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Work-Life Alliance

To accomplish the goals of the report on The Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in Humboldt County, the Alliance will be in an active collaborative between business, child care, and other nontraditional stakeholders to carry out the recommendations and strategies in the report so that the child care system is meeting the needs of children, families and businesses in Humboldt County.

RECEIVED
May 16 2007

To: Michael Richardson, Senior Planner
Humboldt County Planning Department

JUN 21 2007

From: Wendy Rowan, *Work-Life Alliance*

HUMBOLDT COUNTY
PLANNING DIVISION

Subject: Inclusion of Child Care Provisions in General Plan

As you may know, the *Work-Life Alliance* was formed through resolution as an outgrowth of the National Economic Development and Law Center report, The Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in Humboldt County released in 2004. The *Work-Life Alliance* includes representatives from the Work Force Investment Board for the County of Humboldt, the Local Child Care Planning Council, and FIRST 5 HUMBOLDT, and we work together to address recommendations in the report.

It is fairly well recognized yet infrequently acknowledged that access to quality child care is a quality of life issue for communities. Despite its contributions, child care supply does not meet demand in Humboldt County. **A key obstacle to growth in our county is land use barriers.** So on behalf of our child care field, our economy, and our communities we now turn to the General Plan to promote stronger and more strategic relationships between child care and community development.

Please find attached, our recommendations for the General Plan specific to child care. We hope these recommendations can be included in the current effort to update the General Plan for the County of Humboldt. Also find a fact sheet providing background information specific to child care in Humboldt County for the General Plan.

In order to maintain economic output, Humboldt County's labor force participation and productivity rates must increase, which necessitates a quality, stable, affordable child care infrastructure. We believe our General Plan recommendations would facilitate the integration of child care with economic development and land use planning which can foster this growth.

We look forward to working with you on strengthening a partnership through the General Plan and other avenues. Please let us know if you have questions or comments and how we can be involved in promoting the inclusion of these child care recommendations, as well as collaborating in the future with your Department and our communities.



HUMBOLDT COUNTY GENERAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Use Element:

INTEGRATE WITH LAND USE SECTIONS THAT RELATE TO:

Residential or Neighborhood District Goals, Definitions, Objectives, and Policies
Commercial District Goals, Definitions, Objectives

GOAL:

Combine child care facilities with other services and amenities in order to improve child care access and availability.

OBJECTIVE:

The County should evaluate various means by which it can ensure that child care facilities are allowed in locations which are convenient to residents and workers in Humboldt County, including employment centers, homes, schools, community centers, recreation facilities, and transit hubs such as Park and Ride lots. This evaluation should include ongoing review of zoning regulations which may unnecessarily restrict the location and/or size of child care facilities, as well as outreach to the child care field to consider the use of schools, churches, public buildings, and other facilities such as senior centers and community centers which might be adapted to provide convenient child care locations. Specifically:

POLICIES:

- ❑ To **streamline review, processing and permit regulations** to promote the development of child care centers and large family child care homes and remove unnecessary hindrance to child care facility development.
- ❑ To **consider the impact on the demand for child care in the environmental review of development projects**. Project impact on child care supply will vary, but consideration should be given to projects yielding a minimum of 10 units and higher, particularly affordable family housing projects and those with single family homes or multi-bedroom units.
- ❑ To **minimize barriers for developing child care centers/homes:**
 - Allow child care centers in all zones other than Open Space, Heavy Industrial or other zones that are inappropriate for health and safety reasons.
 - Allow small and large family child care homes in all residential zones.
- ❑ To **consider offering incentives**, such as density bonuses and waiving permit fees, to those who address licensed child care needs in their applications.
- ❑ To **assist child care providers and developers with identifying and developing potential sites** including vacant or under utilized land and buildings that might be provided at reasonable or below market rates such as community centers and school sites.



Circulation Element:

GOAL:

Facilitate access to child care services through transportation planning of commute routes, bus services, Park-and-Ride lots and pedestrian walkways, thereby reducing traffic, commute time, air pollution, and family time in cars and supporting transit and carpool use.

OBJECTIVE:

Proactively plan for child care linked with transportation.

POLICIES:

- To **consider or promote use of transportation land or funding** to support child care program development.
- To **support placement of child care facilities near commute routes and public transit.**
- To **promote the development of child care as an integrated part of safe walkable neighborhoods.**

Economics/Economic Development Element:

GOAL:

Humboldt County is able to attract and maintain new businesses and a productive work force through services such as child care and early childhood education.

