

FOCUS ON CHILDREN

Spring 2012

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Join Us in Honoring Children's Champions

The Children's Network and the Solano County Child Abuse Prevention Council will recognize the heroes in our community who work to meet the challenge of child abuse on Thursday, April 26 at the Courtyard Marriott in Fairfield from 6 to 9 pm. The annual Child Abuse Prevention Awards recognize compassionate Solano County individuals and organizations that support and advocate for children who are abused, neglected and mistreated.

As in previous years, awards will highlight accomplishments in child abuse prevention, intervention and treatment that are helping to make Solano County a better and safer place for children and families. Awards will be given in 13 areas, including the courts, education, business, government, law enforcement, medical, community-based organizations, Child Protective Services, journalism, and clergy. (For a full list of awards, check the Children's Network Website at www.childnet.org).

Previous winners include Congressman George Miller, Assembly-member Mariko Yamada, Solano Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Robert Fracchia, and foster parent Lucy Johnson. In 2010, Legislator of the Year George Miller praised the Children's Network and the Solano County Child Abuse Prevention Council for holding this annual event.

"In this difficult time of cutbacks to human services, which greatly affect the children of Solano County,"

Miller said, "the Child Abuse Prevention Council Awards are a bright spot. They highlight the important work of so many individuals in our community who are making a positive change for those in need."

This special evening begins with a hors d'oeuvre reception followed by the award ceremony. Winners will be announced April 17th. For a list of winners, please visit our website.

Tickets are \$35 each and may be purchased on the Children's Network website – www.childnet.org.



Constructing Connections to Close

With the end of Constructing Connections, Solano County is losing a valuable tool for the development of child care centers. But the program leaves a legacy of expertise in the child care field and a broader community awareness of the importance of child care as a key resource for economic development and a necessity in the lives of working Solano County residents.

The Constructing Connections child care facilities development program in Solano County, created in 2004, will come to an end in June 2012.

Constructing Connections is a statewide program designed to strengthen child care facilities development. In its almost eight-year existence, Solano Constructing Connections has:

- Provided technical assistance to more than 180 programs and individuals in site selection, business planning, financing, and local government planning steps related to the development of a child care center.
- Helped in the opening of 11 new child care centers with spaces for 399 children.
- Provided technical assistance to family child care providers, particularly with the local government permitting process.
- Prepared and utilized resources to help tell the child care story to various audiences: A child care video ("Child Care: An Investment Worth Making"), a business brochure ("Child Care: A Guide for Solano County Businesses"), the 2008 Solano County Child Care Needs Assessment, the Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in Solano County report, the Solano County Child Care Facility Financing and Development Resource Guide, and an inventory of local barriers to child care facilities development and strategies to overcome them.

Constructing Connections selected 10 sites in California, with the goal

of creating 15,000 new child care spaces in cost-effective, ADA-compliant facilities. Solano was one of the first five sites, selected largely because of the high need in Solano for the development of high-quality child care centers. In Solano County, most of the child care is provided in individual child care providers' homes (family child care). In comparison, both San Francisco and Sonoma counties have approximately the same number of children under 13 as Solano, but Sonoma has more than twice as many child care centers and San Francisco three times as many.

Solano Constructing Connections was initially funded by the Packard Foundation, First 5 California and First 5 Solano, and managed by The Children's Network. In August 2009, the Packard and First 5 California funding expired, but First 5 Solano stepped in to fully fund Constructing Connections through fiscal year 2009-10. For the following two years, the First 5 funding returned to its original level, resulting in a half-time program that will end in June.

Solano Constructing Connections, from its inception, enjoyed success in its outreach and engagement efforts. Key to the success of the program was a collaborative that met quarterly, bringing together local government representatives, business and community leaders, finance officers, real estate professionals, child care providers and advocates, and others. The program also worked to engage a broader community of local elected officials, business and community leaders, and child care providers and advocates.

Proposed State Budget for 2012-2013: Putting Children Last

In January, Governor Jerry Brown released his proposed 2012-13 spending plan, addressing a \$9.2 billion combined shortfall projected for this year and next year. The governor proposes to drop state spending by \$4.2 billion. More than half that reduction — \$2.5 billion — would come from deep cuts to health and human services and child care programs. Student aid would also be hit hard. Once again, the heaviest cuts are targeted at our children.

