

Development of Additional Childcare Providers

At the May 26, 2021 MXCAB meeting, First 5 Contra Costa, Cocokids, and staff from the Community Services Bureau of the Employment and Human Services Department requested allocations towards early childhood supports, providers and systems. The shortage of childcare slots, including those for children ages 0-5 who are eligible for subsidized childcare, and the lack of early care and education providers has only worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the November 16, Board of Supervisors meeting the proposal was included in the County Administrators' staff report, as a program Board members had requested follow-up information on, but was not feasible due to insufficient funding after addressing other MXCAB and Board of Supervisors' priorities. The proposal was included in the Childcare Slots proposal of Attachment D, and for informational purposes should future allocation opportunities arise.

This proposal goes hand in hand with the Early Childhood Education/Childcare proposal, since access and availability of quality childcare is contingent on the availability of a stable early childhood workforce. However, this is being presented independently due to the limited unallocated Measure X funding available at this time.

The proposal requests Measure X allocations to provide additional compensation to providers who hold non-traditional hours of care such as weekends and evenings and those who care for infants, children with special needs and other special populations. It will support an immediate retention strategy to help keep the workforce afloat until a more permanent solution to the issue of compensation is created.

Partnerships between CocoKids (the resource and referral agency for the county) and the Employment and Human Services, Community Services and Workforce Services Bureaus (administrators of the CalWorks programs) have existing mechanisms in place to support the oversight of this program. The Early Learning and Leadership Group (ELLG), comprised of the core early childhood services entities throughout the County, would support the planning and implementation of a local childcare voucher model.

The annual estimated cost to fully fund the proposal is \$1.6 million. This funding would support families obtaining quality child care and boost the childcare work industry with fair wages.

Recommendation

An on-going allocation of \$1.5 million is recommended for funding the development and retention of childcare providers.