



**DCYF  
2005**

*Mapping the Future of San Francisco's  
Services to Children, Youth, and Their Families*



*“When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.” – Ethiopian proverb*

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the Future of  
San Francisco’s  
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**Note:** Throughout this Community Needs Assessment, recommendations are described as:

- ✓ In progress
- ➔ Next steps
- Recommendation







April 6, 2005

Dear San Franciscans,

The 2005 Community Needs Assessment is an exciting document, filled with innovative recommendations about what we can do as a city to improve our services to children, youth, and their families. I intend to work closely with DCYF and all of our city departments to implement these recommendations.

We know that we face challenges in serving our children well. As a result of failed leadership at the state and national level, some of the most basic services to our children, youth and families are being cut or even dismantled. Our systems for providing health care, child care, education, public housing, and community development are all being subjected to budget shortfalls and regressive policy changes.

But I am determined to do everything we can at the local level to make this a city that welcomes and supports its families. It is important that San Franciscans realize that all of our futures depend on what we do for our children, and that we all have a stake in the success of all of our children.

It is difficult for me to go to some of our neighborhoods and see children whose day-to-day lives are so fraught with pain they have already given up on life. It is inconceivable that 44% of parents with children under age six in our city are considering leaving San Francisco. We simply cannot be a city without children, without families. I am concerned when I see children on the streets of all our neighborhoods because after-school and youth employment programs have waiting lists and are forced to turn children away.

I am proud of the steps I have taken to improve life for children, youth and their families. We have the nation's only local earned income tax credit for low income working families. We are continuing to expand the city's landmark universal health coverage for young people. I have appointed nationally-recognized new leadership for our juvenile probation department and the Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF). I am reorganizing our fragmented youth employment system, redesigning the child welfare system, protecting our child care system, and revitalizing our recreation programs. I am initiating *Communities of Opportunity*, a coordinated focus on the southeast sector to improve housing, economic development and support services for families. I have fostered a close working relationship with the public schools, bringing an unprecedented level of city resources to meet their needs.

I am deeply committed to the principles embodied in this report:

- Equity for all families.
- Empowerment of our children, youth, parents and communities.
- Effective policies and services.
- Efficient use of public resources.

I hope this report will be a call to action for all of us – giving us a specific blueprint to improve opportunities for our children, youth and their families. We need to bring all sectors of our city together to commit to the well-being of children. Everyone has a role to play. Together we can counter the forces at the state and national level. Together, we can bring the creativity, compassion, and energy of San Francisco to the fore, to nurture the young people who will carry on for us.

Sincerely,



Mayor Gavin Newsom

**Setting a precedent.** The Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Their Families (MOCYF), was created in 1987 by Mayor Art Agnos to promote city policies and to coordinate and improve services to San Francisco's children and youth. In 1991, in a precedent-setting action, San Francisco voters amended the city charter to create the Children's Fund (section 16.108). MOCYF was designated by the newly-elected mayor, Frank Jordan, to administer the Fund. In 2000, after Mayor Willie Brown recommended that MOCYF become a city department, the Board of Supervisors passed the necessary legislation to create the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, better known as DCYF.

**Assessing the needs of the community.** In 2000, voters again supported children by renewing the Children's Fund. This time the legislation stipulated DCYF as the agency to both administer the Fund and spearhead the city's overall planning for children's services through three-year planning cycles. Now in 2005, in the second round of planning, DCYF is required to create a Community Needs Assessment – a three-year framework for the goals and objectives for children and youth services citywide.

In 2002, DCYF, the Mayor, and the Board of Supervisors adopted goals for San Francisco's children and youth:

- Children and youth are healthy.
- Children and youth are ready to learn and are succeeding in school.
- Children and youth live in safe, supported families and safe, supported, viable communities.
- Children and youth contribute to the growth, development, and vitality of San Francisco.<sup>1</sup>

This 2005 Community Needs Assessment (CNA) builds on these 2002 goals. In addition, the assessment examines existing data and recommendations on effective services for children, youth, and their families from more than 40 reports completed by city agencies over the past three years. Recommendations for new directions are based on that information, as well as a six-month planning process that included parent and youth surveys, input from public and private service providers, community meetings, and comments from city commissions and the general public.

Most of the recommendations in the CNA are directed to the primary public agencies serving children, youth, and their families: DCYF, Department of Public Health, Human Services Agency, Recreation and Park Department, Juvenile Probation Department, San Francisco Unified School District, First 5 San Francisco, Public Library, and the Mayor's Offices of Community Development and Criminal Justice. The recommendations also relate to more than 300 community-based agencies and child care centers, as well as the broader community of funders, businesses, and civic and other community organizations.

Planning is a dynamic process, so the recommendations presented here will inevitably evolve and change. The staff of DCYF presents this assessment with a commitment to an ongoing dialogue about how to best meet the needs of the city's children, youth, and their families.





# DCYF Community Needs Assessment



# *San Francisco's Children: Endangered?*

**The San Francisco Charter  
calls on city government to meet its  
goals for children and youth:**

**to ensure that they are healthy,  
ready to learn, succeed in school,  
and live in stable, safe, and  
supported families and  
communities.**

**Many San Franciscans can truthfully say,** “Our children are doing OK,” because there are children and youth – in all neighborhoods and in all ethnic and socioeconomic groups – who have loving families, are healthy, attend good schools, live in safe homes, and are engaged in creative and supportive out-of-school activities. These children are enjoying the wonders of San Francisco, hailed by many as the most beautiful city in the world.

These children will grow up to have deep roots in the city, to be the leaders, activists, long term residents, parents, and workers of tomorrow’s San Francisco.

But for too many other San Francisco children and their families there is another reality. They are being pushed out of the city. The trend is, and some observers have predicted, that San Francisco will become a city without families raising children.

A city without children has no future.

The child population of San Francisco has already declined dramatically, leaving it with the smallest proportion of children living in any city in the country.<sup>2</sup> An astonishing 44 percent of San Francisco parents with children under age six say they are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to leave within the next three years.<sup>3</sup> These families either can’t afford housing, find their neighborhoods unfriendly to children, fear violence, are disappointed in the educational opportunities available, or feel isolated and unwanted. They just can’t make life work the way they want.

There are also children – perhaps up to 20 percent of the child population – whom the city has simply failed. Their families are in frequent upheaval, suffering chronic financial stress. These children do not have the opportunities and supports that are needed for healthy development. They are likely to have health and behavioral problems, perform poorly in school, and/or enter the juvenile justice or child welfare systems. They are growing up watching friends and family suffer the tragedies of violence, and they live without the joys and discoveries of childhood itself. Ultimately, the solution to the problems confronting these children and youth is less about



behavior modification, than it is about expanding and enriching opportunities for all members of the family.

This is a report about San Francisco's service delivery system for children, youth, and their families. It asks the question: What can we, as a city, do to better address the unmet needs of our children, and make San Francisco a more family-friendly city?

This report addresses changes and improvements needed in the service delivery systems. It does not address many equally significant issues families face regarding employment, public safety, housing, and economics. The report's recommendations are aimed at strengthening the city's human capital – so that children, youth, and their families are able to access and take advantage of the opportunities that Mayor Newsom and the city's civic leadership are developing to address the quality of life for all San Franciscans.



**THE GOOD NEWS.** There is much to celebrate about the health and well-being of children living in San Francisco. Maternal and child health indicators have improved.

**The infant mortality rate is low** at 3.8 percent, well below the statewide average;<sup>4</sup> and immunization rates exceed 80 percent.<sup>5</sup>

**Test scores in the public schools are improving.** Academic achievement is up for all groups of students including all ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education, and gifted students. Indeed, San Francisco's academic performance on state-mandated assessments has been among the highest of urban education jurisdictions in the nation.<sup>6</sup>

**High-risk behaviors are decreasing.** Contrary to popular belief, crimes committed by youth in the city have declined. The number of juvenile felony arrests declined by half over ten years, from 2,477 in 1994 to 1,198 in 2003.<sup>7</sup> Fewer youth engage in high-risk behaviors such as sexual intercourse or carrying weapons to school. In just two years the percentage of youth reporting heavy drinking declined from 13 percent in 2001 to 10 percent in 2003.<sup>8</sup> And, teen parenting rates and repeat births have declined 45 percent and 42 percent, respectively, since 1990.<sup>9</sup>



**THE BAD NEWS.** Unfortunately, much of this good news is not shared by all segments of the child and youth population.

**African American children are the most likely to be institutionalized.** The overrepresentation of African American children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems has been a focus of policy for over twenty years. The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice estimates that approximately one third of African American males between the ages of 15 and 17 are arrested and placed in the Juvenile Hall each year.<sup>10</sup> Sadly, 136 of every 1,000 African American children are in foster care, compared to the statewide average of 39 per 1,000.<sup>11</sup>

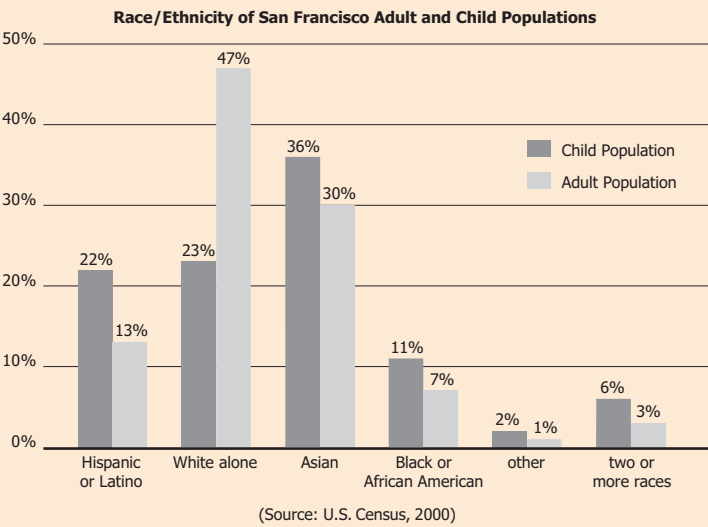
**Success in school varies significantly by race.** Only 17 percent of African American students and 23 percent of Latino students successfully complete the course requirements for admission to the UC and CSU systems, compared to 50 percent of White and 56 percent of Asian students. High school graduation rates show a similar pattern, with 57 percent of African American students and 62 percent of Latino students graduating, compared to 82 percent and 89 percent of Whites and Asians respectively.<sup>12</sup>

While it would appear from the aggregate data and rates of risk factors that Asian/Pacific Islander (API) children fare better than children in other ethnic groups, this is an over-simplification of their status. The *Services and Advocacy for Asian Youth Consortium* refutes what it calls the "model minority" myth – identifying the challenges that face API youth, particularly those who have experienced hardships in their native countries. API youth have the highest depression rates of any population of youth, and one-third of API youth report being victims of physical violence. The lack of disaggregated data hides the problems of specific ethnicities. For instance, Samoan youth have the second highest arrest rate of any ethnic group in San Francisco.<sup>13</sup>

According to the National Economic Development and Law Center, the annual income required for economic self-sufficiency for a San Francisco family of three (one adult, an infant, and a pre-schooler) was \$69,241 in 2003.<sup>14</sup> One-third of San Francisco's families were not able to meet basic needs without public or private assistance.

