



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** December 4, 2025

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**Choose Children 2026 Releases New Data on Key Issues Ahead of California's Governor's Race.**

*This new poll found that 83% of voters want the state's next Governor to prioritize children and families.*

**Los Angeles, CA** – Choose Children 2026, a California coalition of child advocates, community-based organizations, First 5 Commissions, and foundations committed to early childhood investment, has released new polling ahead of the 2026 Governor's race.

Avo Makdessian, Executive Director of the First 5 Association of California, said, "Every day, thousands of California families have to make hard decisions around how best to provide for their young children. That's why we need a leader who will prioritize early childhood investment. Our next governor must be ready to address this chronic underinvestment with real, effective solutions on day one."

The newly released data highlights the most pressing issue facing California's children and families: affordability. Affordability remains the #1 issue for California voters, underscoring the state's chronic underinvestment in early childhood support programs. This same poll found that more than a third of California parents feel child care is a "significant financial strain" on their family finances and 1 in 4 California parents are sacrificing medical care because they simply cannot afford it.

Choose Children has released its list of policy recommendations for candidates to address these issues and alleviate the financial struggle for families with young children. The policy platform includes strengthening economic safety net programs for families with young children, expanding high-quality healthcare options for young children, and increasing access to affordable childcare options. Together, the data and the platform serve as a direct call to action for all the gubernatorial candidates to make the well-being of young children and families their top priority.

"Parents are feeling the strain, not support, of the cost of raising a family in California. That's why I am proud to stand with Choose Children and the 83% of likely voters who want our next Governor to prioritize policies that make California a place where families with young children can live and thrive," said Mayra Alvarez, President of The Children's Partnership.

Having worked with representatives at all levels of state government to advocate for more effective early childhood investments since 2018, Choose Children stands ready to work with the next administration to turn these policy recommendations into real progress for all of California's children and families.



“We will not stand by as nearly half of California parents with children under the age of 12 struggle to afford housing. In a state with the fourth largest economy in the world, the health and housing security of our children should be a guarantee. We need leaders who will fight for our children, not work against them”, said Makedessian.

To learn more about Choose Children 2026, its platform and the polling released today, visit [this link](#).