

August 2021



# SANTA CRUZ COUNTY 2021 CHILD CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT



**SANTA CRUZ**  
COUNTY OFFICE OF  
**EDUCATION**  
DR. FARIS SABBAH • SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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# Introduction

## Purpose of the Report

The California Department of Education (CDE) requires that county Local Child Care and Development Planning Councils (LPCs) conduct an assessment of local child care needs no less than once every five years. This report summarizes data collected by/for Santa Cruz County in fulfillment of this requirement. The data included in this report are intended to facilitate the long-term planning and implementation of programs and initiatives designed to meet the early care and education needs of children who reside in Santa Cruz County who age-eligible for infant/toddler (i.e., ages birth to ~2.9 years) and preschool (i.e., ages ~2.9 to 5 years) programs.

## Data Sources

The information included in this report comes from a variety of county, state, and national sources. Concerted efforts were made to collect and document the most current data available. In addition to the individuals listed under Acknowledgements, various agencies and organizations assisted with compiling these data, including Go Kids, Inc., the Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA) for North and South Santa Cruz County, Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD), and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education and its Child Development Resource Center, Resource & Referral Agency (R&R), and Migrant Education Programs. Data were also collected from publicly accessible databases available through the California Departments of Education (CDE) and Social Services (CDSS), the U.S. Census Bureau, and the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

## Report Structure

The data in this report are organized in accordance with the CDE's California County Local Child Care Planning Council (LPC) Needs Assessment Template. The report includes eight content sections beginning with *Child Demographics, Market Rate Ceilings, and Unmet Need* and ending with *Pilot County Data Requirements*. Where applicable, template item number references are listed with section headers.



# **CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS, MARKET RATE CEILINGS, AND UNMET NEED FOR SUBSIDIZED CARE**

# Child Demographics, Market Rate Ceilings, and Unmet Need

## Number of Children by Age (Item 1a)

The American Institutes for Research generates bi-annual estimates for child population, demand for early care and education, and enrollment in early learning programs at various geographic levels. The estimates are derived largely from public sources including, but not limited to, the U.S. Census Bureau, CA Department of Social Services, and the CA Department of Education. The information is made publicly available online via the CA Early Learning Needs Assessment Reports (CELNAR) system.

According to the most recent data release, as of 2018 there were an estimated 14,689 children ages 0-4 years residing in Santa Cruz County. Of those children, 3,254 (22%) were infants, (i.e., children under 1 year old), 5,737 (39%) were toddlers (i.e., children 12-35 months old), and 5,698 (39%) were of preschool-age (i.e., children ages 3 and 4 years). Children under the age of 5 years, their demographics, unique needs, and child care needs, are the focus of this assessment per instructions specified in the CDE’s LPC Needs Assessment Template.

### Total Number of Children 0-4 Years Old in Santa Cruz County by Age

	0-11 months	12-23 months	24-35 months	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	Total
<b>Number of Children</b>	3,254	2,456	3,281	2,766	2,932	<b>14,689</b>

Source: Demographics: Age, CELNAR (2018), American Institutes for Research

## Percent of Children by Race/Ethnicity and Age (Item 1b)

The table below provides estimates for the number and percent of children under 5 years in Santa Cruz County by race/ethnicity. An estimated 58% of children were identified as Hispanic or Latino. The second largest subgroup was Caucasians (Whites) at 36%. Mixed-race children accounted for 4% of the child population.



**Number/Percent of Children Ages 0-4 Years in Santa Cruz County by Race/Ethnicity**

Race/Ethnicity		0-11 Months	12-23 Months	24-35 Months	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	Total
American Indian	Percent	0.00%	0.04%	0.76%	0.04%	0.00%	0.18%
	Number	0	1	25	1	0	27
Asian	Percent	1.38%	0.69%	0.64%	0.40%	2.96%	1.23%
	Number	45	17	21	11	87	181
Black	Percent	2.52%	0.61%	0.94%	0.04%	0.55%	0.98%
	Number	82	15	31	1	16	145
Filipino	Percent	0.09%	0.16%	0.00%	0.07%	0.10%	0.08%
	Number	3	4	0	2	3	12
Hispanic	Percent	51.77%	59.69%	56.43%	67.10%	55.98%	57.87%
	Number	1,686	1,479	1,866	1,866	1,643	8,540
Other	Percent	0.34%	0.00%	0.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.11%
	Number	11	0	5	0	0	16
Two or More Races	Percent	6.82%	3.07%	4.57%	3.16%	1.70%	3.98%
	Number	222	76	151	88	50	587
White	Percent	37.09%	35.75%	36.53%	29.20%	38.71%	35.57%
	Number	1,208	886	1,208	812	1,136	5,250

**Source:** Demographics: Race by Age, CELNAR (2018), American Institutes for Research

**Regional Market Rates for State-Subsidized Care by Age/Setting (Item 1c)**

Rates collected through the Regional Market Rate survey are used to set maximum reimbursement ceilings for state-subsidized child care. Ceilings vary by setting type, age of the child being served, and hours of child care. Ceilings are set so that licensed providers are reimbursed up to the 85th percentile of the rates charged by private providers in the area who offer the same type of child care. As such, parents should be able to access 85% of providers in their market.

