

Item 5-1

Quality Early Learning Overview
October 20th, 2026

san diego county office of EDUCATION
FUTURE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES℠

FUNDED IN PART BY First 5 San Diego

LEARNING

Quality early learning and care experiences build the foundation for skills children need in school, work, and life. Together, we're strengthening California's approach and systems to nurture children from infancy through preschool. (Quality Counts California)

First 5 San Diego Strategic Plan Goal:
Strengthening the system to improve the quality of early care an education

Markers of Quality

- Coaching
- Resources
- Training
- Communities of Practice

ONE SYSTEM, FOUR FUNDING STREAMS

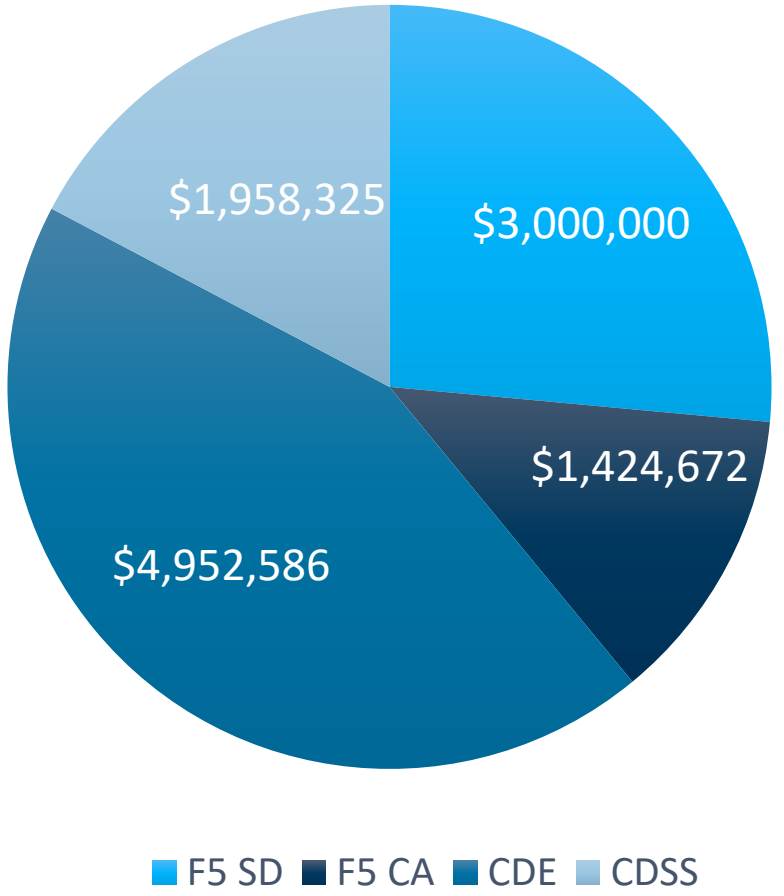
FY26-27 Learn Well funding $3,000,000

Every dollar was matched by leveraged state funds.

SDQPI is an **integrated** approach: one quality improvement system rather than four parallel ones, this allows us to blend funding for continued services.

We are headed towards a fiscal cliff next year with all funding amounts being reduced next year.

Total Funding: $11,335,583.00



Who we served in FY25-26

- Classroom-facing 3,685 role assignments
- Leadership 975 role assignments
- Data & Systems 394 role assignments