OBJECTIVE:

Expand quality child care services to meet the existing and future needs of Humboldt County.

POLICIES:

- To **encourage the provision of child care facilities** within employee-intensive office/industrial developments.
- To **investigate the feasibility of offering low-interest loans or grants to child care operators** for the establishment, rehabilitation or expansion of child care facilities and continue to make other business training resources available to child care providers.
- To **consider utilizing public or private financing such as the Community Reinvestment Act** or other public/private funding available to support economic development projects that include child care.¹

¹ P.39 Humboldt County EICC, NEDLC, 2004.



Housing Element:

GOAL:

Ensure adequate range and supply of quality child care to meet the needs of residents.

OBJECTIVE:

Plan for child care facilities when considering new development as part of a balanced residential environment that combines access to employment opportunities and other community services.

POLICIES:

- ❑ To encourage the coordination and integration of child care services with housing and social programs wherever feasible.
- ❑ To encourage the inclusion of child care facilities, family child care homes, or other child care mitigation in multi-family housing projects, especially those which serve single parents, large families and/or low-income families. Housing units designed to facilitate provision of family child care and marketed to those providers can be included in developments and neighborhoods.
- ❑ To continue to allow family child care homes in residential zones and minimize barriers for permitting child care centers in residential zones.

Public Services Element:

GOAL:

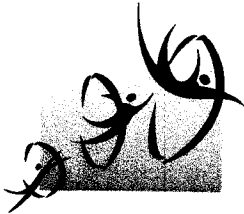
To encourage and facilitate an adequate range and supply of quality child care services to meet the needs of all Humboldt County residents.

OBJECTIVE:

To support the development and operation of quality child care/early education facilities and programs by public and private operators.

POLICIES:

- ❑ To consult with the Humboldt Child Care Planning Council, the local Resource and Referral Agency and others to consider the inclusion of child care facilities in the development of major housing subdivisions or mixed use development, public buildings, and at work hubs such as senior care facilities, industrial and office parks, and other commercial areas wherever possible and appropriate to reduce development costs and improve child care accessibility.
- ❑ To facilitate, where appropriate, child care providers' access to public funding and other resources to develop/improve facilities or operate programs.
- ❑ To encourage shared use of school land/facilities or adjacent properties to support co-location of before/after school care and preschool programs.



Child Care Background Information For Humboldt County's General Plan

The formal **Child Care Industry is a vital component of Humboldt County's Economy.**

It:

- Enables employers to attract and retain employees and increases productivity of employees with children.
Without accessible, affordable child care, employees experience barriers to working comparable to barriers created by poor transportation or limited housing, furthermore their employers and the economy as a whole suffer when workers are absent, leave work or are distracted by concerns for their children's care.
- Provides a significant number of employment opportunities and generates considerable revenue. According to "The Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in Humboldt County" (2004) child care is a major industry in the county contributing similar annual gross receipts to the beef and dairy industry, nursing care and residential facilities. Child care employs 562 fulltime employees in Humboldt County and generates about \$22.5 million annually.
- Ensures a strong economy in the future by preparing children to be skilled, productive workers. Early brain development research demonstrates that child care for children from birth through age five is a vital service, improves children's health, school readiness, and contribution to society. *J.P. Shonkoff and D.A. Phillips, Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development.*

The number of formal child care establishments and child care spaces provided in Humboldt County is insufficient for the number of children under 12 needing child care* (Data provided by

Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing 4/4/07):

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • 91 Small Family Child Care Homes with a capacity of | 546 |
| • 60 Large Family Child Care Homes with a capacity of | 720 |
| • 4 Infant/Toddler Centers with a capacity of | 100** |
| • 51 Preschool Centers with a capacity of | 1427 |
| • 7 Licensed School Aged Centers with a capacity of | 285*** |

Total child care capacity in formal settings is 3,078

* In Humboldt County, licensed child care is available for 26% of children with parents in the labor force. As of April 2007 the Centralized Eligibility List had 900 limited income families waiting for subsidized space in child care programs. Those waiting constitute approximately 29% of the total spaces currently available. Many middle class families, not eligible for enrollment in publicly subsidized programs, are unable to find formal child care alternatives for their children.

