BUILDING CHILD CARE WITH LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION, AND FUNDING: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CROSS CULTURAL FAMILY CENTER'S MARY LANE INFANT AND TODDLER CENTER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This paper provides a brief overview of some basic concepts in child care, a short history of child care funding in San Francisco, a description of San Francisco's assessment of child care needs, a case study of the implementation of the Mary Lane Infant and Toddler Center, and a review of some of the issues encountered during implementation of the Center. The paper concludes with recommendations that may be useful to the counties of San Mateo and Santa Clara in future child care center implementations.

BASIC CONCEPTS IN CHILD CARE

The following child care concepts are defined:

- **Family Child Care Homes** - Child care services are rendered in the provider's home.
- **Child Care Centers** - Child care services are provided in an established facility; hours are structured.
- **Licensed and License-Exempt Care** – State-licensed childcare has requirements such as staff ratios, training, health, and safety conditions. The State also supports services supplied by providers without a license (license-exempt care).
- Subsidized Care and Individual Subsidies (CalWORKs Stages).

LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION, AND FUNDING: CHILD CARE BECOMES A SAN FRANCISCO PRIORITY

Child care has been a significant priority in San Francisco politics as early as 1991. That year, San Francisco voters approved the Children's Amendment to be incorporated into the City Charter, resulting in the creation of the Children's Fund. This fund dedicates 2½ cents per $1 of property tax to children-based groups and children-focused city departments. In 2000, San Francisco voters increased the allocation to 3 cents per $1 of assessed property value.

In March of 1998, the Mayor's Office of Community Development established the San Francisco Child Care Facilities Fund (CCFF). The CCFF received $200,000 from the city and $735,000 from private sponsors (Providian Financial Corporation and the Miriam and Peter Haas Fund). This money was provided to improve the quantity and quality of child care centers in San Francisco.

Also in 1998, California voters passed the Children's and Family's Act (Proposition 10); which provides tobacco tax dollars to children aged five and under. Within a year, the San Francisco Children and Families Commission was formed. In 2000, the Commission released an RFP in the

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amount of $1.653 million to increase the quality and number of infant/toddler child care slots through operational support for existing and new child care centers and increased compensation for child care providers.

CHILD CARE NEEDS IN SAN FRANCISCO

The California Department of Education requires local planning councils to conduct needs assessments no less than every five years. The San Francisco Child Care Planning and Advisory Council conducted its most recent assessment in 2002. The assessment noted that nearly two-thirds (62%) of eligible children have unmet needs for child care. The need was even greater among children age two and younger; 80% of children under three have an unmet need for child care.

CASE STUDY: CROSS CULTURAL FAMILY CENTER'S MARY LANE INFANT AND TODDLER CENTER

A description of the history and physical layout of the Center is provided. A description of funding strategies and the implementation of the project is included.

In the summer of 2000, Bridge and Low Income Investment Fund identified the Cross Cultural Family Center (CCFC) as a candidate for the new child care center. The Mary Lane Infant and Toddler Center is a state-of-the-art child care facility in the middle of a cul-de-sac facing the back of the old San Francisco mint and adjacent to the Muni streetcar tracks. The Center covers 2,775 square feet with an attached, contained play-yard

When fully operational, it is expected that the Center will serve 26 children; 6 infants, 8 toddlers, and 12 older toddlers. Although CCFC initially expected that 18 of the 26 slots would be subsidized, they now believe that nearly all of the children receiving care will also receive subsidies.

Nearly $900,000 in funds used for the Center project came from six sources: the Child Care Facilities Fund (44%); the Community Development Block Grant Section 108 Program (32%); a SFDHS/MOCD/ Section 108 Grant (13%); the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (6%); the San Francisco Conservation Corps (3%); and CCFC fundraising (2%). Approximately 58% of funding was in the form of grants, 40% was in loans, and 2% was in CCFC fundraising.

ISSUES

As with every complicated project, a variety of issues and difficulties arose. The following obstacles were identified:

- **Fear of Commitment** – There is a consistent resistance to involvement in large capital social service projects such as child care centers. This occurs at many levels including the community, the government, and the community-based organization.
- **Child Care as an Afterthought** - Child care is often thought of as an "amenity" in housing projects and not as an integral component.
- **Shared Knowledge** - Housing developers and child care developers rarely demonstrate shared knowledge.
- **Licensure and Practice** – Differences in definitions between licensure requirements, child care research, and child care practice are often arbitrary and create additional cost for providers.
- **Building Nightmares** – The common experience of unforeseen consequences in new con-

struction (e.g., flooding).