The governor's proposed budget assumes that voters approve a November ballot measure that would:

- impose three new tax rates on very-high-income Californians for the next seven years and,
- raise the state sales-tax rate $\frac{1}{4}$ cent for the next three years.

This measure is the result of a compromise with another tax measure proposed by the California Federation of Teachers. But the expected revenue from this measure would not save child care and CalWORKs from cuts. The governor proposes even deeper cuts if the revenue measure doesn't pass; these cuts primarily target K-12 education, continuing with the theme of putting children last.

CalWORKS

Specifically, the governor proposes to:

- Cut the average monthly grant from \$463 to \$392, a 15.3 percent decrease, for families in which cash assistance is provided only for the children ("child-only" families).

The governor also proposes to move these families into a new program outside CalWORKs — the Child Maintenance Program — beginning in October 2012. The proposed budget estimates that 296,000 families will be enrolled in the new program in 2012-13.

- Divide the existing CalWORKs program into two subprograms: CalWORKs Basic, which would provide welfare-to-work services for adults who do not have enough hours of unsubsidized employment to meet federal work requirements; and CalWORKs Plus, which would serve adults meeting federal work participation requirements — unsubsidized employment for 30 hours a week for most families; 20 hours a week for families with children younger than six.
- Cut the maximum period that CalWORKs participants can spend in welfare-to-work activities from 48 months to 24 months. CalWORKs Basic participants who do not move into unsubsidized employment that meets federal work participation requirements within 24 months would no longer receive welfare-to-work services. The adult would no longer receive cash aid, and the children would shift into the Child Maintenance Program.

These proposals would have devastating effects on Solano children, their families, public and private child care providers, and local businesses, further deepening poverty, creating local job losses in the thousands and causing huge turnover in the staff of lower-wage Industries when parents can no longer get the child care they need in order to work.

(See chart, p. 5)

Have you found us on Facebook yet? We've re-launched our page, and it'd be great if you **Liked** us! You'll find news on children's issues in Solano County, information on services available to the community, and updates on the great work that The Children's Network is doing!

Find us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheChildrensNetwork>

(Cont. Pg 4)

(Cont from pg. 3)

Child Care and Development Programs

The governor proposes cutting child care and preschool subsidies for low-income families by \$516.8 million. The reductions would be achieved through changes in eligibility rules and reimbursement rates and would eliminate an estimated 62,000 child care slots statewide.

Specifically, the governor proposes to:

- Require all families to meet federal work participation requirements applicable to the CalWORKs program as a condition of eligibility for child care assistance. Spending reduction: \$293.6 million.
- Lower the income eligibility limit from 70 percent of the state median income (SMI) to 200 percent of the federal poverty line. For a family of three, the income eligibility limit would be \$37,060. Spending reduction: \$68 million.
- Make three changes to child care reimbursement formulas:
 - eliminate the statutory cost-of-living increase for child care programs serving non-CalWORKs families and for part-day preschool programs;
 - lower the maximum reimbursement rate for child care voucher programs;
 - lower the reimbursement rate for child care and preschool centers that contract directly with the state by 10 percent.

Spending reduction: \$155.3 million.

Fortunately, in March hearings, the state Assembly rejected these proposals. The Senate, however, took no action, preferring instead to see what changes are offered in the governor's "May Revise" of his budget proposal.

All of us who have fought for years to assure that children are cared for and supported in becoming the capable, contributing adults of the future share outrage and sadness at this continuing assault on women, children, and the poor. We must continue to stand up for our children.

It only takes a moment to let your elected representatives know that you support children and oppose these cuts.

