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**New San José Study Confirms Long-term Need for  
More Affordable Quality Child Care**  
*More public/private partnerships needed to close gap*



***San José ----***

According to the San Jose child care needs assessment, 5515 pre-school-aged children currently need child care that existing facilities cannot support at this time. Even if current

providers can expand their capacity as planned in the next several years, by 2010 more than 4600 young children still will need child care spaces beyond what is projected to be available.

“Quality child care and early education are critically important to both our families and to our community’s future,” said Mayor Ron Gonzales. “Our city’s youngest children can get a smart start for schooling that leads directly to long-term academic success, and parents can have peace of mind knowing that their children are in good hands.”

Anticipating the probability of increased demand if California voters approve the “*Preschool for All*” initiative on the statewide ballot in June, the City of San José and San José Public Library commissioned the study to identify the unmet needs of San Jose families for quality child care and to provide guidance on how best to allocate limited resources to meet these needs.



“We found that there is a significant gap between the need for affordable, quality child care services and their availability, both today and into the future,” said Leslie Shelton, Manager, Early Care and Education Services at the San Jose Public Library.

The last study for child care trends, completed in 2002, looked at countywide needs and was based on data from regional workforce projections and child care wait lists. The 2006 San Jose survey by Godbe Research interviewed 400 parents and guardians and 193 child care providers, and it is expected to be a more reliable indicator of actual needs within the city itself. The executive summary of the study can be found at [www.sjmayor.org](http://www.sjmayor.org).

Since 1999, when Gonzales made child care and early education a priority for the city, San Jose has invested nearly \$7 million to fund new or renovated child care facilities through the Smart Start San José program. Smart Start San José Program standards are recognized nationally as a model for improving the quality of community child care.

This initiative has increased access to quality child care by adding more than 3,010 child care spaces in 16 new child care facilities, more than 100 family care homes, and expansion of 10 existing child care centers. Another \$3 million is slated for 5 additional construction projects for child care facilities in the next two years.

“Investment in child care spaces alone will not guarantee quality child care,” said the mayor. “As the study found, we also will need to increase the skills of early childhood educators and their number by working with our partners in the child care field.”

### **Highlights of Parent Survey**

- 43% of parents and guardians with children five and under use childcare on a regular basis (approximately 9,999 of 23,176 households with young children).
- Of the 56% who do not use outside care, over 75% indicated that they prefer to care for their children at home, and only 12% stated that the cost of childcare was the main reason why they did not use childcare.
- 77% of those who used childcare on a regular basis indicated that they were “very satisfied” with their current childcare provider.
- In terms of quality of care, 8% rated the quality as *excellent*, 41% felt it was *good*, 20% felt it was *fair*, 8% felt it was *poor or very poor* (24% declined to answer).

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- When asked to rate the factors influencing their choice of a provider, parents ranked overall cleanliness first, followed by a stimulating and appropriate environment, experience of the providers, and quality of educational experience for the children.

### **Highlights of Provider Survey**

- A rich blend of family care and center-based providers, large and small, exists in San José to serve area residents. This is a plus in light of the potential for the statewide Preschool for All Act to pass.
- 37% of the providers anticipated a need to expand facilities or services in the next 5 years. Of these, 29% expected to expand current facilities and 20% expected to build new facilities.
- Of those who saw a need to expand facilities or services, 48% stated that they would seek assistance to build new facilities (needing an average of \$124,000) and 55% stated they would seek assistance to expand existing facilities (seeking an average of \$45,500). Other financial needs included funding to enhance curriculum materials and hire staff.

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