**THE DEMOGRAPHICS.** The three most striking demographic features of San Francisco's 112,802 children are their diversity, their small numbers relative to the adult population, and their concentration in low-income neighborhoods.

San Francisco has one of the most racially and ethnically diverse populations of children in the country. Thirty-five percent of the



The children who call San Francisco home are among the most racially and ethnically diverse populations in the nation. They are also a declining percent of the city's total population.

city's births are to immigrant women. Nearly 30 percent of the students in the public schools are English Language Learners (speaking 51 different languages) with more than half of the students in each grade level speaking a language at home other than English.<sup>15</sup> Over the past 20 years, the ethnic mix of the city's children has changed as the number of African American and White children declined and the number of Latino and Asian children, many of them immigrants, increased. In the 1990s the city lost over 20 percent of its African American children. Today, 16 percent of the children in Visitacion Valley and just half of those in Bayview-Hunters Point are African American.<sup>16</sup>

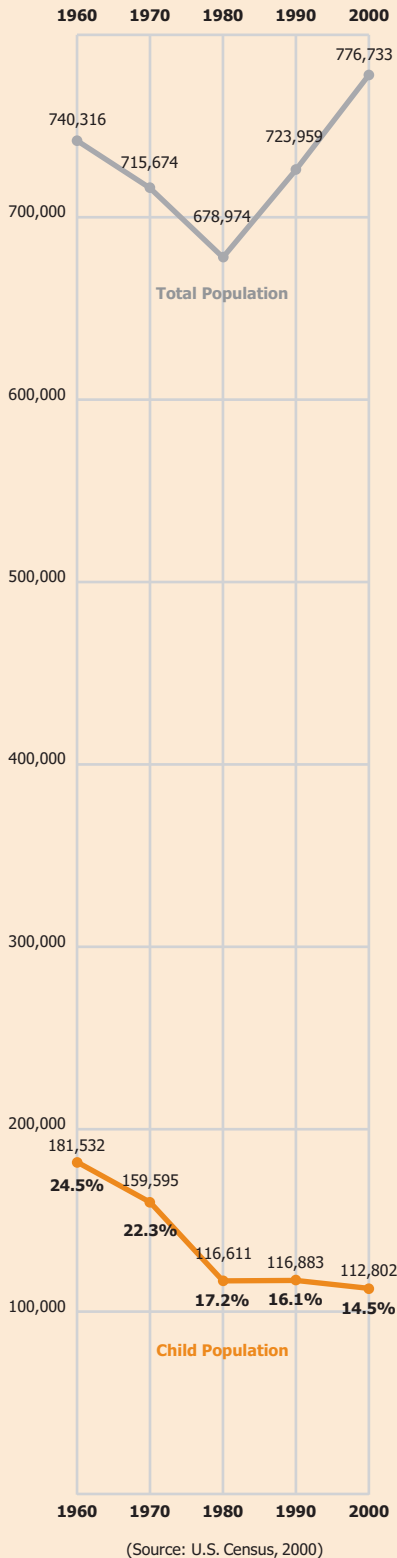
Significantly, the demographics of San Francisco's children are different from the overall population of the city. San Francisco households without children are predominantly White and have a higher average income than households with children.

The neighborhoods of the city most densely populated with families raising children are primarily in the southeast sector – Bayview-Hunters Point, the Mission, Visitacion Valley, Ingleside, and the Excelsior. Thirty percent of the population in Bayview-Hunters Point and nearly one-quarter of the population in Visitacion Valley are under 18 years of age. The percentage of San Francisco children living in poverty is 14 percent compared to just 11 percent of adults. African American and Latino children experience the highest rates of poverty, 36 percent and 18 percent, respectively.<sup>17</sup> Yet because of their large population in the city, Asians make up the greatest number of children (approximately 5,000) living in poverty in San Francisco.<sup>18</sup> Citywide, one in seven children live with relatives other than a parent.<sup>19</sup>

*“Home is where you put  
down roots. The city  
suffers when families feel  
they have to move  
elsewhere to make it.”*

*– San Francisco Parent*

**Total Population and Child Population  
San Francisco, 1960 – 2000**



The proportion of children in San Francisco is smaller than the proportion of children in the state or the nation. Children comprise only 14.5 percent of San Francisco’s population compared to 26 percent of the U.S. population and 27 percent of California’s population. It would appear there is a continuing trend towards fewer children in the city – as both private and public school enrollment as well as the number of births decrease each year. The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) experienced a 5 percent decline in enrollment between the 1999–2000 and 2003–2004 school years. Private schools experienced an 8 percent decline during this same period. In the elementary grades the drop in enrollment ranged from 7 percent to 15 percent in SFUSD and 13 percent to 18 percent in private schools.<sup>20</sup> Over the same period of time, San Francisco’s birthrate for women age 15 to 44 declined from 55.3 to 45.7 births per 1,000 women.<sup>21</sup>

The demographic realities of San Francisco’s children boil down to four challenges for the city:

- Addressing changing language and cultural needs
- Shifting locations of services to where children reside
- Keeping children’s issues a high public priority despite their small numbers in the population, and
- Keeping families in the city



# Making Services Work Better for Children

*Systemwide  
Issues and  
Needed Reforms*



## LOCATION OF SERVICES

**Location matters.** Finding the right distribution of services among San Francisco's many neighborhoods is an ongoing challenge. The city's unwritten policy has been that services be funded in all parts of the city, but that the highest level of services be available for children in the greatest need. Fortunately, this policy of distributing services by both population and need has been embraced by decisionmakers, despite competing needs and a governance system where each neighborhood has its own legislator.

DCYF has evaluated the location of city-funded services in relation to the density of the child population.

**Services are clustered where the highest-need children reside.** Community-based organizations are clustered in high-need neighborhoods, such as the Mission, Bayview-Hunters Point, Chinatown, Tenderloin/South of Market, and the Western Addition. For instance, the Mission is home to over 30 community agencies serving children and youth at 65 sites. To respond to changing demographics, in the past decade, services have been added to the Tenderloin, Treasure Island, and Visitacion Valley.

The Richmond and the Sunset pose unique problems to the service delivery system due to their geographic size and economic diversity. They have lower risk indicators than some other neighborhoods and house fewer nonprofit agencies. Services that do exist are far apart. Yet in absolute numbers, the Sunset and Richmond have many high-need children and youth – both living in these neighborhoods and commuting to these areas for school. The Richmond has more CalWORKs families than the Tenderloin.<sup>22</sup> The five elementary schools in the Sunset have more students receiving free and reduced lunch than the five elementary schools in Bayview-Hunters Point.<sup>23</sup>

Although the Excelsior and Ocean View, Merced Heights, Ingleside (OMI) have significant numbers of children, these neighborhoods have fewer community-based organizations than other neighborhoods with comparable risk indicators.

Recreation centers, schools, and libraries are spread more evenly around the city than community-based organizations. These sites could provide opportunities to expand services in areas where other space is unavailable.

Child care centers are becoming more equitably distributed throughout the city.

DCYF will evaluate the geographic distribution of services every three years, and recommend adjustments to better reflect the overall needs of families.





**Citywide and neighborhood services are both essential.**

It is critical that both neighborhood and citywide services be available. Agencies meeting specialized needs should be organized on a citywide level in order to pull resources and develop the expertise needed to provide quality services. Such specialized citywide organizations serve teen parents, homeless families, children with special health care needs, new immigrant families, children in foster care, child care providers, and youth in the juvenile justice system – among others.

Furthermore, many children move freely around the city, living in one neighborhood and spending time with relatives, at school, or in a parent’s workplace, all in different parts of the city. Sometimes, for important confidentiality and safety reasons, families prefer to leave their home neighborhood for services, or they may feel they can only get the particular services they need outside their neighborhood. For instance, DCYF-funded agencies in Chinatown estimate 60 percent of their clients come from outside the neighborhood.

Because the Board of Supervisors is organized by district, there is an emphasis on neighborhood planning. Yet it is critical that policymakers understand the importance of agencies that serve citywide populations. Approximately one-third of those served through DCYF use the services of these agencies, with the majority of service recipients coming from neighborhoods with the highest risk indicators.

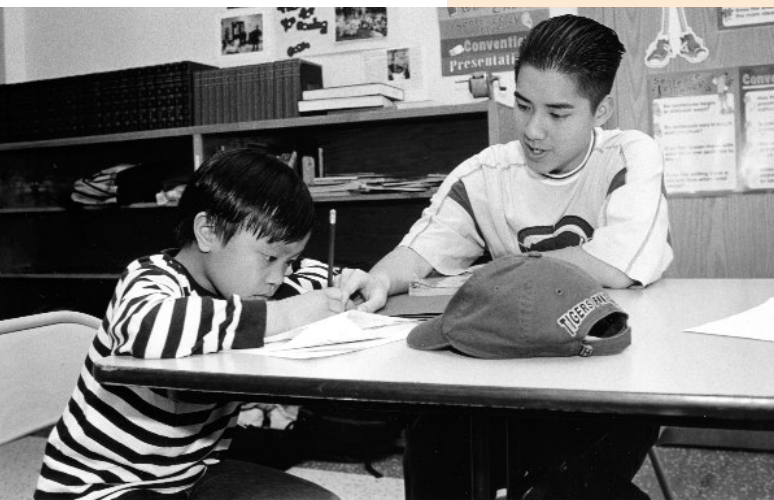
*“We serve kids  
from all over the city,  
and they manage  
to recognize the  
importance of leaving  
their turf at the door.”*

*– Program Director*



*“Youth who hang out on street corners need jobs which in turn gives them legitimacy. It changes them ways and they don’t want to go back.”*

*– Outreach Worker*



## Seven Street Corners: High Need, Small Area

The Human Services Agency (HSA) has identified seven street corners where the need for social services is highly concentrated.<sup>24</sup> All of these street corners are adjacent to low-income housing. The majority of children removed from their homes because of child abuse live within walking distance of one of these street corners. Much of the juvenile justice and children’s behavioral health caseloads are also concentrated around the same seven street corners: Middle Point Road and West Point; Griffith and Oakdale; Sunnydale and Santos; Laguna and Golden Gate; Eddy and Jones; Connecticut and 25th Street; and Fitzgerald and Griffith. HSA suggests that by creating “prevention zones” around these corners, the city could dramatically change the course of these neighborhoods, shrink the number of children removed from their homes, and reduce community violence.

The analysis by HSA also reveals that a small number of families who are caught up in the child welfare, behavioral health, and juvenile justice systems consume the majority of services. For example:

- Only 126 youth account for more than half of the days at the Juvenile Hall. Eighty percent of these youth are also clients of the Department of Public Health (DPH) Behavioral Health, and 40 percent are in foster care.
- Ten percent of the children served by DPH Behavioral Health account for 55 percent of the public costs – 480 children cost \$16.5 million.

