settings.

Tips to prevent childhood obesity and promote healthy weight:

- Nutritionists recommend that toddlers eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Aim to include at least one with every meal, including snack time.
- Keep portion sizes small. Toddlers don't require many calories, so it's important to serve age-appropriate servings. The general rule of thumb is one tablespoon of each food for each year of age.
- Stick to a regular meal schedule. Toddlers as young as 1 year old should eat three meals and just two snacks daily, three to four hours apart.

At www.eatmovegrow.org, visitors can find more helpful tips, a Health Education E-Toolkit, games and details on how to get a free Yummy for Your Tummy Recipe Booklet featuring fun, easy and nutritious recipes by Celebrity Chef LaLa.

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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.