Agency Leadership
366 program directors
24 assistant directors

390

Site Leadership
487 site leaders
98 assistant site leaders

585

Lead Teachers
Lead classroom teachers
across 559 sites

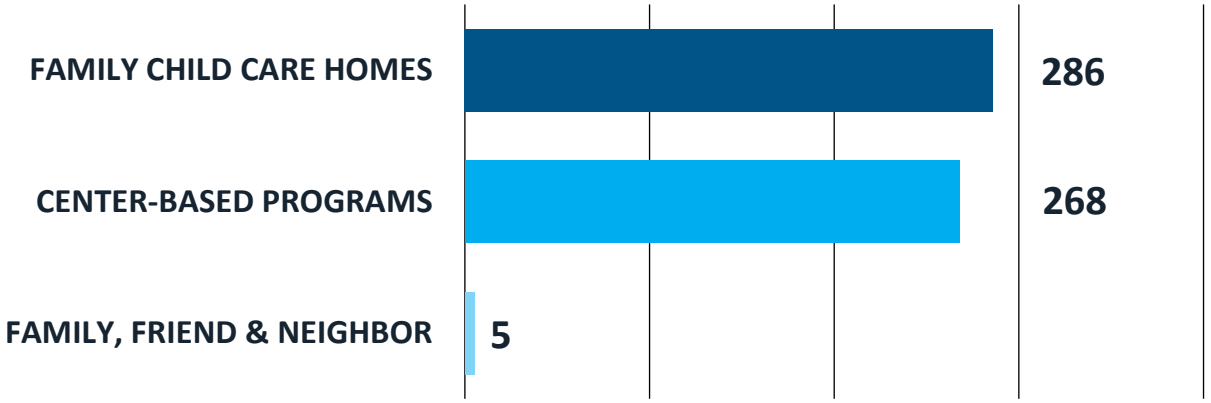
1,282

Classroom Support
1,962 instructional assistants
441 floaters

2,403

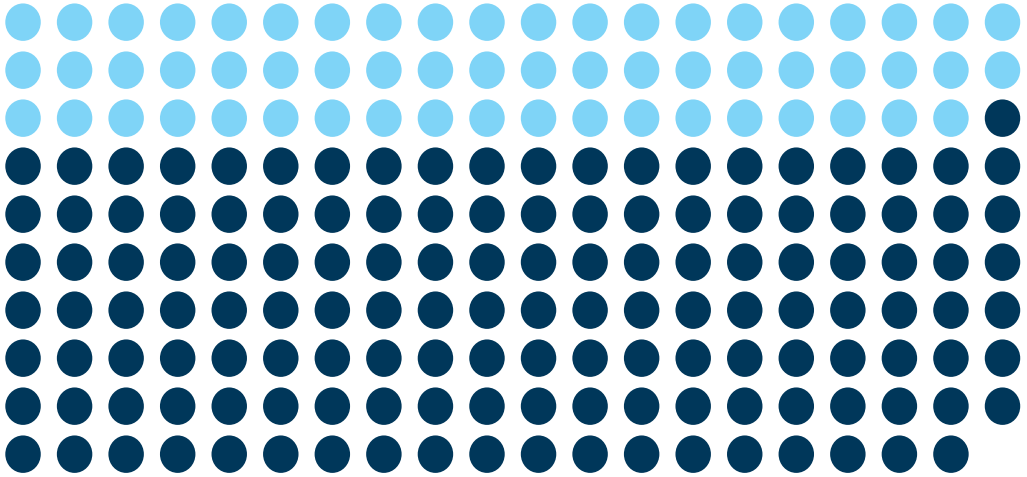
WHY THIS MATTERS

FCC providers are small businesses, frequently operated by women of color and immigrant entrepreneurs, the exact population central to equity in the childcare sector.



