



Costa Mesa Child Care & Youth Services Committee

c/o City of Costa Mesa/Administrative Services Department/Recreation Division

TO: Costa Mesa City Council
FROM: The Costa Mesa Child Care & Youth Services Committee
DATE: April 8, 2005
SUBJECT: Providing Continued and Additional Support for Child Care in Costa Mesa

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the City is falling short on the number of child care spaces needed to meet its needs. A renewed focus on child care is necessary to fill in the gaps in available care and to plan for the future.

Child care is an issue that impacts the entire community and is an integral part of a community's infrastructure. The purpose of this report is to draw attention to the continued need for supporting child care in the City of Costa Mesa and to suggest ways in which the City can further support the community by supporting child care.

For Costa Mesa parents, concern for the availability and quality of child care is an on-going issue. Access to safe, affordable, quality child care is a component of providing a safe and secure community to its residents. Access to child care can affect a parent's decision to relocate and/or remain in a community.

Child care also affects the business community. Access to child care affects both the availability -and productivity- of the workforce. In fact, without child care, a certain percentage of the workforce would not be able to work. Businesses with workers who require child care factor in this issue when deciding to remain or relocate to a community.

Information sources for this report include the United Way's "Success By Six" 2004 Report, the Children's Home Society of California Waiting List Annual Demographical Information (2004), the State of California Community Care Licensing Division, Orange County Child Care Association, 10th Annual "Conditions of Children in Orange County" by Center for Demographic Research, the Child Care in California: A Short Report on Subsidies, Affordability and Supply, and the Newport Mesa Unified School District's 2003 Enrollment Projections Report.

In closing, child care can affect both the economic prosperity of the City as well as the economic and personal well being of its residents. Child care in Orange County is a \$412 million dollar industry that contributes \$29 million in direct taxes. By supporting child care, government can have a profound affect on its business community and its residents -even those residents without children.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Costa Mesa's *Child Care and Youth Services Committee* believes there is a substantial need for families who live and work in Costa Mesa for safe, affordable, quality child care.

According to statistics provided by The Center for Demographic Research's 10th Annual Conditions of Children Report, Costa Mesa currently has 22,304 children. Of those, almost two thirds (14,275) have both parents working outside the home. Half of these, or an estimated 7,137 families, receive child care in informal settings consisting of relatives, neighbors, and non-profit and/or municipal recreation programs, or are latchkey children, going home after school alone and unsupervised. The remaining families (7,137 children) generally seek child care from either a licensed, center-based program, or from licensed, family in-home child care providers.

Based on statistics gleaned from United Way's Success By Six Report, the City's current capacity of licensed of child care providers identifies a shortfall of Infant, Toddler and School-Age licensed child care spaces in Costa Mesa.

The City's current needs for both Infant and Toddler, as well as school-age care, have not been met, as evidenced by the waitlist numbers in each age category and the extremely limited number of spaces in Infant and Toddler care from United Way's Success By Six Report and Children's Home Society of California Waiting List Annual Demographical Information.

A review of the current conditions, as well as projected future trends in center and home-based child care, indicate the needs for both child care provider training and the need for increasing the overall child care capacity. The availability of child care, are very important if we are to meet the needs of Costa Mesa families, parents, and the business community's workforce.

CURRENT STATUS AND TRENDS

Based on data collected from the County of Orange's Child Care Coordinator, United Way's "Success by Six" program, the Orange County Department of Education, and the Children's Home Society of California, and the City of Costa Mesa, Costa Mesa currently has:

Center-based, Licensed Child Care:

Child care centers account for 74% of child care spaces in Costa Mesa. Statistics from the Newport Mesa Unified School District's 2003 Enrollment Projections Report show that there are seven (7) child care centers in Costa Mesa offering school-age care and providing 261 licensed spaces.

Additionally: there are five (5) child care centers offering infant care, with 128 licensed spaces; 31 child care and preschool programs, offering 2,138 spaces; and, six (6) facilities offering 226 spaces of school age care. Of these, there are three (3) child care centers in Costa Mesa are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).* (* information pertaining to the above-mentioned centers can be found at: www.naeyc.org or at http://www.cclcd.ca.gov/docs/cclcd_search/cclcd_search.aspx).

In-Home, Licensed Child Care:

In-home, family child care homes account for 26% of the child care spaces in Costa Mesa. Of these there are currently 22 licensed large In-home Family Child Care Homes (serving 6-14

children) and 60 small In-home Family Child Care Homes (serving 0-6 children) in Costa Mesa, representing 648 total spaces.

Non-licensed, City-provided Drop-In/Non-custodial Recreational Programs:

The City of Costa Mesa Recreation Division offers recreational drop-in programs for school-age children. There is no maximum on the number of participants who may be in the program, however, during the 2003-04 school year, these programs served an average of approximately 2000 children by providing after-school, non-custodial, drop-in recreation Playground Programs at 11 NMUSD elementary school sites and at five Costa Mesa neighborhood sites in the Mobile Recreation Program. These programs are not licensed, custodial care, but are options for parents.

Current Needs:

Currently, the City is falling short on the number of spaces needed to meet its needs. A renewed focus on child care is needed to fill in the gaps in available care and to plan for the future.

