Child Care Is Essential
Supporting Early Care and Education During the COVID-19 Crisis and Beyond

A National Crisis
The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unparalleled crisis in the United States’ early care and education (ECE) system. Early education is struggling with reduced attendance and increased health and sanitation requirements. This is resulting in higher costs and significant loss of income in a field that was already underpaid and understaffed.

In a national survey of 5,000 child care providers: 1

- 73% of programs have had or will have to engage in layoffs, furloughs, and/or pay cuts.
- 82% of child care programs expect they will either shut down temporarily or permanently without additional assistance.
- 50% of programs need to raise operational costs to support teachers and other essential staff.
- 67% of the average decrease in enrollment in child care programs.

The economy of the United States is reliant on child care so that parents can go to work. And yet, if the early care and education system is not supported during this crisis, it risks collapse. “…most child care providers feel the industry will see widespread, permanent closures without significant federal/financial support to regenerate the sector.” — The Guardian, July 27, 2020

How is childcare funded?2

- 60% is paid by parents
- 39% is subsidized by federal, state, and local governments
- 1% is contributed by philanthropy

Local Impact
Early educators in San Francisco have experienced many challenges due to COVID-19. A joint survey of 267 family child care and center-based programs by OECE, First 5 San Francisco, and Children’s Council of San Francisco shows:

- 83% of the early care workforce are women
- 39% of the ECE workforce are women
- 60% of early care and education sites funded by OECE have had to permanently close, as of September 2020

The early care and education system plays a vital role for children, families, and communities. It must be supported during this crisis, or it risks collapse. “…the fragile child care system, still seen largely as a personal service instead of a public good, is heavily reliant on parental fees, and it has begun to shatter amid the Covid-19 pandemic.” — The New York Times, August 5, 2020

Local Successes
The City’s investment in early care and education has enabled OECE to support early educators to meet increased health and sanitation requirements and remain stable during disruptions in service. Since shelter in place began, OECE has disbursed:

- $1.54 million to support programs through temporary closures
- $20,000 in emergency operating grants to family child care programs
- $7.4 million in early educator stipends via the Compensation and Retention Educator Stipend (CARES) program
- $200,000 to support the purchase and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ECE programs

We know that the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the ECE field are significant and widespread, but so are our programs’ contributions to the community. OECE has disbursed $1.7 million to help mitigate negative impacts of COVID-19 on San Francisco’s ECE community.

The Result
Despite significant challenges, sustained City investment in early care and education enabled OECE to help mitigate negative impacts of COVID-19 on San Francisco’s ECE community.

- $1.7 million + in emergency grants to city-funded early education programs, including:
  - $155,000 to support the purchase and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ECE programs
  - $20,000 in emergency operating grants to family child care programs
  - $7.4 million in early educator stipends via the Compensation and Retention Educator Stipend (CARES) program
  - $200,000 to support the purchase and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ECE programs

Of the 453 early care and education sites funded by OECE have had to permanently close, as of September 2020. NONE of the 453 early care and education sites funded by OECE have had to permanently close, as of September 2020.

None of the city-funded ECE programs are currently open and providing in-person services, in accordance with SFDPH health and safety guidelines.4

1 National Association for the Education of Young Children, July 13, 2020
2 Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley, July 22, 2020
3 4 Sites run by the San Francisco Unified School District follow district policies and are currently still closed for in-person instruction
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