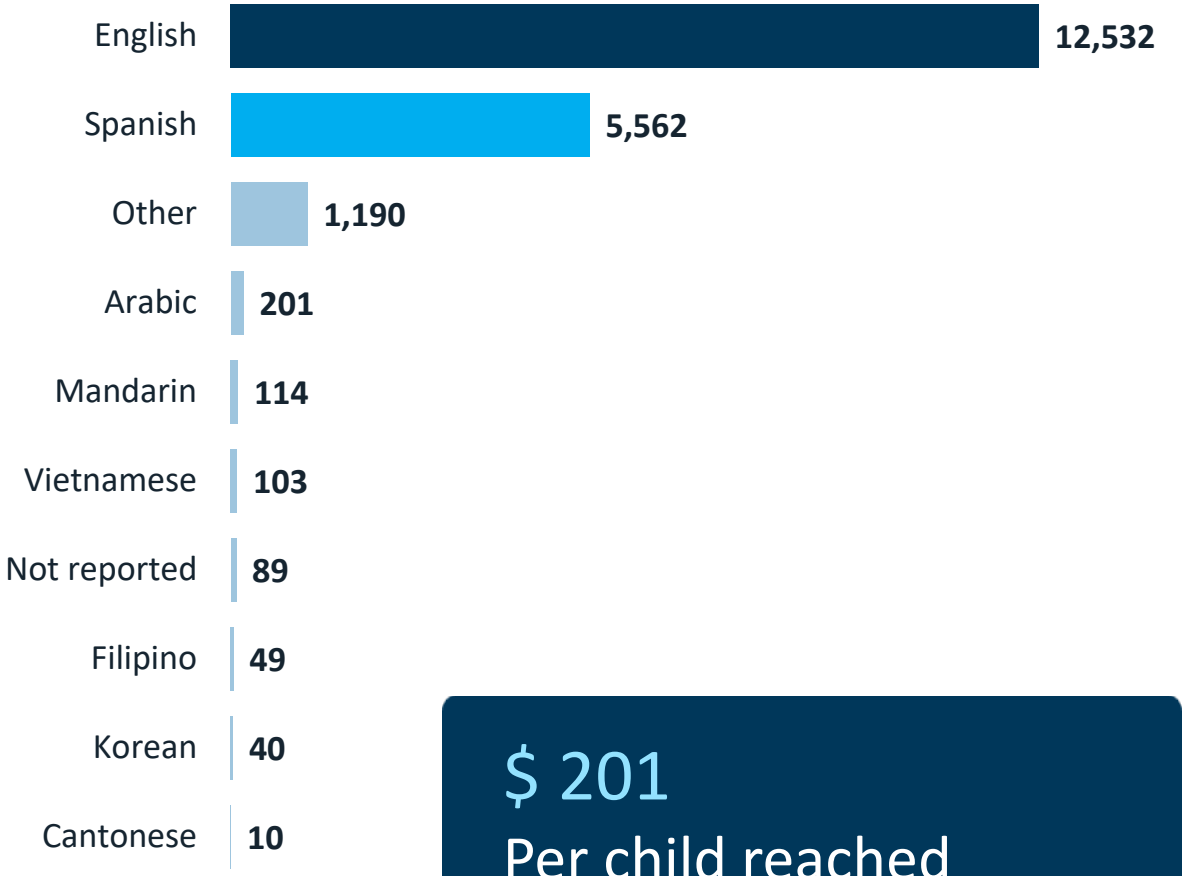
19,890 CHILDREN, 9 HOME LANGUAGES

Each dot = 100 children · 19,890 children served in 2025-26



Infant / Toddler
5,859 · 29.5%

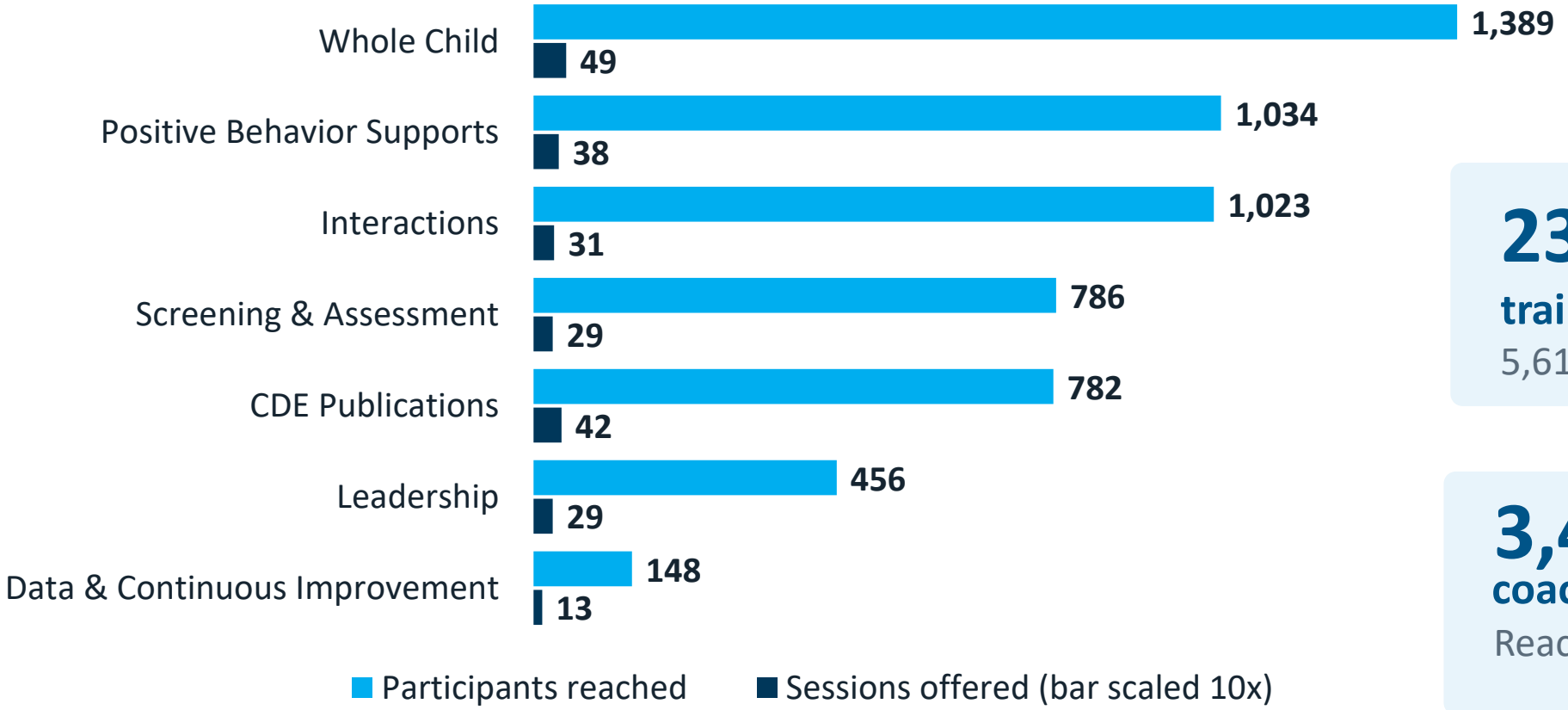
Preschool-age
14,031 · 70.5%



7,269 multilingual learners
36.5% of children served, including 5,562 from Spanish-speaking homes. This is why every service is delivered in English and Spanish.

$ 201
Per child reached across 19,890 children

10,941 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TOUCHPOINTS



231
training sessions
5,618 participants

3,482
coaching sessions
Reaching 5,323 people

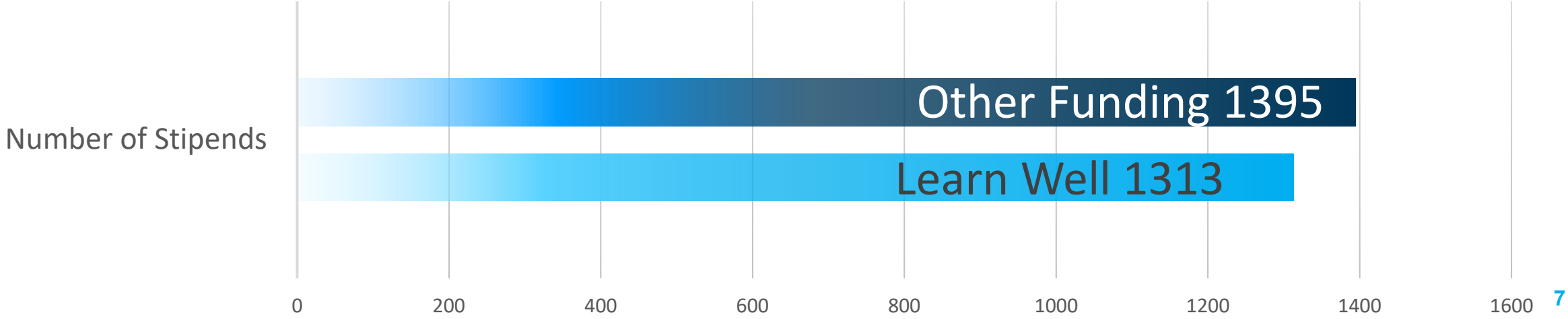
For a family child care provider working alone in a home, a coaching cohort is frequently the only professional community available.

$3.36 MILLION INVESTED DIRECTLY IN EDUCATORS

2,708 educators completed all program requirements and received $1,240 each. The majority serve as teachers or assistant teachers, the roles that traditionally receive the lowest wages in the field.

The workforce mirrors the children they serve

28.8% of stipend applicants named Spanish as their primary language. 28.0% of children served come from Spanish-speaking homes. That alignment is the pattern a bilingual delivery model is designed to produce.



Leading with Confidence



"By prioritizing the well-being of ECE professionals, the Learn Well Initiative shows promise in supporting positive outcomes for leaders and caregivers, with potential implications for improving the overall quality of early childhood programs" (Early Childhood Research Quarterly Journal)

Learn Well Funding Overview

Funding was reduced by 50% in comparison to the previous funding cycle.
It reduced again after the first year of this cycle and is expected to decrease further.

2024-25	2025-26	2026-27 through 2028-29	2029-30
$8.0M	$4.0M	$3.0M-$2.75 M	$2.5M

These successive reductions have a direct impact on the scope and sustainability of services available to early learning and care providers throughout San Diego County after this year.

FY 26-27 Changes with $3M F5 SD Funds

- CDE Funds used to offset the reduction in Learn Well funding.
- Implemented 100% group coaching
- Larger caseloads for coaches
- Reduced amounts of stipends

All state funds that have been leveraged to ensure over 3,000 educators and close to 20,000 children are impacted by this work will be significantly reduced and, in some cases, will end in June of 2027.

Learn Well funds, will be reduced almost by 50% from the beginning of the funding cycle to the end, to implement the “Learning” goal of the F5 SD strategic plan.

