

BACKGROUND

In Solano County, child care was already limited prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with only 24% of children ages 0-12 who had working parents having access to a space in a licensed child care facility. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, 45% of licensed child care centers and family child care homes in Solano County closed, either temporarily or permanently (May 2020). While August data showed, 84 providers had reopened since May, Solano was still suffering from a loss of 135 or 28% of licensed child care providers resulting in a loss of child care for over 3,500 children (Reference: Solano Family & Children's Services).

Based on these factors and building upon previous efforts by First 5 Solano, schools, and other community partners to support the early learning community and working parents during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board approved the following approach to supporting child care providers with CARES Act funds:

- 1. Continue to support child care for essential workers**
- 2. Protect current supply of child care providers by offsetting increased cost of care**
- 3. Increase capacity to operate within COVID-19 restrictions**



CARES ACT FUNDING UPDATE

The CARES Act Proposal approved August 25, 2020 included a total of \$599,277 in child care funding and \$405,919 in funding for First 5 Solano's Emergency Response Fund. Below is an update of what has been accomplished to date.

Child Care Support

- Child care for essential workers—First 5 Solano is continuing to support child care for essential workers who enrolled in care in April 2020 as part of the efforts of the Office of Emergency Services. All children have been transitioned from the Cooper Elementary Popup Child Care to providers who can provide care beyond the CARES Act funding. Out of the \$299,277 allocated for this purpose, \$236,236 has been spent or encumbered.
- Offset increased cost of providing child care—\$300,000 was allocated to provide stipends for licensed child care providers to cover increased costs due to operating at lower capacity to accommodate social distancing and increased staffing for health screenings and rigorous cleaning protocols. As of October 7, 60 providers have been enrolled in the stipend program, allocating approximately \$170,000 of the funds. First 5 Solano is working with Solano Family & Children's Services to determine additional eligible providers to allocate the remainder of the funds.

Emergency Response Fund:

- Increase capacity of community providers, including child care providers, to operate during COVID-19 pandemic. A total of \$405,919 was allocated to provide grants of up to \$7,500 for social distancing equipment, individual learning supplies, cleaning supplies, etc. through the First 5 Solano Emergency Response Fund. With \$250,000 additional funds approved in August, a new grant opportunity was released, and 46 new grants were approved totaling \$125, 562. This brings the total to 101 grants and \$278,252 in funding approved. First 5 Solano anticipates releasing one more grant opportunity to expend the remainder of the funds.