



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY Comprehensive Countywide Child Care Plan

2008 through 2011

Prepared by
The Contra Costa County Office of Education
and the Local Planning Council for Child Care
and Development (LPC)





Local Planning Council for Child Care and Development

The Contra Costa Local Planning Council for Child Care and Development (LPC) is an advisory body established by state legislation to plan for child care and development services based on the needs of families in local communities.

In 1991, Congress established federal Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG) through which each state was allocated funds to assist low-income families in obtaining child care and development services. As a result, a plan was developed to ensure that California would have a local voice to establish priorities in the allocation of CCDBG funds in each community.

During this same year, Assembly Bill 2141 passed establishing the creation of LPCs in local communities. LPC's membership and responsibilities were revised in 1997 as mandated by AB 1542 which passed that year, establishing welfare reform legislation (CalWORKS). There are currently 58 individual planning councils representing each county in California.

As the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and the Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools appoint council members, the councils are required to conduct business in accordance with The Brown Act. Both appointing public bodies oversee the work of the LPC and utilize the data gathered through a comprehensive child care needs assessment of families in the county to inform local decisions that affect county policies related to child care and development services.



LPC – Scope of Work

The goal of the LPCs is to support the existing child care infrastructure by coordinating services that are locally available through collaboration with individuals and public agencies interested in the welfare of children and families in the county.

The scope of work and responsibilities of local planning councils are defined in welfare reform legislation and are included as part of the Education Code. As specified in the Education Code – Section 8499.3-8499.7, the Local Planning Councils identify and determine local funding priorities for new state and federal funds.

In order to ensure effectiveness, councils are highly encouraged to strengthen the partnerships with both public and private organizations in each county. Furthermore, LPCs are intended to serve as a forum to address the child care needs of all families in the community and all child care programs - including both subsidized and non-subsidized child care.

Creating a Child Care Plan for Contra Costa

Step One:

Collecting the Data

One of the primary responsibilities of the LPC is to assess the county's overall child care needs for families with children 0 to 12 years of age at least once every five years. In 2006, the LPC joined efforts with the Contra Costa First 5 Children and Families Commission and the Contra Costa Child Care Council to collaboratively collect data required for the LPC's child care needs assessment and also support the creation of a universal preschool plan for Contra Costa County called Preschool Makes a Difference. The data collected through the needs assessment is organized in the following categories:

- Data on Children, Their Families and Child Care
- Data on Education of Providers and Workforce
- Kindergarten Readiness and School Data
- Child Care Quality and Assessments
- Additional Services and Innovative Models

Needs Assessment Findings

- Over the next ten years, the county's population of children will decrease, and most of this reduction will be in the category of school age children.
- Most cities in the county have current shortages of child care spaces and several cities have shortages that exceed 1,000 child care spaces.
- The cities with the highest incomes also have the lowest rates of children as a percent of population and have either very small gaps in child care or have surpluses of child care spaces relative to demand.
- Cities with lower household incomes and a higher ratio of children to the total population possess, on average, a disproportionately larger population of children with special needs and other special population children such as children in protective services, in the county.
- Data on child care subsidies is somewhat limited and it is not clear how many children actually receive child care subsidies. Given the disparity of household incomes in the county and the number of children on the Centralized Eligibility List (CEL), more child care subsidies are needed.
- The county is expected to see an increase in the ethnic diversity of its residents, which may impact child care demand.
- The demand for preschool age spaces for 3 to 5 year olds exceeds existing supply of preschool spaces currently in all but six cities in the county.
- There are several sets of data on children with special needs but it is difficult to estimate the number of children with special needs by city.
- About 64 elementary schools, of a total of 150 countywide, have been ranked in deciles 1 to 5 based on their low Academic Performance Index (API). (Schools in California are ranked in deciles 1-10 with 1 being the lowest based on their API scores.)
- Given the size of the county and the diversity of incomes and ethnicity, providing adequate child care services for all children that need care will present considerable challenges.

All detailed data for particular cities in Contra Costa County is included in the report and is available on the Web by visiting the Contra Costa Local Planning Council for Child Care and Development's Web site at www.plan4kids.org.



Step Two:

Prioritizing Issues and Goal Development

In order to continue the prioritization of issues and the development of tangible goals for child care, the LPC called for the formation of a Child Care Plan Adhoc Committee. The Adhoc Committee's main task was to develop a child care plan based on the data findings from the LPC's needs assessment. The plan would identify key goal areas, implementation strategies and measurable outcomes.

During the initial planning phase, the Adhoc Committee established guiding principles and goals that would serve as the philosophical foundation to guide the development of the Countywide Child Care Plan for Contra Costa.

Guiding Principles:

- Quality child care for all children from birth to 12 years of age
- Fill the unmet need for licensed child care spaces
- Inclusion of children of all abilities in a diversity of programs
- Affordability of care for families of all income levels
- Nurture a professional workforce for all children in care in Contra Costa County

Purpose of the Child Care Plan

Organizations and agency leaders are constantly faced with the difficult task of making decisions that impact the welfare of families and children in our community. In order to make effective decisions, policy makers and leaders must have readily accessible data that can inform them on the needs of children in the county. Their ability to access relevant research, data and community input play a crucial factor in creating a positive impact for our families.