- **Maximum Advocacy** – There is a fine line between being a vocal advocate and an obstacle to completion.
- **Future Funding** – Although the initial funding for development was secured, there are outstanding loans that are susceptible to the economic downturn.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon our experiences, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties should consider the following strategies:

- **Develop a Long-Term Child Care Facilities Plan** - Leadership must be encouraged to take a long-term view. The cornerstone of the San Francisco model is the dedicated Child Care Fund. A broad-based coalition of child care providers, parents, educators, and policy makers could institutionalize investment in child care and school readiness.
- **Information Sharing** - Developing an organization to coordinate funding and provide technical assistance to child care developers may exceed county capabilities, however, smaller scale opportunities for sharing information between developers may be readily available.
- **Alignment of Definitions** - There are some basic discrepancies between the categories used by CalWORKs, California Department of Education, and California Department of Social Services in defining toddler age. This issue may be raised locally for discussion and considered for discussion with the California County Welfare Directors Association meeting.
- **Assessment of Child Care Need** - A comprehensive and consistent method of need assessment can facilitate the development of child care facilities from many different perspectives including identifying underserved areas and satisfying grant requirements. Over time, the consistent collection of child care information can help identify policy impacts and outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

"A dark, dungeon-like cave" was how Fonda Davidson, the Executive Director of the Cross Cultural Family Center described her initial impression of the new Mary Lane Infant and Toddler Center. However, with the approach of the Center kickoff, San Francisco should be excited about the addition of a state-of-the-art child care facility. This paper seeks to identify the key leadership strategies, collaboration points, and funding sources that coalesced to successfully implement this Center.

In support of the interests of the San Mateo County Human Services Agency and the Santa Clara County Social Services Agency, this paper provides:

- A brief overview of some basic concepts in child care,
- A short history of child care funding in San Francisco,
- A description of San Francisco's assessment of child care needs,
- A case study of the implementation of the Mary Lane Infant and Toddler Center, and
- A review of some of the issues encountered during implementation of the Center.

The paper concludes with recommendations that may be useful for the counties of San Mateo and Santa Clara in future child care center implementations.

BASIC CONCEPTS IN CHILD CARE

The range of child care includes all services and facilities that provide a positive contribution to a child's emotional, cognitive, and educational development. Child care may occur any time of day, and be provided by a private or public organization, in a center, or in a home. Here is a brief synopsis of different types of child care facilities and services:

Family Child Care Homes – Child care services are rendered in the provider's home; no more than 14 children may be served.

Child Care Centers – Child care services are provided in an established facility; hours are structured. This case study focuses on the implementation of the Mary Lane Infant and Toddler Center.

Licensed and License-Exempt Care – Child care is licensed by the State and outlines different requirements such as staff ratios, training, health, and safety conditions. The State also supports services supplied by providers without a license; this is referred to as license-exempt care. This type of care is often provided by relatives/kin. The Mary Lane Infant and Toddler Center is a licensed child care site.

Subsidized Care – This is child care that receives full or partial funding from government and private agencies. In developing the Center, this site received support from the Community Development

Block Grant Section 108 Program, the Child Care Facilities Fund, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and the San Francisco Conservation Corps.

Individual Subsidies – Although there will be some parents who pay in full for child care at the Center, a majority of parents with children will receive individual public subsidies. The most common individual subsidy is related to the different Stages of CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) child care.

- CalWORKs Stage 1 – Administered by County Social Service Agencies, Stage 1 provides child care subsidies to parents of children under the age of 13 receiving CalWORKs.
- CalWORKs Stage 2 - Administered by California Department of Education (CDE), Stage 2 is, generally, for parents of children receiving CalWORKs who have achieved some work and child care stability. Child care providers are paid by an "Alternative Payment" (Voucher) program, rather than the local welfare agency.
- CalWORKs Stage 3 - Administered by CDE, Stage 3 is for parents who are "working poor" and opt out of the welfare system. Stage 3 is also available to CalWORKs participants if space is available. Child care providers are paid by an "Alternative Payment" (Voucher) program, rather than the local welfare agency.

LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION, AND FUNDING: CHILD CARE BECOMES A SAN FRANCISCO PRIORITY

As early as 1991, San Francisco began investing in a child care infrastructure. That year Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, with the support of a variety of constituencies including the police, gay and lesbian political clubs, the Catholic Archdiocese, the Gray Panthers, the Teamsters, and the Green Party, collected signatures to get The Children's Amendment (Proposition D) on the ballot.

San Francisco voters approved the Children's Amendment to be incorporated into the City Charter, resulting in the creation of the Children's Fund. This fund dedicates 2 1/2 cents per $1 of property tax to children-based groups and children-focused city departments.

Over the next seven years, child care became a more visible issue both nationally and in San Francisco. In the beginning of 1998, CalWORKs was implemented to replace Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Around the same time, San Francisco was enjoying record budget surpluses. Larger budgets were made available for child care and Supervisor Mabel Teng called for universal child care.

THE CHILD CARE FACILITIES FUND

In March of 1998, the Mayor's Office of Community Development established the San Francisco Child Care Facilities Fund (CCFF). The CCFF received $200,000 from the city and $735,000 from private sponsors (Providian Financial Corporation and the Miriam and Peter Haas Fund). This money was provided to improve the quantity and quality of child care centers in San Francisco.

Also in 1998, California voters passed the Children's and Family's Act of 1998 (Proposition 10); this act provides tobacco tax dollars to children aged five and under. Within a year, the San Francisco Children and Families Commission was formed.

In 1999, San Francisco had an estimated budget surplus of $100 million. In the spring, Mayor Willie

Brown initiated the "Adopt-A-Child care- Center". This is a project in which local construction companies donate labor to develop and improve child care facilities.

In 2000, San Francisco voters approved the renewal of the Children's Amendment/ Children's Fund, and increased the allocation to 3 cents per $1 of assessed property value.

Also during 2000, the San Francisco Children and Families Commission released an RFP in the amount of $1.653 million to increase the quality and number of infant/toddler child care slots through operational support for existing and new child care centers and increased compensation for child care providers.

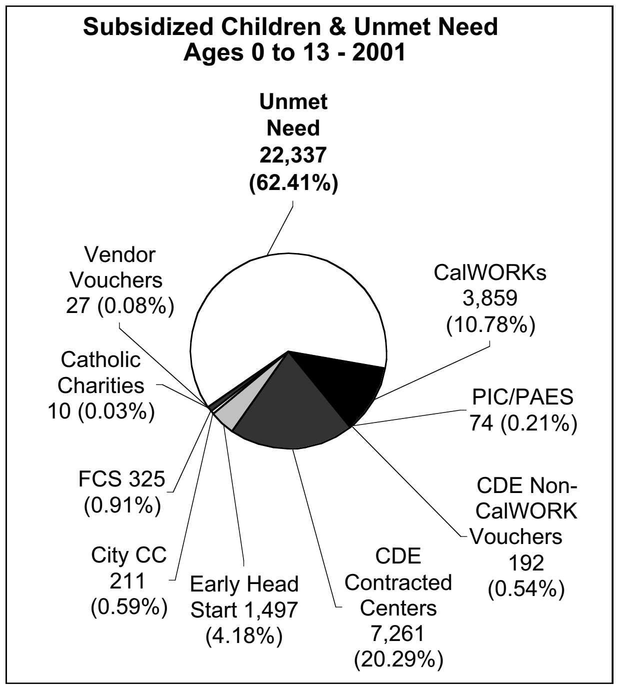
During 2001 and 2002 San Francisco reported record budget deficits in the $100 to $200 million range. The focus and funding appears to be shifting from child care to child healthcare.

CHILD CARE NEEDS IN SAN FRANCISCO

The California Department of Education requires local planning councils to conduct needs assessments no less than every five years. The San Francisco Child Care Planning and Advisory Council (CPAC) (the local planning council) conducted its first needs assessment in 1999 and its most recent one in 2002.

Data for the 2002 needs assessment was gathered from the U.S. Census 2000 and the two San Francisco Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Agencies, the Children's Council of San Francisco (CCSF) and the Wu Yee Children's Services (WYCS). The report describes the child care population, child care capacity, and estimates of subsidy-eligible children, subsidized children, estimates of unmet need, the type of child care, and the location of the services.