Maximum reimbursement ceilings for full and part-time subsidized child care at licensed centers and Family Child Care Homes (FCCHs) are in the table below. This data indicates that (a) child care through licensed centers is more expensive compared to like care provided by FCCHs, and (b) infant/toddler care is more costly relative to preschool. Santa Cruz County parents can expect to pay as much as \$79 more a week (\$4,108 annually) for infant/toddler care and as much as \$211 more a week (\$10,972 annually) for center-based care.

**Weekly Regional Market Rate Ceilings for State-Subsidized Care by Age/Setting**

Setting Type	0-24 Months	Ages 2-5 Years
Center – Full-Time	\$454.35	\$375.04
Center – Part-Time	\$312.33	\$284.83
FCCH – Full-Time	\$243.15	\$229.25
FCCH – Part-Time	\$177.64	\$181.14

**Source:** Regional Market Rate Ceilings, CELNAR (2018), American Institutes for Research

**Unmet Need for State/Federally Subsidized Infant/Toddler Programs (Item 1d)**

Estimates for unmet need for state and federally subsidized infant/toddler child care by age group are provided in the table below. Child care supply and demand data indicated that there were enough subsidized slots to care for 16% of income-eligible children ages 0-2 years with full-time working parents.

**Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Infant/Toddler Programs**

		0-11 Months	12-23 Months	24-35 Months	Total
<b>Eligibility</b>	Total children	3,254	2,456	3,281	8,991
	Income-eligible and qualifying need	1,052	1,151	1,430	3,633
	Percentage of children income-eligible and qualifying need	32%	47%	44%	40%
<b>Enrolled/Served</b>	Alternative payment	12	42	46	100
	CalWORKs stage 1	30	30	45	105
	CalWORKs stage 2	3	9	24	36
	CalWORKs stage 3	3	6	4	13
	Head Start (2016-17)	31	49	106	186
	Head Start funding only (2016/17)	21	33	72	126
	Title 5 center-based	24	77	80	181
	Title 5 FCCH network	1	5	5	11
	Title 5 migrant child care program	3	11	11	25
	Title 5 state preschool program	0	0	0	0
	Total enrollment	97	213	287	597
<b>Unmet need</b>	Unmet need	955	938	1,143	3,036
	Percentage unmet need	91%	81%	80%	84%

**Source:** Unmet Need: Infants and Toddlers, CELNAR (2018), American Institutes for Research

## Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Preschool Programs (Item 1e)

As shown in the table below, there were an estimated 5,698 preschool-aged children residing in Santa Cruz County in 2018. Of those children, approximately two-thirds (3,731) were in working families with qualifying incomes. Providers in Santa Cruz County with state- and/or federal-subsidized contracts had the capacity to serve 45% of eligible preschool-aged children.

### Unmet Need for State and Federally Subsidized Preschool Programs

		3-year-olds	4-year-olds	Total
<b>Eligibility</b>	Total children	2,766	2,932	5,698
	Income-eligible and qualifying need	2,007	1,724	3,731
	Percentage of children income-eligible and qualifying need	73%	59%	66%
<b>Enrolled/Served</b>	Alternative payment	52	46	98
	CalWORKs stage 1	45	45	90
	CalWORKs stage 2	20	20	40
	CalWORKs stage 3	10	18	28
	Estimated TK students eligible for Title 5	0	273	273
	Head Start (2016-17)	266	164	430
	Head Start funding only (2016/17)	181	112	293
	Title 5 center-based	44	28	72
	Title 5 FCCH network	3	3	6
	Title 5 migrant child care program	15	15	30
	Title 5 state preschool program	281	484	765
	Total enrollment	651	1,044	1,695
	Transitional kindergarten (2017/18)	0	464	464
<b>Unmet need</b>	Unmet need	1,356	680	2,036
	Percentage unmet need	68%	40%	55%

