

Crescent Park Children's Center

Temporary Center Closure

A center closure, even a temporary one, is an action taken only as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted. Prior to making such a decision, analyses of root causes, trends, alternative solutions and community needs are conducted and alternative solutions are implemented whenever possible.

Temporary Closure of Crescent Park: Rationale:

The center has historically been difficult to enroll families and retain staff due to community violence and other safety issues in the surrounding community. The center was closed previously for these reasons in 2013-14 for one year, and slots were reduced from 98 to 64 overall in the last two program years to address these challenges. There are currently 154 children on the waiting list listing Crescent Park as their 1st or 2nd choice, out of 6,373 names on the list. That means .02% of the list wishes to enroll in Crescent Park. The waiting list is not vetted, so not all names on the list will even be eligible to enroll.

The low enrollment and lack of staffing has resulted in the need to temporarily close the center until stable staffing and enrollment can be achieved. The center is located nearby and between two of our largest west county centers, thus offering ample transfer opportunities and a reasonable choice to currently enrolled families. Staff have worked diligently to ensure that all remaining 32 children and four staff at the center are successfully transitioned to other close by centers and the 64 childcare slots allocated for that center (56 preschool and 8 toddler) will be re-allocated to CSB's existing childcare partner, Baby Yale in Antioch, an area in high demand.

Vacancies and Leaves:

CSB has experienced on-going staffing shortages for the past three to four years which can be attributed to several factors such as the county unemployment rate being at a historic low for the past four years (4.90% in May 2015 and 2.60% in May 2019). Schools and childcare programs throughout the State are experiencing the same issues regarding staffing and several programs have closed as a result. The most significant vacancy/leave rate is at our Crescent Park center in Richmond, where only five of the necessary 12 positions are filled consistently; this is a 58% vacancy rate.

Contributing to the vacancy factor is also the high number of leaves, specifically at CSB's west county centers. Thirty-one percent of the necessary positions are either vacant or the incumbent staff is on leave. As shown in the table below, 17 of 21 vacant positions are in West County, and 11 of 14 positions with staff on leave are also in West County. See table below:

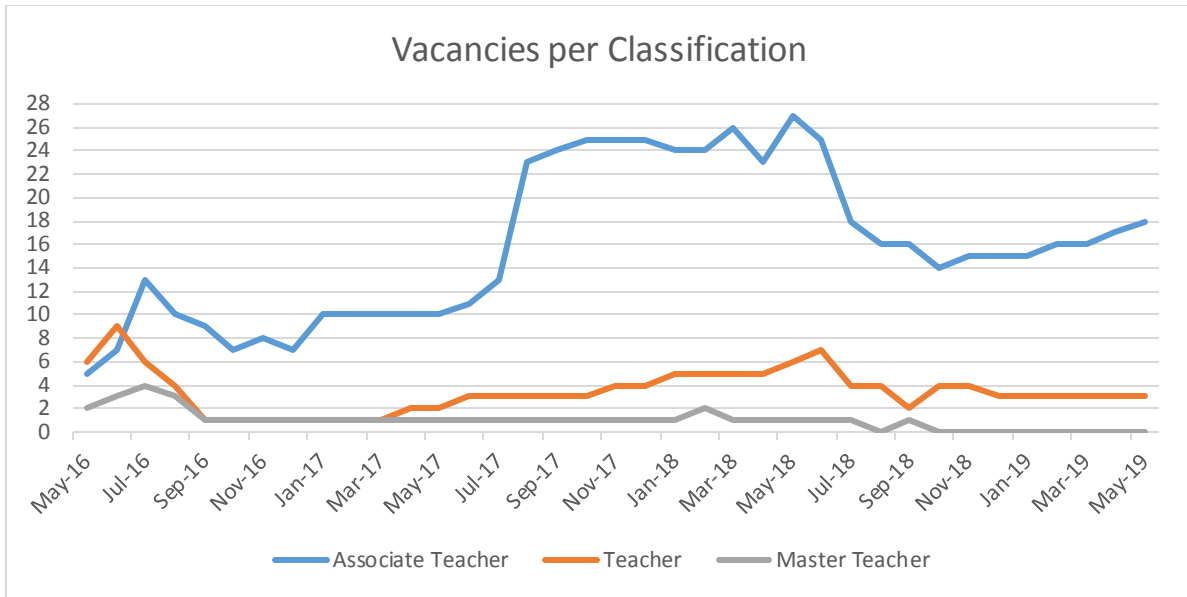
Center	Vacant/open positions	Staff on long-term leave	Total
Ambrose (east)	1 IT T	0	1 (of 8)
Balboa (west)	3 ATs, 1 IT AT	2 Ts, 1 IT AT, 1 TAT	8 (of 27)
Bayo Vista (central)	0	0	0 (of 9)
Contra Costa College (west)	1 IT AT	0	1 (of 8)
Crescent Park (west)	1 IT AT, 3 ATs, 1 T	1 AT, 1 T	7 (of 12)
George Miller Concord (central)	1 IT AT	1 T, 1 AT	3 (of 23)
George Miller III (west)	2 ATs	5 ATs	7 (of 30)
Las Deltas (west)	2 IT ATs, 1 TAT	0	3 (of 8)
Lavonia Allen (east)	1 AT	0	1 (of 7)
Los Arboles (east)	1 AT	0	1 (of 9)
Los Nogales (east)	0	0	0 (of 6)
Marsh Creek (east)	0	0	0 (of 3)
Riverview (east)	0	0	0 (of 6)
Verde (west)	2 ATs	0	2 (of 6)
TOTAL	21 county-wide (17 in west county)	14 county-wide (11 in west county)	34 (of 162) or 21% county-wide 28 (of 91) or 31% in west county 6 (of 71) or 8% in e/c county

