

San Mateo County has a **shortfall of 17,000 child care spaces** for children ages 0-12. This directly impacts the county's business, education, transportation and housing sectors. By 2032, this shortage is expected to rise to 22,000 spaces. The good news is that **cities 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** and a contributor to quality of life at the local level. 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

## Potential City Actions

### Municipal General Plans and City Priorities

Including child care as a priority in city general plans in the areas of Public Facilities and Services, Climate, 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.

### Reducing Barriers Through Zoning, Permitting and Parking

Cities can take the following important steps to reduce systemic and regulatory barriers:

- 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

### Developer Impact Fees

Cities can impose fees on developers to be used exclusively for capital improvements and 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.

### 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 incorporate template language into DAs.

## The American Planning Association (contd.)...

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.

## Potential City Actions (Contd.)

### Local Tax Measures

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

### City-Operated Child Care and Preschool Programs

Most Peninsula cities operate preschool, child care and/or after-school programs, most often through their Recreation Departments.

### School Districts

Cities can encourage and/or partner with school districts that may operate preschools or provide space to preschool operators. Several local districts operate state-funded preschools while others operate fee-based programs.

### Employer-Sponsored Child Care

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

### Climate Change and Child care for Cities

Climate change has already begun to disrupt children's learning, with extreme weather events resulting in school closures, and the effect of climate change on young children's health has yet to be seen. **Time spent learning and exploring outdoors is also essential to young children's brain development and learning.** Cities can support child care centers in **expanding and upgrading indoor and outdoor learning spaces** to support young children's needs and be more climate resilient.

### Resources for Cities



Scan me!

**Sources for this document include:** SMC Child Care and Preschool Facilities Task Force Final Report and Recommendations, 2017; SMC Child Care Needs Assessment, Brion Economics, 2022; 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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Updated June 2024