Based on information in the State of California’s Community Care Licensing Division, the Orange County Child Care Association, and United Way’s Success By Six, the following chart identifies the number of licensed child care, license exempt space (drop-in programs), and the remaining shortfall of child care spaces:

Existing Child Care 2004

	Licensed Spaces, Center-based	Licensed Spaces, In-Home Child Care	City Drop-In Recreation Program Participation
Infant/Toddler	128	(Specific	-
Preschool	2,138	Data Not	-
School-Age	226	Available)	Approx. 2,000
Total	2,492	648	2,000

Child Care Spaces Needed: 7,132
 Grand Total of Child Care Availability: 3,140
 Approx. Shortfall of Child Care Spaces: 3,992

Child care shortfalls can have economic impacts on people who live and or work in Costa Mesa. Studies show that parents prefer to have Infant, Toddler and Preschool child care close to where they work and school-age child care close to their children’s homes and schools. Due to current shortfalls, a percentage of Costa Mesa residents seeking child care must look for care in other cities.

Average Costs for Child Care:

Figures obtained from the Center for Demographic Research’s 10th Annual Report on the Condition of Children in Orange County showed that the average costs for child care in Orange County. The numbers are based on a weekly rate multiplied by 52 weeks.

	Annual Center-based Fees	Annual Family Child Care Fees
Infant/Toddler	\$10,088	\$7,904
Preschool	\$6,812	\$7,280

School-Age	\$4,836	\$6,032
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(NOTE: Rates above are averages for Orange County. Newport/Costa Mesa rates are expected to be higher) Although the current average income for Costa Mesa residents is \$50,000 - \$75,000 (Center for Demographic Research’s 10th Annual Report on the Condition of Children in Orange County) of Costa Mesa households 57% qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District. There is also a portion of the population who, partially for economic reasons, use unlicensed care or avoid full-time care by using split shifts to care for their own children.

Though limited child care subsidies are available through the Children’s Home Society of California, there is a current need for more subsidized care. This can be achieved by supporting private/non-profit sector development of funds.

The Child Care and Youth Services Committee is asking the City Council to support child care issues by reviewing the recommendations listed in the capacity building section of this report.

Current Costa Mesa Efforts:

Currently, the City of Costa Mesa has taken several proactive steps to support children and families in Costa Mesa.

It is one of three cities in Orange County to have a formal Child Care Committee that reports to City Council.

It allows the development of child care centers in multiple City zones, thus allowing new centers greater opportunities to secure land for the development of child care.

When the Home Ranch development and IKEA project was approved, addressing and providing child care was an item required by the City for project approval.

The City is priced in the mid-range for permit fees for center-based programs, although it recently raised its fees from \$675 to \$980, as well as being in the mid-range for in-home programs at \$505.

Child Care Permit Fees Charged by O.C. Cities

	Center-based Child Care Permit Fees	In-home Family Child Care Permit Fees
Costa Mesa	\$980 (recently increased from \$675)	\$505
O.C. Average	\$1,470	\$458

The waiting time for permits issued is similar to the majority of other O.C. cities.

And the City does provide non-licensed, recreational drop-in, non-custodial recreation programs for children that serve approximately 2,000 children.

Capacity Building & Meeting the Needs of Families For Child Care:

The City of Costa Mesa can proactively meet the community’s needs by supporting the following measures recommended by the Costa mesa Child Care Committee:

- Study the cost of child care business licensing fees charged by the City of Costa Mesa and possibly reduce these fees to attract new child care center and large family child care home to meet child care needs (Attachment 1).
- Create language in the City’s General Plan that supports and promotes increased child care. See attached examples from the cities of Brea and Garden Grove (Attachment 2).
- Address child care facilities development by identifying and adding land use, development and zoning requirements for child care centers that increase the quality of care. Attached are the city of Irvine’s standards (Attachment 3).
- Development of family-friendly policies that attract businesses. Create, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, an annual Family Friendly Business award that would recognize small, medium and large businesses that offered family friendly practices. See attached example (Attachment 4).
- Increased funding to the Child Care & Youth Services Committee to distribute additional “Costa Mesa Child Care & Youth Services Directories” created by the Committee (currently approximately 1,000 are printed annually) supporting outreach efforts to Costa Mesa businesses and families primarily to distribute printed materials on choosing quality child care and child care options within the City of Costa Mesa.

CONCLUSION

Costa Mesa is one of only three cities in Orange County that has a formalized City committee to monitor child care issues and that strives to ensure children and youth issues are supported now and in the future. Since the City Council created the *Child Care and Youth Services Committee*, the City has taken a positive and proactive approach to trying to understand and meet the needs of families who live and work in Costa Mesa for safe, affordable, quality child care and youth services and programs.

Costa Mesa’s current child care needs are not being met. Unless change comes about, Costa Mesa will not be able to meet the demands of its residents and workers in the future without continued expansion of its child care services.

The Child Care and Youth Services Committee requests that the City make a commitment over the long term towards securing a safe community by building strength in families and to make this commitment a priority as it considers the direct and indirect impact of policy decisions on all children, youth and families during the planning processes in areas of land use, development, zoning, human and recreational services.

To meet the needs of Costa Mesa’s diverse population, it is essential that the City place a renewed focus on promoting the development of child care facilities and services in both residential and commercial developments.

The Committee is available to speak to the Council at a future study session or provide further information based on the needs of the Council. We await your direction.

Sincerely,

The Costa Mesa Child Care & Youth Services Committee

Attachments: 1 - United Way Power Point Presentation on Child Care Conditions in O.C.
2 - City of Brea and Garden Grove General Plan language regarding child care
3 - City of Irvine, Land Use Development and Zoning Requirements
4 - Family Friendly Business Information

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