** Three of the four centers are part of educational institutions.

*** This number does not include the capacity of after-school programs operated by school districts that are not subject to licensing.



The Formal Child Care Industry is subject to taxes, licensing, education and training requirements:

- Includes all establishments that are required by law to meet minimum health and safety standards and are licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division including: full-day and part-day private care centers and publicly funded programs, and small and large child care homes.
- Includes all legally license-exempt before- and after-school programs which are primarily located on public school campuses.
- Excludes unlicensed care by nannies, babysitters, or relatives. Although these options are widely used adding to the economy, it is difficult to ascertain impact.

Establishing and maintaining quality formal child care establishments

- Family Child Care Homes can be “small” (licensed up to 8 children) or “large” (licensed up to 14 children) and by state law do not need to apply for planning permits. Licensed family child care homes often provide the only care for infants/toddlers and care during non-traditional hours. Individuals wishing to operate family child care often face opposition by neighbors or landlords, or excessive costs required to remodel, update, and meet licensing requirements.
- Child Care centers are currently located in the more densely populated areas of the county. The majority of centers provide care for low or limited-income families and children with special needs. Centers are difficult to develop due to many reasons, including land use and permitting barriers, inadequate, inappropriate or unaffordable facility space.

Humboldt County demographic and economic trends and implications for the Child Care Industry and the General Plan.

- Humboldt County’s population is not growing as fast as that of the state’s. Investment in child care is needed to attract and retain businesses and young working families to the county.
- From 1990 to 2000, single-parent families became more prevalent in Humboldt County. In 2000 single-parent families made up 37% of all families with children under 18. If this trend continues there will be an increasing need for child care services to enable the employment of single parents.
- There is a recognized shortage of child care in rural and outlying areas. Enhanced accessibility and availability of child care establishments in these areas is needed to meet the economic needs of businesses seeking employees, parents and the educational needs of children.
- Child care programs are a significant expense for families in most income brackets. A median income family (\$39,370) with an infant in full-time home based care spend 16% of the total family budget for child care, with an additional preschooler in full-time care, the cost rises to 30% of the family’s total income.
- Increased demand in employment for lower-wage services and retail areas highlights the necessity for affordable quality child care as well as programs offered outside the traditional workday hours.
- Rising housing costs reduce the income families have for other areas including child care.
- Quality child care experiences are critical to prepare the future workforce for the growth in high-skilled technology and professional service occupations being sought for in Humboldt County.

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION



Recommended Zoning Regulation Changes

1. Definitions of Child Care in Code

- a. Add child care definitions to Zoning Regulations, Section C, Ch.3, p. 186

CHILD CARE FACILITY: A facility that provides non-medical care to children under 18 years of age in need of personal services, supervision, or assistance essential for sustaining the activities of daily living or for the protection of the individual on less than a 24-hour basis. "Child care facility" includes Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes.

CHILD CARE CENTER is any child care facility other than a family child care home (small or large) and includes pre-schools, infant centers, and extended day care (after-school care) facilities.

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME. A home that provides care, protection and supervision for 14 or fewer children, in the provider's own home, for periods of less than 24 hours per day, while the parents or guardians are away. Child care homes may be either:

- a. Small Family Child Care Home. A home that provides family child care for eight or fewer children, including any children under the age of 10 years who reside at the home, as set forth in Cal. Health & Safety Code §1597.44 and as defined in regulations.
- b. Large Family Child Care Home. A home that provides family child care for 7 to 14 children, inclusive, including any children under the age of 10 years who reside at the home, as set forth in Cal. Health & Safety Code §1597.465 and as defined in regulations.

Comments: Consistent with Cal. Health & Safety Code §1596.750-1596.78 definitions of state-licensed child care facilities. Updates license capacity numbers for Small Family Child Care Homes from 6 to 8 children, and Large Family Child Care Homes from 12 to 14 (1997 change in Cal. law).

Additional language can be added to allow local ordinance to track future changes in state law, e.g. "...or as revised henceforth."