Because a small number of families are involved with multiple agencies, families often have to deal with many different “official helpers” addressing their problems. This is an inefficient use of city resources, and also confusing and time-consuming for families. DPH is addressing this issue by continuing to integrate its “system of care” for families in the mental health system with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. HSA is also developing a system of “wraparound” services for

families – aimed at keeping children out of institutional care and in their own homes.

### DCYF recommends that:

- Public and private agencies work together to create “prevention zones” and concentrate additional resources near the seven street corners. These resources should focus on job training, healthcare, substance abuse treatment, child care, and parent education.
- HSA, DPH, and Juvenile Probation Department (JPD) continue to improve their interagency case management systems to create a seamless system of care for the city’s highest-risk families.



**Parents lack information.** Parents often complain about the difficulty of obtaining information about services and activities for their children and families. Over the years, there have been several successful initiatives to provide information to parents and youth, such as *TALKline*, (a 30-year-old child abuse prevention hotline), the recently created *Parent Ambassador* (a program of First 5 San Francisco), and *Youthline*. However, San Francisco has never developed a coordinated strategy for getting information about children's services to the public. It is time to incorporate the best aspects of the existing strategies into a more coherent and comprehensive public information system.

**DCYF recommends that:**

- ➔ First 5, the Public Library, DCYF, and parent organizations collaborate to create a parent-friendly website with up-to-date information about activities and services for families, and that strategies to address the "digital divide" be included in this initiative
- ➔ Public and private organizations of all kinds increase their efforts to get information to parents and youth, utilizing public libraries, faith-based institutions, SFUSD, MUNI, and the media to assist with dissemination
- ➔ City contractors providing services to children, youth, and their families be required to regularly disseminate information about benefits and services to their clients
- ➔ HSA, SFUSD, the Public Library, DCYF, and other relevant agencies collaborate to increase access to state- and federally-funded benefits for children, such as food programs
- ➔ Visibility and utilization of *Youthline* be increased and that the data collected on these calls be used to document unmet needs
- Collaboration with the planners of the city's "311" system and United Way's "211" system becomes a priority – ensuring that information provided to the public about services to children, youth, and their families be user-friendly
- An official information hub where residents can learn about services in each supervisorial district be designated and resourced
- The lessons and strategies of the *Parent Ambassador Program* be incorporated into a citywide, multilingual outreach program to get the word out to parents

**Transportation is a longstanding problem.** Transporting children from school (including pre-school) to after-school activities and home is a major problem for many families. This has become a growing challenge as the number of parents who work increases and as families choose schools and services in different parts of the city. MUNI and school bus services are limited, and safety is a major concern. There are a few examples of successful transportation strategies, such as the *Mission Van Collaborative*. Because the need for transportation has become increasingly urgent, it is time to develop realistic citywide solutions.

DCYF is prepared to convene a planning effort with MUNI, the public school bus company, the Recreation and Park Department, and community organizations to expand and improve the safety of transportation for children. This effort will include an investigation of the feasibility of the city and/or private agencies operating a fleet of vans to transport children to after-school programs.

**DCYF recommends that:**

- Employers develop family-friendly policies respecting parents' need to pick up and drop off their children

## ACCESS TO SERVICES



*“If a young person  
hasn’t made positive  
connections to school,  
the workforce, or the  
community by age 25,  
they’re likely to be in  
jail, on the street,  
missing, or dead.”*

– Youth Policymaker



**Family-friendly outreach.** Parents and youth report that language barriers, inappropriate hours, hard-to-reach locations, and lack of cultural competence sometimes make services inaccessible. While it is city policy to support both culturally specific and multicultural agencies and programs, the increasing diversity of neighborhoods calls for a reassessment of the appropriate balance. Ensuring that all who seek services feel consistently welcomed requires a high level of flexibility and sensitivity in accommodating the unique needs of each family.

#### **DCYF recommends that:**

- ➔ Public and private agencies collaborate to co-locate services and create neighborhood hubs to increase the accessibility of services to residents
- Service providers increase their capacity to respond sensitively to the broad range of families who reside in the city, and provide each other with mutual assistance toward that goal, including assistance with language capacity and translation
- Public agencies utilize the contracting process to expand accessibility (location and hours), language capacity, and cultural competence of funded agencies, and that these issues be part of the contracting criteria

**Supporting the transition to adulthood.** Youth services have traditionally been limited to children under age 18. Yet the needs of young people do not stop suddenly on their 18th birthday. This is especially true of young adults ages 18 through 24 who lack strong connections to school, work, or caring adults. In addition to youth who “age out” of the foster care system, young people with real and continuing needs for services and support include youth in the juvenile justice system, pregnant and parenting teens, and runaway and emancipated youth. Particularly in this troubled economy, San Francisco has a significantly high number of young people who face difficult transition years.

To address some of the health care issues confronting this age group, this past year, the Mayor extended the city’s universal health insurance program to young people between the ages of 19 and 24 who are enrolled in Healthy Families, Healthy Kids, or Medi-Cal. Additionally, several new youth job initiatives have been expanded to include young people through age 24. The city must now build on the work that has begun and more fully address the need for safe housing, employment, economic literacy, and the opportunity to complete high school, as well as the need for health, mental health, substance abuse, and child care services.

#### **DCYF recommends that:**

- ✓ The city’s universal health insurance program continue to expand incrementally to include all youth through age 24
- ➔ The city’s workforce development policies prioritize the special needs of young people aged 18 through 24
- An interdepartmental Transitional Youth Task Force (including representatives of San Francisco City College, the Private Industry Council, the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, as well as other public and private sector service providers) be convened to assess the housing, educational, employment, mental health, and economic needs of “disconnected” youth 18- through 24-years old. The potential for providing housing, employment, and free tuition at City College for emancipated youth and youth transitioning from foster care should also be assessed.

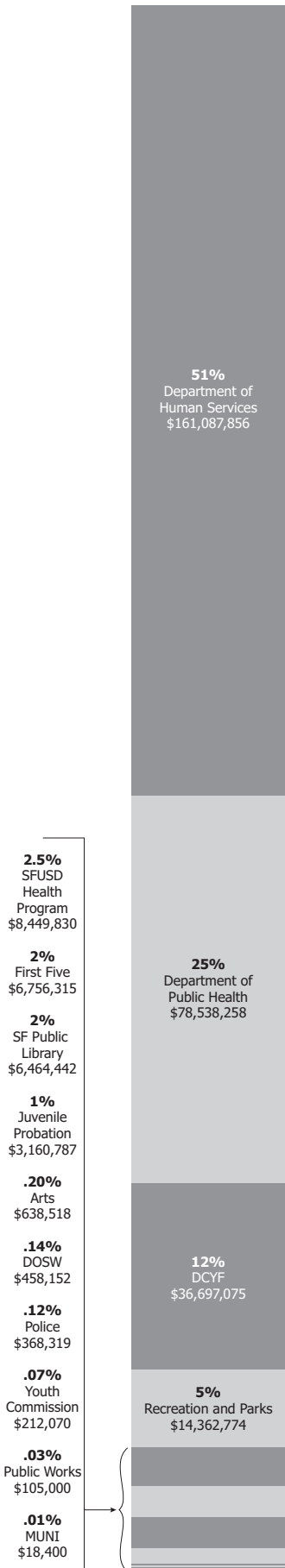
# Making Services Work Better for Children

*Management*



## MONEY

Allocation of Funds by City Department



(Source: Children's Services Allocation Plan:  
A Blueprint for the Children's Fund,  
DCYF [November 2003].  
Figures based on fiscal year 2003–2004.)

**Prevention dollars: a small slice of the city's budget pie.** As a result of the voter-initiated Children's Fund, San Francisco is able to spend more than most cities on preventive children's services. Yet the Children's Fund, the largest pot of money for prevention, comprises only 9 percent of city spending on children.

The city spends more than \$300 million on children's services, or approximately 6 percent of the city budget (not including SFUSD, the court system, juvenile detention or the Police Department). Half of this \$300 million is state and federal money earmarked for entitlement programs such as Medi-Cal and CalWORKs, and for children in foster care. These programs are administered through the HSA, which manages about \$160 million of the total investment in children, and DPH, which manages 25 percent of the investment. The city has little discretion over most of this funding, and very little of it is for primary prevention. San Francisco's spending mirrors national patterns – the majority of money goes to a relatively small number of children and youth for intervention after problems arise.<sup>25</sup>

**Budget cutbacks and new investments.** Despite efforts by policymakers to protect children's services, budget crises have impacted how the city can serve children. *The Children's Baseline* (local discretionary spending on children) has decreased as a percent of the city's General Fund, and has not kept up with rising costs.

State and federal cutbacks have made matters worse. In the coming year, the city anticipates losing millions in children's services, including \$3 million for youth employment programs in the highest-need neighborhoods; \$3 million in state First 5 dollars going to family support, mental health, child care, and health services; and an undetermined amount in community block grants and child care reimbursements, as well as funds for housing, health, and education.

Some additional funds for mental health services will come through Prop. 63, but these funds cannot be used to supplant existing services. This year the city will spend \$3.3 million from Prop. H funds for *Preschool for All*, and \$6.6 million for art, music, sports, libraries, and other services in the schools. Fortunately, private donors in San Francisco have been generous. They can play a critical role in shaping services and policy. But the current funding for children's services poses challenges. There will be insufficient local funds to compensate for state and federal cuts. Significant unmet needs will persist in some neighborhoods and among some populations of children and families.

### DCYF recommends that:

- ✓ City departments expand strategies to "draw down" state and federal funding (particularly for health and social services) including the development of "wraparound" services through a state waiver, expansion of the number of children who can be fed through nutrition programs, and maximizing Medi-Cal funds
- ✓ Developers' fees for child care be expanded
- ➔ Prop. 63 funding plans include a set-aside for children and youth services, as well as prevention
- Policymakers investigate the feasibility of a "soda tax" to fund nutrition programs; an increase in birth certificate and marriage dissolution fees to fund early childhood services; and other revenue-generating measures
- Private donors (foundations, corporations, individuals) collaborate with city agencies to determine how investments can yield maximum benefit and be leveraged to implement the recommendations in this report



**Service coordination: going to scale.** San Francisco has a large committed, creative, and knowledgeable network of people who work with children, youth, and their families. Many innovations and successes have resulted from this network's ability to plan and work together. The challenge is to continue the good work that is underway and expand it until all children, youth, and their families have the services they need.

DCYF will convene an annual conference to bring service providers together to share information and participate in the city's public policy dialogue.

**DCYF recommends that:**

- Public agencies serving children facilitate more partnerships and greater communication among service providers at the neighborhood and citywide level

**Standards and evaluation.** Program evaluations and feedback from participants and providers reveal that the quality of both public and private services is inconsistent. City departments have not implemented consistent standards of care or evaluation strategies. Improving the quality of services in both the public and private sectors is a complex undertaking – requiring multiple approaches and long-term commitment.

The child care field is a shining example of groundbreaking evaluations and agreement on standards of care.

DCYF is working with community-based organizations to develop, implement, and monitor standards for the services it funds and will share standards with other city departments. Additionally, DCYF plans to identify one service delivery system each year for intensive evaluation.

