

**For Immediate Release- Updated**  
**March 3, 2021**

## **Vaccines Distributed to Early Childhood Educators**

***Hundreds of early childhood educators were vaccinated against COVID-19 during the first week of eligibility***

SAN MATEO COUNTY - On February 22, 2021, San Mateo County Health announced the expansion of COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to child care providers, along with teachers, first responders, and food and agricultural workers. With this announcement, these essential workers are eligible for the protection they need to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Child care providers are a critical piece of our community's infrastructure. "Early childhood educators have been on the front lines caring for children ages 0-14 throughout the pandemic," shares Angel Barrios, executive director of the Institute for Human and Social Development. "We are essential to our families and the community."

In response to the shortage of adequate vaccine supply, the San Mateo County COVID-19 Child Care Response Team advocated for the prioritization of early childhood educators during Phase 1B and made recommendations to San Mateo County Health to support equitable distribution. As of this release, hundreds of early education professionals have been vaccinated in San Mateo County, including at three child care-eligible vaccination clinics hosted by San Mateo County Health last week. These efforts prioritized those who have remained open during the pandemic and who serve the highest-risk families and communities, including East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, Redwood City, Belle Haven and Daly City.

Child care professionals and early educators can receive vaccines from their primary health providers, federally operated FEMA clinics, and vaccination clinics through San Mateo County Health. Find more information here: [www.smchealth.org/covidvaccine](http://www.smchealth.org/covidvaccine). Information on available vaccine appointments can also be found at [myturn.ca.gov](http://myturn.ca.gov). Child care vaccination updates are available through 4Cs of San Mateo County at [sanmateo4cs.org](http://sanmateo4cs.org). Residents should sign up for both the [County's notification tool](#) (<https://bit.ly/2MOO6eY>) and the State's [MyTurn tool](#) ([myturn.ca.gov](http://myturn.ca.gov)). It is expected that MyTurn will offer vaccine appointment scheduling in San Mateo County starting on March 15.

The Response Team is continuing to work to maximize vaccine access for this essential workforce. This includes partnering with the San Mateo County Department of Health to organize additional vaccination events and collaborating with community partners to minimize barriers to getting vaccines. Many in the child care workforce not only serve vulnerable communities, but are themselves under-resourced women and women of color. Heather Cleary, chief executive officer of Peninsula Family Service says, "We are working to address access barriers, such as lack of transportation, so that early educators who have been

on the front lines of this pandemic do not miss the opportunity to receive this life-saving vaccine simply because they cannot get there.”

The San Mateo County COVID-19 Child Care Response Team thanks early childhood educators and recognizes the vital role they play for young children and families—work that in turn builds strong economies, interrupts intergenerational cycles of poverty, empowers women and working families, and improves academic and health outcomes.

“In child care programs across the county, early childhood educators have cared for our county’s most vulnerable children amidst unprecedented challenges,” says First 5 San Mateo County executive director, Kitty Lopez. “We hope that these current events will reinforce the resolve of leaders, as well as our community at large, to not only prioritize early educators during COVID-19, but to also commit to the long-term work of addressing systemic inequities and investing in this essential workforce.”

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*First 5 San Mateo County works on behalf of children ages 0-5 in San Mateo County - to ensure their every need is met, their families are supported, and their future is a priority. We partner with our community and make investments to create the conditions that will allow all young children to prosper socially, emotionally, and economically. First 5 San Mateo County was created in 1998 when California voters passed Proposition 10.*

*In March 2020, early care and education leaders in San Mateo County came together to form the San Mateo County COVID-19 Child Care Response Team (“Response Team”) to ensure a coordinated child care relief and recovery effort during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