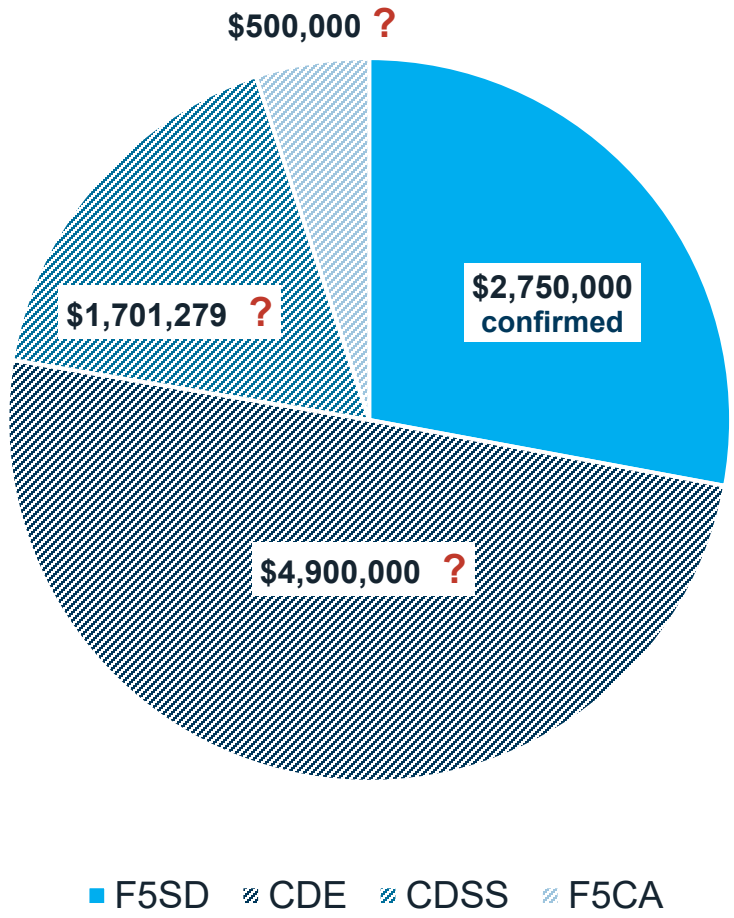
Implementation in FY 27-28 with $2.75M of Learn Well Funds and reductions from other funders

72% **NOT YET SECURED**

$7.1M of the $9.85M expected for FY27-28 is not yet secured

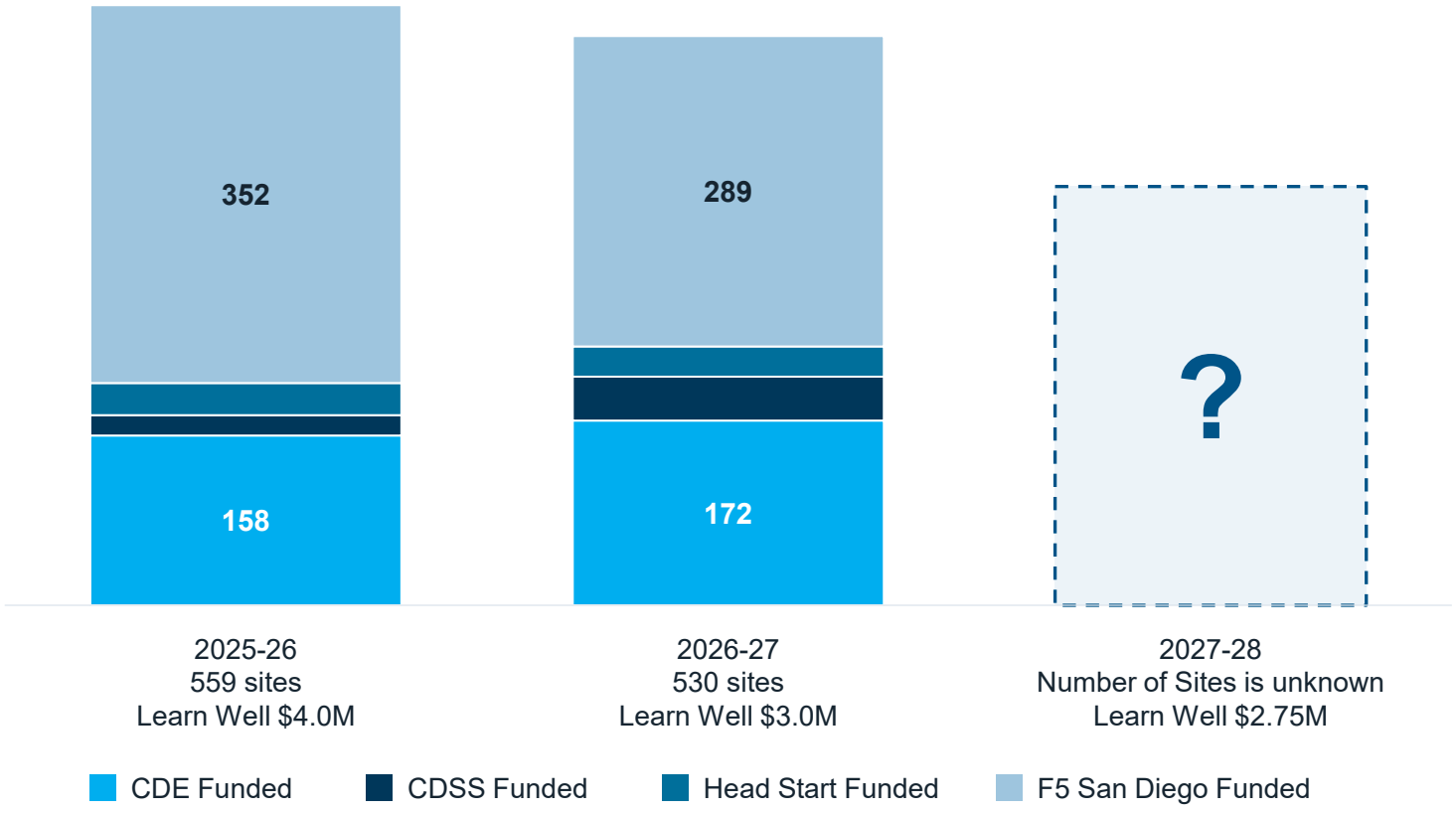
CONFIRMED	**Learn Well (F5 SD)** $2.75M
NOT YET SECURED	CDE $4.9M · CDSS $1.7M · F5 CA $0.5M