**Source:** Unmet Need: Preschool, CELNAR (2018), American Institutes for Research



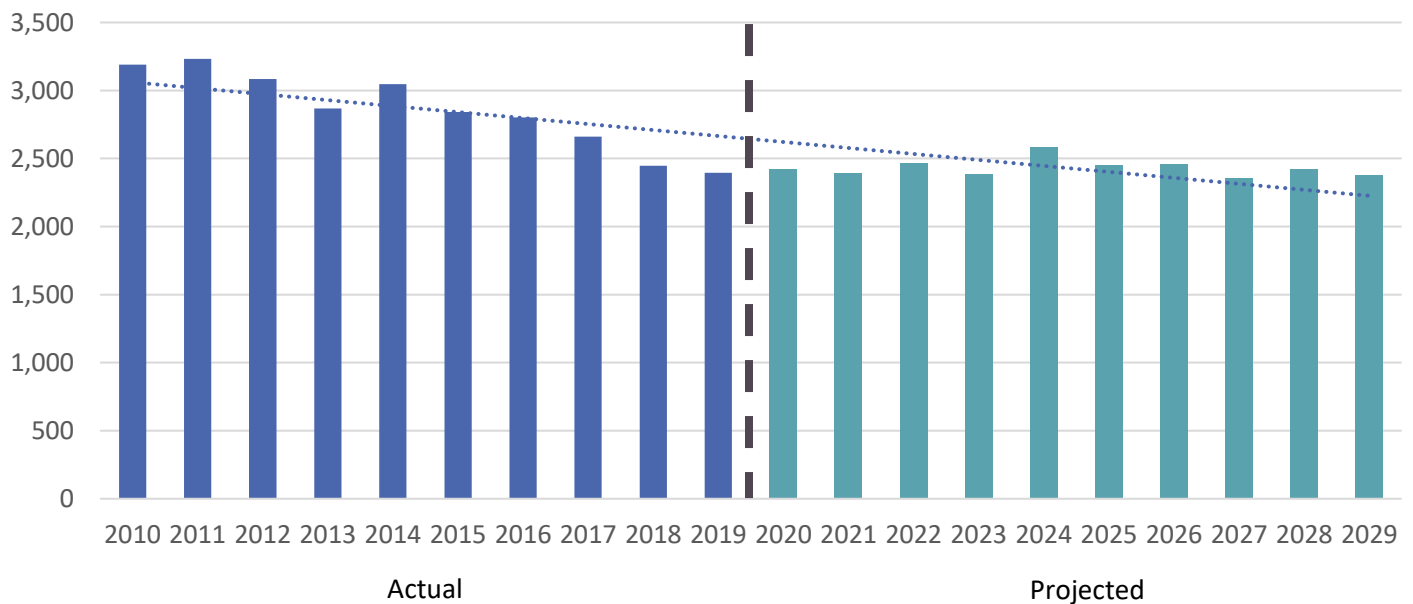
# POPULATION DATA

# Population Data

## Actual and Project Births (Item 2)

Data on actual (2010-2019) and projected (2020-2029) births for Santa Cruz County are depicted in the graph below. Between 2010 and 2019, the number of births declined by 25%. There were 795 fewer births reported in 2019 compared to 10 years earlier. Researchers with the CA Department of Finance’s Demographic Research Unit project that births will hold relatively stable from 2020 through 2029.

**Actual and Projected Births for Santa Cruz County**



**Source:** P- Births:  
Historical and Projected Fertility Rates and Births, Calendar Year 1990-2040, Demographic Research Unit, CA Department of Finance



## ENROLLMENT AND WAITLIST DATA

# Enrollment and Waitlist Data

## Enrollment (Item 3)

Child care capacity and vacancy data were provided by the Santa Cruz County Resource and Referral Agency (R&R). The data, summarized in the table below, was used to calculate enrollment (i.e., the number of vacancies subtracted from the capacity) and the percent of empty slots available to infants/toddlers and preschool-aged children. The capacity of Santa Cruz County center-based providers to serve infants/toddlers is substantially lower than the capacity to serve preschool-aged children. However, the estimated percentage of slots available to infants/toddlers that are currently unfilled is higher than that for preschool-aged children (22% vs. 12%). This may be due to a number of factors including, but not limited to, the higher cost of infant/toddler care and parent work-from-home/telecommuting situations induced by the pandemic. More parents working from home who have young children may opt to keep their children home and provide personal care.

### Child Care Center Capacity and Enrollment Figures for Santa Cruz County

Age Group	Capacity	Vacancy	Enrollment	Percent of Unfilled Slots
Infant/Toddler	319	69	250	22%
Preschool	2,909	355	2,554	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,228</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>2,804</b>	<b>10%</b>

**Source:** Provider Supply Report, R&R, Santa Cruz County (June 2020 – July 2021)

Though not specific to age groups, capacity and vacancy data were also provided for Family Child Care Home (FCCH) providers by FCCH size (small vs. large). This data is summarized in the table below. There were more reported vacancies among small FCCHs than large FCCHs in 2020/21.

