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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Investment in San Joaquin County Families Recognizes Their Pandemic Struggles
Transfer of $4.2M from American Rescue Plan Act Funds Approved by Board of Supervisors

Stockton, CA – For San Joaquin County families already struggling with poverty, the impact of
the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated everyday challenges with education, housing, mental
health, and physical health. Concerns about children’s physical, social and emotional
development, and continued economic instability are just a few of the long-term impacts for
families that won’t go away overnight. “I’m here today because of these impacts,” declared Lani
Schiff-Ross, Executive Director of First 5 San Joaquin, at the September 14th San Joaquin County
Board of Supervisors meeting.

Schiff-Ross pointed to the First 5 San Joaquin Children & Families Commission and its partners’
critical community insights and corresponding progress in their COVID-impacted programs,
including special needs services, oral health, home visitation, childcare, and family engagement.
When their teams were met with restrictions on in-person services and outreach options, staff
reached families via increased phone communications and virtual services. Revised outreach
methods and delivery of services also helped make important improvements in the health and
well-being of the county’s youngest children. “It has been incredible to see how our programs
and partners have risen to the occasion in serving children and families, even as they go
through their own COVID impacts,” said Schiff-Ross.

Recognizing that additional funding would be required for First 5 San Joaquin and its partners to
continue meeting families’ needs, the Board of Supervisors approved a transfer of $4,163,465
from American Rescue Plan Act funds to fund COVID-impacted services for the period of

“This funding is all about supporting families in recognition of what they’ve been through—
from job losses to a lack of social interaction. It’s about helping build critical connections so
they don’t feel so alone,” said Commissioner Chris Woods, Director of the San Joaquin County Human Services Agency.

Programs funded through the American Rescue Plan include:

- **SJ TEETH** – A project that provides San Joaquin County families with assistance to find a Medi-Cal dental provider, secure dental appointments, and increase access to oral health care. A partnership with several local community organizations, this program will serve approximately 1,500 children and parents/caregivers.

- **Help Me Grow** – A project that helps children receive periodically-based developmental and behavioral screenings and connects families to a wide range of services such as referrals to home visiting programs, housing assistance, mental health services, health insurance, food assistance, general childhood development information, provider training, and family education. A partnership with the Family Resource & Referral Center, this program will serve 1,100 families.

- **Grandparents Initiative** – A project that provides coordination and services to Family, Friend, and Neighbor (licensed exempt) childcare providers in San Joaquin County with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of care for children. A partnership with APSARA, Catholic Charities, Mary Magdalene Community Services, and El Concilio, this program will serve 189 grandparents.

- **Home Visitation Expansion** – A project that strengthens families and leads to long-term positive health and other evidence-based outcomes through regular visits and support from trained professionals. Through these visits and referrals, home visiting programs reduce parental stress, improve child health and development, and help parents bond with their child. This program will serve 350 parents/caregivers.

- **Parent Engagement** – A project that promotes children’s development, learning, and wellness. A partnership with Creative Child Care, Inc. and Tracy Unified School District, this program will serve 200 families.

About First 5 San Joaquin

Research shows that what parents and caregivers do to support a child’s growth and development during their first five years of life has a meaningful impact throughout their lifetime. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50-cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children, ages 0 to 5. This year, First 5 San Joaquin plans to distribute over $15 million in Prop. 10 and other revenue to support programs and services that meet local needs with a focus on family resiliency, quality early learning, and comprehensive health and development. To learn more, visit [www.sjckids.org](http://www.sjckids.org).

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