As noted in the chart below, it is estimated that nearly two-thirds (62%) of children under age 14 who come from families below 75% of the state of California median income have an unmet need for child care. The need was even greater among children age two and younger; 80% of children under three have an unmet need for child care.



CASE STUDY: CROSS CULTURAL FAMILY CENTER'S MARY LANE INFANT AND TODDLER CENTER

In October of 2000, with the support of the City and County of San Francisco, the Bridge Housing Corporation (Bridge) broke ground on the Church Street Apartments. Church Street Apartments are comprised of 93 units of affordable housing centrally located in San Francisco close to a public transportation hub and main thoroughfares. The units are designed for family living; a proportion of the rental units are targeted to residents with HIV/AIDS. The amenities include a small retail space and a child care center.

Prior to groundbreaking, Bridge had been working with the Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF - see box) to identify the child care provider that would be appropriate for this new site. A bidder's conference did not yield a good match for the site.

> **The Low Income Investment Fund** (LIIF) invests capital and provides technical assistance to spur economic advancement for the very poor. A national community development financial institution, LIIF is a steward for capital invested in housing, child care, education, workforce development and other community-building initiatives. LIIF fosters healthy communities by providing a bridge between private capital markets and low income neighborhoods. LIIF administers a family of funds including Affordable Buildings for Children's Development (ABCD) Fund, Revolving Loan Fund, Fund for Children and Communities, San Francisco Child Care Facilities Fund, Making Space for Children, and the Low Income Housing Fund—LIIF encourages comprehensive strategies that address the diverse needs of people and communities. – *From www.liifund.org*

In the summer of 2000, Bridge and LIIF identified the Cross Cultural Family Center (CCFC) as a candidate for the new child care center. CCFC demonstrated some initial resistance to the project. Some of the resistance came from CCFC's Board of Directors; long term Board members had previously been involved in the collaborative development of a center with government agencies. This former project went seriously wrong, resulting in a loss of funds, and control of the center.

Additionally, CCFC had just hired a new executive director, Fonda Davidson. Ms. Davidson related that at that time, her initial focus as executive director was to take CCFC a "giant step forward toward professionalization." This included improving the organizational capacity for state-of-the-art, quality child care services, grant writing, and technological capability.

Both the executive director and the board agreed to go forward on the project. The Center had a potential to increase CCFC's visibility in the community and re-energize the organization as a whole. A business plan was submitted to the board and to Bridge in November 2000.

The Center

The Mary Lane Infant and Toddler Center is in the middle of a cul-de-sac facing the back of the old San Francisco mint and adjacent to the Muni streetcar tracks. The entrance to the Center is at street level between two driveways that serve the apartment complex. The Center is placed within a portion of the complex's garage (see Appendix A).

The Center covers 2,775 square feet in an L-shaped pattern, with the narrower space facing the courtyard of the complex. In the courtyard is an attached, contained play-yard; the play-yard is made available to complex residents on the weekends. The ceilings are relatively low, ranging in height from 7' to 7'6".

The layout, including the low ceilings, the placement in the garage, and limited natural light were what inspired Fond Davidson to call the Center "a dark, dungeon-like cave". From our observation, we did not see anything remotely cave-like. Ms. Davidson's critical eye and advocacy helped spur some innovative design. The resulting space has large windows, fewer walls, and a large number of lights. The designers were very successful in hiding pipes in soffits and poles in walls.

Infants (6 to 14 months) will receive care in the rooms on the street entrance side of the Center; toddlers (12 to 20 months) and older toddlers (18 to 30 months) will receive care on the courtyard side. Under state regulations, the space is large enough for 34 children. When fully operational, it is expected that the Center will serve 26 children; 6 infants, 8 toddlers, and 12 older toddlers. Although CCFC initially expected that 18 of the 26 slots would be subsidized, they now believe that nearly all of the children receiving care will also receive subsidies.

Funding

A funding strategy was already in place when Bridge and LIIF approached CCFC. The Church Street Apartments received money from the City and County of San Francisco and the Redevelopment Agency strictly for housing – these monies could not be used for a child care center. Based on their funder's requirements, Bridge Housing, Incorporated could only provide the space and an architectural footprint for the Center.