### Family Child Care Home (FCCH) Capacity and Enrollment Figures for Santa Cruz County

FCCH Type	Capacity	Vacancy	Enrollment	Percent of Unfilled Slots
Small	552	461	91	84%
Large	2,434	202	2,232	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,651</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>1,988</b>	<b>25%</b>

**Source:** Provider Supply Report, R&R, Santa Cruz County (June 2020 – July 2021)

## Waitlist (Item 4)

Countywide waitlist figures are not available for Santa Cruz County. This data is highly dynamic and questionable, as there is no effective way to account for, or track, the number of children who are placed on multiple waitlists. However, waitlist data is collected by Go Kids, Inc., Santa Cruz County's Alternative Payment (AP) contractor, as well as individual Title 5 contract holders in the county. As of August 2021, 137 infants and 61 preschoolers were on AP provider waitlists. It is important to note that the majority of AP programs are operated in Watsonville, which is located in South Santa Cruz County. As such, they do not reflect interest by families who reside in North Santa Cruz County nor do they reflect interest by full-pay families who do not qualify for state-subsidized child care programs.

### Go Kids, Inc. AP Waitlist County by Age Group

Age Group	Number of Waitlist
Infant/Toddler	137
Preschool	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>

**Source:** Go Kids, Inc. (August, 2021)





## LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY CHILDREN

## Languages Spoken by Children

### Language (Item 5)

In the 2020/21 academic year, 2,619 students were enrolled in Kindergarten in Santa Cruz County public schools. Among those Kindergarteners, 222 were classified as English Learners (EL). As shown in the table below, the majority of Kindergarten EL students speak Spanish (89%). The second and third most common languages spoken by Kindergarten EL students were Mixteco (5%) and Russian (1%). In 2020/21, no Kindergarten EL students were reported to speak Tagalog, Cantonese, Vietnamese, or Armenian. These languages were excluded from the table.

#### Kindergarten English Learner Students by Language

Language	Count	Percent of English Language Learners	Percent of Kindergarten Enrollment
Spanish	197	88.74%	7.52%
Mixteco	11	4.95%	0.42%
Russian	3	1.35%	0.11%
Arabic	2	0.90%	0.08%
Khmer (Cambodian)	2	0.90%	0.08%
Mandarin (Putonghua)	1	0.45%	0.04%
German	1	0.45%	0.04%
Pashto	1	0.45%	0.04%
Kannada	1	0.45%	0.04%
Albanian	1	0.45%	0.04%
Other non-English languages	2	0.90%	0.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>8.47%</b>

**Source:** English Learner Students by Language by Grade (2020/21), Santa Cruz, DataQuest, CA Department of Education

### Local Language Data (Item 6)

#### Estimated Number of Children Under 5 Who Are English Learners

Data on languages spoken by children under the age of five years are not available. In addition, due to language development and assessment factors, language data for Kindergarteners may not be the most reliable gauge for languages spoken by young children. Given these circumstances, language data for first graders for the academic years

2018/19 to 2020/21 were used to develop an estimate for the percentage of children under the age of five years in Santa Cruz County who are English Learners. These data are summarized in the table below.

The number of students who were classified as either English Learner (EL), Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP), or To Be Determined (TBD), were aggregated over three years then divided by the three-year sum of first grade enrollment to calculate an average EL rate of 37%. Using this as a standard, when applied to the total number of children reported in response to Item 1 (N=14,689), the number of children under the age of five years who reside in Santa Cruz County who are English Learners is estimated to be 5,435.

### First Grade Students Classified as English Learners

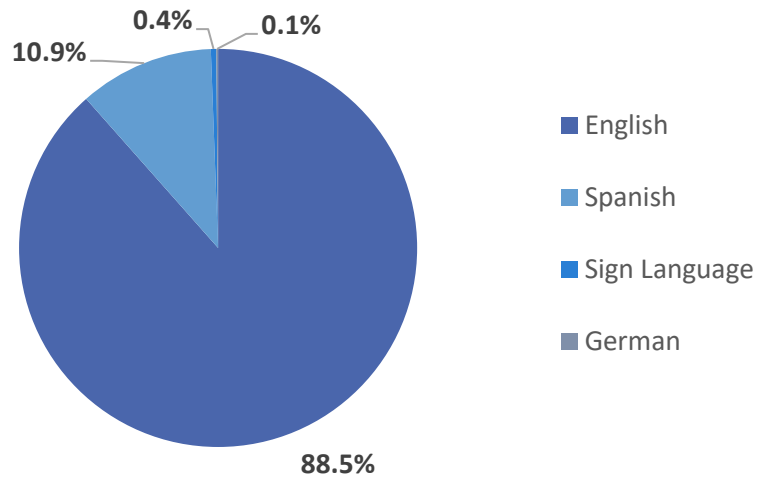
Year	EL	RFEP	TBD	Total (EL/RFEP/TBD)	First Grade Enrollment	Percent (EL/RFEP/TBD)
2020-21	964	1	12	977	2,785	35%
2019-20	1,013	5	2	1,020	2,769	37%
2018-19	1,111	10	0	1,121	2,958	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,088</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3,118</b>	<b>8,512</b>	<b>37%</b>