Source: California Budget Project

Contact Your Legislators

Tell them NO MORE on cuts to children's programs

Assemblymember Michael Allen

(916) 319-2007 Assemblymember.Allen@@assembly.ca.gov

Assemblymember Mariko Yamada

(916) 319-2008 AssemblymemberYamada@assembly.ca.gov

Senator Noreen Evans

(916) 651-4002 Senator.Evans@senate.ca.gov

Senator Lois Wolk

(916) 651-4005 Senator.Wolk@senate.ca.gov

Proposed State Child Care Cuts: Impact on Solano, By the Numbers

Total number of children now receiving child care subsidies: 3,291

Child care vouchers: 2,402
(for any care the parent chooses, for children from birth to 12)

Spaces in state-subsidized centers: 889
Part-day preschool: 320
Full-day preschool: 226
Infant/toddler child care: 69
School-age child care: 274

Number of children who would lose care because of lowered income “ceiling”: 144

Number of children who would lose care because of new restrictions and work requirements: 2,611

Homeless children: 2
Children whose parents are students: 507
Children whose parents are looking for work: 158
Children whose parents are working, but less than 30 hours a week: 618
Children whose parents are working more than 30 hours a week but not receiving welfare: 1,326

Number of children who would lose care because of loss of space in state-subsidized programs: 247

0 to 18 months: 21
18 to 35 months: 42
3 to 5 years: 172
School-age: 12

Impact of child care cuts on children receiving vouchers:

Children in **licensed family child care homes** facing a **12% reduction** in reimbursement rates 979

Children in **licensed centers** facing a **14% reduction** in reimbursement rates 577



Child Care Cuts = Job Loss

Number of child care center teaching positions lost: 43 - 53

Number of staff positions in the subsidy program lost: 16

Additional positions would be lost in the child care food program and Solano Family and Children's Services, as well as family child care providers who may be forced out of business because of rate cuts or because their clients lose subsidies.

Child Care Cuts: Impact on Careers

Top vocational goals of families receiving child care assistance:

Nursing
Other Medical Fields
Social Worker/Case Manager
Law Enforcement

Child Care Cuts: Impact on Business

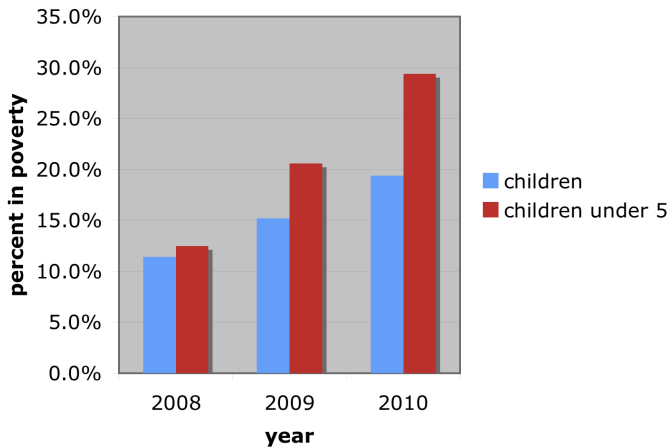
Top 6 Solano employers of families receiving child care services

In Home Supportive Services
Walmart
State of California
Kaiser Permanente
Goodwill
Target

Note: Some figures on this page are under-estimates because of limitations on the data available.

Child Poverty Continues to Rise in Solano County

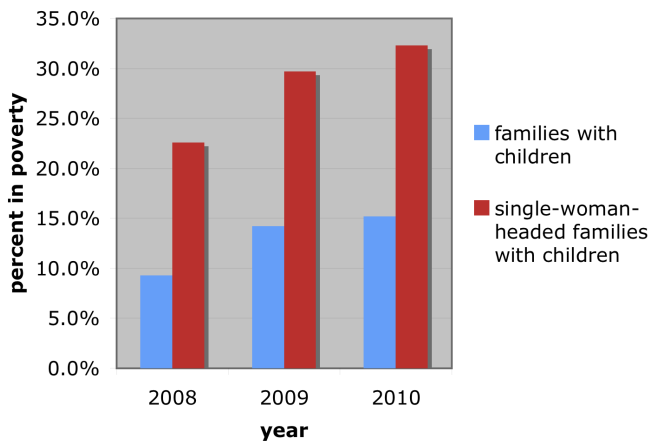
Percentage of children in poverty



The outlook is not good for families in Solano County:

In 2010, we promised to continue to track child poverty levels in Solano and keep our readers informed. Unfortunately, the news is not good. The last 3 years have seen a steady increase in the percentage of Solano families who are poor. For families headed by single women, the poverty rate reached almost one-third in 2010. The percentage of Solano children who are poor has also been increasing, with the highest rate of poverty for children under 5, who are most likely to suffer permanent harm. An astonishing 29.4% of Solano children under age 6 are growing up in families with incomes below the Federal Poverty line.

