



First 5 San Luis Obispo County
Statement Regarding Climate Change Impacts on Young Children

June 28, 2017

First 5 San Luis Obispo County is dedicated to our role as an advocate for young children and their capacity to grow up healthy and ready to learn. We champion efforts in our communities that reinforce this positive start in life. We also focus attention on ways that children are put in harm's way - whether because of genetic, environmental, or human factors.

Climate change touches all of these factors. It is a global phenomenon with far-reaching and long-term threats to our planet. It poses particular dangers for the world's children, both now and as we anticipate them inheriting its ongoing effects as they become adults.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) highlights both current and pending effects of climate change on children. Rising temperatures in recent years are yielding more frequent heat waves and severe weather events which disproportionately impact the very young, whether because of compromised physical health and/or mental distress due to fear or family displacement. Poor air quality is associated with increased rates of asthma, and some climate-sensitive infection outbreaks such as Lyme Disease are on the rise. Various pockets of the planet are beginning to experience increased food insecurity related to failed crops in the face of changing climate. It is children who suffer most when food becomes scarce. Future threats include unhealthier air, fewer species of plants and animals, less land as seas rise, mass migration, and more political instability.

In its policy statement on Climate Change and Children's Health, the AAP articulates that "the social foundations of children's mental and physical health are threatened by the specter of far-reaching effects of unchecked climate change....Given this knowledge, failure to take prompt, substantive action would be an act of injustice to all children. A paradigm shift in production and consumption of energy is both a necessity and an opportunity for major innovation, job creation, and significant, immediate associated health benefits."

First 5 San Luis Obispo County supports the AAP's conviction that "tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century." We

commit to doing our part to advance this crucial worldwide call-to-action and integrate its message within our daily local work to protect the rights and potential of children on California's Central Coast.