



## CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY MEETING NOTES

Thursday, September 12, 2024, 1:30 - 3:30 pm

United Way of Santa Cruz County, Conference Rm. 4450 Capitola Rd. STE. 106, Capitola, CA

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Any person wishing to make a public comment will have the opportunity to do so via videoconference during the meeting for up to three minutes. To submit a comment, please send a comment no longer than 300 words to [dmunoz@santacruzcoe.org](mailto:dmunoz@santacruzcoe.org) no later than 11:00 am on Wednesday, September 11, 2024. Everyone may only make one comment per topic.

#### I. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

- No official Childhood Advisory Council meeting due to lack of an in-person quorum.
- Consent agenda items will be approved at the December 12th meeting.

#### II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS - **ACTION ITEM**

MAY MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER COMMITTEE REPORTS  
SEPTEMBER STAFF REPORT

#### III. CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL – SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WORKFORCE STUDY UPDATE: JOANNE BRION, BRION ECONOMICS INC.

- Joanne presented a *Draft of the Workforce Study and Strategic Plan*. The study revealed a predominantly female and Hispanic/Latina workforce with varying education levels and hourly rates. The survey had a 24% response rate with 421 total responses, showing that 66% of respondents worked 12 months a year, and the top concerns being low pay and lack of benefits. She also discussed a workforce analysis and wage analysis, estimating the total workforce in Santa Cruz County to be 1,616 staff, including directors and support staff.
- Addressing Wage Gaps and Living Wage Requirements, Joanne presented data on the current wages and living wages in Santa Cruz County, highlighting a significant gap between the two. She noted that the current wages for the workforce are about \$130 million a year, while a living wage would require an investment of \$307 million a year, indicating a need for a 236% increase in wages. Joanne also mentioned that the wage data used is specific to the cost of living in Santa Cruz County. Diane asked for clarification on the numbers, and Joanne confirmed that the data was for the current workforce, not the new one. Joanne also compared Santa Cruz County's living wage to Tulare County, noting that while the actual dollar values are lower in Tulare, the

gap between current wages and living wages is similar. Julie pointed out a discrepancy between the county's living wage ordinance ordinance and the data presented by Joanne, which showed a higher living wage requirement.

- Family Childcare Worker Challenges and Education, Diane, Joanne, Kathy and Patricia discussed the survey results and the challenges faced by family childcare workers. They noted that promotions often involve applying for different positions rather than automatically advancing within a role. The group also discussed the correlation between people with an AA and a BA. Joanne highlighted the challenges faced by counties in promoting their workforce, particularly in the areas of higher education and early childhood education. She presented an analysis of the costs involved in bringing the workforce up to an Associate's degree and then a Bachelor's degree. The group also discussed the importance of English and Math as barriers to higher education for Latino women in the county and the need for public investment, higher wages and better benefits to improve working conditions.

#### IV. SANTA CRUZ COUNTY EARLY CARE, EDUCATION AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE - STRATEGIC PLAN YEAR 1 PLANNING DISCUSSION

- Diane led a discussion on the strategic plan for the Council, focusing on four main areas:
  - Accessibility and Affordability
  - Equity and inclusion
  - Quality and Innovation
  - Community and Partnerships
- She emphasized the need for efficiency and respect for everyone's time, considering current workforce challenges. Diane also discussed the four focus areas for improving early care, education and after-school opportunities for children from birth to age 13. She proposed creating a speaker's bureau to address workforce development and collaboration and suggested capitalizing on a recent report to drive progress in these key focus areas within the next six months. The team agreed on the need for a concrete plan to actualize their commitment to improving the community, with a focus on leading with data, organizing a community collective, setting measurable outcomes and investing in strong facilitation and management of the initiative.
- Addressing Workforce and Family support Challenges, Joanne emphasized the need for local action to support the workforce and families, suggesting the exploration of mechanisms at the county level for childcare support. She highlighted the importance of advocating for state and federal funding and the need for educational support, financial support, mentorship and public awareness campaigns. Diane expressed concern about the lack of progress in providing affordable childcare, particularly for families without higher incomes, and suggested the need for creative solutions to expand eligibility and make childcare more accessible. The team discussed the potential use of a tool to advocate for change or policy initiatives, particularly in relation to the workforce and the importance of addressing housing affordability and the shortage of childcare workers. They agreed on the need for affordable housing for childcare workers and planned to include this in their advocacy efforts. The team also discussed the importance of partnering with business to address the issue of childcare and the need for proactive community-level education.
- Linda expressed her frustration with the current state of society, particularly in relation to education and resource distribution. She suggested that young people might consider alternative paths to higher education, such as joining family childcare networks, which could offer better earning potential and technical skills. They discussed the importance of

childcare for small business owners and the community and the need to build awareness and understanding of the value of childcare. It emphasized the need to increase the reach of these resources and find mechanisms to inform high school students about the opportunities available. Also discussed were the challenges faced by childcare providers in Santa Cruz County, particularly regarding living conditions and landlord support.

#### **Action Items:**

- **Develop a speaker's bureau** to address workforce development and collaboration.
- **Develop short video clips** showcasing parent stories for presentations.
- **Create key metrics and goals** related to workforce sustainability.
- **Compile and send invitations** to potential new council members.
- **Explore ways to promote family childcare** as a career option to high school students.
- **Consider developing partnerships** with landlords and property owners to support family child care providers.
- **Attend the Women in Leadership Conference** in October.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Finalize workforce study report with infographic.
- Streamline committee meetings for efficiency.
- Develop a concrete plan for implementing the strategic plan.

**Overall, the meeting highlighted the critical need for addressing the challenges faced by the ECE workforce in Santa Cruz County.**

***Our Mission** is to present a unified voice for an early care and education system that meets the needs of all children and families in Santa Cruz County*

***Our Vision** is that every child in Santa Cruz County has access to quality affordable early care education and after-school programs.*