**DCYF recommends that:**

- The major public agencies providing children's services agree on a common evaluation protocol for consumer feedback, and implement it collaboratively through a common online system

**Contracting: reform and efficiency are needed.** In the past five years, the city's grantmaking process with community organizations has undergone major changes. DCYF has adopted a model on-line contract management system; the Department of Public Health has recently redesigned its own system. In addition, some important experiments in collaborative interdepartmental grantmaking have been able to fund innovative, comprehensive, multidisciplinary programs. And the Human Services Agency, First 5, and DCYF have jointly granted funds to child care and family support organizations.

Nevertheless, the city's contracting process is fragmented, inefficient, time-consuming, and unnecessarily burdensome. Currently, there are approximately 2,000 contracts with approximately 400 community-based organizations among seven city agencies.<sup>26</sup> Each public agency monitors contracts differently. At least half of the contracts overlap; some of the major community-based organizations have dozens of different contracts, often for very similar work. The city's Non-Profit Contracting Task Force has made multiple recommendations that would result in a streamlined, more efficient system.<sup>27</sup>

### DCYF recommends that:

- ✓ The seven major public agencies contracting with community organizations serving children work with the Office of the Controller to implement the recommendations of the Non-Profit Contracting Task Force (consolidation of contracts both across and within departments; development of common protocols and forms; support of common performance and accounting standards, grantmaking, and contract monitoring; collaboration on site visits) and to involve community-based organizations in planning and decisionmaking processes
- The seven agencies develop on-line capability to share information and simplify protocols. Whenever feasible, departments should adopt the Contract Management System (CMS) developed by CitySpan Technologies

**Building capacity.** Quality staff create strong organizations and exemplary programs. Staff who work in the children's field are among the most dedicated people in the city and the most important assets to their programs and organizations. Yet they are often underpaid and under-appreciated. Many, particularly in the nonprofit sector, have limited opportunities for training, peer support, or learning the latest developments in their field. DCYF surveys of community agency staff document interest in learning about everything from organizational development, to financial management and fundraising, to program innovations.

To ensure continuity of service, there is an urgent need to grow and support new leaders for the field, and embrace a diversity of new leadership styles. Yet there has never been a coordinated, comprehensive strategy to address the learning and leadership development needs of staff working in this field.

DCYF plans to facilitate the development of peer learning networks so that people in the field can learn from one another, starting with the SF Family Support Network. DCYF is also working to convene an interagency task force to address workforce needs in the youth development arena, including compensation and professional development.

### DCYF recommends that:

- ➔ All city departments contracting with community agencies (including DCYF) improve their technical assistance capacity, and share staff development opportunities with each other and the entire field
- City departments, in collaboration with nonprofit agencies, support professional development strategies to ensure that there is a new generation of strong, well qualified, diverse leaders throughout the service delivery system

*“Building community leadership that fosters community action is the foundation on which all effective intervention hinges.”*

– Foundation Program Officer



EVALUATION  
OF SERVICES:

*What participants  
and evaluators  
say about DCYF  
programs*

DCYF evaluated 159 of its programs in 2003 – 2004 to determine the amount and types of services provided and child outcomes, and to measure satisfaction among participants.

During the 10-month evaluation, 28,218 children, youth, and parents in every ZIP code in San Francisco were served by the programs. The programs provided more than three million hours of service with the average participant receiving 106 hours of service. Academic support, child care,

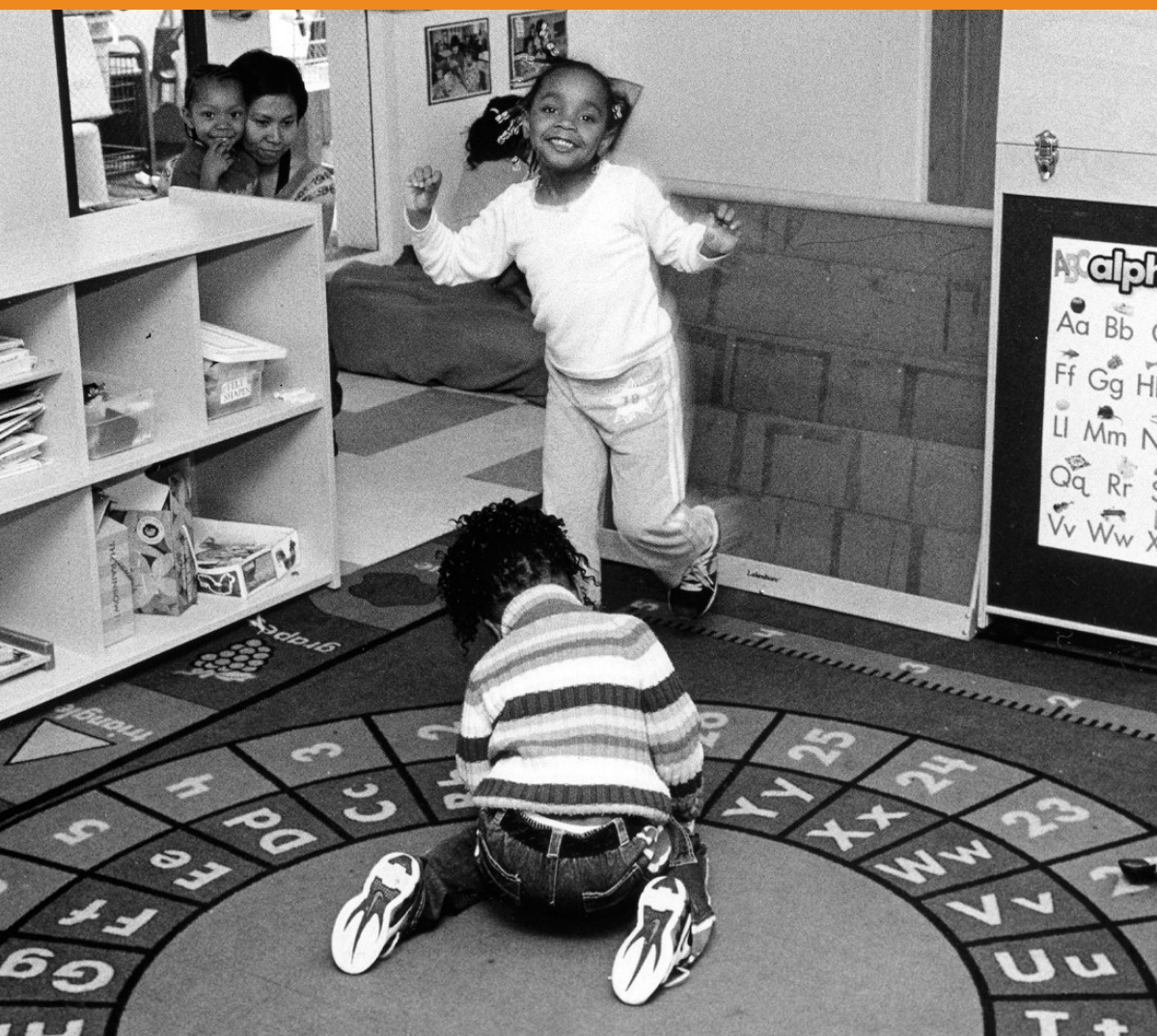
recreation and enrichment, and subsidized employment accounted for 80 percent of the service hours.

Modest-to-large gains in client outcomes were realized in all program areas. Over two-thirds of the participants in youth development and childhood parental support programs showed positive gains. A majority of program participants showed improvement in job training and readiness, family support, and child care provider support.

DCYF collected 7,740 child/youth and 3,857 parent questionnaires. Children, youth, and parents indicated that they were highly satisfied with the quality of the programs. On a scale of 1 to 5, the mean level score for satisfaction among participants was 4.2; for parents, 4.5. Children and youth reported that they felt that program staff listened to their opinions and spoke respectfully to them. They also indicated that they trusted the information and advice that staff provided.<sup>28</sup> These consistently positive results indicate that the majority of DCYF-funded programs are committed to the youth, children, and families they serve, and make relationship-building a priority.







## *Collaborations Work!*

**Working together yields results.** San Francisco service providers know that the results of collaboration are far greater than going it alone. Following are some examples

of collaborative efforts that have increased benefits to children, youth, and their families. Some are citywide, some neighborhood based. Some are planning efforts, some service delivery collaborations. Some were initiated by government, some by community. These programs address issues as diverse as violence prevention and cultural enrichment.

- **Wellness Centers** – SFUSD, DPH, and DCYF have collaborated with 31 community-based organizations to place wellness centers in seven large high schools – providing mental health, substance abuse, and other health-related services. Two-thirds of the 4,000 students using the centers say they would not have sought help if a wellness center were not located at their school.
- **Beacon Centers** – A public-private partnership promoting comprehensive youth development programs has been created in public schools. Eight Beacon Centers serve more than 7,500 participants annually after school, on weekends, and in the summer months. More than two-thirds of youth participants show positive outcomes on key youth development indicators such as leadership skills, homework completion, and physical activity.
- **High Risk Infant Interagency Council** – This interagency, parent/professional collaborative coordinates services for children with special health care needs. Work ranges from public awareness campaigns, to case conferences, to policy and case advocacy, to joint staff trainings.



# Making Services Work Better for Children

*Working Together*

- **The Mission's Community Response Network** – This neighborhood-wide, multi-agency network promotes safety for children in the Mission District. Its work includes crisis intervention, late-night outreach, and interagency case management. Formed after shootings of Mission District youth, the group's collective commitment to protect neighborhood children has kept them together.
- **The Village** – Described variously as a collaboration of collaborations or a “web of services,” the Village houses a health clinic, a community development corporation, a community center, and other community-based organizations in two buildings in Visitacion Valley. Participants meet monthly and work together to provide family-oriented services and activities. Many of the services are aimed at Asian families, who now constitute the majority of Visitacion Valley residents.
- **Greater Mission Consortium (GMC)** – An 11-year collaboration among six youth organizations offers services to more than 1,200 moderate-to-low income youth and families in the Outer Mission and Excelsior. Agencies are co-located in an accessible storefront. The GMC was initiated by agencies willing to collectively expand their area in order to help a significantly underserved neighborhood.
- **District 3 Youth Development Network** – A five-year-old collaboration of six neighborhood organizations shares resources, seeks funding, coordinates programming, provides staff support, and evaluates after school, literacy, and recreation services. As a result there has been a major expansion of quality after-school options for Chinatown and North Beach children.
- **Hunters Point Family** – *GIRLS 2000, Peacekeepers, Bayview Safe Haven, and United Playaz* have joined together under one administrative umbrella to support youth development for high-risk youth in Hunters Point. Describing themselves as an “extended family,” these agencies work in recreation centers, housing projects, and storefronts – building gardens, feeding families, taking field trips, teaching healthy lifestyles, and providing job training. They aim to mentor new staff and new organizations that join their collaborative.
- **Richmond After-School Collaborative** – This 10-year-old collaboration among five neighborhood public schools, three Bay Area museums, and two community-based organizations focuses on providing affordable after-school care. Curriculum includes the arts and a mental health component in addition to more traditional after-school programming.
- **Master Plan for Arts Education** – This first-ever citywide collaborative planning process aims to ensure that every child – at every grade, in every classroom – experiences visual arts, music, dance, theater, and literary arts. The process is coordinated by a committee of principals, teachers, artists, arts education specialists, foundations, parents, and the Arts Commission.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Good collaborations depend on collective vision and agreed upon outcomes; mutual trust and respect among partners; clear interagency governance structures and lines of authority; time and resources to devote to collaborative process; ongoing evaluation and quality improvement; technical assistance and professional development opportunities; blended funding and shared resources; clearly delineated responsibilities for all partners; and shared credit.