**Source:** English Learner Students by Language by Grade (2020/21), Santa Cruz, DataQuest, CA Department of Education

### Languages Spoken by Parents Seeking Child Care Referrals

The Santa Cruz County R&R Agency tracks the languages spoken by parents who request referrals for child care. Most of the requests (89%) were made by English-speaking parents. The second most common language spoken by parents seeking referrals was Spanish at 11%.

### Languages Spoken by Parents Seeking Child Care Referrals





## CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

# Children with Additional Needs

## Children with Special Needs (Items 7a and 7b)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that all disabled students between the ages of 0-22 years are to be provided with specialized settings or interventions beyond the scope of services offered by general education programs. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education provides special education services for students from birth to 22 years of age. Children under three years old with developmental delays or other disabilities are eligible for an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Individuals between the ages of 3-22 are eligible for an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Services for young children are provided through the Early Start Program, or the Chrysalis Center Autism Program. The Early Start program provides services for infants and toddlers between birth and three years of age, while the Chrysalis Center provides services for students from preschool through fifth grade. In South Santa Cruz County, special education services for infants and preschool-aged children are provided by the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD).

Current counts for the number of children with IFSPs and IEPs in Santa Cruz County were provided Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA) for North and South Santa Cruz County. As shown in the table below, as of August of 2021, a total of 71 children under the age of three were reported to have an IFSP, while 407 children ages 3-4 years were reported to have an IEP.

**Number of Children with an IFSP or IEP by Age Group**

Age Group	Children w/IFSP	Children w/IEP	Total
0-2 Years	71	NA	71
3 & 4 Years	NA	407	407
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>478</b>

**Source:** North Santa Cruz County SELPA, South Santa Cruz County SELPA (August, 2021)

## Children in Child Protective Services (Items 8a and 8b)

Information on the number of children receiving Child Protective Services (CPS) was obtained from The California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP), which is a collaboration between the University of California at Berkeley, and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The data listed in table below come from the latest release. As of October of 2020, there were a total of 86 infants and 16 preschool-aged children in CPS custody.

### Number of Children in CPS Custody

Age Group	In CPS Custody
0-2 Years	86
3-5 Years	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>

**Source:** The CA Child Welfare Indicators Project (October 2020)

### Children in Working Families (Item 9)

This section includes a summary of the number and percentage of children in working families. According to the CA Early Learning Needs Assessment Report (CELNAR), in 2018, of the 14,689 children ages 0-4 years in Santa Cruz County, an estimated 8,327 (57%) had both parents in the workforce. The numbers and percentages associated with infants/ toddlers in working families are two-to-three times higher than those associated with preschool-aged children.

#### Number of Children with Working Parents

Age Group	Number of Children in Working Families	Percent of Children In Working Families
Infant (<1 year)	1,548	11%
One-year-olds	2,413	16%
Two-year-olds	2,761	19%
Three-year-olds	805	5%
Four-year-olds	800	5%

**Source:** CELNAR (2018), American Institutes for Research

### Children in Migrant Families (Item 12)

A child is considered “migratory” if his/her parent/guardian is a migratory worker in the agricultural, dairy, lumber, or fishing industries and his/her family has moved during the past three years. A qualifying move can range from moving from one residence to another or across school district boundaries due to economic necessity. Current data on the number of migrant children residing in Santa Cruz County is not available. The number can be estimated with a method similar to that used to estimate the number of children under the age of five years who are English Learners (see response to Item 6).

As shown in the table below, the five-year rate for first grade enrollment by migrant students in Santa Cruz County is calculated at 5.3%. Using this as a standard, when applied to the total number of children reported in response to Item 1 (N=14,689), the number of children under the age of five years who reside in Santa Cruz County who are “migratory” is estimated to be 779.