Key: T = Teacher; IT = Infant/Toddler; AT = Associate Teacher; TAT = Teacher Assistant Trainee

CSB employs 28 reliable substitutes in West County to cover for the 28 vacant/on leave positions as well as staff illness and vacations. Fifty percent (50%) of these substitutes are TATs (untrained, entry-level positions). The substitute coverage is not adequate to meet the need.

Trends:

Vacancies: There has been an increase in vacancies since fall 2018, especially in the Associate Teacher classification, which comprises the majority of our teaching workforce. This is a lower wage position and has the highest turnover of all classifications within the Bureau.

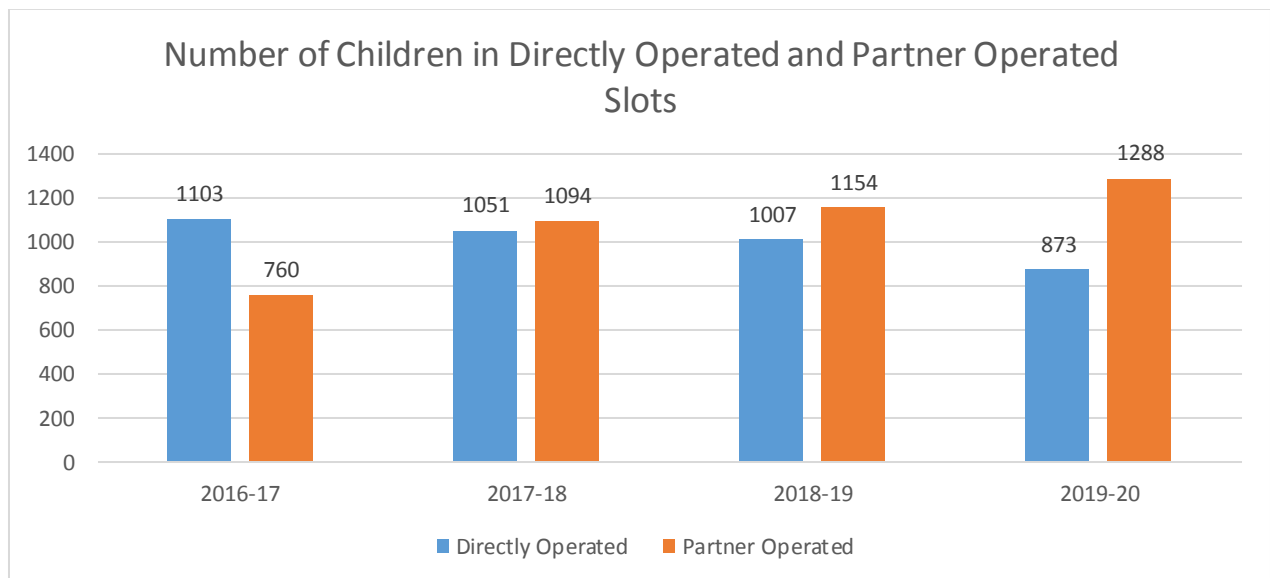


Steep Cost of Living Increases:

We know from both quantitative and qualitative data that our teachers, especially the lower paid Associate Teachers and TATs, struggle significantly to afford the cost of living in Bay Area. Many leave for higher-paying work or choose to leave the area for lower cost of living.

Subcontracting Services to Child Care Partners:

In response to staffing shortages, CSB has been fortunate to find quality child care partners to operate childcare slots. They often pay higher wages and so are able to recruit and retain staff more successfully. However, this option has been maximized and cannot be relied upon as an easily available option at all times. CSB now has more than half of the over 2,000 children served in these childcare partnerships throughout the county.



Alternative Solutions:

When faced with staffing shortages, CSB strives to implement strategies that ensure slots and services stay in our community. As noted previously, sometimes partners are identified who can provide services when CSB cannot.

CSB is also engaging in innovative Grow our Own programs such as the ECE Work Study Program in partnership with the local community colleges and childcare programs. We have also made staff retention and wellness a bureau priority.

CSB has engaged in the past in a federal process called slots reduction, where slots are permanently reduced from the grant with no reduction in the granted budget, thus allowing adjustments for increases in cost of doing business. CSB has done this twice: in November 2015 reduced by 70 Head Start slots and in August 2016 reduced by 150 Head Start slots. These reductions impacted the community with a loss in available services however allowed the program to fund negotiated COLAs, maintain facilities, provide necessary program materials and training, and operate generally without negative fiscal impact.

CSB staff will continue to work diligently over this next year to use data to identify means for staff retention while striving to provide high quality services for the county.