



**For Immediate Release**  
March 16, 2021

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## **First 5 California Welcomes Jackie Wong as New Chief Deputy Director**

*Former GRACE Executive Brings Decades of Experience to State Role*

Sacramento, Calif. — First 5 California today announced the hiring of Jackie Thu-Huong Wong as Chief Deputy Director of Program, Evaluation, and External and Governmental Affairs, according to First 5 California Executive Director Camille Maben. Ms. Wong has almost three decades of experience in the private sector and government where she worked to advocate for educational and economic equity, as well as racial justice for children, youth, and families.

“We are extremely happy to have such a highly-regarded and qualified executive join the ranks of our First 5 California family,” said Ms. Maben. “From her humble beginnings to fighting for equity for our most at-risk communities, we welcome her knowledge, skills, and experience to help us move forward as California’s leading agency dedicated to uplifting and supporting young children and families.”

Jackie most recently served as the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at GRACE, Inc., a private nonprofit dedicated to reducing child poverty in California by investing in programs and equal opportunities that will lift children out of deep poverty.

“First 5 California is a nationally recognized leader in early care and education. Their integrated approach to helping young children and families thrive is rooted in community. I am extremely honored to be joining First 5 California to help lead the advocacy work, which has a strategic focus on early childhood development, reducing childhood poverty, and increasing learning readiness for California’s families, especially those who are low-income, and Black, Indigenous, People of Color,” said Ms. Wong.

Jackie previously served as the Government Relations Director for the National Center for Youth Law, Principal Policy Consultant to the California Senate President, and Statewide Director for the Foster Youth Service at the California Department of Education. Ms. Wong also serves as the Vice President of the Washington Unified School Board in West Sacramento and is a Professor with California State University, Sacramento’s Nursing Program.

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“As chief deputy director, I will use my skills, knowledge, and breadth of experience to further the work of First 5 California by helping families overcome the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, address Adverse Childhood Experiences, remove barriers to equity, and tackle the systemic issues affecting California’s families,” said Ms. Wong.

Jackie Thu-Huong Wong is also a trained social worker, holding a Bachelor of Arts in Social Welfare and Psychology from University of California, Berkeley, and a Master of Social Work from California State University, Sacramento. Ms. Wong will begin on April 1, 2021.

For more information about First 5 California, visit [www.cafc.ca.gov](http://www.cafc.ca.gov).

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**ABOUT FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA:**

*First 5 California was established in 1998 when voters passed Proposition 10, which taxes tobacco products to fund services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. First 5 California programs and resources are designed to educate and support teachers, parents, and caregivers in the critical role they play during a child's first five years – to help California kids receive the best possible start in life and thrive. For more information, please visit [www.cafc.ca.gov](http://www.cafc.ca.gov).*