**Percent of First Grade Students Who Are Migrant**

Academic Year	First Grade Enrollment	Number of First Grade Migrant Students	Percent of First Grade Students Who Are Migrant
2020/21	2,785	135	4.8%
2019/20	2,769	142	5.1%
2018/19	2,958	152	5.1%
2017/18	2,987	167	5.6%
2016/17	2,922	165	5.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,421</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

**Source:** Enrollment Multi-Year Summary by Grade (2016/17 – 2020/21), DataQuest, CDE

Services for migrant children are provided through the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, as well as the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD), which runs the Migrant Seasonal Head Start Program. Children are served either through Family Child Care Homes (FCCHs), or through child care centers located at PVUSD schools. While approximately 170 children under 18 years are served through the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, most migrant infants, toddlers and preschoolers are served by PVUSD. The table below lists the number of children receiving Migrant Seasonal Head Start services at PVUSD centers. A total of 400 children were receiving services as of August 2021.

**Number of Children in Migrant Head Start**

Age Group	Number
Infants (ages birth- 2 years)	68
Toddlers (ages 2-3 years)	207
Preschool (ages 3-4 years)	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>

**Source:** Migrant Head Start Program (August, 2021), Pajaro Valley USD





**FAMILIES RECEIVING  
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND  
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME**

# Families Receiving Public Assistance and Median Family Income

## Families Receiving Public Assistance (Item 10)

Child care is essential to the success of the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program. CalWORKs is a public assistance program that provides cash aid and services to eligible families with children. Income and work requirement criteria apply. CalWORKs is California’s version of the Federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. The CalWORKs child care program is administered in three different stages:

- Stage 1 is administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) through county welfare departments (CWDs). The family may be served for up to six months, or until work activity and child care become stable.
- Stage 2 is for families who are in stable CalWORKs Employment Services (CWES) activities, or who have transitioned off cash aid.
- Stage 3 begins when a funded space is available and when the client has completed 24 months of child care. Families remain in Stage 3 until the family’s income exceeds 85 percent of the state median income (SMI) or until the children are over the eligibility age (13th birthday).

The counts provided in the table below reflect children in families that received CalWORKs Stage 1 cash aid as well as child care services. In 2019/20, 391 children ages 0-5 years were in families that received CalWORKs Stage 1 assistance. In 2020/21, the number fell by 46% to 210. In 2020/21, 181 fewer families receiving CalWORKs Stage 1 assistance.

### Number of Children in Families that Received CalWORKs Stage 1 Assistance

Fiscal Year	Children 0-2 Years	Children 3-5 Years	Total
2019/20	106	285	<b>391</b>
2020/21	62	148	<b>210</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>- 44</b>	<b>- 137</b>	<b>- 181</b>

**Source:** Stage 1 Enrollment Table (2019/20 – 2020/21), Santa Cruz County Office of Education & County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department

While not specific to children in the desired age-range, data reported by the CA Department of Social Services (accessible at kidsdata.org) indicate that 39 out of every 1,000 children under the age of 18 years participate in CalWORKs. Using this as a standard, when applied to the total number of children reported in response to Item 1 (N=14,689), the number of children under the age of five years who reside in Santa Cruz County and are receiving CalWORKs assistance is estimated

to be 573. The number is likely higher given that a key component of the program focuses on the provision of financial support that families can use to cover the cost of child care expenses. The need for this type of support is not as high among families with older children.

## Median Family Income (Item 11)

As shown in the table below, the 2015-2019 5-year estimate for Median Family Income (MFI) for Santa Cruz County is \$102,708. The corresponding 5-year estimate for Median Household Income (MHI) was calculated at \$82,234. MFI is typically higher than MHI due to the composition of households. Family households tend to have more people, and more of those members are in their prime earning years.

### Santa Cruz County Median Family and Household Incomes

Income Type	Estimate
Median Family Income	\$102,708
Median Household Income	\$82,234

**Source:** Selected Economic Characteristics (2019), ACS, U.S. Census Bureau



## **LOCAL EFFORTS**

## Local Efforts

### Meeting Early Learning Facility Needs (Item 13)

Due to the high cost of living in Santa Cruz County and the uncertainties/challenges posed by the pandemic, little-to-no new early learning facilities have been developed. Some providers have remained non-operational following the shelter-in-place order initiated in March of 2020 that prompted school and business closures. However, several developments are in the negotiation phase. Facility expansion occurred at one Local Education Agency (LEA) site where a portable unit was added with the capacity to provide two per-school sessions. Additionally, a nonprofit organization is in the process of opening an existing facility on their property with plans to offer full-day preschool in 2022. That Santa Cruz County Office of Education is currently exploring the prospect of conducting an early learning facilities study to better understand the current and future need for facility development, estimate the costs associated with that development, and identify barriers to expansion.

