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# PLAYGROUP GRANT OPPORTUNITY 2025-2026

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND APPLICATION GUIDANCE

First 5 Humboldt is inviting applications from local organizations for one-year grants to provide Playgroups for children aged five and younger and their caregivers in Humboldt County. Grantees will receive funding and ongoing support and guidance from First 5 Humboldt staff. The grant period will be from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

### About Playgroups

First 5 Humboldt supports Playgroups as a key initiative in our mission to improve the lives of young children and their families. Playgroups provide safe, fun environments for families to connect with one another, learn about and support their children's development, and get access and referrals to other important services. Well-run accessible Playgroups are an important prevention and early intervention measure in a county where many children and families experience trauma and adversity. Playgroups promote protective factors, relational health, resilience, and family strengthening components which are demonstrated to reduce child abuse and neglect and to support healthy family functioning, child development, and readiness for school (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2016).

Playgroups operate through local partners that host a Playgroup in their community, a role that includes providing a physical space for Playgroup and serving as employer for a local Playgroup Leader(s). First 5 Humboldt staff provide ongoing support services to Playgroups including orientation and guidance for Playgroup Leaders and joining Playgroups periodically to help support families and Leaders.

Funding for Playgroups comes from the voter approved Proposition 10, the California Children and Families Act. First 5 Humboldt is committed to financial transparency and effective evaluation of our programs. Playgroup grantees agree to meet First 5 Humboldt's requirements for Playgroup, including health and safety measures, tracking and reporting attendance, completion of evaluation and reporting documents, and financial recordkeeping.

### Number of Grants and Grant Amounts

We expect to fund about 12 Playgroups with grants of \$7,000 each. This is a significant reduction from recent years, and a result of significant declines in the Proposition 10 funding received by First 5 Humboldt. To continue supporting as many Playgroups as possible, we are revising our funding approach so that each grantee gets the same grant amount, based on providing a once per week

Playgroup meeting. Grantees with funding support from other sources are welcome to offer more frequent Playgroup meetings.

## Application Process

A complete grant application package has the following components

1. A complete 2025-26 Playgroup Grant Application that is signed by an Authorized Agent of the grantee organization.
2. A proposed annual budget (see the included template budget).
3. A completed W-9 form for the grantee organization.

Completed applications can be submitted by mail or by email to [dberman@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:dberman@co.humboldt.ca.us)

**Applications are due February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

Our mailing address is:

Playgroup Grant  
First 5 Humboldt  
325 2nd Street, Ste. 201  
Eureka, CA 95501

## Application Assistance and Questions

We will be holding two public meetings about this grant opportunity to answer any questions applicants may have about Playgroups, the application process, and changes from past Playgroup grants. Attendance at these meetings is not required to apply for a Playgroup grant.

- 1) A hybrid (Zoom and in person) meeting will be held on Friday January 24<sup>th</sup> from 2 to 3:30 pm at Jefferson Community Center in Eureka. The Zoom meeting link is [here](#)
- 2) An online meeting will be held on Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup> from 3 to 4 pm. The Zoom meeting link is [here](#)

For help accessing these meetings, or to ask questions about the application, please contact Dan Berman at [dberman@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:dberman@co.humboldt.ca.us) or 707-498-4937.

## Application Review Process

First 5 Humboldt will convene a committee to review applications. Final decisions on grants will be made by the First 5 Humboldt Commission at a public meeting in April 2025. Applications will be evaluated according to the following priorities and criteria:

- 1. Geographic Isolation and Distribution.**

Playgroups that serve families in isolated areas with limited resources or services available to families will be prioritized. First 5 Humboldt will seek to avoid duplication of Playgroups in the same area and to avoid leaving large areas of the county unserved.

2. **Cultural Responsiveness.**

Playgroups that support the specific cultural needs of historically or currently under-served or marginalized communities will be prioritized. For example, Playgroups offered in languages other than English, or Playgroups serving Native American families with appropriate language or other cultural components.

3. **Leader Qualifications**

Playgroups that have leaders with some combination of educational background, work experience, and lived experience that makes them well qualified to lead a supportive high-quality Playgroup will be prioritized.

4. **Organizational Capacity and Need**

Applications should address the organizational capacity of the applicant to successfully manage a First 5 Humboldt grant and implement a Playgroup. Applicants should also discuss their need for financial support and their ability to partially or fully fund Playgroup.

5. **Capacity for Family Support and Referrals**

Applicants with an established reputation and history for serving families and the community, relationships with other community organizations, and a history of effectively referring families to appropriate services, will be prioritized.

First 5 Humboldt will notify all applicants of funding decisions in writing no later than May 1, 2025.

Applicants should review the Playgroup Grant Requirements, and the Required Essential Practices for Playgroup – both of which are attached below.



## Attachment A – Playgroup Grant Requirements

### Grant Agreement

1. The Playgroup grant term will be July 1, 2025, thru June 30, 2026.
2. Playgroup Leaders will be employed and paid by the grantee
3. The grant is a reimbursement-based system – grantees can only invoice for funds that have already been spent. Quarterly invoices are required – due Oct 20, Jan 20, April 20, and July 20, for each preceding quarter.
4. Successful applicants will need to enter into a Grant Agreement with First 5 Humboldt, which includes the following requirements:
  1. Provide certificates of insurance documenting that the grantee has liability and worker's compensation insurance
  2. Provide a W-9 form to First 5 Humboldt.

### Playgroup Staff Requirements

1. Playgroup Leaders must complete a LiveScan Fingerprint check
2. Playgroup Leaders must have a current Infant CPR/First Aid certificates  
*Costs for these certifications can be included in the Playgroup budget.*

### Scheduling Expectations

Playgroups will meet at least 40 weeks per year, for at least 2 hours per session.

