



June 9, 2020

Dear Governor Newsom,

COVID-19 has affected nearly every facet of daily life for Californians. We applaud your strong leadership in taking prompt and deliberate steps to flatten the curve of COVID-19.

As the largest business organization in San Luis Obispo County, representing nearly 1,400 members that employ approximately 38,000 employees throughout the Central Coast, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce is committed to curbing the spread of the virus and serving as a partner in our state's economic recovery ahead.

As businesses begin to reopen and Californians return to work, it is essential to ensure child care services are prioritized in order to reach our shared goals of equity, community health and economic recovery.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, childcare affordability and accessibility were already reaching crisis levels with some families paying more on childcare than on housing, if they could find a space at all. In a 2019 survey of more than 300 parents, more than 15% of respondents shared that they had regretfully taken themselves out of the workforce because childcare was not available.

When not available or affordable, childcare - like so much unpaid work - disproportionately falls to women who would otherwise be interested in working and helping to get our economy back on track. Childcare is key to our State's economic recovery and essential to ensuring that the recovery is equitable.

When we first sheltered in place, your administration took bold actions to ensure care was available to essential workers by dedicating \$100 million towards emergency vouchers and cleaning supplies, granting flexibilities around family fees and eligibility standards, and launching a new child care website to help essential workers find care. We saw similar bold action in the May Revision through the allocation of the CAREs Act funding to support child care providers and increase access.

We hope that your bold action relating to childcare will continue in the final FY 2020-21 State Budget. Given the razor thin margins of the child care field, steady reimbursement rates and a hold harmless agreement will be critical to keeping child care open and serving our working families.

Child care has always been an essential support for our economy by allowing California parents to work. Thank you for your leadership and unwavering commitment to California.

Sincerely,

Jim Dantona  
President/CEO  
San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce



CC: Giannina Perez, Governor's Office; Kris Perry, California Health and Human Services Agency