### Requests for Care During Non-Traditional Hours (Item 14)

Data on requests for care during non-traditional hours was provided by the Santa Cruz County Resource and Referral Agency (R&R). Non-traditional hours are defined as child care offered on weekends, evenings, or hours that extend outside of the typical 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday. A summary of the number of requests for care by setting type (i.e., Center-Based vs. Family Child Care Home (FCCH)) received by the R&R from July 2020 to June 2021 is provided in the table below. Among the non-traditional hour options, requests were most frequently received for before- and after-school care. Requests for evening and overnight care were not as common as requests for weekend care. For each of these options, the data suggest a preference for FCCH providers. The large number of requests for care for the full year should be noted, as well as the number of requests for drop-in care.

### Requests for Care by Setting Type

Type of Care Requested	Center-Based	Family Child Care Home
Full-Time	63	233
Part-Time	68	239
Full Year	51	241
School Year Only	26	3
Summer Only	1	2
Drop-In	15	109
Rotating	2	34
<b>Evening Care</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Overnight</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Weekends</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Before School</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>After School</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>185</b>

Source: Santa Cruz County Office of Education (2020/21)

## Meeting Early Learning Workforce and Quality Counts CA Needs (Item 15)

In recent years, Santa Cruz County has experienced a decline in the number of Early Childhood Education (ECE) professionals. In fact, community college enrollment among ECE students was at an all-time low this past Fall. This is partially due to the focus of encouraging all community college students, including ECE students, to complete their transfer coursework and attain a B.A. and/or teaching credential.

At this time, many child care programs are searching for trained and entry level employees. As a result, child care programs have faced difficulty in fully enrolling children and sustaining their businesses. To address the workforce shortage, the Childhood Advisory Council (CAC) of Santa Cruz County collaborated with the County Workforce Development Board to create Career Pathways in Early Childhood Education, a resource available to new “back to workforce” clients searching for career and training options.

In addition, the CAC Community Organizer coordinated the Assembly Bill (AB) 212 Staff Retention and Professional Development Program and the new Quality Counts CA (QCC) Workforce Development Pathway Program. Designed to educate, update, and retain current state- and non-state-funded early educators, the QCC Workforce Development Pathway Program focuses on three areas: workforce advising, professional development, and higher education. By

offering ongoing support, ECE providers are better able to maintain their credentials/permits, navigate online workforce websites, seek continuous education credits, and improve their capacity to offer high-quality ECE to the children enrolled in their programs. The CAC also hosts a monthly Subsidized Programs Consortium Subcommittee for all funded programs. This network of administrators meets regularly to discuss, analyze, and mentor each other on matters that include mandated reporting requirements. Furthermore, this body serves as advisory to the Workforce Development Pathway (WDP), Pilot Plan, Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) CA State Preschool Program (CSPP) Block Grant, the Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP), and the Voluntary Temporary Transfer of Funds mandate.

Quality Counts Santa Cruz County (QCSCC), co-led by First 5 Santa Cruz County and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, shares First 5 California's and the CDE's shared goal of building a more effective, equitable, focused, and high-impact statewide quality improvement system that utilizes the Quality Counts framework. This goal is consistent and integrated with the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care as well as the focus of federal and state investments in the early learning and care workforce. To achieve that broad goal, QCSCC is building on its strong foundation of QRIS implementation that began with Santa Cruz County's participation in the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant and continues to this day through the coordinated implementation of IMPACT, QCC, CSPP, and WDP Block Grant programs. In addition, QCSCC is integrating local quality improvement initiatives and local funding initiatives, like the County of Santa Cruz's Thrive by Three initiative, and local municipalities' children's funds. As of June 30, 2021, all state and federally subsidized centers are participating in QCSCC, as well as 60 FCCHs with state and federally subsidized child care slots.

## Addressing Parent Needs and Concerns (Item 16)

Due to the reprioritization of staffing and resources for emergency response efforts, this activity was not conducted directly by the Santa Cruz County LPC. However, local ECE providers, administrators, and community partners who provide services and supports to parents with young children employed their own methods to assess parent needs and concerns. This information could not be collected, aggregated, nor summarized in time for the submission of this report.

## Increasing Access (Item 17)

Equitable access to child care remains a primary concern in Santa Cruz County. Due to the pandemic, the county experienced a temporary shortage of child care due to program closures. Many critical industries such as retail, restaurant, hospitality, agriculture, and financial services were impacted by the shortage of child care in the county.

In response to the shortage, The Childhood Advisory Council (CAC) initiated the Child Care Expansion Priorities Report, which collects enrollment data from all subsidized child care providers, both state-, and federally-funded. This report is used to secure additional funding to expand their capacity to serve income-eligible children. The report identifies the highest need areas in the county by ZIP which allows for targeted advocacy work and financial support for programs that seek to expand the number of children they serve.

