

Public Comment - Health & Human Services - LEAP

Katherine Douglas

From: Lori Lander Goodman <lorig@leapcentralcoast.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2026 3:42 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Joan Hartmann; Laura Capps; Gina Fischer; Daniela Aguirre
Subject: Letter of Concern regarding proposed DSS cuts - cutting KIDS Network

Categories: Public Comment

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Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am writing on behalf of LEAP: Learn. Engage. Advocate. Partner. As you know, LEAP operates three Children's Centers providing year-round, full-day childcare for SB County low-income families in Goleta, Isla Vista, and Lompoc. Additionally, LEAP operates a Family Resource Center (FRC), which serves more than 2,000 families from across the entire county.

LEAP is a proud member of the KIDS Network — Santa Barbara County's county-wide collaborative bringing together organizations from across sectors to strengthen families, prevent child abuse and neglect, and support the wellbeing of children and families throughout our region.

I'm writing today to express my concern about proposed cuts to KIDS Network and to the prevention funding that supports the work of Family Resource Centers and community-based organizations across the county.

What KIDS Network Does — and Why It Matters

KIDS Network is Santa Barbara County's cross-sector collaborative for child and family wellbeing. It convenes leaders from nonprofits, healthcare, education, government, and faith communities across the county to share information, align resources, coordinate services, and strengthen the safety net for our most vulnerable families. It is one of the only structures in our county that brings these diverse sectors together consistently and deliberately — and the results show in the depth of collaboration across our region.

For Family Resource Centers like ours, KIDS Network is the connective tissue of our work. Through it, we learn about emerging community needs, connect families to services beyond our own programs, and participate in a county-wide prevention strategy that is larger than any single organization can sustain alone. The annual cost of convening KIDS Network is approximately \$30,000 — a remarkably modest investment for the coordination and collaboration it makes possible. **At the very least, you must preserve the funding to continue convening KIDS network.**

The Prevention Funding at Stake

The proposed budget cuts would eliminate approximately \$400,000 in PSSF (Promoting Safe and Stable Families) and CAPIT (Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment) funding that has historically been braided with CBCAP and Children's Trust Fund dollars to support the county's prevention contracts. This funding directly supports services provided by Family Resource Centers and community-based organizations across Santa Barbara County, including:

- Concrete support for basic needs
- Information and referrals
- Case management
- Parent leadership development and peer support
- Evidence-based home visitation and parenting education programs
- Behavioral health services for at-risk families

These are not duplicative or administrative services — they are the front-line supports that help families stabilize before a difficult situation becomes a crisis. Cutting this funding does not make the need disappear. It shifts cost downstream, to Child Welfare Services, emergency intervention, and the courts — at far greater expense to the county and to families.

Impact on Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (CANP) Funding

We also want to draw the Board’s attention to the downstream impact on CANP funding. Without restoration of the \$400,000 in prevention dollars, available CANP funding for Santa Barbara County would be reduced to approximately \$153,303 — only the allocations available through the Children’s Trust Fund and CBCAP. This represents a significant reduction from recent years and would meaningfully limit the reach of child abuse prevention services across our county, at a time when those services are more needed than ever.

Our Request

As the Board finalizes the FY 2025–26 budget, we respectfully urge you to:

- **Preserve KIDS Network** and the county’s cross-sector infrastructure for child and family wellbeing collaboration.
- **Restore the \$400,000 in PSSF and CAPIT prevention funding** that supports Family Resource Centers and community-based prevention services across Santa Barbara County.
- **Protect CANP funding** to ensure child abuse prevention services can continue to reach the families who need them most.

I appreciate that this is a very difficult budget year and appreciate the difficult decisions you must make. Please consider that prevention is always less costly than intervention, for families and for the county. I hope you will do what you can to preserve this investment in our community’s children.

Thank you for your leadership, your service, and your commitment to the families of Santa Barbara County. I am grateful for the opportunity to share my perspective and hopeful that you will find a way to protect these critical services.

Sincerely,

Lori

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