## Achieving Results

**Reducing Teen Parenting: A San Francisco Success Story.** Recognizing that teen parents and their children were at high risk, San Francisco began developing a system of intervention more than 30 years ago – well before other cities saw the value of such programs. It has been a model for the state and the nation for more than two decades.

The elements of this effort are worth noting:

- Extensive teen-friendly health services and family life education in schools and community agencies;
- A range of comprehensive services for pregnant and parenting teens, including encouragement to stay in school and the opportunity to access child care;
- Family-centered, youth-friendly services;
- Strong advocacy for reproductive rights and primary prevention.

**The Result:** Teen parenting rates and repeat births, now among the lowest in the state, have declined 45 percent and 42 percent respectively since 1990.

The Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Project, (TAPP), the city's flagship program, attributes its success to intensive one-on-one case management, an emphasis on peer support, advocacy with other systems on behalf of participants, and a philosophy of resiliency that is imbued throughout the program – encouraging young women to succeed. Perhaps, TAPP is best explained by one young woman: “If there is something that's really stressing you out and you need help – they help. They helped me through legal problems and helped me get my community hours done... If I had a magic wand, I would put up little TAPP buildings on all the empty lots in the city.”

*“All the money, all the meetings, all the talking – none of it matters unless children and families get help, unless THEY say that things are better as a result of what we do.”*

*– Public agency director*



# Collaborating for Change

## Creating Partnerships

**High school students combine classroom learning with hands on career skills at community centers and internships in industry.**

“The private sector can play a huge role in helping youth develop job skills. Young people need to know how to use computer software, understand business etiquette, improve their writing skills, and learn how to communicate ideas. They'll be running our company in the future. Giving youth substantive opportunities to build skills now is a win-win for everybody.”

*– Corporate Executive*



## Empowering Communities

**Youth commissioners grapple with policy issues and advise the city on topics of importance to young people.**

“Policymakers are the first to admit that they don't know what it's like to be 16 and growing up in 2005 in San Francisco. Who better to tell them than the youth themselves?”

*– Director, San Francisco Youth Commission*



## Building Vibrant Anchor Institutions

**Recreation centers – like the Tenderloin Children's Playground and Recreation Center – are hubs of activity.**

“We have truly become a community hub. The place is always jumping with activity – ranging from child drop-in, to ESL classes, to discussion groups, to counseling, the neighborhood annual fair, community college classes, weekend family events, serving food – you name it. If our neighborhood wants it, we try to provide it.”

*– Director, Family Resource Center*



## Putting It All Together

**Many strategies, one goal: a city where families thrive.** Integrating all of the city's strategies to address the needs of San Francisco families offers possibilities for real change. But this will require an unprecedented level of collaboration with all sectors of the city – public and private service providers and agencies, community and faith-based organizations, schools and universities, businesses, philanthropists, policymakers, parents, youth, and the media. Difficult as this may be, the results would enable San Francisco to be a model for other cities – increasing the human and social capital of its neighborhoods and of the broader community.

*“If it wasn't for the youth programs the city funds – a lot of kids would be in trouble. For me, Youthline saved me. If not for that, I'd be locked up like my brother.”*

*– Youth in DCYF-funded Program*

These strategies will need to be aligned with other efforts underway to improve public safety, housing affordability, economic development, and land-use planning such that the needs of a family-friendly city are considered when developing policy.

*Communities of Opportunity*, Mayor Newsom's initiative to end persistent child poverty in the southeast sector of the city, is an example of this thinking. Working to ensure that all children are healthy; have safe, affordable housing; succeed in school; are living with economically successful families; and are encouraged to pursue their dreams – this initiative is seen as a model for community development and service delivery for all of San Francisco.





WHAT  
PARENTS SAY:

## *Voices of 738 Parents*

In January and February, 2005, the City Controller surveyed San Franciscans about their views of the city and their opinions of city services. Of those surveyed, 738 were parents with children under the age of 18.

Many parents are considering moving out of the city: 36 percent of parents overall, and 44 percent of parents with children under age 6, are “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to leave within three years.<sup>29</sup> When asked what would make San Francisco a better city for families, housing and schools were mentioned most often. Only 7 percent of San Francisco households earn enough to buy a median priced home, compared to 60 percent nationally. There are 28,303 families with 11,583 children on waiting lists for public housing.

### **Families utilize many public and private city services.**

- Parents report that their children utilize a broad array of services. Forty-one percent are in after-school programs; 28 percent in academic enrichment programs; 46 percent in child care; 13 percent use counseling; and 18 percent use youth employment programs.
- 44 percent of parents use libraries at least once a month, compared to 25 percent of respondents without children under age 18.
- 43 percent of parents said their household used a recreation center within the past year, compared to 17 percent of respondents without children under the age of 18.
- 66 percent of parents say their families visit parks at least once a month, compared to 55 percent of households without children.

### **Parents with children rate some city services as “fair to very poor.”**

- 76 percent of parents rated park facilities “fair to very poor” and 67 percent rated recreation programs for children “fair to very poor.”
- 69 percent of parents rated the general quality of city services “fair to very poor.”

### **The percentage of San Francisco children with health insurance is far higher than the national average.**

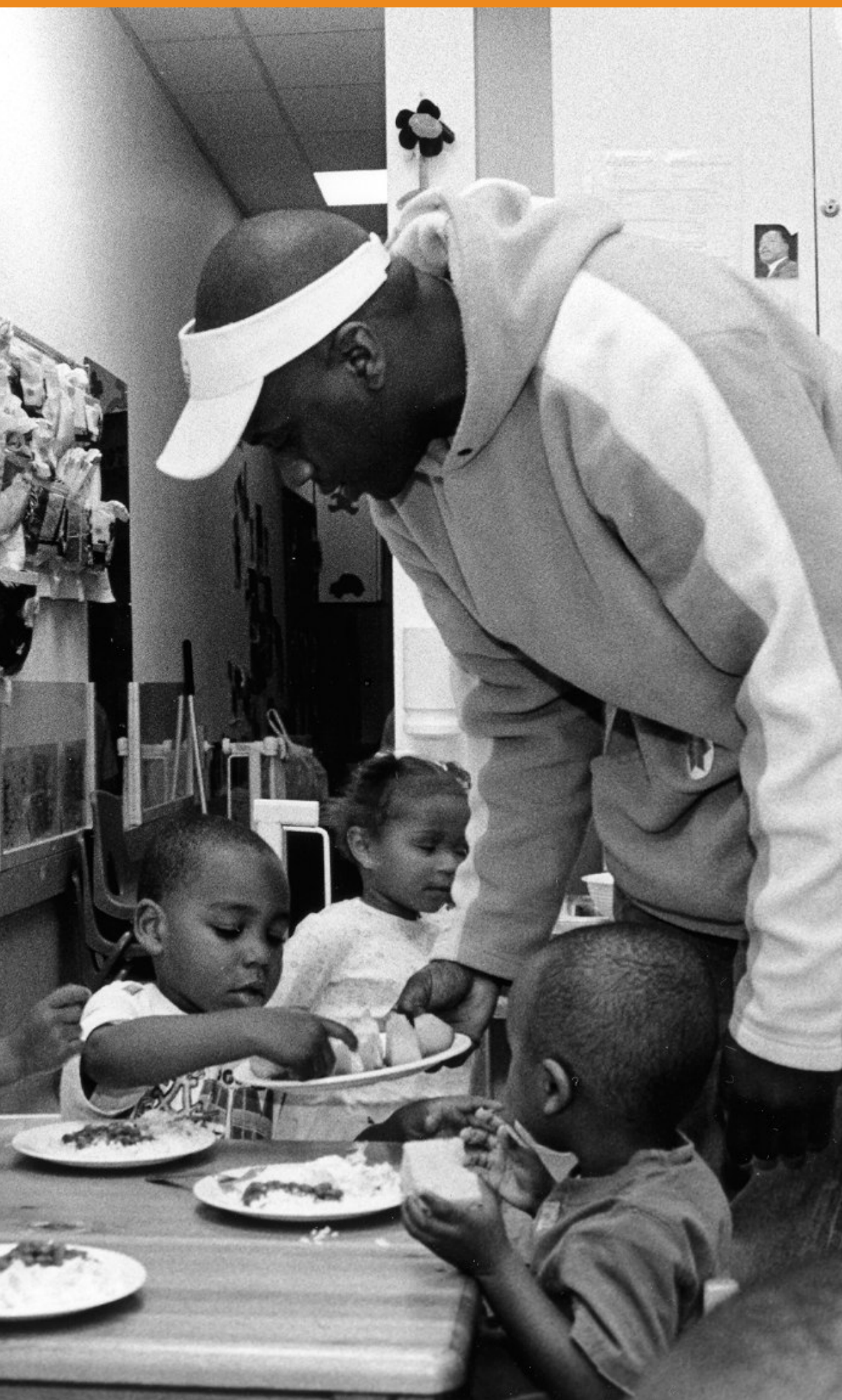
- 94 percent of parents reported that their children had some form of health insurance, compared to the national average of 88% of children insured.

This remarkably high percentage of children who are insured is likely the result of the city’s groundbreaking universal health coverage program. When the city commits to making change, the impact can be felt by thousands of families.



# Making Services Work Better for Children

*Service  
Delivery Systems*





## CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

### San Francisco's Nationally Recognized Child Care System

#### Planning, collaboration, innovation, and political will.

Over the past eight years, San Francisco has built a child care system that addresses some of the most challenging issues in the field: quality of care, wages, facilities, cost, and supply. The city's policies and programs have become models for the nation. In addition, the process through which child care goals have been accomplished can be replicated to address other needs of children and youth.

