



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Office of Early Care and Education
Department No.: CEO/HR
For Agenda Of: January 22, 2008
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme:
Continued Item:
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Select_Vote

TO: Select_Board(s)
FROM: Select_From Eileen Monahan, Manager, Office of Early Care and Education,
560-1038
Contact Info: Susan Paul, Assistant CEO/HR Director, 568-2817
SUBJECT: **Downtown Child Care Study**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Select_Concurrence

Other Concurrence: Select_Other

As to form: Select_Concurrence

Recommended Actions:

1. That the Board of Supervisors consider the County's participation in the Downtown Child Care Study by assuming a lead role on the project and authorize funding in the amount of \$10,000 to participate in the Downtown Child Care Assessment Survey.

Summary Text:

The County currently supports a child care center in Santa Maria at the Betteravia Government Center. This facility has been in operation for many years and is operated by the YMCA. The child care center was included in the original building design with the intent of offering employees working in Santa Maria with child care services. The Office of Early Care and Education has been working with the YMCA for the past two years to optimize the use of the facility.

Over the last several months, employers operating out of the downtown Santa Barbara area have been meeting informally as the Downtown Child Care Partnership to explore the issue of availability of workforce child care in the downtown area. The Downtown Child Care Partnership includes the following:

- Antioch University
- Bartlett, Pringle and Wolf
- City of Santa Barbara
- Cottage Hospital

- County of Santa Barbara
- Santa Barbara Bank and Trust
- Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce
- Santa Barbara Downtown Organization
- Santa Barbara School District
- Sonos

This group has completed an initial community-wide assessment of childcare capacity; however at this point a formal child care needs assessment of the workforce is necessary. Data from a formal assessment will identify not only specific child care needs of the employees of the County along with other downtown employers, it will also help the Downtown Child Care Partnership determine an appropriate course of action regarding child care needs in general.

The formal assessment process would include the following steps:

- 1) engaging local employers participation in a child care needs assessment survey;
- 2) conducting the employee survey and 5-8 focus groups;
- 3) analyzing the data;
- 4) developing a recommended action plan; and
- 5) developing a formal coalition to work together on implementing the plan.

The Downtown Child Care Partnership anticipates the needs assessment survey will be conducted in March 2008, followed by focus groups with the development of a plan based on research results completed in approximately July 2008. The process survey and resulting report will be documented so that this effort can be used in other areas of the County.

Research conducted on similar efforts in other areas of the nation have shown that having a large employer, such as the County of Santa Barbara, in a leadership role is key to the overall success of the project. The County's leadership on the project would include providing staff support from the First Five Office of Early Care and Education and CEO/HR, the County contributing approximately one-fourth of the cost of the study, and allowing all County employees to participate in the assessment.

Funding for the assessment is shared between First Five, the Office of Early Care and Education, the County of Santa Barbara, and the downtown employers. The County's contribution to the project would be \$10,000. The total project cost is approximately \$59,000. First Five and the Office of Early Care and Education have already committed \$39,000 to the project.

Of the core group of ten employers/organizations participating in the effort, seven of the employers besides the County have expressed interest in having their employees participate in the assessment. Two have pledged or contributed a share of the cost, and three are in the process of requesting funding through their internal processes. Finally, one is considering participation in the assessment process. The employers/organizations participating in the effort will also contribute \$10,000 to the project.

Background:

There is a critical shortage of child care for the workforce in downtown Santa Barbara. Evidence from the child care field includes a significant number of closures of family child care providers each year (from a capacity of 64 providers with approximately 640 spaces in 2004 to 46 providers with approximately 460 spaces in 2007), and a reduction in the number of individuals applying for new child care licenses in the south county. Informal queries indicate that a prime reason for this is high housing costs.

Additionally, child care centers, when recently surveyed, reported no available spaces and long waiting lists. Evidence from the workforce indicates that parents struggle to find any available child care space, but find it nearly impossible to find spaces in quality programs. Many parents in desperation place their children in settings that are less than optimum for a child, at the most critical time in their development. The impact of the availability of suitable child care typically results in difficulties later in life for both the child and his/her parents who must deal with poor quality or patched together child care.

At the County level in recent years, the County executives and managers have heard from County employees that child care in the downtown Santa Barbara area is unavailable to them, which causes a strain on productivity. Employees have informally reported needing to travel long distances to access child care, having to patch together a variety of care arrangements, spending time at work worrying about, and dealing with poor quality child care, and some employees have seriously considered leaving their jobs due to this stressful issue.

Performance Measure: The goal is to assess approximately 50 downtown businesses with 20 or more employees and the County’s workforce to determine the scope of child care needs. Outreach to employers will begin once the County has determined its participation in the process.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Select_Budgeted

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00
State			
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total		\$ -	

Narrative:

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

FTEs:

Special Instructions:

Attachments:

Authored by:

cc: