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First 5 Humboldt Announces \$120,000 Investment to Expand Child Care Capacity

First 5 Humboldt is offering financial incentives to help child care providers adapt and reopen their essential services during this pandemic.

Eureka, CA — First 5 Humboldt and the Humboldt Area Foundation are investing \$120,000 to increase child care capacity in Humboldt County during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds are available as financial incentives to local child care providers to help them reopen or stay open. Incentive payments through this new program are currently set at \$500-\$750 for each eligible child care facility.

Protective public health measures reduce the number of children each provider can serve, making the finances of these small businesses very difficult. More than half of local licensed child care facilities have been closed since the shelter in place order in March.

Funding for the Child Care Capacity Project includes \$65,000 from First 5 Humboldt and \$55,000 from the Humboldt Area Foundation's COVID-19 Regional Response Fund.

“Child care providers are essential workers on the front lines of this crisis, caring for the children of our hospital staff, law enforcement, grocery, and other essential workers,” said Mary Ann Hansen, Executive Director of First 5 Humboldt County. “Child care has been, and continues to be, the backbone of our economy, allowing parents to go to work and keep society functioning.”

“Caring for families with child care needs during the coronavirus is one way we are putting our COVID-19 Regional Response Fund to work. Joining our trusted partner First 5 Humboldt in providing help to local child care providers helps us all.” said Sara Dronkers, Director of Grants and Nonprofit Resources at Humboldt Area Foundation.

The child care system in Humboldt and around the country was in crisis before the pandemic, with issues of availability, affordability for parents, and chronic low pay for workers. First 5

Humboldt supports and advocates for quality, affordable child care for everyone as part of their mission to improve the lives of children and families in Humboldt County.

Eureka Mayor Susan Seaman serves on the local Humboldt Emergency Child Care Task Force and expressed her support for the program: “In December of 2019, the City of Eureka adopted a Children & Families Strategic Plan that identified supporting childcare professionals as a key component to providing a family friendly community. We recognize that quality childcare provides the social and intellectual development of our children, and also allows parents to feel secure when they're at work knowing their children are cared for. As we face a tidal wave of childcare uncertainties because of COVID 19, it seems like the best course of action to find ways to keep and cultivate the providers we currently have in our community. I was honored to help work with Humboldt Area Foundation and First Five Humboldt on this project.”

Applications for the Child Care Capacity Incentive are available at www.first5humboldt.org will be accepted until October 15th 2020, while funding is available.

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About First 5 Humboldt

FIRST 5 HUMBOLDT works to improve the health, early learning, and well-being of young children and their families in Humboldt County using evidence-based methods and community engagement. *For more information, go to: www.first5humboldt.org, or call (707) 445-7389*