#### What led to success?

- Responsive and committed voters, and concerned and dedicated elected officials in both the executive and legislative branches of city government
- Ongoing collaborative planning among all relevant stakeholders – establishing core priorities, documenting needs, and recommending the most effective use of dollars
- A vigorous and sustained advocacy campaign led by independent advocates and service providers
- Foundation funding to support demonstration models and the planning process
- Exemplary collaboration and leadership within public agencies responsible for child care
- New statewide funding creating First 5 San Francisco

#### The Elements of San Francisco's Child Care System

- California's most comprehensive preschool system (*Preschool for All*) – to be phased in over the coming five years
- Two innovative child care worker wage augmentation programs: *Wages Plus* and *SF CARES*
- A model mental health consultation program operating in over 70 child care programs throughout the city
- Millions of dollars dedicated to child care facilities – through innovative use of state and federal dollars, local fund set-asides, and a developers' fee
- *Gateway to Quality Child Care Project*, a comprehensive standard-setting, staff training, and quality improvement initiative
- A centralized eligibility list for parents coordinating intake and access to subsidized child care
- The *Child Care Inclusion Challenge Project*, which supports children with special health care needs
- Peer training and support networks for both family and center-based child care



**Many challenges despite progress.** Despite having a model child care and early childhood development system, the field faces many challenges, mostly as a result of state and federal under-funding and policies that threaten to undo much of what San Francisco has created. There are still more than 3,000 families on the waiting list for subsidized care, and 80 percent of families seeking infant and toddler subsidized care are unable to find it. Despite innovative wage augmentation programs, many child care workers are still living near poverty – earning even less than in-home support workers.<sup>30</sup>

#### **DCYF recommends that:**

- ✓ The *Preschool for All* system be created by building upon the existing early care and education system
- ✓ Additional resources for the *Child Care Facilities Fund* be sought and efforts be made to determine the feasibility of (1) expanding the developers' fee for child care to include all commercial space and (2) modifying the developers' fee ordinance to streamline fee collection and assessment
- ✓ Business community support for child care be increased, starting with an Economic Impact Report for child care to act as a springboard for land use and economic development policies, as well as facility financing and public relations; and that a Mayor's advisory committee (comprised of business and child care leaders) be appointed to monitor the project
- ➔ City and community leaders work vigorously at the state level to preserve the city's child care allocation from the Department of Education and to ensure that the standard reimbursement rate and market rate reimbursement ceilings be modified to cover the real costs of centers and family child care providers in high-cost counties like San Francisco
- ➔ The city's two provider compensation systems be sustained and expanded to improve the stability, quality, and retention of the child care and early education workforce
- Infant-toddler capacity be expanded (Only 5 percent of licensed center slots currently serve infants and toddlers.)<sup>31</sup>
- The *Child Care Inclusion Challenge Project*, the *High Quality Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative*, and the *Gateway to Quality Child Care Project* – all aimed at improving the accessibility, inclusiveness, and quality of child care centers and family child care homes – be sustained

*“Between housing and child care, parents pay over 75 percent of their income.”*

*- Director of  
Child Care Center*



## EDUCATION

**Education is priority no. 1.** When San Franciscans are polled about their public policy priorities, education ranks first or second. In recent years, the electorate has approved a major school facilities bond, as well as infusions of local resources into the schools to ensure that arts, sports, libraries, and other programs and services under-funded by the state will be provided to youth.

### Progress and Reforms in the Public Schools: 2000 – 2005<sup>32</sup>

Over the past five years, San Francisco Unified School District's focus on raising achievement for all students has resulted in impressive gains:

- Test scores are up. SFUSD is among the top-scoring urban school districts in the nation.
- More students have enrolled in advanced placement and honors classes, and more students are going to college.
- Attendance is improving.

An array of policies and programs have led to these achievement gains:

#### Empowering Schools To Succeed

- STAR initiative to provide extra personnel and resources to low-achieving schools
- Weighted Student Formula for more equitable allocation of funds to schools
- Stronger school site councils to help plan programs and school budgets
- Dream Schools created at lowest-performing schools
- Two new small high schools and two new small learning communities within high schools
- Elimination of junk food and improved food quality with new nutrition policy
- \$10 million redirected from central office to school sites

#### Improving Central Office Services

- Increased teacher salaries and incentives
- Open and equitable student assignment policies
- Fiscal accountability and balanced budget despite tough fiscal times, including \$46 million recovered through legal settlement of fraud cases

#### Strengthening Community Collaboration

- Community representation on task forces for student assignment, bond oversight, Prop. H, and other advisory bodies
- Parent liaison positions created at 45 schools; Office of Parent Relations created; monthly parent roundtables
- Expanded after-school learning programs, now in more than 60 schools
- Increased collaboration with city departments, facilitated by the appointment of a Mayoral liaison to SFUSD

**SFUSD has an ambitious agenda for school reform.** SFUSD has come a long way in achieving its goals. However, there is much that still needs to be done to accomplish the hoped-for outcomes for all San Francisco students. Many students, particularly African American and Latino students, are not achieving to their potential.<sup>33</sup> The drop-out and truancy rates are unacceptably high. Many parents feel unconnected to their child's school. The financial and political challenges public education faces today are almost unprecedented – rendering SFUSD unable to adequately pay teachers, hire enough janitors, adequately update materials and equipment, and maintain its buildings and facilities.



**DCYF recommends that:**

- ✓ City government and the community continue to support education reforms underway, such as the STAR and small schools initiatives, which improve the quality of education and access to that quality
- ➔ The entire community join forces with the public schools to demand adequate state and federal funding
- Stakeholders work together to develop an ongoing agenda for building on reforms so that SFUSD can achieve its *Excellence for All* goals

**Collaborations with public schools offer unique opportunities and challenges.** Some of the most successful service innovations of recent years have been accomplished through collaborations among community agencies, city departments, and the SFUSD. Schools are natural places to reach children. Yet one of the most common complaints among service providers and city departments is the difficulty of partnering with schools. Public education is under attack, and school personnel feel themselves to be the primary targets. Teachers, principals, and school administrators are over-burdened. At the same time, hundreds of organizations and individuals are seeking to “partner” with schools. School sites do not have sufficient staff to either evaluate proposals or nurture collaborative planning. Nevertheless, it is imperative that all possible resources be brought to children, and that all parties work to advance collaborations among schools, community groups, and city departments.

**DCYF recommends that:**

- ✓ Planning for Prop. H continue to involve many stakeholders, and that programs implemented with Prop. H funds be monitored by SFUSD and the city.
- ➔ SFUSD, city departments, and community groups collaborate to adopt new procedures to enhance community/school partnerships. (DCYF will help facilitate this process.) These partnerships should address the use of space, the need for before- and after-school activities, learning support services, staff training, and classroom enrichment – recognizing that different strategies and protocols are needed for the wide variety of public and private organizations, businesses, and agencies with which the schools must collaborate.
- ➔ SFUSD designate point people to interface with community groups seeking to partner with the schools.

*DCYF recognizes the importance of encouraging all city agencies to support school/community collaborations through their grantmaking processes.*



## PREPARING FOR SUCCESS IN THE WORKFORCE

For young people to thrive as adults, they not only need a strong academic foundation, but also the ability to be successful in a career. Experience in the workplace through jobs, internships, class visits, and career mentors helps young people better understand the opportunities available to them and the skills and education needed to reach their goals.

Existing employment and career development opportunities are inadequate to meet the needs of San Francisco's youth. Thirty years ago, there were over 10,000 federally funded summer jobs for San Francisco's young people. Today, there are fewer than 400.<sup>34</sup> While the city has responded by increasing funding for both summer and year-round work experiences, opportunities are available for fewer than 8 percent of San Francisco's young people.

Faced with decreased funding and increasing pressures to perform on state and federal standardized tests, schools have cut career and vocational offerings. Acknowledging that academic preparation alone is not sufficient, SFUSD has made school-to-career programming a priority. But the schools can't do it alone. They need support to coordinate the resources of the private and nonprofit sectors. A mechanism is needed to broker opportunities in the private sector with schools and community programs so that both youth and employers benefit.

Youth also need preparation to participate in the financial world. Having the opportunity to save (ideally with savings matches and/or incentives) and learn about financial and economic issues prepares young people to avoid credit problems and resist the appeals of predatory financial practices. While research shows the effectiveness of asset-building and financial literacy in developing school connectedness and orientation to college, there are few such opportunities for young people in San Francisco.

### DCYF will provide leadership:

- ✓ To support SFUSD's School-to-Career Advisory Council's efforts to strengthen workplace learning offerings in all public schools
- ➔ To help the city create a public/private intermediary to connect youth with workplace learning and job opportunities in both the public and private sectors
- ➔ To consolidate youth employment programs and develop common performance measures for these programs
- ➔ To restructure and revitalize the Youth Council of the Workforce Investment Board
- ➔ To encourage first-source hiring policies to include youth training and employment opportunities
- To strengthen city department support for and participation with career academies in the high schools, so that more students have opportunities for real-world training and job experience
- To help city service providers, SFUSD, the private sector, and policymakers work to ensure there is a career center in every public high school
- To encourage service providers, the private sector, and policymakers to work together to offer greater savings opportunities (with matches) and financial literacy opportunities



## San Francisco Leads the Way on Local EITC

**Addressing economic stability for working families.** In 2005, Mayor Newsom launched the nation's only municipal, local earned income tax credit (EITC) for low-income working families. This groundbreaking initiative will supplement the annual income of qualified families by approximately \$300. It will also encourage families to apply for the federal EITC, a program that is currently underutilized (in the amount of \$12 million in San Francisco) although it can provide an annual average payout of \$1,800 per family. The local tax credit can help families making less than \$36,000 a year purchase basics such as school supplies for children, or pay for rent increases or health care premiums. It will also provide a modest stimulus for the local economy, send a message to families that the city wants to help them meet their needs, and help families access the state and federal benefits to which they are entitled. H&R Block has committed \$1 million to support this effort.

**Serving children means addressing the whole family.** San Francisco's service delivery system has not fully incorporated the idea that serving children and youth also means addressing the needs of the entire family. Many programs, even some of the most well-established ones, do not sufficiently reach out to parents.

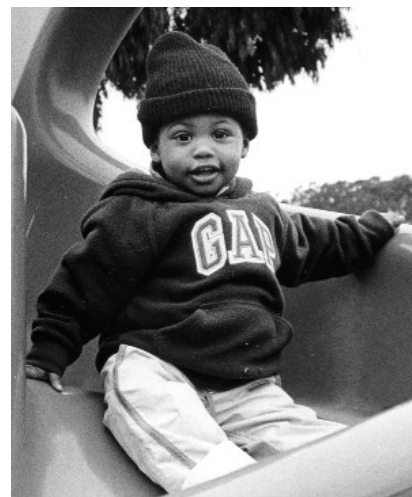
"Family Support" is a set of strategies that build on family strengths with the goals of school readiness, good parenting, access to health care, family economic success, and civic engagement. The services include parenting education, literacy and adult education, peer support groups, and drop-in respite care. These services can be effective early interventions to keep children in their own homes and out of the foster care system.

Many of these family support services are offered at family resource centers, at central, neighborhood locations within the family's community. Staff often come from the neighborhood or population served; staff and families work in partnership; and every family member is regarded as having something valuable to contribute. Family resource centers could help coordinate fragmented services. San Francisco has 29 programs that consider themselves family resource centers. Some are among the city's strongest child/family-serving programs. Others are less stable than they should be.