### Attendance Requirements

Playgroups should have a minimum average attendance of at least 5 children to receive a Playgroup grant. This expectation is based on the "Birth to Three Best Practices: Playgroups" report issued by First 5 Ventura County in partnership with the Center for the Study of Social Policy. If average attendance is below the required minimum for more than one month, Playgroups should work with First 5 Humboldt staff on a plan to increase attendance. If average attendance continues to fall below 5, funding for that group may be terminated (with appropriate notice and discussion)

## Required Reporting and Evaluation

Data collection forms and report formats, with instructions and examples, will be provided by First 5 Humboldt.

1. All families complete First Time Attendance Forms.
2. Sign in sheets completed at each meeting.
3. Invoices are due quarterly as shown here:
  - a) First Quarter (July-Sep) due by Oct 20<sup>th</sup>
  - b) Second Quarter Invoice (Oct-Dec) due by Jan 20<sup>th</sup>
  - c) Third Quarter Invoice (Jan-March) due by April 20<sup>th</sup>
  - d) Final invoice (April-June) due by July 20<sup>th</sup>
4. Playgroups complete and submit the Duplicated Counts Spreadsheet tracking attendance monthly, and the Unduplicated Counts spreadsheet at mid-year and year end.
5. Playgroups work with families to complete Evaluation Surveys
6. Interim Progress Report (due 1/20/26)
7. End-of-Year Reports (due 6/20/26).

## Documents Maintained on File


Funded Playgroups and their fiscal agents will maintain the following documents on file.

1. First Time Attendance Forms (contain Emergency Contact information for families)
2. Daily Playgroup sign-in sheets
3. Documentation of staff time worked (i.e. time sheets, time cards, invoices)
4. Purchase receipts (i.e. food, toys, equipment, materials)
5. Fingerprint information of staff
6. Infant CPR/First Aid certificates of staff


## Playgroup Operating Standards

1. Required Essential Practices Checklist completed with First 5 Staff (attached below)
2. Playgroup leaders attend biannual First 5 Humboldt workshops. Supervisors are strongly encouraged to attend as well.
3. Once awarded a Playgroup grant, grantees are required to attend an orientation meeting (Date TBD)


# First 5 Humboldt Playgroups- Required Essential Practices

 <p><b>These are the basic health, safety, and community practices that ensure a safe and welcoming experience for families. Please review these practices with your Family Support Navigator and be sure to reach out to First 5 with any questions or support requests around ensuring each of these practices are in place.</b></p>	Have not started	In Progress	In Place	Need Support
1. The 'Welcome to Playgroup' and the 'Feeling Well Enough for Playgroup Today' flyers from First 5 Humboldt are posted and followed at Playgroup. Each parent/caregiver is informed of these practices.				
2. Every parent/caregiver completes and returns the First Time Attendance form and provides emergency contact info on that form, or the online equivalent.				
3. A designated eating area is established where adults and children can be seated while they eat, caregivers are informed about this practice and staff reinforces that eating needs to be done in that area.				
4. All staff wash their hands upon arrival, before preparing snacks and after toileting, or cleaning up messes. Families are encouraged to engage in the same practice.				
5. Food provided by the program is age appropriate and is consistent with the choking safety guidelines provided by First 5 Humboldt.				
6. The First 5 Healthy Beverage Policy is followed. Water is accessible for all attending playgroup.				
7. A system is established for regularly disinfecting toys and parents/caregivers are notified of where to put toys that need to be cleaned (mouth toy bin).				
8. All playgroup staff members reinforce all Health and Safety Practices, including wearing masks if/when appropriate and sending families home if caregivers or children are too ill to attend.				
9. All toys meet standard safety codes for age, size, and construction and are durable enough to withstand group play.				
10. Activities such as cutting with scissors, cooking, arts, crafts, texture table, etc. that could potentially create a hazard are always supervised by an assigned adult.				
11. Diaper bags, purses, and other items are stored out of reach of children and parents/caregivers are notified about where to store such items.				

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12. The environment is arranged to support safe play for the ages and developmental levels of the group.				
13. All doors leading to areas outside of the playgroup space are made as secure as possible, taking into consideration the ages/developmental needs of the group.				
14. In sites where there are multiple staff members, they are spread throughout the room and they are mindful of safety issues such as doors, active play areas and larger groups of children and place themselves to help supervise these areas.				
15. A First Aid kit is readily available at each site and leaders have been trained in basic First Aid				
16. Playgroup staff members have been fingerprinted and have received criminal clearance.				
17. A playgroup staff member provides each new family with an overview of the playgroup policies and schedule i.e. snack time, circle time, clean up, etc. and explains any "off limits" or other special areas.				
18. A playgroup staff member checks with each new family to see if there are any special considerations/needs for the family members i.e. allergies, environmental sensitivities, etc.				
19. Playgroup leaders are in the playgroup space, interacting and building relationships with families most of the playgroup time. Leaders share community resources with families and provide referrals as needed.				
20. Playgroup staff members are mindful of caregivers and children who are more shy or reserved and make an extra effort to reach out to them and connect them with others.				

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21. All playgroup staff members will contact their First 5 Humboldt Navigator if they and/or the caregiver have concerns about a child or family.				
22. All playgroup staff members will contact their First 5 Humboldt Navigator if they need assistance with supporting a family whose primary language is not English.				
23. Family information is confidential. All playgroup staff members will refrain from talking about their concerns about a child or caregiver in front of other parents, caregivers, and children.				
24. All playgroup primary leaders will attend biennial (2x/yr) Playgroup Workshops to further their skills in supporting families.				
25. Playgroup staff members who have their own children present will follow and model all Health and Safety Practices.				