Nearly $900,000 in funds used for the Center predevelopment, construction, and transition to permanent services came from six sources: the Child Care Facilities Fund (44%); the Community Development Block Grant Section 108 Program (32%); a SFDHS/MOCD/Section 108 Grant (13%); the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (6%); the San Francisco Conservation Corps (3%); and CCFC fundraising (2%). Approximately 58% of funding was in the form of grants, 40% was loans, and 2% was CCFC fundraising.

As noted above, the Child Care Facilities Fund is a fund created by combining City and private foundation monies; this Fund is administered by LIIF. The CCCF supplied $399,217 in funding for the Center; 84% of this funding was provided in six separate grants.

The largest sole source of funds was a loan from the Community Development Block Grant Section 108 Program (see box below). The $290,381 Section 108 loan is due in 2012; 80% of these loans is incurred by the City and County of San Francisco. The other 20% of the loan is paid by CCFC, estimated to be about $1,200 per month.

The Section 108 Program in San Francisco

Section 108 is the loan guarantee provision of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program. Loans are made available to urban counties for economic development, and construction, reconstruction, or installation of public facilities. The projects subsidized by these loans must benefit people with low and moderate-incomes, aid in the elimination/prevention of slums and blight, or meet the urgent needs of the community.

Although originally intended for small business development, in 1999 with the collaboration of the local HUD office, the Mayor's Office of Community Development (MOCD) secured $10 million in Section 108 loans for the development of child care in San Francisco. Thirteen loans have been used for new construction; one loan is being used for permanent acquisition. The Mayor has committed the City to pay up to 80% of the loans.

SFDHS, in collaboration with the MOCD, provided an $114,619 grant for the development of the Center. The commitment of the City to pay 80% of Section 108 loans resulted in a windfall during the first few years when loans were not closed and construction had yet to begin. This commitment by the City reduced the amount of the Section 108 loan.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families provided a $25,000 capacity building grant, the SF Conservation Corps will be providing $50,000 in-kind to assist with encroachment issues, and the CCFC raised over $18,000 to assist with the implementation.

Implementation

Once the initial funding was secured, implementation of the Center project began with a predevelopment phase, followed by construction, the transition to a permanent child care center, and attaining an easement to encroach on City property.

Predevelopment

Prior to any construction, about 3% of the budget ($22,448) was spent on predevelopment services. These services included:

- Hiring a design consultant who specialized in designing child care centers,
- Architectural support to draft the specifications of the design consultant, and
- Contracting with a consultant to help write the CCFC Business Plan

Construction

More than two-thirds of the budget (68%, $613,134) was spent on construction. During the construction phase not only were typical construction costs incurred, but also costs for architecture, design, security, permits, insurance, and legal fees.

Transition to Child Care Services

It takes more than plasterboard and carpeting to open a child care center. About 16% of funding ($143,250) was secured for the other essentials to open the Center. These funds were used for classroom equipment, play-yard equipment, office/staff support equipment, start-up staffing, and a licensing consultant.

Encroachment

Currently, CCFC is seeking an easement from the City and County of San Francisco to allow the construction of a play-area in front of the center on the Webster Street sidewalk. About $118,925 (13%) has been dedicated to this construction. The additional play-area would allow the infant clients outdoor access without having to be carried through the toddler areas.

ISSUES

As with every complicated project, a variety of issues and difficulties arose. Below are a few of the obstacles that had to be overcome during implementation.

Fear of Commitment

With the large amounts of capital and long time-frame involved, there seems to be a natural fear of investing in large social service projects such as child care centers. This occurs at many levels including the community, the government, and the community-based organization.

In San Francisco these fears were overcome by the community in dedicating development money to the Child Care Fund. Leadership from the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, and the San Francisco Department of Human Services helped to continually usher significant funds to the development of child care centers. The Executive Director of CCFC revisited the Board of Directors and her own concerns to make the development of a new center the first priority.

Child Care as an Afterthought

Child care is often thought of as an "amenity" in housing projects. Although space was dedicated in the architectural blueprints for a child care center, discussions with CCFC did not occur until after groundbreaking. Although some of the initial resentments were overcome, the implementation of a child care center can be jeopardized if the space is inappropriate to center funders or service providers. Upon completion of the footprint, the Center was placed squarely between to driveways, creating a potential safety concern.

Shared Knowledge

It has been noted by Claudia Siegman of LIIF that housing developers and child care developers rarely demonstrate shared knowledge. Housing developers have in-depth understanding of project logistics, housing codes, requirements, and licensure. Larger scale child care developers are rare; most child care center development in San Francisco has involved community-based organizations that have historically focused on service and not on facilities.

