

**For Immediate Release:**

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**Grand Opening of *Smart Start San José***  
**Children's Center at Overfelt High School**  
*Teen parents and their kids go to school on the same campus*



*Mayor Ron Gonzales spoke at Overfelt High School*

***San José*** --- The Children's Center at W.C. Overfelt High School, one of the newest Smart Start San José child care and early education centers that celebrated its grand opening today, will serve families and teen parents in East San José neighborhoods through an innovative partnership.

The new center will provide quality care and education for young children of teen parents while they also continue their high school classes. The Overfelt site also includes new facilities for the Healthy Start Program and Neighborhood Health Clinic as part of a collaborative community service center.

“By working together, we have built a comprehensive center that will help our youngest children get a smart start on their education, and we can help young parents to complete their studies and become

better prepared themselves,” said San José Mayor Ron Gonzales. “We are helping families succeed by linking young parents with a strong network of support through the school and the community.”



The Overfelt Children’s Center is the result of a partnership among the city’s Smart Start San José program, East Side Union High School District, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, and the Health Trust.

The center will serve children from six weeks to five years old, along with their families in the East Side Union High School District. Family need and income determine eligibility for the program and services, and parents must be attending school or a training program, be employed, or actively seeking employment.

The center’s program also trains high school students for future careers working with young children through an elective course at Overfelt High School. The course provides both instruction and practical experience, while enhancing the center’s capabilities to provide extra personal attention for the care of young children.

Other services offered through the center include parenting education for high school students, case management coordinated by a Home/School Teen Parent Liaison, and physical and mental health services and referrals.

“The new center offers an engaging environment that supports the developmental stages of each child and encourages social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills that form the foundation for successful future school experiences,” said Angel Rios, San José Parks Superintendent who oversees the city’s child care programs.

The city invested \$758,000 toward the Overfelt Children’s Center to help with the Smart Start component and additional site improvements. Smart Start San José funding increased the center’s capacity by 17 spaces to 40, and added space for the care of infants and toddlers.

The total project cost \$2.1 million, and included \$288,000 in funding from the Packard Foundation, \$800,000 from ESUHSD, and \$150,000 from the Cowell Foundation. The Health Trust provided \$389,000 in support of the Overfelt Neighborhood Health Clinic, which is part of the School Health Clinics of Santa Clara County program. The school district operates the Smart Start center.



"Our partnership worked to create a new model of care in one centralized location on the Overfelt campus that would address the needs of the neighborhood community and reinforce family stability to help their long-term success," said Peggy Gibb, director of the Health Trust.

Mayor Gonzales initiated the Smart Start San José commitment to build or expand 20 early care and education centers throughout the community to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability and help children become better prepared to achieve academic success when they reach kindergarten.

The city contributes to the capital costs of Smart Start centers, which are then operated by school districts or community-based organizations. Smart Start San José quality standards include a rigorous child development curriculum; communication between preschool and kindergarten teachers to ensure successful transition into kindergarten; and parent participation. Since 1999, eleven new Smart Start San José centers have opened.

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