

Success for Every Child



SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:

Challenging Communities to Change the Child Care Crisis

An Interview with Build Up for San Mateo County's Children Leaders

How can San Mateo County close the gap of 19,000 needed child care, preschool and afterschool spaces? According to Christine Padilla and Sarah Kinahan of Build Up for San Mateo County's Children (Build Up SMC), there isn't a one-size fits all approach to this problem—every city and person requires something different. And to make a real difference, these leaders also know that solutions must be practical.

Build Up SMC is a critical initiative that is working to grow and improve the supply of child care and preschool facilities in San Mateo County. Utilizing a multi-pronged approach, Build Up is seeking to alleviate the child care shortage through the reuse of existing available spaces, inclusion of child care in new developments, partnerships with large employers, and generating new capital funds.

Build Up's approach goes beyond Early Childhood Education (ECE)—at its core is multi-sector relationship building that improves the lives of families, the infrastructure of the community and the economies of cities within San Mateo County. "With such a significant shortage, we needed to move outside the ECE circle, we needed more

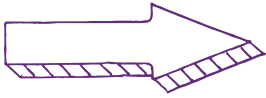
people to be an 'advocate' for the cause because it affects us all," Padilla said.

Leaders within the organization focus on child care as a benefit that supports employee retention and productivity, along with creating a sustainable work-life balance for parents and caregivers. Kinahan brings attention to the fact that the child care crisis is an economic and community issue that impacts overall life potential.

"It takes a lot of leg work and relationship-building to sustain progress," Kinahan said. "It's not often something that's on a city council's radar, but as soon as we share the impact the child care crisis has on everyone, it's eye-opening for them." Child care is part of community infrastructure, interrelated



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with housing and transit. According to Padilla and Kinahan it is about taking care of our environment, our workforce, our children and their future. Build Up envisions child care located close to homes, jobs and transit that makes the community better as a whole, for everyone in it.

To-date, Build Up SMC has worked with child care providers and cities to add 1,600 child care spaces, with a goal of adding 3,000 by June 2020.

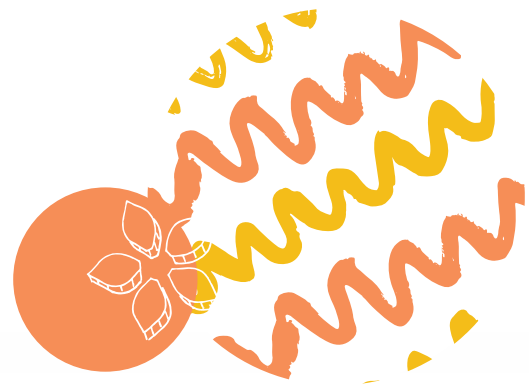
Tackling this issue city by city and person by person is not accomplished without great difficulties. As Padilla acknowledges, different cities have different needs and challenges and San Mateo County is unique with vast disparities across the county that can't always be seen. It can sometimes take time to get buy-in from cities and achieve the funding that is needed to tackle this crisis. To continue progress, further support from cities and communities is needed.

In the next year, Build Up SMC will be taking on these challenges with a variety of strategies, including growing its capital fund. Gilead Sciences,

Inc., Build Up's first corporate donor, recently provided a \$50,000 grant to Build Up SMC. Using this funding, Build Up SMC will be rolling out mini grants for small at-home child care facilities so these small businesses can increase their capacities. These exciting opportunities coincide with SB234, new state legislation that makes it easier for licensed family homes to expand the number of spaces they offer.

And perhaps most importantly, Build Up SMC will continue with expanded community awareness and relationship-building in order to create change across the county. "Helping different sectors recognize the interconnectedness between child care, the economy, and workforce, as well as overall community wellness, is essential to move forward. The Child Care shortage is not an isolated problem and it impacts communities on numerous levels." Padilla said.

Learn how you can [be an advocate](#) for Build Up SMC and [sign up](#) for the First 5 San Mateo County newsletter to stay up to date with the latest news.



First 5 San Mateo County is entrusted with the strategic investment of nearly \$7 million public dollars each year specifically earmarked to help children and families in our county succeed. We work on behalf of the more than 53,000 children ages zero to five living here to ensure their every need is met, their families are supported and their future is a priority.