- b. Delete entry for "Family Day Care Center" (Ch. 3, Page 190; also referenced on p.187)

The current distinction of a child care center located in a residential structure can be listed as subset of Child Care Center, if it's important that county use permit requirements distinguish child care centers in the two types of structures. (i.e. Replace term "Family Day Care Center" with "Child Care Center/Residential building" vs. Child Care Center/Non-residential)

Comments: Term is inconsistent with State Licensing. Child Care Centers located in any type of structure must meet extensive physical plant requirements for Licensing, as well as Building and Fire codes for "E-3" occupancies (rather than R-3 for Family Child Care Homes).¹

2. **Clarify Home Occupation exception for Family Child Care Homes**

Clarify that Family Child Care Homes (Small and Large) are not subject to permit requirements as Home Occupations. Clarification language can be added to Definitions section and/or to Home Occupations regulations.

Comment: Typical restrictions on Home Occupations cannot apply to Family Child Care Homes due to State Licensing requirements as well as the nature of operation of such home care settings.

3. **Change discretionary use permit requirement for Child Care Centers to nondiscretionary review**

based on meeting specified performance standards appropriate for this use. E.g. "Child Care Centers shall be principally permitted in all zones if they comply with performance standards specified below. Exceptions to standards may be approved by Zoning Administrator based on findings of alternative means for meeting the intent of standards. To enable inclusion of child care center space in multifamily housing, non-residential or multi-use developments exceptions to performance standards shall be allowed.

4. **Amend current zoning regulations for legal nonconforming buildings** to enable use for child care centers where such use does not involve expansion of the building or occupant capacity. Sample language might read: "Child care centers shall be allowed in nonconforming buildings where such use is determined to be essentially similar to the prior use. Examples include churches, schools, community centers, service clubs or other public or quasi-public buildings that accommodate group uses."

5. **Consider adoption of a child care center combining or overlay district** to address the above recommendations (# 3 and 4), to be applied to residential and/or commercial zones.

6. **Adopt a density bonus provision** allowed in Cal. Government Code §65915 to provide incentives for inclusion of child care centers in affordable housing developments.

7. **Adopt a density bonus provision** allowed in Cal. Government Code §65917.5 to provide incentives for inclusion of child care centers in non-residential developments.

8. **Consider adoption of other incentives to encourage developers to integrate child care in residential or non-residential developments.** Such examples might include transportation credits and priority processing of applications for planning permits

Performance Standards for Child Care Centers

1. Child Care Centers shall be licensed by the California Department of Social Services/Community Care Licensing Division and regulated under Title 22 of the Cal. Code of Regulations, unless deemed exempt as defined in Cal. Health & Safety Code §1596.792-1596.793.

2. Child Care Centers shall meet appropriate Building and Fire Code as an "E Occupancy" type.

3. **Parking:**

a. One space per ten children based on proposed State-licensed capacity shall be provided for drop-off and pick-up of children. Spaces may be designated as short-term parking (e.g. 10-15 minute) during peak hours (e.g. 7:00-9:00 a.m. and 4:00-6:00 p.m.). On-street parking may be used to meet this requirement if available.

b. Child Care Centers that have hard start and end schedules (e.g. part-day preschool, 9:00-12:00) shall provide short-term parent parking at one space per five children. A ratio of one space per ten children shall suffice if parents are allowed drop-off and pick-up time periods of at least 30 minutes.

- c. Child care centers incorporated at worksites for use primarily by employees shall be exempt from parent parking requirements. A safe loading zone will be provided if the child care entrance is not convenient to employee parking.

4. Traffic

- a. Only one child care center with licensed capacity of over 30 children shall be allowed on the same block, unless evidence is provided that program schedules for parent drop off/pick up will mostly occur at different hours.
- b. Child care centers in walkable neighborhoods and multi-family housing developments shall be exempt from the above.
- c. Child care centers incorporated at worksites for use primarily by workers in the business or development shall be considered as mitigating traffic impact by reducing the number and length of parent vehicle trips.

5. Noise:

- a. For noise abatement purposes in residential districts, organized outdoor playground activities shall be limited to the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- b. Permanently-installed play structures shall be set back a minimum of six feet from property lines. Climbing or other structures that enable children to stand five or more feet above ground level shall require additional setbacks and/or visual barriers.
- c. A solid wall or acoustical fence shall be provided around playground areas that border residential properties.

6. Environmental Hazards

- a. Child Care Center applicants for sites within Industrial, Manufacturing, Agricultural or other zones where hazardous materials/activities may exist shall provide certification from the County Health Department that no hazardous materials/uses exist within 1,000 feet of the site.
- b. Child Care Centers to be located within the tsunami zone shall develop an emergency evacuation plan in consultation with County staff.