Percentage of families in poverty



(Poverty data source: U.S. Census. The 2008 and 2009 figures are based on the 2000 census, while the 2010 figures are based on the 2010 census.)

And there are other signs of family stress:

- ◆ **Solano's unemployment rate** reached 12% in 2010.
- ◆ **Solano's foreclosure rate** is second highest in the nation. An October RealtyTrac report shows that 1 home in every 51 in Solano County is affected by foreclosure.
- ◆ The percentage of Solano school children eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, a widely used indicator of poverty, climbed from 38.5% in the 2007-08 school year to 44.4% in the 2010-11 school year. *(Cont. pg. 6)*

Number/percent of Children (K-12) Receiving Free/Reduced Price Meals, Solano County

2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Increase from 2006-07 to 2010-11
24,988	26,206	28,260	25,455	28,451	3,463
36.5%	38.5%	42.3%	38.6%	44.4%	13.9%

Source: California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit

Spring Events Calendar**April 19, 1 pm– 4pm****Local Child Care Planning Council Meeting**

Children's Network
2320 Courage Dr, Suite 107
Fairfield

April 21, 9 am–4 pm**CARES Training:**

California Preschool Learning
Foundations: Yes, Preschoolers CAN
Do Geometry: and Primary
Colors: Visual Arts in the Preschool
Classroom

Solano County Office of Education
5100 Business Center Drive
Fairfield

April 26, 6 pm– 9pm**Child Abuse Prevention Awards**

Courtyard Marriott
1350 Holiday Lane
Fairfield

May 2, 12 pm–2 pm**Child Abuse Prevention Council Meeting**

Joe Nelson Community Center
411 Village Dr
Suisun

May 9, 6 pm–9 pm**CARES Training:**

**Including Children with Special
Needs: Inclusion Works!**

Brandman University
4820 Business Center Dr #100
Fairfield

This protracted trend toward deepening child poverty matters, and not just to the families in our communities experiencing deprivation and hunger. It matters to the future of our entire community.

- ♦ **Earned Income Tax Credit:** The EITC is available to many tax-filing households in Solano County, and is intended to encourage work by offsetting taxes for low income households. The IRS estimates that nearly 25% of all families are eligible for this credit, but do not claim it. United Way of the Bay Area estimates that 75% of eligible families do not file at volunteer income tax assistance (VITA) sites in Solano County. Only 367 of EITC-eligible households (3%) took advantage of VITA services last year, which means that the vast majority of low income families are either not taking advantage of the tax credit, or are paying to receive it. Even that small proportion had a large impact in the county: \$394,572 in earned income credits were refunded for Solano residents through VITA.
- ♦ **Hunger and food insecurity:** Nearly half of Solano's school-aged children have family incomes low enough to make adequate nutrition uncertain. 22,000 adults in Solano County live in food-insecure households, according to the 2010 Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profile. Many of those households include children. Many families and children who are eligible for food assistance are not accessing these programs: In Solano, 9,644 eligible individuals are not accessing CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) and 10,633 eligible young people are not enrolled in the School Lunch Program, according to California Food Policy Advocates. In addition to worsening hunger and food insecurity, failure to enroll eligible households in CalFresh costs Solano \$13.5 million a year in federal support for this program, according to a February 2011 California Food Policy Advocates report.

*Researchers have gathered new evidence on the importance of the first years of life for children's emotional and intellectual development . . . [children who are poor in the early years] face a greater risk of impaired brain development due to their exposure to a number of risk factors associated with poverty." —National Center for Children in Poverty, *Poverty and Brain Development in Early Childhood*, June 1999*

"[P]oor children are more likely to have low academic achievement, to drop out of school, and to have health, behavioral, and emotional problems. These linkages are particularly strong for children whose families experience deep poverty, who are poor during early childhood, and who are trapped in poverty for a long time.."

— Kristin Anderson Moore, Ph.D., Zakia Redd, M.P.P., Mary Burkhauser, M.A., Kassim Mbwana, M.P.P., and Ashleigh Collins, M.A., *Children in Poverty: Trends, Consequences, and Policy Options*, April 2009

Children's Network

*A united voice
for the children of Solano County*

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