

# Child Care Master Plan



C I T Y O F S A N T A M O N I C A

City of Santa Monica

# Child Care Master Plan

**Project Sponsors**

City of Santa Monica  
Santa Monica College  
Santa Monica/Malibu Unified School District

**With Assistance From**

Connections For Children  
Santa Monica Child Care Task Force  
Santa Monica Child Care Master Plan Working Group

**Funded By**

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City of Santa Monica

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City of Santa Monica

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## **Overall Executive Summary**

# *Santa Monica Child Care Master Plan*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary presents the major findings of the child care planning process and the goals, objectives and strategies that constitute the long-range Master Plan for child care in the City of Santa Monica.

Child care has become an urgent social issue for the State of California and the nation. According to 1990 U. S. Census data, there are 40% more preschoolers in California than there were in 1980. This second baby boom has enormous consequences for schools and child care resources. At the same time, longitudinal studies show that high quality child care has long-term benefits and can make a significant contribution to healthy development. The need for an increase in child care supply and quality is immediate and clear.

In response to this growing problem, the City of Santa Monica, Santa Monica/ Malibu Unified School District and Santa Monica College, agreed to pursue a joint child care planning effort, in cooperation with the local child care resource and referral agency, Connections for Children. The Master Plan project was jointly funded by the City of Santa Monica and a grant from the State Department of Education, Child Development Division.

A Working Group was formed at the initiation of the project and consisted of representatives from the local agencies and child care providers and advocates. The Working Group met at each critical point in the Master Plan process to identify project goals, evaluate progress, develop research methods, study results and formulate strategies.

The purpose of the Child Care Master Plan project was to:

- Set forth a comprehensive long term vision for child care in Santa Monica;
- Enhance community child care resources by coordinating efforts among the Project Sponsors;
- Encourage increased private sector involvement in meeting child care needs;
- Provide direction and support for funders, employers, providers and community groups in their efforts to serve children and families.

The Master Plan project was conducted in two phases with the following activities undertaken:

### *Phase One: Child Care Needs Assessment*

- Demographic Analysis of Residential Child Care Demand
- Working Parents Survey
- Child Care Provider Survey

### *Phase Two: Implementation Strategy Development*

- Strategy Development
- Financing Mechanisms Research
- Community Workshop

The text and charts below summarize the findings of the Phase One Needs Assessment and present the priority strategies that were developed in Phase Two to meet identified child care needs.

### **Summary of Child Care Needs in Santa Monica**

The child care needs of the Santa Monica community were identified in Phase One of the Child Care Master Planning process through the activities mentioned above. These needs

are summarized below in three categories: Availability, Affordability and Quality of Care.

**Availability of Care**

• **Child Care for Santa Monica Children**

According to a number of economic, demographic and social factors, and findings from both the Working Parents and Providers surveys, the current demand for child care from Santa Monica residents is *triple* the current available supply. (This does not account for residents who work outside of the Santa Monica and may want child care near their work locations.)

• **Care for Children of Non-Resident Working Parents**

Santa Monica serves as a regional child care supplier and would serve additional non-residents if they had access to their preferred care arrangements. Over half of the licensed child care spaces in Santa Monica are currently held by children of non-resident parents, and almost 60% of non-residents' preferred arrangements would be located in the city.

• **Licensed Child Care at Centers and Schools**

Overall, working parents expressed a strong preference for licensed child care, especially center care and after school programs. A comparison of parents' current and preferred child care arrangements (in the chart at the top of the next column) shows that overall use of licensed child care would increase in each age range, and would increase dramatically for school-age children.

Current and Preferred Types of Care By Age Range				
Age Range	Informal		Licensed	
	Current	Preferred	Current	Preferred
Under 2	70%	60%	30%	40%
2 - 5	39%	36%	61%	64%
5 - 12	64%	41%	34%	59%
All Ages	59%	43%	40%	55%

• **Care for School Age Children**

The Demographic Analysis indicates that the population of children age 10 to 14 is increasing. This trend, several survey findings, and a 73% labor participation rate for women with children over five indicate an increasing need for before and after school programs, and care during summer, school vacations and holidays.

• **Care for Infants and Toddlers**

Several survey findings suggest a clear demand for expanded licensed infant and toddler care (although 60% of preferred arrangements would still be informal):

- At least 56% of women with children under six work outside the home;
- Finding infant care has been a problem for over half of the working parents who have children under two and they ranked infant care as their second most important logistical consideration;
- While only 7% of current *infant* care arrangements are at preschools or child care centers, 26% of preferred arrangements would be at this type of facility;
- Only 15% of child care centers offer infant care.

- **Expanded Hours of Operation**

The need for expanded child care hours of operation is indicated by the fact that very few providers offer care before 7am or after 6pm even though many parents (48% of the Working Parents Survey sample) need to drop off their children early or pick them up late at least sometimes.

- **Sick Child Care**

While half of Working Parents Survey respondents indicated that they have experienced a problem finding sick child care, less than one quarter of family day care homes and no child care centers offer this type of care.

- **Temporary or Drop-in Care**

Finding drop-in or temporary care arrangements has also been a problem in Santa Monica according to half of the working parents surveyed.

- **School Vacation/Summer Care**

Although half of family day care providers and two-thirds of child care centers offer care during school vacations, over half of Working Parents Survey respondents with school-age children reported a problem finding vacation care, with a quarter reporting a major problem.

- **Accessible Child Care**

Convenience, proximity to work and to home were mentioned repeatedly in the Working Parents Survey as reasons explaining preferred care arrangements. Convenience may be interpreted as the right type of care, in the right place, at the right times, for the right price. This complex arrangement may be different for each family and in order to accommodate the majority of situations, care must be available in a variety of types, locations and times, and for a variety of costs.

### *Affordability of Care*

- **Affordable Child Care**

Many Working Parents Survey respondents expressed that they cannot pay more for child care or perceive that they are already paying too much. In fact, the cost of child care was the problem experienced most often by working parents and affordability was mentioned most often as one of respondents' three most important logistical considerations.

<b>Identified Child Care Problems By Age Range and Important Logistical Considerations By Age Range</b>		
<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Top Three Identified Problems</i>	<i>Top Three Logistical Considerations</i>
Under 2	<b>Cost of Care (66%)</b> Finding Infant Care (55%) Convenience of Location (51%)	<b>Affordability</b> Infant care Proximity to work
2 - 5	<b>Cost of Care (72%)</b> Finding Sick Care (52%) Finding School Vacation Care (51%)	<b>Affordability</b> Proximity to work Proximity to home
5 - 12	<b>Cost of Care (67%)</b> Finding Sick Care (53%) Finding School Vacation Care (51%)	<b>Affordability</b> Before/after school care Proximity to work
All Ages	<b>Cost of Care (68%)</b> Finding Sick Care (50%) Finding Temporary Care (49%)	<b>Affordability</b> Proximity to work Proximity to home Before/after school care