### DCYF recommends that:

- ✓ A consortium of public and private agencies create a Family Support Network to coordinate the development of family support policies, training, peer support, and service improvements
- ➔ Existing family resource centers be utilized by public and private agencies as hubs of information and as places to outstation workers and services
- ➔ Family resource centers build their internal capacity to address family economic security and provide information on asset building, financial management, and employment
- Every neighborhood have a family resource center capable of addressing its community's needs
- Public agencies use their contracting relationships and their expertise to ensure the inclusion of a family component in more programs
- Public and private agencies adopt policies and procedures that make them more family friendly and that the Family Support Network provide technical assistance to support these changes

## FAMILY SUPPORT





## INVOLVING A CITY TO RAISE HEALTHY CHILDREN

**All children deserve quality health care** and the opportunity to grow up in a community that promotes a healthy environment and focuses on prevention.

Many of San Francisco's child health initiatives are exemplary, such as the High Quality Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative and violence prevention programs. The city does well on key health indicators, such as prenatal care, infant mortality, immunizations, and teen pregnancy. The planned building of a world class hospital by UCSF offers a unique opportunity to expand quality care.

However, the city's success in addressing child health risks has not benefited all children equally. There are extreme racial and ethnic disparities. Latino and African American children have double and triple the overall child population's rate of low birth weight, teen pregnancy, asthma, preventable injury, mental illness, STDs, and behavioral health problems. San Francisco has one of the highest pedestrian auto injury rates in the nation.

### DCYF recommends that:

- ✓ DPH and the Department of Parking and Traffic continue their aggressive approach to pedestrian safety – prioritizing neighborhoods for traffic calming that are heavily traveled by children and where accidents are most prevalent, such as the Excelsior
- ✓ DPH continue its efforts to fully integrate mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment into a comprehensive, continuous system of care
- ✓ The city continue outreach efforts and the incremental expansion of Healthy Kids and Young Adults, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all children and youth under age 25 have health insurance
- ➔ The city address a major child health problem – lack of good nutrition and exercise – through a comprehensive public health approach, including fitness and nutrition awareness campaigns, innovative programs that promote fitness, bringing grocery stores into neighborhoods that lack them, expanding enrollment in federal food programs, and selling healthy beverages in city-owned vending machines
- ➔ School-based behavior health services be expanded by developing Wellness Centers for middle schools and small high schools, and by providing adequate mental health support in elementary schools
- Early intervention strategies, such as home visiting and multidisciplinary assessments of young children, be among the highest health priorities, and that the DPH, DCYF, and First 5 San Francisco collaborate to sustain and expand these early intervention services
- All relevant city agencies educate public and service providers about the importance of environmental health issues – such as reducing exposure to lead particulates from diesel fuel exhaust and other air pollutants
- City officials get involved in the planning process to rebuild local hospitals with an eye to ensuring that the needs of San Francisco's children are met

### Health Insurance for All Children: A San Francisco Achievement

San Francisco took a bold step four years ago when it implemented one of the only local universal child health insurance programs in the United States. The program's utilization rates are exceptionally high, and 3,800 children and youth have already enrolled.<sup>35</sup>

When Mayor Newsom began phasing in coverage of 19 through 24 year olds, the program was renamed "Healthy Kids and Young Adults," making the city the first in the nation to insure young adults graduating out of an existing public program.

The purpose of the juvenile justice system is to rehabilitate children who have broken the law, while treating them in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety. While steady progress in reforming the system has been made since the 1970s – when over 400 children were housed in Juvenile Hall – San Francisco’s juvenile justice system remains unable to adequately fulfill its mission.

Disproportionate minority involvement in the juvenile justice system is as serious as ever. African American youth comprise almost 60 percent of young people in the system, almost six times their representation in the population. In recent years the situation has worsened for girls, as their detention rate has more than doubled. The city’s Log Cabin Ranch in La Honda is inadequate to meet the needs of today’s troubled youth. Two innovative efforts, the Community Assessment and Referral Center (CARC) and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), have not fully realized their goals of preventing unnecessary detention.

The city continues to spend millions of dollars each year to house youth in out-of-county facilities. There are approximately 50 youths currently sentenced to the California Youth Authority (CYA) from San Francisco. Last year the city approved a non-binding moratorium on future CYA commitments over revelations about inhumane conditions.<sup>36</sup>

**DCYF recommends that the Juvenile Probation Department, in collaboration with all stakeholders in the juvenile justice system:**

- ✓ Fully implement and enforce detention criteria that conform to national standards and reduce unnecessary detention, as recommended by the JDAI process
- ➔ Integrate the delivery of services to youth in the juvenile justice system through better coordination with other city departments such as DPH and HSA
- ➔ Expand the use of proven detention alternatives and integrate them into the Juvenile Probation Department’s (JPD) core operations. Require community-based programs that receive funds from JPD to take referrals from the juvenile justice system, and give priority to the youth with the most serious issues. Work with other city departments to provide incentives for all relevant community agencies to take referrals from the juvenile justice system
- ➔ Fully institute standards of care at the Juvenile Hall that conform to national guidelines, and ensure that these standards apply to the new detention facility
- ➔ Transform Log Cabin Ranch into a model program for youth rehabilitation
- Work with state officials to close the CYA and transfer resources to county probation departments

**UPHOLDING JUSTICE**

*“My experience in the juvenile justice system taught me that there is no God, because he would never allow children to be treated this way.”*

- Male youth



## RECREATION

Creating vibrant recreational facilities is a goal within our reach. Wholesome, age-appropriate, accessible recreation opportunities are essential to the lifelong health and well being of children and youth. San Francisco has a network of 97 public buildings dedicated to recreation, ranging from small clubhouses to full-service recreation centers. These centers can be central to the city's latchkey, violence prevention, and health and fitness strategies for children and youth.

While the city can boast many flagship recreation programs, the quality and utilization of programs is inconsistent. Some centers are well equipped and full of children every day, others are nearing the end of their life cycle. Budget cuts over the years have forced reductions in services, negatively impacted staff morale, and limited the department's ability to undertake thoughtful programming and facilities planning.

In an assessment of the Recreation Division, published by the Recreation and Park Department (Rec & Park) in August 2004,<sup>37</sup> the overarching recommendation was that a comprehensive approach be used to create recreation centers that are more responsive to the needs of today's children and families. The report recommends reorganization of personnel, new operating systems, more rigorous accountability standards, program revitalization, increased community partnerships, and reinvestment of resources.

### DCYF recommends that:

➔ Rec & Park collaborate with DCYF to launch an interagency planning process to revitalize and reorganize the programming and management



of recreation centers. A steering committee of public and private stakeholders should guide this process, engage private funders, survey potential models, get community input, and develop an implementation plan

- Rec & Park and DCYF work together to develop pilot projects that experiment with new programming and governance models at three to five recreation centers located throughout the city
- Creating child-friendly spaces in parks, and expanding the availability of quality playing fields, be a priority



The Human Services Agency has some unique opportunities to make a significant impact on the city's most vulnerable children – even in the face of counter-productive national and state policies.

HSA allocates more funding to assist the children, youth, and families of San Francisco than any other city department – over double the next highest department (DPH) and approximately half of the total city resources going to children, youth, and their families from city departments in San Francisco.

**Targeting and reallocating resources.** Declining case loads and new data about needs clustering around the seven street corners will allow HSA to target its resources more strategically to change the course of the city's highest need neighborhoods. By concentrating services and linking residents to the broader community, HSA has an opportunity to impact and ultimately reduce persistent child poverty.

HSA is applying for a state waiver to redirect foster care dollars (used for residential placements) to innovative non-residential services that keep children out of placement. This effort has the potential to increase resources available for keeping families together and to avoid the often-negative impact of residential care, particularly out-of-county care. If successful, the implementation of this plan could also result in a reduction in the number of youth in the juvenile justice system, as well as a decrease in the foster care placement population – while improving services to children and youth.

**DCYF recommends that:**

- ✓ HSA implement its innovative plan to provide in-home services in lieu of residential services
- ➔ The “differential response” strategy for handling reports of child abuse and neglect required by the state in the Child Welfare Redesign be implemented through strong partnerships with community agencies – particularly family resource centers
- HSA evaluate the status of families who are being timed-out of CalWORKs to understand the impact on children and adopt appropriate intervention strategies if they are needed
- HSA take a leadership role in creating “prevention zones” around the seven street corners it has identified as concentrated areas of need and poverty

## SOCIAL SERVICES



## THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH



**What happens outside school time?** Youth development principles emphasize the development and provision of supports and opportunities for young people to develop skills and a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and empowerment. The youth development approach focuses on young people's assets, not their pathology. The premise: youth need opportunities to develop their talents, to be able to form positive relationships with peers and adults, and to serve as resources for their communities. The youth development approach should be central to all programs and services for children and youth.

After-school and youth development programs are the core of the service delivery system funded by DCYF. Thus, many recommendations in this report (transportation, collaboration with SFUSD, recreation, program hours) apply to these programs.

Programs that operate outside traditional school hours and enhance the academic, social, physical, and civic development of youth are all considered youth development services. These programs complement school lessons and provide youth with opportunities to prepare for adulthood. San Francisco has a rich array of these programs, including some nationally-recognized initiatives. DCYF is the primary funder of many of San Francisco's youth development programs. There are after-school programs in 63 schools, and over 300 after-school programs throughout the city.<sup>38</sup>

While the city lacks comprehensive data about existing and needed youth development services, evaluations and participant surveys reveal that San Francisco's children do not have equal access to after-school programs (some programs have extensive waiting lists), and program quality is inconsistent. Unfortunately, youth development programs are often seen as less important than the services that intervene after a crisis has occurred.

### **DCYF, in collaboration with other service providers, is working to:**

- ✓ Develop a networking strategy to improve the capacity of youth development programs, and promote a citywide understanding of youth development principles and practices, by building on existing networks and the considerable local expertise in the field
- ➔ Foster the development of diverse leaders who can define the issues and advocate effectively for solutions
- ➔ Coordinate with the schools, community organizations, and other stakeholders to prepare San Francisco to use Prop. 49 funds (possible new state dollars for after-school services) and other revenues that may become available
- Create new partnerships that link after-school programs to the city's physical fitness, arts expansion, Public Library, and youth employment initiatives

# Making Services Work Better for Children

*Special  
Populations*





## SERVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Over 5,000 children in San Francisco under the age of six have special health care needs. Yet many are not receiving adequate services such as early assessment and intervention, inclusion in city programs, or coverage for therapy and home care costs.<sup>39</sup>

In the past 10 years the city has taken responsibility for augmenting state-funded programs for children with special health care needs, thanks to advocacy from parents and service providers. DCYF, First 5, and DPH now fund excellent local agencies supporting families, occupational programs for youth, interagency planning and coordination, resource centers, a multidisciplinary assessment center, and more. The Child Care Planning and Advisory Committee has recently initiated an inclusion project.

Yet state and federal funding for some important services is running out and families continue to struggle mightily with many challenges – the loss of family supports, the time demands of caring for a needy child, endless appointments, overwhelming bureaucracies, unreasonable eligibility criteria for services, and negative public attitudes toward their children. San Francisco must continue to expand its work to ensure that children with special needs lead full lives with opportunities, dignity, and hope.