There were Herculean efforts to bridge this gap in knowledge, most of which can be attributed to LIIF and CCFC. LIIF provided a great deal of assistance in guiding planning, funding, and project managing. Fonda Davidson of CCFC, understood the necessity of coming "up-to-speed" and spent more than half of her time during the first year of the project mastering the necessary details of the Center implementation.

Licensure and Practice

As described above, the Center will be serving 26 children aged 3 to 30 months. Child care research, CalWORKs subsidies, and common practice denote that infants and toddlers range in the ages of 0 to 36 months. Unfortunately, California Department of Social Services Child Care Licensing defines infants and toddlers as children 30 months and younger. Due to licensure requirements, the Center must transition older toddlers out of their care at 30 months. This is arbitrary, costly, and conflicts with both research findings and common practice.

Building Nightmares

As it is with most construction projects, the Center encountered a building nightmare. During the first significant rain of the season, both the Center and the housing complex had significant flooding issues. A trench has been dug around parts of the building and additional waterproofing is being added to the foundation. This has slowed the completion of the Center.

Maximum Advocacy

During interviews, a couple of people noted that the CCFC leaders were extremely effective advocates, sometimes to the point of driving funders "crazy". This is an issue that cuts both ways. CCFC demanded additional funds to assist in design and project management. These demands were driven by a passion for an excellent, cutting-edge facility. Demands often put pressure on funders, designers, architects, and contractors; these demands were mostly met to the benefit of the Center.

Future Funding

Many of the funding sources for this project are being challenged by the current economic environment.

- Due to the economic downturn, there is a shrinking tax-base and less real estate development. This dynamic diminishes the size of the Child Care Fund.
- Foundation endowments to the Child Care Facilities Fund have been frozen or decreased.
- Section 108 loans are no longer being offered; the term is now less than nine years and San Francisco does not have the matching funds for new loans.
- In a strong economic environment, child care centers struggle to maintain solvency. Fewer parents are able to pay market rates for child care. This impacts both the Center's short term income and the Center's goal for an economically diversified client base.
- Decreases in provider reimburse rates can significantly impact the Center's bottom line.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are a few recommendations that may help San Mateo County and Santa Clara County expand their long-term child care capacity.

Develop a Long-Term Child Care Facilities Plan

Developing a new child care center takes both time and funding. The cornerstone of the San Francisco model is the dedicated Child Care Fund. San Mateo County and Santa Clara County could benefit from grassroots lobbying for earmarking a portion of the tax base for developing child care. A broad-based coalition of child care providers, parents, educators, and policy makers could institutionalize investment in child care and school readiness.

Leadership must be encouraged to take a long-term view. Mayor Brown and the Board of Supervisors committed to fifteen years of co-payment on a $10 million loan from HUD. A short-term, election-cycle view will not generate enough capital to develop child care facilities.

Information Sharing

The Low Income Investment Fund played an integral role in the successful implementation of the Center. In addition to administering the Child Care Facilities Fund, LIIF functioned as a liaison between CCFC, MOCD, Bridge Housing and SFDHS. Currently, LIIF staff are present at many of the discussions of new housing and remain vigilant in seeking child care development opportunities.

Developing an organization to coordinate funding and provide technical assistance may exceed county capabilities, however, smaller scale opportunities for sharing information may be readily available. These opportunities may include training county child care staff and providers in basic capital financing and low-income housing – this would prepare child care providers to expand should funds become available. County housing staff may be trained to recognize communities with high child care need and the benefits of community child care.

Alignment of Definitions

As noted above, there are some basic discrepancies between the categories used by CalWORKs, CDE, and CDSS in defining toddler age. This issue may be raised locally for discussion and considered for discussion with the California County Welfare Directors Association meeting.

Assessment of Child Care Need

A comprehensive and consistent method of assessment can facilitate the development of child care facilities from many different perspectives. Assessment information helps identify areas within the county that have high demand. Conversely, it would help determine areas that are over-serviced (this actually occurred in San Francisco).

The public dissemination of assessment information helps small organizations reduce some of the data collection efforts necessary to satisfy grant requirements. Over time, the consistent collection of child care information can help identify policy impacts and outcomes.

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Appendix A

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