The Contra Costa County Local Planning Council for Child Care and Development seeks to provide a plan that can be a guide and resource that will drive the agenda of child care services that will meet the needs of Contra Costa County's children and families.

The goals and objectives identified in this plan will be accomplished through collaboration between public, private and community agencies and coordination of new and existing services and resources in the county.

Establishing a Guiding Framework

Vision

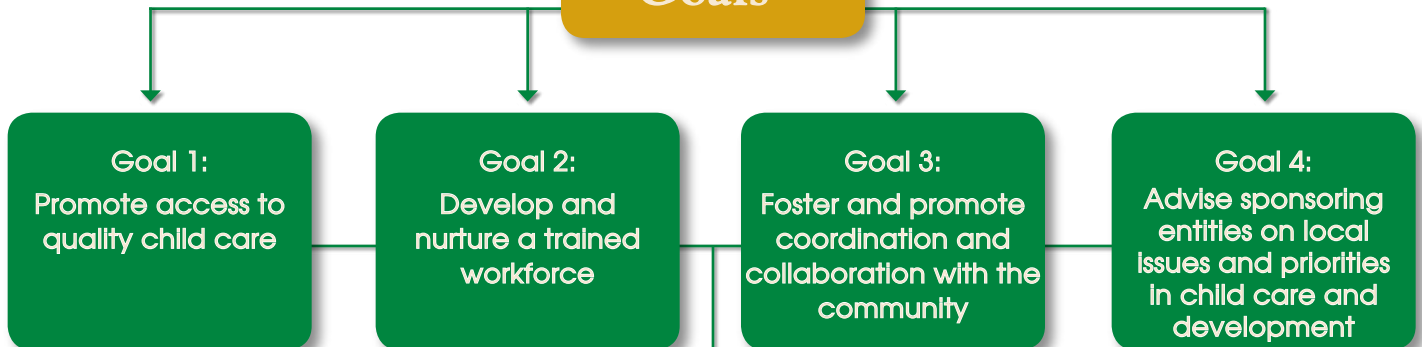
All children in Contra Costa County have access to quality child care

Focus Areas

The Contra Costa LPC works to embed and coordinate:

- **Quality child care** for all children from birth to 12 years of age
- **Child care capacity** to fill the unmet need for licensed child care spaces
- **Inclusion** of children of all abilities in a diversity of programs
- **Affordability** of care for families of all income levels
- **Development of a professional workforce** for all children in care in Contra Costa County

Goals



Objectives and Strategies

Performance Measures



Goal 1:

Promote Access to Quality Child Care

Objective 1.1

Increase the number of child care slots for underserved age groups (infant/toddler and school age).

Strategies

- a. Insure that all subsidized spaces currently available in Contra Costa County are utilized. Conduct outreach to providers about becoming state contractors and provide help with the process. I,O,O
- b. Provide incentives for existing programs to add spaces in areas of the county where there is the greatest need. P,I,O
- c. Provide incentives for new program development in areas of the county where there is the greatest need; encourage development of a range of different types of programs (e.g. full day, part day, center-based, family-based, etc.) P,I,O
- d. Follow up on existing board ordinance regarding the use of developer fees for child care, advise on current child care needs by participating in RFA committee and advisory committee which will review language on general plan and board of supervisors child care ordinance. I,C,O
- e. Work with cities toward development of developer fee programs, mutual leverage of funds to target specific gaps in each area. P,P,I
- f. Provide models and incentives for development of new after-school programs. P,P,I

Objective 1.2

Improve the quality of child care throughout Contra Costa County.

Strategies

- a. Conduct outreach and training for parents, teachers, and providers and for decision makers within the county to increase availability and understanding of information about child development and the characteristics of quality child care programs as defined in the Preschool Makes a Difference Plan (PMD). O,O,O
- b. Form outreach and community education partnerships among the various agencies and organizations with interests in promoting early education and child care to increase the awareness of quality. O,O,O
- c. Upgrade provider supports at every level (family, friend and neighbor, Licensed Family Child Care Networks, and Centers) by promoting community grants, inviting corporate and foundation funding to enhance environments and provider support and training. P,I,I
- d. Team with existing community initiatives, such as “Healthy and Active Before 5” to create access to healthier environments for all children in care. C,O,O

Goal 1 Performance Measures

1. There is an increase in the number of slots available for full-day child care services provided for infant/toddler and on site school services for school age children.
2. There is an increase in the amount of available subsidized or free child care services and facilities.
3. There is an increased number of child care providers caring for children with special needs.
4. There is an increase in the number of high quality child care programs as indicated in the Preschool Makes a Difference Plan and/or accreditation standards.
5. Local competencies and definition of quality indicators are promoted, published and acknowledged by all child care programs, parents and leaders in the county.
6. Increase in the number of quality and supervised after school programs for youth throughout the county.
7. Developer fees are used by different cities to fill the unmet need for child care in their communities.