Projected FY27-28 total: $9,851,279
72% NOT YET SECURED



PARTICIPANT COMPARISON BY FUNDING

The sites leaving are the ones with no state or federal subsidy: the sites Learn Well carries on its own.



WHO IS LEAVING

−63 sites with no subsidy

	25-26	26-27	27-28
CDE Funded	158	172	?
CDSS Funded	19	41	?
Head Start Funded	30	28	?
F5SD Funded	**352**	**289**	**?**
Total	**559**	**530**	**?**

2027-28: Learn Well drops to $2.75M and the state amounts are not confirmed. Fewer sites is the only safe assumption.

Potential Impact to the work

- Reduction in Staff
- Reduction in number of participants
- Elimination of Stipends and Resources
- Overall impact to children and learning



VOICES

FROM THE FIELD

Learn Well trainings and coaching have helped me to move forward with confidence. I have the resources, talent and skills to create my desired results. I have gained full confidence in my own competence.

LEARN WELL PROVIDER

I worked with my coach on improving my consistency and accountability. Focusing on daily habits and taking ownership of my performance helped me become more confident and reliable.

LEARN WELL PROVIDER

Hope for Learn Well

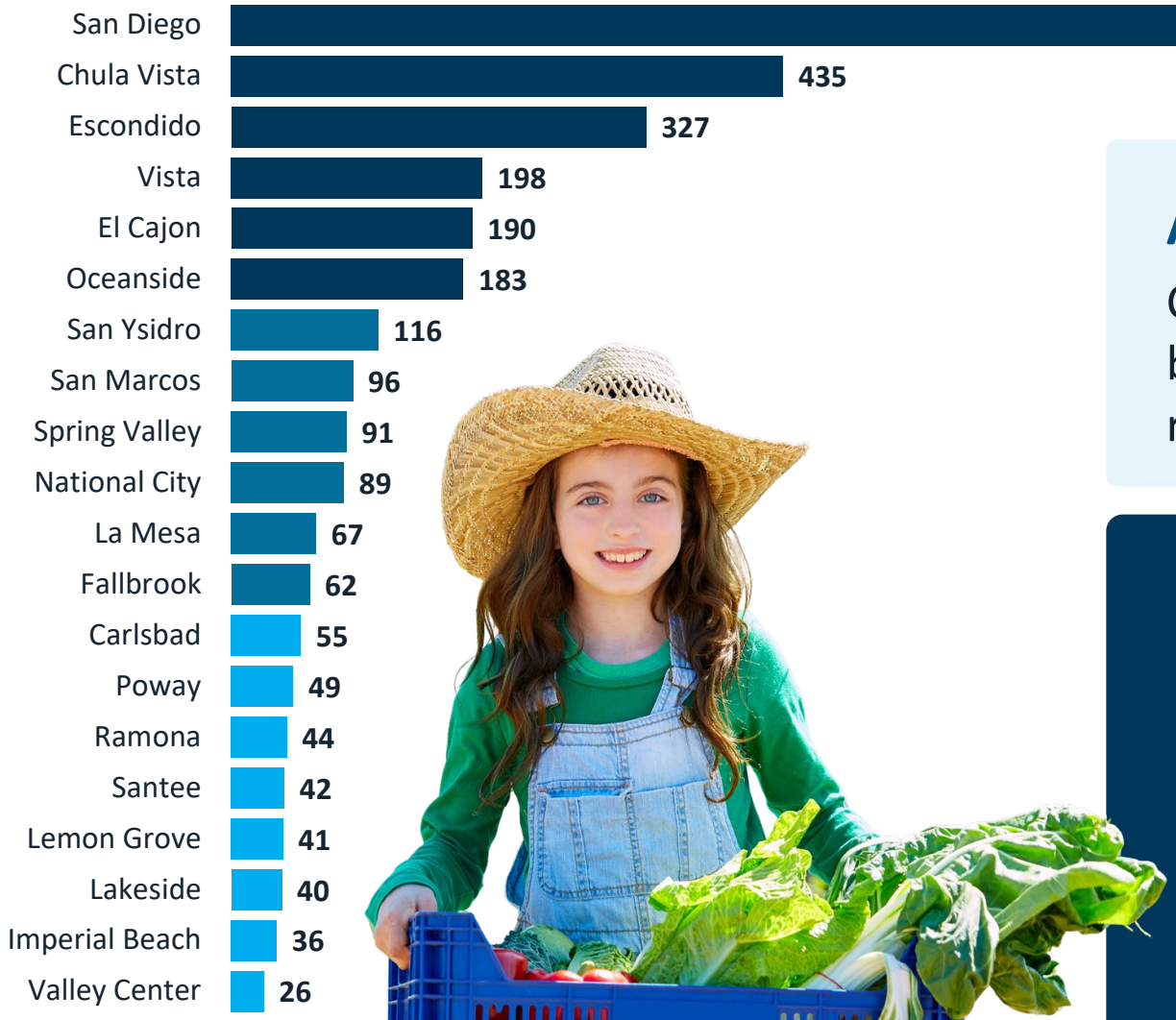
Consideration for additional funding to continue the positive impact for thousands of educators and of children.



REFERENCE INFORMATION

The following slides reference the Child Care Blueprint and are to be used for reference only and will not be reviewed during the presentation

RECIPIENTS LIVE IN EVERY CORNER OF THE COUNTY



All five supervisorial districts

Coastal, urban, suburban, inland, and back-country communities are all represented in the stipend program.

Reaching where infrastructure is thinnest

Ramona, Valley Center, and Fallbrook appear alongside San Diego, Chula Vista, and Escondido. Rural communities have the fewest early learning options, so presence there matters.

SDQPI is the Model for California's Implementation of Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) Plus with the U.S. Department of Defense



- Serves families from the Army, Navy, Marine Corp, Coast Guards and the Air Force