### DCYF recommends that:

- ➔ All city departments serving children accommodate and integrate children with special health care needs into a wider range of programs and opportunities, including recreation, after-school services, public events, and internships (DCYF will implement a comprehensive training program for service providers to accomplish this goal.)
- First 5, SFUSD, and DPH play leadership roles in supporting early screening of children with possible special health care needs
- DPH integrate the Multidisciplinary Assessment Center into its ongoing operation and budget
- Outreach to children and youth with special health care needs and their families ensure that they are represented on community boards, such as the Youth Commission



The majority of San Francisco's children and youth report that they feel safe in their neighborhoods and schools. Perhaps this is because crime has decreased in the past decade. Yet violence is an overriding concern in many low-income neighborhoods and dominates the life of many residents. The availability and use of guns has greatly escalated tragedy and fear. There have been more than 360 homicides in San Francisco since 2000.<sup>40</sup> Parents won't take their children to some child care centers because they fear violence in the vicinity of the center. Young people know not to cross turf boundaries, in order to avoid violence. In *Youth Vote 2004*, 16 percent of the 5,000 high school youth surveyed reported that they feel either very unsafe or unsafe walking around their neighborhoods. Sixteen percent reported that there are fights in their school at least every week.

And violence is not limited to the streets. Violence within the home is equally devastating and even more prevalent. According to San Francisco's *SafeStart Initiative*, which addresses the needs of young children exposed to violence, 10,000 children and youth live in homes where there is interpersonal violence. A disproportionate number of these children are under age six.<sup>41</sup>

Sadly, child abuse continues unabated in San Francisco with about 6,000 reported incidents a year.<sup>42</sup> Still, very little of the money spent on child abuse is spent on prevention. Too many of the services for children exposed to violence are financially fragile, including the linchpin of the child abuse system at SF General Hospital.

Exposure to violence, as a victim of abuse or survivor of relationship or street violence, affects every aspect of a child's development – physical and behavioral health, cognitive functioning, and school readiness. Children exposed to violence are more likely than other children to adopt aggressive behavior themselves, have difficulty in school, have developmental delays, develop substance abuse problems, and suffer or inflict violence in interpersonal relationships.

#### **DCYF recommends that:**

- ✓ The city address the underlying causes of violence, using strategies such as access to employment, affordable housing, and family economic security
- ✓ The city continue to support the most successful prevention and intervention programs, such as child abuse awareness services in the schools, the Multidisciplinary Interview Center at SF General Hospital, child mental health crisis services, and the Community Response Network
- ✓ DPH and city policymakers build on the public health approach to violence by fostering environmental conditions that promote peace in our community, including limiting the availability of guns, reducing the number of liquor stores, improving the physical environment of neighborhoods, and reducing exposure to violence in the media and other commercial outlets
- ✓ The city continue to raise awareness of the immediate, short-term and long-term effects of exposure to violence, and assess children and youth for post traumatic stress syndrome whenever appropriate
- ✓ City departments collaborate to ensure that the victims and survivors of violence receive timely, compassionate, and comprehensive care, as well as the victim compensation funds they deserve

## **CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPOSED TO VIOLENCE – INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE HOME**

*“We need safe havens for children living in neighborhoods with so much violence. And we need to reach isolated families who are fearful for life and limb.”*

*- Public Health Worker*



## HOMELESS FAMILIES, AND HOMELESS AND RUNAWAY YOUTH

While the adult homeless population is highly visible, the needs of homeless children, youth, and their families are equally pressing. Their needs include medical care, substance abuse treatment, education support, mental health intervention, and employment assistance – as well as housing. Service providers estimate that there are as many as 4,000 homeless children in San Francisco. Homeless children have developmental delays, trouble in school, and behavior disorders at three to eight times the rate of other children. Breaking the cycle of homelessness must be a priority.

Since the 1960s San Francisco has been a mecca for runaway youth. An estimated 4,000 adolescents and young adults live on the streets of the city. Residential and counseling programs for status offender youth – the service delivery system for youth beyond parental control – are chronically underfunded and in jeopardy.

### DCYF recommends that:

- ✓ Homeless children, youth, and families be given priority for services, including child care, and behavioral health services
- ✓ City agencies serving homeless families and SFUSD work collaboratively to implement the San Francisco Homeless Education Plan
- ➔ Services for homeless children, youth, and families receive high priority consideration for Prop. 63 funds – particularly for substance abuse services and safe, supportive housing
- ➔ The city adequately fund services for status offender youth
- Services for single adult homeless be reorganized and improved to address the unique needs of homeless young people ages 18 through 24
- The city partner with financial institutions and community agencies to expand small loan programs for move-in costs

## LGBTQ YOUTH AND FAMILIES

For Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth, adolescence can be difficult. Discrimination and fear of discrimination cause many LGBTQ youth to be isolated from their families, health care providers, schools, and peers. In San Francisco, 43 percent of high school students report hearing or seeing homophobic comments, slurs, or violence against LGBTQ students daily.<sup>43</sup> Isolation for LGBTQ youth of color is particularly acute, as they confront racism as well as homophobia.

Because LGBTQ youth often internalize society's negative messages regarding sexual orientation, suicide attempts and drug use are high. Many LGBTQ youth leave home because of conflicts with parents. Youth service providers estimate that LGBTQ youth comprise 20 to 40 percent of the homeless youth population.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that an increasing number of children in San Francisco are being raised by LGBT parents. Not only do those parents need support, but their children may need help dealing with bias and discrimination.

LGBTQ youth and LGBT families should feel welcome throughout the community, especially in city-funded programs.

### DCYF recommends that:

- ✓ SFUSD continue to work with community partners to create safe, bias-free school environments
- ➔ The shelter and housing needs of LGBTQ youth be evaluated, and the number of beds expanded to address the unmet need
- All programs funded by the city receive training to improve their capacity and motivation to serve LGBTQ youth and LGBT families



# Making Services Work Better for Children

*Leadership  
and Planning*





## PLANNING

San Francisco's planning on behalf of children, youth, and their families is a model for the nation. The city charter mandates that DCYF develop regular citywide plans for children's services. In the past three years, various governmental entities in San Francisco have published more than 40 reports about the status of children. Furthermore, city agencies and task groups are coordinating services and developing policies on everything from child care, to adolescent health, to preschool for all, to the redesign of child welfare, to truancy, to violence and young children, to detention alternatives. San Francisco must continue to build on this fine work and fill in gaps by creating mechanisms that ensure a comprehensive approach when planning becomes too focused on single issues.

### DCYF recommends that:

- ✓ The Mayor create an overarching Policy Council on Children, Youth, and Families, comprised of leaders from throughout the city, to help frame policy from a broad perspective and to get broad-based engagement
- ➔ DCYF, in collaboration with other city agencies, convene government and community bodies to address issues for which there is no official planning forum (such as coordinated planning for youth, comparable to the coordinated planning that occurred for children ages 0 – 5)
- ➔ City departments monitor the implementation of the reports they have created (DCYF plans to publish regular progress reports on the status of the implementation of the recommendations.)

*“We started out  
organizing to bring  
music to the park,  
but the bathrooms  
were always locked.  
We wound up  
negotiating to get  
them unlocked so  
kids could use them.”*

*- San Francisco Parent*

### PARENT ACTION:

#### First 5's Parent Empowerment Initiative

The Parent Action grant program is the centerpiece of First 5's work to empower parents. Parent Action provides funding for parent-designed programs in four categories.

- Community Building: newsletters, parent forums, and films
- Parent Support and Education: parenting classes, support groups, and workshops with special speakers
- Leadership Development: training for parent leaders
- Family Activities: events nurturing parent/child bonding and parent involvement.

First 5 San Francisco provides technical assistance to the projects, including computer training, leadership development, and conflict resolution.

Highlights of recent programs:

- Immigrant parents created the first Chinese language web site providing information about family services in San Francisco.
- Young parents in the Bayview hosted a monthly “Safe Neighborhood” night for families to share dinner while children play and do homework with supervision.
- Families in a cooperative preschool created a garden for the whole community.

## ENGAGING YOUTH

San Francisco has one of the most successful Youth Commissions in the country, a civic culture of activism and inclusion, and numerous youth leaders and youth-led organizations. The city is well positioned to take bold steps in changing the paradigm of its relationship to youth: moving from seeing youth as targets of services to engaging them as partners in decisionmaking, planning, and community change initiatives. By integrating a solid youth development approach throughout the service system, the city will continue to grow the capacity of young people to give back. DCYF has funded youth-led initiatives that have successfully supported young people in visioning and implementing their own projects. San Francisco now has the opportunity to provide increased support and resources for youth to practice democratic and participatory leadership. All city residents can benefit from the energy, idealism, and skills of young people.



*“Why do we have to wait to be the leaders of tomorrow?”*

*- Youth Commissioner*

DCYF is committed to using a significant portion of the Children’s Fund’s three percent set-aside for youth-initiated projects to strengthen the capacity of young people to organize for change. Additionally, DCYF and the Youth Commission will work together to strengthen the voices of young people in the civic life of San Francisco, at all levels of the city policymaking arena.

### DCYF recommends that:

- City departments require – in their contracts with community agencies and in their own programming – that youth participate actively in the planning and evaluation of services, and that the involvement of young people be a criterion by which all relevant grants and programs are evaluated

## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

The city must develop strategies that foster collective problemsolving, promote new leadership, and empower communities to work on behalf of children, youth, and their families. The weakest voice in the policymaking process is often that of parents, whose multiple responsibilities in caring for families may leave little time for civic engagement. But parents have important opinions and experiences to share.

### DCYF recommends that:

- Policies and program proposals that reflect an authentic community voice receive the highest priority from city decisionmakers
- City departments funding children’s services place a greater emphasis on funding strategies that build community leadership and foster community action
- Creative and flexible strategies be adopted to facilitate the involvement of parents at all levels of decisionmaking

## CONCLUSION:

### *A Vision for the Future*

**San Francisco can be the best.** San Francisco can have the best service delivery system in the world for its children, youth, and their families. The city is rich with resources. It

has dedicated and creative professionals, a compassionate and wise electorate, and policymakers passionate about improving the quality of life for all San Franciscans. It has a legacy of commitment to children, and model policies and programs that are known throughout the nation. There is much to build on, but also much still to be done.

**Imagine San Francisco as a family-friendly city where every child grows up healthy, safe, well-educated, and productively involved in the community.**



#### **Imagine a city where...**

- Every child has access to the basic opportunities and supports needed for healthy growth and development, including comprehensive health care, quality education from pre-school to high school, and stimulating social, cultural, and recreational enrichment activities.
- Every family in need of help has timely access to high quality services, with expert, culturally sensitive staff who have the capacity to respond to the unique needs of each family: counseling, parent support, employment assistance, or child care.
- Every community has vibrant institutions – both public and private – that serve as community hubs, offer a variety of activities, services, and information at convenient times in inviting settings, and are effective vehicles for strengthening community relations and the quality of life for all.

**The Department of Children, Youth and Their Families** is committed to taking a leadership role in implementing the recommendations of this 2005 report. We intend to facilitate joint planning at all levels, involve the community, and strengthen the service delivery systems for all children, youth, and their families. We commit to strategies that are inclusive, transparent, timely, well informed, and driven by the documented and expressed needs of children, youth, and families.

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