Because this is a three-year strategic plan the three letter code gives a timeframe to each strategy.

Codes - 2008-9, 2009-10, 2010-11
(three-year intervals)

P= Plan

I = Implement

O= On going

C= Complete



Goal 2:

Develop and Nurture A Trained Workforce

Objective 2.1

Increase number and percentage of child development professionals with teacher permits and higher degrees.

Strategies

- a. Maintain Professional Development Program, using joint CARES/AB212 funding to provide stipends and financial support to providers from both state funded and private sectors. O,O,O
- b. Provide incentives to recruit additional teachers/family providers and increase retention of current teachers/providers. P,I,I
- c. Provide on-going professional development opportunities for teachers/providers, program directors, and program administrators that include the use outside resources to provide research-based, relevant, cutting edge training to workforce in the county (ie. WestEd, CPIN; professional associations, colleges, etc.). I,I,O
- d. Provide professional development and mentoring opportunities for English Language Learners interested in a career in Early Childhood Education (ECE) OR that are currently in the ECE field but need additional support for career and education advancement. I,I,O
- e. Provide opportunities for adults with disabilities to enter the early education workforce and develop partnerships with community-based employment programs for adults with developmental disabilities to support their employment in child care. P,P,I

Objective 2.2

Prepare the workforce to increase inclusion and retention of all children in programs.

Strategies

- a. Conduct public education and outreach to make parents and the community at large aware of the societal and legal imperatives for inclusion of all children in child care and early education programs. P,I,O
- b. Increase inclusion of children with special needs by providing teacher training and program support (consultation and resources). P,P,I
- c. Reduce the rate of expulsion of children from early education and child care programs and promote success for all children by providing teacher training and program support (consultation and resources). P,P,I

Objective 2.3

Prepare for advent of Preschool Makes a Difference standards and education within the next four years.

Strategies

- a. Provide early childhood staff with information about future professional requirements as defined in the Preschool Makes a Difference plan. C,O,O
- b. Provide the workforce with information and linkages to four-year colleges and universities, as well as financial aid information. O,O,O

Goal 2 Performance Measures

1. There is an increase in the educational level and permit level of staff at state funded and private child care programs.
2. There are more training opportunities offered in the areas of inclusion and cultural diversity.
3. There is an increased number of staff and program directors successfully and actively participating in the Professional Development Program.
4. There is an increased number of cohorts, courses and training available for English Language Learners resulting in an increased recruitment of a prepared, diverse workforce reflective of the families served.
5. There is a centralized master calendar of professional development opportunities for all types of child care providers in the county.
6. There is more collaboration amongst local agencies to provide high quality trainings and professional growth opportunities for all providers.



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Goal 3:

Foster and Promote Coordination and Collaboration with the Community

Objective 3.1

Bring together major child development agencies to leverage knowledge and resources of programs, maximize funds, and enhance delivery systems.

Strategies

- a. Establish monthly information sharing meeting between staff of LPC, Child Care Council, First 5 Contra Costa, Community Services Bureau, Children's Services Office, and the Health Services. P,I,I
- b. Sponsor joint forums by the above entities for businesses and the public to discuss the economic and social impact of child care in the community. I,I,O
- c. Maintain a complete and updated LPC Web site with information about programs, and links to other child care related agencies and published research, studies, and reports related to the field. I,O,O

Objective 3.2

Develop educational campaigns on quality child care and the economic impact of child care for the public.

Strategies

- a. Develop presentation packet and train LPC members to use it. P,I,C
- b. Make presentations for parents, business, and community agents through PTA, chambers of commerce and non-profit organizations. I,I,O

Goal 4:

Advise Sponsoring Entities on Local Issues and Priorities in Child Care and Development

Objective 4.1

Insure that cities and county departments are fully informed about local child care needs and priorities, and view the LPC as the information resource for planning to meet those needs.

Strategies

- a. Establish a speaker’s bureau with LPC members to present at City Council and Board of Supervisors meetings to share relevant data on child care demand and supply and important community, state and nationwide trends. I,C,O
- b. Create GIS map showing agencies providing child care services, support services, and resources for families with children. P,I,C
- c. Recommend changes to county ordinance as it relates to the planning process for the development of commercial and residential properties. The recommendations would include working with the LPC to access child care data from needs assessment and to insure consistency with local priorities. I,C,O



Goal 3 Performance Measures

1. Members of the community (parents, providers, government, business, and advocates) have access to information, data, and resources on child care and development issues through a centralized source.
2. Linkages between community agencies, schools, government, and businesses are established and improve coordination of services.
3. There is an increased parent and provider participation in advocacy, and public awareness events addressing young children’s issues.

Goal 4 Performance Measures

1. Child care is included as an essential need in the community in general plans and policy platforms of city and county departments, housing agencies, and planners.
2. Ordinances, fees, regulations, tax credits reflect a commitment to sustaining and developing child care programs based on the data collected by LPC and other stakeholders.
3. There is an increased awareness by employers about child care options offered as a benefit to their employees.

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