

Overview: This proposal is for a new San Diego County initiative to create awareness and incentives for San Diego County businesses to increase support to working families. Doing so creates a dual benefit for children and working parents, but also for business to have productive, reliable employees. First 5 San Diego (F5SD), in terms of systems change, can be a catalyst and organizer for increased critical supports for working families. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce research establishes the business case for supporting high-quality child care, citing research that shows when companies provide child care supports, employee absences decrease, job satisfaction increases, and job turnover declines by as much as 60 percent.

Proposed Convener: F5SD, supporting its current Strategic Plan direction of **Integrated Leadership**, to engage cross-sector partners and build community capacity.

Potential Partners: Child and family advocacy organizations, parent organizations, chambers of commerce, economic development councils, workforce organizations, philanthropic organizations, community organizations

Foundation for Call to Action:

- All children deserve to be healthy and safe and to develop to their full potential
- Focus on the Family: When parents thrive, children thrive.
- Affordable child care enables parents to work to not only achieve self-sufficiency and reduce social costs, but creates increase in family wealth
- Child health and safety may be at risk when families don't have access to reliable, stable care
- Employers that offer childcare and family-friendly policies are better able to attract and retain talent, and yields more engaged, reliable and productive employees
- Due to primary caregiving responsibilities, women in the workforce are disproportionately affected
- Childcare and economic development are linked. The pandemic has laid bare how important child care and family wellness is to productivity, absenteeism, workforce participation, and job retention.
- As a result of the COVID pandemic and during economic recovery, businesses are struggling to hire, train, and retain the workforce necessary for economic sustainment and growth
- Government resources are limited. Philanthropy and business have untapped potential to provide needed resources for working families

Concept outline:

- Create San Diego County awareness and education campaign about **6 critical supports** for working families
 1. Company Support for working parents
 2. Flexible & Predictable Work Schedules
 3. Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)
 4. Lactation Supports
 5. Paid Parental Leave
 6. Child Care assistance: On-site or Financial Assistance

San Diego County Working Families Initiative Proposal

- Encourage businesses to commit to SD County Working Families Initiative Family Friendly 7 Practices within their business
 - Small to Large, including large non-profit, education (ex. Universities)
- First 5 SD Public Recognition of businesses who join initiative and awards to business who implement 3 of 6 practices, higher level recognition for 5 or more practices
- First 5 build partnerships across business and philanthropy sectors that increase community commitment to supporting the first five years of life
- Philanthropic and other grant fund to provide financial resources to accelerate change
- Possibility: Connect to Live Well SD and/or County's new strategic plan vision:
 - **Vision:** A just, sustainable, and resilient future for all.
 - **Mission:** Strengthen our communities with innovative, inclusive, and data-driven services through a skilled and supported workforce.

Six Critical Supports Recommendations for Businesses

- **Company Supports for working parents**
 - Indicate that a company is inclusive and supportive of families
 - Understanding of needs and challenges of employee as parents
 - Provide peer-to-peer support for employees who are juggling the needs of employment and parenthood
 - Provide a conduit of parenting resources to employees
- **Flexible & Predictable Work Schedules**
 - Make work hours/schedules as predictable as possible, to enable employees to make childcare arrangements and help with family income stability (supports consistent earnings week-to-week)
 - Use of PTO to care for sick family members
 - Flexibility or unpaid leave to attend school conferences or events
- **Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)**
 - Provide (and help employees utilize) dependent care flexible spending account and/or dependent care assistance plans
- **Lactation Supports**
 - Support workplace lactation beyond the requirements of the law; Since 2002, California has required employers of 50+ employees to provide reasonable time and location for employees for lactation
 - Adopt lactation policies
- **Paid Parental leave**
 - Provide paid leave for employees that are new parents (mothers, fathers, partners), to augment or extend the leave provided by California's paid family leave program
- **Child Care assistance - On-site or Financial Assistance:**
 - Explore options for on-site or work-adjacent childcare that is provided at a discount and/or waitlist preference for employees
 - Provide direct financial assistance

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Resources:

- **Workforce + Childcare:** *San Diego Workforce Partnership and The San Diego Foundation report* <https://childcare.workforce.org/>
- COVID-19 Impact on Child Care: <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/reports/covid-19-impact-childcare>
- New Research Shows States Lose Billions in Annual Economic Opportunity Due to Childcare Gaps: <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/press-release/new-research-shows-states-lose-billions-annual-economic-opportunity-due-childcare-gaps>
- Raising The Future, The Childcare Crisis: <https://video.kpbs.org/video/raising-the-future-the-child-care-crisis-t4jkzl/>
- Family Friendly Business Practices: https://cdphe.colorado.gov/sites/cdphe/files/PSD_SDOH_Family-Friendly-Business_long.pdf
- Supporting San Diego's working families: 6 takeaways: <https://workforce.org/news/supporting-san-diegos-working-families-6-takeaways/>
- Piecing Together Solutions: The Importance of Childcare to U.S. Families and Businesses: [EarlyEd Minis Report6 121420 Final.pdf \(uschamberfoundation.org\)](https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/early-ed-minis-report-6-121420-final)
- Institute for Women's Policy Research: The Business Case for Childcare: <https://iwpr.org/iwpr-publications/one-pager/the-business-case-for-childcare/>
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation: Essential Care For Essential Workers: https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/media-uploads/ECE%20Executive%20Briefing_Jan2021.pdf
- Cornell University: Child Care & Parent Productivity: Making the Business Case: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/mildredwarner.org/attachments/000/000/074/original/154-21008542.pdf>
- Forbes: Employers are improving their childcare benefits, but it's not nearly enough to stop the ongoing crisis: https://fortune.com/2022/03/03/study-finds-employers-are-improving-child-care-benefits/?utm_campaign=COVID%20Testimony%202022&utm_source=Bambu&utm_content=20220304_bambunewsletter&blaid=2724511

Author: Rick Richardson, rrichardson@cdasd.org

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