Furthermore, council members meet with local stakeholders frequently to discuss what needs to be done to ensure that providers receive quality improvement training, have access to COVID-19 supplies, and that those who operate in specific geographic areas receive additional funding and support. This collaborative effort maximized the resources available for allocation, resulting in positive outcomes for the most vulnerable families and children in the county. Additionally, the CAC has provided technical support to city and county governments, housing developers, and elected officials in areas that include designing child care centers (e.g., navigating ordinances, zoning, and business permit processes), supporting local designated child care funding measures, utilization of American Rescue Plan Act (ARAP) and other COVID-related funding, and the distribution of Local Developer Fee funding. All efforts were designed to expand, retain, and support the existing child care industry in the county.





# Pilot County Data Requirements

# Pilot County Data Requirements

## Requests for Care (Item 18)

Santa Cruz is a Pilot Plan county. Children are served in city of Watsonville through Community Bridges, Child Development Division, Encompass Head Start, PVUSD Early Education/Child Development Programs, and YWCA of Watsonville. Other Pilot programs in the county are operated by Cabrillo College Children's Center, Live Oak School District Extended Learning/Child Development, Pacific Elementary State Preschool, Walnut Avenue Family and Women's Center, and the University of California Santa Cruz Early Education Services. By modifying several contract sections, participating programs eliminated barriers to enroll low-income children into their programs, thereby expanding the number of eligible children. However, the programs still receive a large number of requests for care that they do not have the capacity to provide. A summary of the total number of requests received by participating providers is provided in the table below (Note: Data on requests for care received by Pilot Plan providers is not collected at the level specified in the CA Department of Education's Needs Assessment Template).

### Requests for Care Among Pilot Plan Providers

	Part-Time	Full-Time	Nontraditional
Number of Requests	157	257	0

Source: Santa Cruz County Office of Education (January - June 2021)

## Self-Sufficiency Standard Income (Item 19)

According to data reported by the Center for Women's Welfare at the University of Washington, a family of four with two adults and two children under the age six years, both residing and utilizing child care in Santa Cruz County, must earn between \$133,373 and \$145,534 annually (depending on the specific ages of each child which determine the type/cost of child care services) to make ends meet financially. A family fitting this description can expect to allocate approximately 25% of its salary to cover child care expenses.

## Self-Sufficiency Standard Income for a Family of Four with Two Young Children Residing in Santa Cruz County

Family Characteristics	Annual Self-Sufficiency Standard Income (SSSI)	Percent of Annual SSSI Allocated to Child Care
2 Adults, 2 Infants/Toddlers	\$145,534	27%
2 Adults, 1 Infant/Toddler, 1 Preschool-Aged Child	\$139,452	26%
2 Adults, 2 Preschool-Aged Children	\$133,373	24%

**Source:** Monthly Costs in Santa Cruz County, CA 2021, Family Needs Calculator, Insight Center

## Emergency Preparedness (Item 20)

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has highlighted the need to remain prepared in case of an emergency. Most notably, the pandemic provided an opportunity for the community to highlight child care as an essential service that offers support for the children of other essential workers in the community. The Childhood Advisory Council (CAC), along with Child Development Program partners, hosts a weekly Child Care Briefing where the County Superintendent of School presents the latest COVID-19 updates and shares new resources with various child care providers. The meeting recordings and resources are shared with providers and community partners. This meeting has become an information hub that has included presenters from different non-profits, LEAs, SBDC, FCCH network members, and community partners. Additionally, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (COE) sends newsletters to families on a monthly basis, or more frequently depending on needs (e.g., when a critical decision is made by the state that pertains to children’s health or education). The COE website also contains a special webpage, RESTORE, to disseminate important COVID-19 updates, as well as resources for students, families, teachers, and administrators.

Efforts have been made to ensure that all communities have access to information about COVID-19. The CAC Community Organizer regularly attends the South County COVID-19 Triage Committee, which addresses the specific needs of south county residents. This committee creates action plans to address marketing, funding, dissemination of information, language barriers, education barriers, services, farmworker needs, and vaccine clinics. In partnership with the Santa Cruz County Resource and Referral Agency (R&R) and First 5, the CAC Community Organizer facilitated the distribution of COVID-19 supplies to child care providers in the county. In addition, the CAC Community Organizer represents the child care industry on the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County’s Economic Recovery Council, whose goal is to help get people back to work by supporting the safe reopening of businesses under public health guidance. As a member of this

council, the CAC Community Organizer provides pandemic impact data on the child care industry, such as the available child care options/slots for essential and returning workers, and collects vital pandemic data and information to share with the child care industry.

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