

Expanding Child Care & Preschool Facilities

A brief for cities prepared by Build Up for San Mateo County's Children, a new initiative growing and improving the supply of child care and preschool



San Mateo County has a **shortfall of 11,000 child care and preschool spaces**, directly impacting the county's business, education, transportation and housing sectors.

By 2025, this shortage is expected to rise to 14,000.

The good news is that cities, like the Peninsula Pathfinders highlighted below, are powerful agents of change and can make a significant contribution to increasing the supply of child care.



Why should cities take action to increase the availability of child care?

The child care industry is an economic driver at the local level and a contributor to quality of life. Families rely on child care to participate in the workforce and the industry itself generates employment and revenue.

Children who participate in high-quality preschool programs enter kindergarten prepared for school and increase their earning potential.

Accessible child care is a key component of family-friendly communities. The location and availability of child care can affect other community development goals and activities including smart growth and sustainability planning initiatives.

The American Planning Association...

.... encourages communities to consider amending local zoning ordinances to remove obstacles to the provision of regulated group and family child care in all zoning districts, in locations that are appropriate and safe for children.

... encourages communities to negotiate with developers and to offer incentives to provide space for child care in all types of projects, residential, office, mixed use, and commercial, including new construction and reuse.

Eight Potential City Actions and the Peninsula Pathfinders

1) Municipal General Plans and City Priorities

Including child care as a priority in city general plans, in the areas of Public Facilities and Services, Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Open Space or Economic Development, provides a basis for city council members and staff to focus their efforts and resources accordingly. Addressing community child care needs in long-range planning documents and development reviews results in more family-friendly neighborhoods.

Peninsula Pathfinders: Redwood City (has language in general plan), San Mateo (child care is a recognized city priority), San Carlos (prioritizing and researching city options).

2) Reducing Barriers Through Zoning, Permitting and Parking

Important steps cities can take to reduce systemic and regulatory barriers include:

- Expedite, streamline, and clarify permitting processes
- Waive permit fees and/or provide tax credits
- Reduce parking and traffic requirements
- Evaluate current zoning and land use policies to provide more flexibility
- Designate a city employee in planning, economic or community development to provide consistent and accurate guidance to prospective child care providers
- Develop a child care start-up guide to walk prospects through the city's process

Peninsula Pathfinders: Redwood City (waives permit fees for FCCs and employs child care coordinator), San Mateo (start-up guide and allows large FCCs without permit), San Mateo County (start-up guide).

3) Developer Impact Fees

Cities have the option of imposing fees on developers, to be used exclusively for capital improvements, to fund infrastructure and public facilities projects. Developer impact fees are ordinance-based, one-time charges on new development designed to cover a "proportional-share" of the capital cost of necessary public infrastructure and facilities, such as child care. The creation and collection of impact fees are allowed under AB-1600 as codified in California Government Code Section 66000, known as the Mitigation Fee Act.

Peninsula Pathfinders: South San Francisco, San Mateo (along with San Francisco, Berkeley, Los Angeles).

4) Development Agreements

A development agreement (DA) is a legally binding agreement between a local government and developer authorized by State statute (Government Code Section 65864 et seq.). Cities can include child care as a community benefit in a DA and develop template language to be incorporated into DAs as appropriate opportunities arise.

Peninsula Pathfinder: In 2017, San Mateo allocated \$100,000 from a DA to their child care fund in exchange for permitting the developer to build over allowed building height.

5) Local Tax Measures

Cities, counties, and school districts can seek voter approval to collect parcel taxes, sales taxes and school district bonds (limited to capital expenditures).

Peninsula Pathfinders: Ravenswood City School District Measure H 2016 and Woodside Elementary School District Measure D 2014 both funded facility upgrades for district preschools, in addition to other school upgrades.

6) City-Operated Child Care and Preschool Programs

Most Peninsula cities operate preschool, child care or after school programs, most often through Parks and Recreation.

Peninsula Pathfinders: Belmont, Brisbane, Burlingame, Colma, Daly City, Foster City, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, Millbrae, Pacifica, Redwood City, San Carlos, San Mateo, South San Francisco.

7) School Districts

Cities can encourage and/or partner with school districts that may operate their own preschools or provide space to providers. Several San Mateo County districts operate state-funded preschools and others operate fee-based programs.

Peninsula Pathfinders: Three cities (Brisbane, Redwood City, and San Carlos) have 2+2 or 2x2 committees where members of city council and school board and city staff meet jointly on a regular basis.

8) Employer Sponsored Child Care

Cities can encourage and/or incentivize employers to provide child care as a benefit for their employees.

Peninsula Pathfinders: Genentech, City of Daly City, County of San Mateo, Electronic Arts, Gilead, Mills Peninsula Medical Center, SFO, Oracle, USGS.

Resources for Cities

American Planning Association, <https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/childcare.htm>

Low Income Investment Fund, <http://www.liifund.org/programs/child-care/>

City of San Mateo Child Care Start-Up Guide, <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/DocumentCenter/View/150>

Child Care Law Center, childcarelaw.org

Building Child Care: A resource clearinghouse to support child care facility development, buildingchildcare.org

California Health & Safety Code, <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

- Definitions of child care types §1596.750-1597.621
- Preemption of local regulation of Family Child Care Homes §1597.40-1597.47

Community Care Licensing, CA Dept. of Social Services, http://ccl.dss.cahwnet.gov/ChildCareL_1728.htm

- Regulations (Title 22, Division 12), www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/CCRTitle22_715.htm
- Regulation highlights for centers and homes, <http://ccld.ca.gov/res/pdf/CCCRegulationHighlights.pdf>



Sources for this document include:

San Mateo County Child Care and Preschool Facilities Task Force Final Report and Recommendations, 2017; San Mateo County Early Learning Facilities Needs Assessment and Early Learning Facilities Study, Brion Economics, 2016; The Importance of Ensuring Adequate Child Care in Planning Practice: Child Care and Sustainable Community Development, American Planning Association, 2011; APA Policy Guide on the Provision of Child Care, 2007; Strategies for Increasing Child Care Facilities Development and Financing in California, Building Child Care Collaborative, 2007; Economic Impacts of Early Care and Education in California, UC Berkeley, Center for Labor Research and Education, 2011; San Carlos Child Care: Preliminary Options and Recommendations, Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., 2017.

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