



For Immediate Release

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Photo opportunities available

Families Invited to Take 5 and Read to Kids! Campaign Kick-off May 3rd

*First 5 Ventura County to Host Free Events Countywide
with Local Celebrity Readers*

(Ventura County, CA) – The eighth annual **Take 5 and Read to Kids!** campaign will kick-off May 3rd at preschools and various locations throughout Ventura County. More than 50 local celebrity readers will be reading to young children. First 5 Ventura County hosts the free community events to help raise awareness about the importance of early childhood literacy for the more than 55,000 children in Ventura County who are age 5 years and younger. For more information, visit www.first5ventura.org/talk-read-sing/

This year's impressive lineup of readers includes Congresswoman Julia Brownley, Assemblymembers Steve Bennett and Jacqui Irwin, Supervisors Jeff Gorell, Matt LaVere, Kelly Long, and Janice Parvin, County Executive Officer Dr. Sevet Johnson, Ventura County Sheriff Jim Fryhoff, Ventura County Fire Chief Dustin Gardner, and many more.

Members of the public with children age 5 and younger are invited to attend **Take 5 and Read to Kids!** storytimes with a celebrity reader at select First 5 Ventura County Neighborhoods for Learning (NfL) sites as well as local libraries during their regularly scheduled storytimes:

- Rio Plaza Elementary (NfL classroom), 3300 Cortez St., Oxnard, May 3rd at 9:30 a.m.
- Ruben Castro Center (NfL classroom), 612 B. Spring St. Suite 401, Moorpark, May 3rd at 9:30 a.m.
- Sheridan Way Elementary (NfL classroom), 573 Sheridan Way, Ventura, May 3rd at 9:30 a.m.
- E.P. Foster Library on Monday, May 6th at 10:30 a.m.
- Fillmore Library on Wednesday, May 8th at 10:30 a.m.
- Hill Road Library on Wednesday, May 8th at 10:30 a.m.
- Ojai Library on Wednesday, May 8th at 10:30 a.m.



First 5 Ventura County encourages parents, caregivers, and community members to become champions of early literacy by taking at least five minutes each day to read with a young child. *“Talking throughout the day with your young child, reading together, telling stories, and singing all help develop pathways in the brain that will later be used to recognize letters, read, and think critically,”* Supervisor and First 5 Commissioner Matt LaVere added.

Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko reads to children at Take 5 and Read to Kids! in 2023.

“We know that the first five years of life lay the foundation for success in school and life. For young children, early exposure to books is beneficial for long-term academic achievements,” said Health Care Agency Director and First 5 Commission Chair Barry Zimmerman. Studies have proven that when you talk, read, and sing to children starting at birth, you promote and support early language and literacy development.

About First 5 Ventura County, www.first5ventura.org

Brain research shows that the prenatal period and first five years of a child’s life are critical for developing lifelong social, emotional and learning skills. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 (a tobacco tax) in 1998 which established First 5 county commissions throughout the state to improve health and education programs for children prenatal to 5 years.

For more than 25 years, First 5 Ventura County’s investment, expertise and leadership have made a significant, positive impact on early childhood in our community. F5VC’s early education and childhood development programs – Neighborhoods for Learning and Help Me Grow – strengthen families and help ensure Ventura County’s 55,000 children age 5 and younger reach their full potential.

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