

Child Care is a Right & the Foundation of Economic Power and Well-Being

We believe that child care is a right and the foundation for lifelong financial security, economic power and overall well-being of women in San Mateo County. It is essential infrastructure and a vital safety net. When women thrive, entire communities flourish.



San Mateo County

Snapshot of Our Community

Of the 737,888 people who live in San Mateo County, 386,376 are women and 41,000 are children ages 0-12. Due to the high cost of living, 79,927 are rent burdened. Average annual child care costs are \$15K-25K. Low wages for the 5,300 child care workers drive a shortage of over 2,829 workers resulting in a deficit of 17,000 child care slots. Child care challenges - from low wages for providers to high costs to families - have lifelong implications on women, children and families.

Drivers

Impacts on women of child care crisis & lifelong caregiving



ECONOMIC INJUSTICE

Poverty wages for child care workforce. Pay penalties for women and caregivers.



INEQUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Chronic underfunding in facilities and workforce development plus insufficient systems exacerbate gaps in care and inhibit cross sector collaboration.



BIAS & POWER

Racism and sexism are root causes of systemic injustice that go unchecked due to power imbalances.



Our Survey

Voices of Women in San Mateo County

Respondent Info

- 389 total respondents
- 80% between 30-50 years old & have children under 18; 20% have child with special needs
- 83% use child care to work
- 50% often do unpaid work (outside home)
- 44% nonwhite

Child Care Impact

- 88% say it impacts their lives
- 68% delay or abandon career opportunities
- 60-70% have to leave work early or arrive late
- Half lost income, experience stress or partner conflict and over 20% report illness

Potential Benefits

- Save/invest more money, pay for housing and basic needs
- Less stress/improved mental health
- More time with children/families
- Freedom to pursue professional development

Solutions

- County office to elevate children's well-being
- Dedicated funding to support liveable wages for child care workers and expand access for families
- Multi-sector coalitions with business, housing & others
- Support for policies including paid family/sick leave and flexibility for workers



Your Power

CONNECT, SHARE, MOBILIZE & ACT

Visit our website to learn more, make your voice heard and find resources to drive change



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Child Care is a Right

& the Foundation of Economic Power and Well-Being

"I am a single parent who provides 100% caregiving outside of work. My day starts at 6am and goes full speed until 10pm, seven days a week...The financial, emotional, and physical labor of childrearing falls on [the single working parent] with seemingly no tangible support from public entities. Where programs and policies do come into place, they benefit only a fraction of the people who need help and often operate with rigid criteria for qualification. Child raising in isolation has had extremely adverse impacts on my mental health..."

- Ana

DRIVING CHANGE



The Commission on the Status of Women is committed to driving change through funding for fair pay for child care workers and investments in vital safety nets and essential infrastructure, including facilities and workforce development. These efforts plus collaboration with other sectors, such as housing, can be optimized through the creation of a Chief Children's Office. In addition to financial resources plus investments in systems or infrastructure - we must tackle the root causes of these issues, including racial and gender biases.



Income/Wealth

"If I had access to affordable childcare I would have some savings built up so I didn't have to decide if I was going to buy food or go to the laundromat and do laundry."

- **Extra caregiving** responsibilities plus **pay penalties** at work cost women an average \$17K per year (\$38K for Latinas)
- In our county, 73% of parents **turned down work**, 68% **delayed professional development** and 55% **lost income** due to child care challenges
- With universal child care, 83% would **save or invest more**.
- Expanding child care access would **increase employment** for moms by 17% with **lifetime financial benefits of \$94,000**



Housing

"I sleep 4 hours a night because only way can manage work and child care and cost of child care and housing in bay area."

- **Underfunding child care** is the root cause of issues such as **economic, housing and food insecurity** (2023 Sustainable San Mateo County report)
- Stable, affordable housing and high-quality, affordable child care are key to parent's **economic stability** and children's **healthy development**.
- Investments in child care that increase quality and access not only **help family budgets** but also **increase local property values**.

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE + FAIR PAY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING + UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE



Health/Well-Being

"I always feel that I am failing as an employee and mother. It's very depressing."

- Nearly 9 in 10 women said child care challenges impacted their lives with half **experiencing stress/conflict with partners** as a result
- Domestic violence survivors express the need for affordable, flexible, and reliable child care as **essential to safety and stability** for themselves and children
- 75% say policies like universal child care access or paid leave would **improve their well-being** and **lower stress**



Child Care Workforce

"Our children are the future - they deserve the best care. Paying teachers well means they can take care of themselves and their families and do a good job."

- Child care educators (mostly BIPOC women) **make less** than 98% of all other professions and **experience poverty at 8X the rate of K-12 teachers**
- Paying early educators a livable wage in San Mateo County would create an **economic annual benefit of \$389M** and mitigate the **shortage of 2,829 workers** that drives the **deficit of over 17K child care spaces**

UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE + EXPANDED LEAVE

FAIR PAY + INFRASTRUCTURE