



January 26, 2022

Supervisor Mitchoff, Chair  
Supervisor Burgis  
Supervisor Andersen  
Supervisor Gioia  
Supervisor Glover

Mariana Moore, Chair, Measure X Community Advisory Board  
Members of the Measure X Community Advisory Board

**Re: Include child care support in Measure X funding**

Dear Contra Costa County Measure X Advisory Committee and the Board of Supervisors,

Child care is essential for strong, thriving families and just communities. Enriching, safe, quality care should be available to all children, regardless of their race, ethnicity, language, or family income. And, early childhood educators deserve to make a living wage so that they can take care of the children in their programs, as well as their own families. Unfortunately, child care is in crisis in Contra Costa County and families are suffering as a result.

It doesn't have to be this way. We, the members of the Early Learning Leadership Group (ELLG), urge you to take a step in the right direction by allocating \$6.1 million in Measure X funds to support the child care sector, getting families the child care they need and providers the compensation they deserve. While the Measure X Community Advisory Board (CAB) recognized child care as a priority and included "expansion of subsidized child care" in their recommendations, the CAO did not. We hope you will reconsider expansion of child care as you decide how to allocate the remaining Measure X funds.

A few critical points to consider:

- Prior to the pandemic, **Contra Costa was short nearly 13,000 child care slots** for children under 5; since the start of the pandemic Contra Costa has lost **at least 1,200 more slots**.
- The picture is even more dire for families who qualify for subsidized care—those working the hardest to make ends meet. There are currently **5,544 eligible children on a waiting list for subsidized child care in the county**. Of those children, **close to 50% will**





**never receive childcare** due to the lack of funding that has created a dearth of slots and workforce shortages.

- Many families with infants and toddlers depend on family child care providers, yet since the onset of the pandemic, we've witnessed **dramatic losses in family child care providers across the County**: there are 50% fewer child care sites in San Ramon, 41% fewer in Oakley, 39% fewer in Concord, and 35% fewer in San Pablo.
- The availability of "slots" (spaces for children in care) is entirely dependent on two things: funding to cover the costs of operating a child care facility and the availability of early childhood educators. Subsidized funding helps a child care facility cover the important costs associated with administration, supplies, overhead, and facility maintenance but **does not come close to adequately covering the salaries of early childhood educators**.
- Throughout the pandemic, child care providers have stepped into their role as child care heroes to support other essential workers, children, families, and our communities. Yet **their compensation does not recognize this mammoth undertaking**.
- In 2019, early educators in California were paid an average of \$13 per hour, an annual average of \$30,000 less than their K-12 counterparts. They are **twice as likely as other California workers to live in poverty**, and six times more likely than K-12 teachers. In fact, in 2020 31% of early childhood providers were food insecure.
- It is no surprise, then, that the pandemic has served as a breaking point for many providers, who have left the field due to low wages and strenuous work. Given that these providers are primarily women of color, addressing the compensation crisis in this field is not just a matter of providing better care for children—it's **a matter of racial and gender justice**.
- Although there is subsidized funding coming from the State to support care for four year-olds, **it will not be enough to address the need**. The current influx of state and federal funding is time-limited, two-year funding with no guarantee of ongoing long-term funding and does not address the urgent need for infant and toddler care.
- **Our county depends on child care for today, and for our future**. As per the budget presentation to the Board of Supervisors on January 25 by Dr. Chris Thornberg of Beacon Economics, providing robust child care support is a win for today, in that it helps caregivers, especially women, return to the workforce, addressing the current labor shortage. It is also a win for tomorrow, in creating better educational outcomes for children.



We appreciate the Measure X CAB's support for including subsidized child care in their recommendations and hope that this additional information will demonstrate why providing funding to increase the number of slots, especially for infant and toddler care, and to sustain and build the early childhood workforce is critical!

We reiterate our original request for \$6.1 million annually; a portion will support slots/spaces for critically needed infant and toddler care and a portion will help to retain the current workforce.

We sincerely hope that you will prioritize young children in the funding recommendations that you make with the unallocated \$12 million. We cannot leave so many families out in the cold, without the early care and education that every child deserves. Caring and supporting our youngest children is simply the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Members of the Early Learning Leadership Group

Cc: Measure X Community Advisory Board  
Monica Nino, County Administrator  
Lisa Driscoll, County Finance Director, County Administrator's Office