- Expanded access to children of military families for quality care
- Increased enrollment for SDQPI Participating sites

THE COUNTY'S RESPONSE: THE CHILD CARE BLUEPRINT

Following the Board of Supervisors' October 2022 Child Care Conference, the County of San Diego adopted the Child Care Blueprint. Since 2024, a countywide Implementation Team has advanced the work through three pillars:



Advocacy & Funding

Building the Child Care Ecosystem of the Future

Influence policy and secure financial resources, including provider wages and educator financial support.



Navigation Hub

Organizing What We Have Today

A one-stop, culturally and linguistically responsive resource for providers, families, and professionals.



Systems Change & Alignment

Enhancing and Expanding Support

Coordinate data, partnerships, and services across systems to improve outcomes countywide.

Source: San Diego County Child Care Blueprint Implementation Plan, San Diego County Office of Education, 2026 (sdcoe.net/special-populations/early-education/lpc/san-diego-county-child-care-blueprint-implementation-plan).

THE CHALLENGE: A COUNTYWIDE CHILD CARE CRISIS

The San Diego County Child Care Blueprint was created in direct response to a documented affordability and access crisis:

~40%

of monthly income

spent on child care by many San Diego County families

$1,643

per month, infant care

in a San Diego County child care center, 56% more than preschool-age care

$24/hr

median lead teacher wage

self-reported by San Diego County center-based educators; FCC assistants median $18/hr

$107K+

household income needed

for a family of four to afford child care out of pocket

SDQPI is positioned to respond to the Child Care crisis if there is sustained funding

Sources: San Diego County Child Care Blueprint (County of San Diego Child and Family Well-Being Dept. / Children First Collective San Diego, 2023); San Diego County Housing Needs Report (San Diego Housing Federation, 2025); Powell, A. et al., The Early Care and Education Workforce of San Diego County (CSCCE, UC Berkeley, Oct. 2025), citing California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (2025) for infant care cost.

PILLAR 1

Advocacy & Funding: Project “Increased Provider Wages”

THE GAP

$24/hr lead, $18/hr FCC assistant median self-reported wages for San Diego County educators

$28/hour wage the Blueprint calls for the county to work toward

84% of center educators say higher pay is the top fix for turnover

HOW LEARN WELL RESPONDS

$3.36 million placed directly into educator pockets through the Learn Well stipend program in 2025-26

2,708 educators completed stipend requirements and received $1,240 each, the majority serving as teachers and assistant teachers, the roles with the lowest wages in the field

Without continued SDQPI funding, this is the only direct wage supplement most of these educators receive.

Sources: San Diego County Child Care Blueprint Implementation Plan (SDCOE, 2026); Powell, A. et al., The Early Care and Education Workforce of San Diego County (CSCCE, UC Berkeley, Oct. 2025), Tables 3.9-3.10 and Table 4.9; SDQPI/Learn Well 2025-26 program data (SDCOE Early Education).

PILLAR 1

Workforce Instability: Turnover & Retention

THE GAP

24% / 30% of lead teachers and assistants turned over in the past year at San Diego County centers

34% of centers have an unfilled lead teacher vacancy right now

HOW SDQPI / LEARN WELL RESPONDS

5,054 workforce role assignments reached in 2025-26: 3,685 classroom-facing, 975 leadership, and 394 data and systems roles

Stipends target teachers and assistants specifically, the exact roles CSCCE identifies as facing the highest turnover in the county

A stabilized workforce is the precondition for every other pillar of the Blueprint.

Sources: Powell, A. et al., The Early Care and Education Workforce of San Diego County (CSCCE, UC Berkeley, Oct. 2025), Table 3.8; San Diego County Child Care Blueprint Implementation Plan (SDCOE, 2026); SDQPI/Learn Well 2025-26 program data (SDCOE Early Education).

PILLAR 2

Navigation Hub

10,941

professional learning touchpoints delivered in 2025-26, spanning whole-child practice, positive behavior supports, and data-driven improvement

49%

of San Diego County center educators speak Spanish, and 42% of family child care providers do too, closely mirroring the 28.8% of stipend applicants who named Spanish as their primary language

3,482

coaching sessions offered, reaching 5,323 people, often the only professional community available to a family child care provider working alone

A bilingual delivery model isn't a side benefit, it is the pattern the workforce data requires.

Sources: San Diego County Child Care Blueprint Implementation Plan (SDCOE, 2026); Powell, A. et al., The Early Care and Education Workforce of San Diego County (CSCCE, UC Berkeley, Oct. 2025), Tables 1.1-1.2; SDQPI/Learn Well 2025-26 program data (SDCOE Early Education).

PILLAR 2

Training That Matches the Need

Named Implementation Plan project: ***"Create a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Training Continuum,"*** *prioritizing infant and toddler care and evidence-based topics.*

THE GAP

77% of San Diego County center educators want more training on working with children's challenging behaviors, their single most requested topic

Up to 63% of large family child care providers say the same

HOW SDQPI / LEARN WELL RESPONDS

1,034 participants reached through Positive Behavior Supports touchpoints in 2025-26, Learn Well's second-largest training category

10,941 total touchpoints delivered across whole-child practice, behavior supports, screening, and data-driven improvement

SDQPI isn't guessing what training educators need; 2025-26 delivery already matches the county's top-cited classroom challenge.

Sources: Powell, A. et al., The Early Care and Education Workforce of San Diego County (CSCCE, UC Berkeley, Oct. 2025), Figures 2.7-2.8; San Diego County Child Care Blueprint Implementation Plan (SDCOE, 2026); SDQPI/Learn Well 2025-26 program data (SDCOE Early Education).

PILLAR 3

Systems Change & Alignment

Countywide reach, tracked

19,890 children served across licensed centers and family child care homes in 2025-26

All 5 supervisorial districts represented among stipend recipients, from urban San Diego to back-country Ramona and Valley Center

Interactive dashboards built from applicant and licensing data support the countywide data-monitoring infrastructure this pillar calls for



Sources: San Diego County Child Care Blueprint Implementation Plan (SDCOE, 2026); SDQPI/Learn Well 2025-26 program data (SDCOE Early Education); LPC Needs Assessment workgroup status, SDCOE Early Education.