



# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY CHILD CARE TASK FORCE

## COVID-19 Emergency Child Care Response

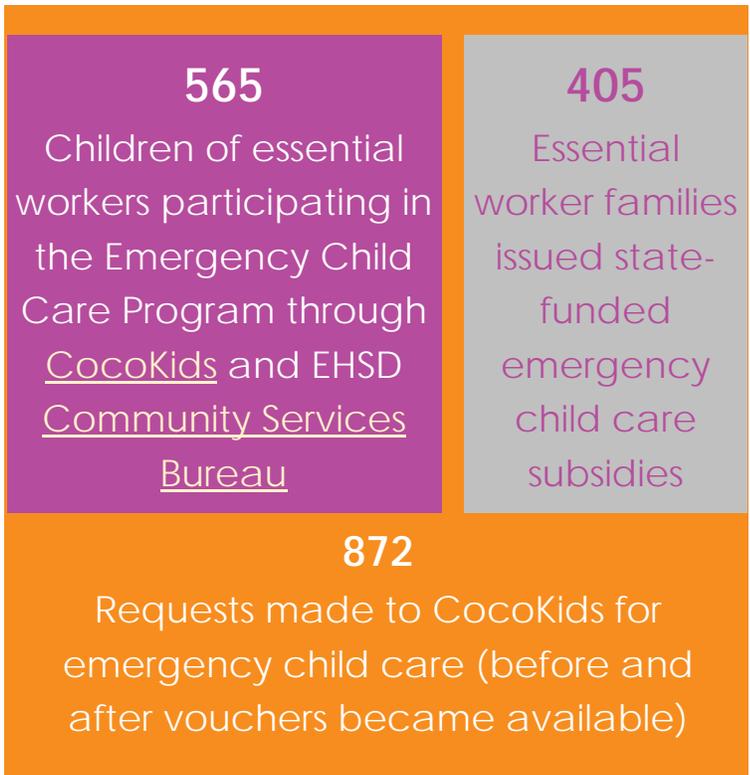
March 17 - June 5, 2020

Child Care is an essential service for essential workers.

Thousands of essential workers served as part of the community response to COVID-19. As a result, parents living and/or working in Contra Costa County faced a predicament: *how do we find reliable, trustworthy child care for our children?*

<b>MAR</b> <b>17</b>	Shelter-in-Place order; California declares child care is an essential service	<b>APR</b> <b>15</b>	Start of County emergency center-based child care	<b>APR</b> <b>21</b>	Start of CA Alternative Payment Program (APP) funding emergency child care
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Employment & Human Services Department (EHSD) collaborated with CocoKids, CCC Office of Education, First 5 Contra Costa, Local Planning Council, and Contra Costa Health Services to implement the **Emergency Child Care Program**, offering support for all **essential workers** serving our community's needs during the COVID-19 health crisis, with highest priority going to health care workers. The Program ran between March 17 and June 5, 2020.

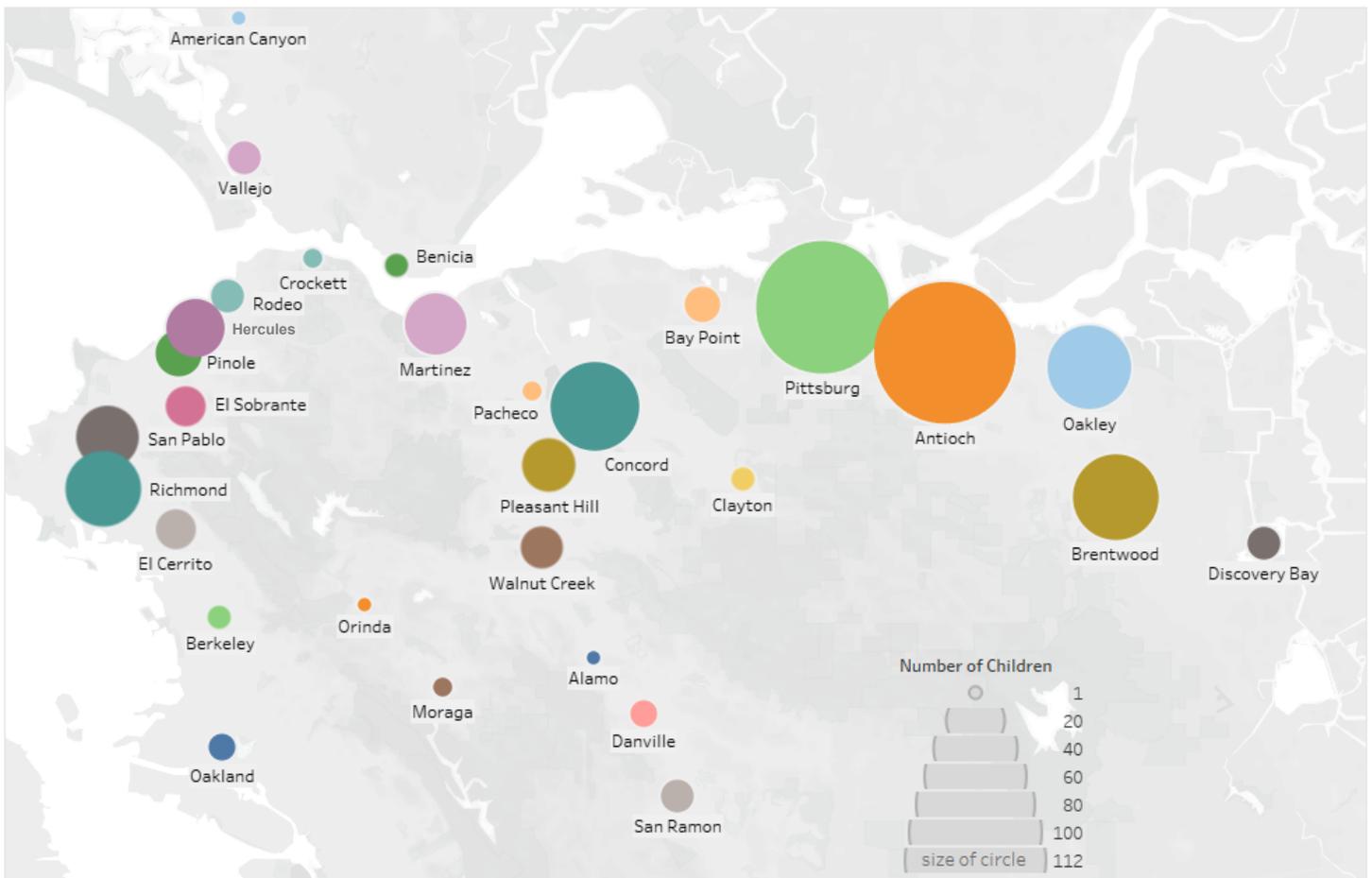


No eligible applicants for emergency child care were turned away.

DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY CHILD CARE

When emergency child care opened up for essential workers living and working in Contra Costa County, children came from 39 cities.

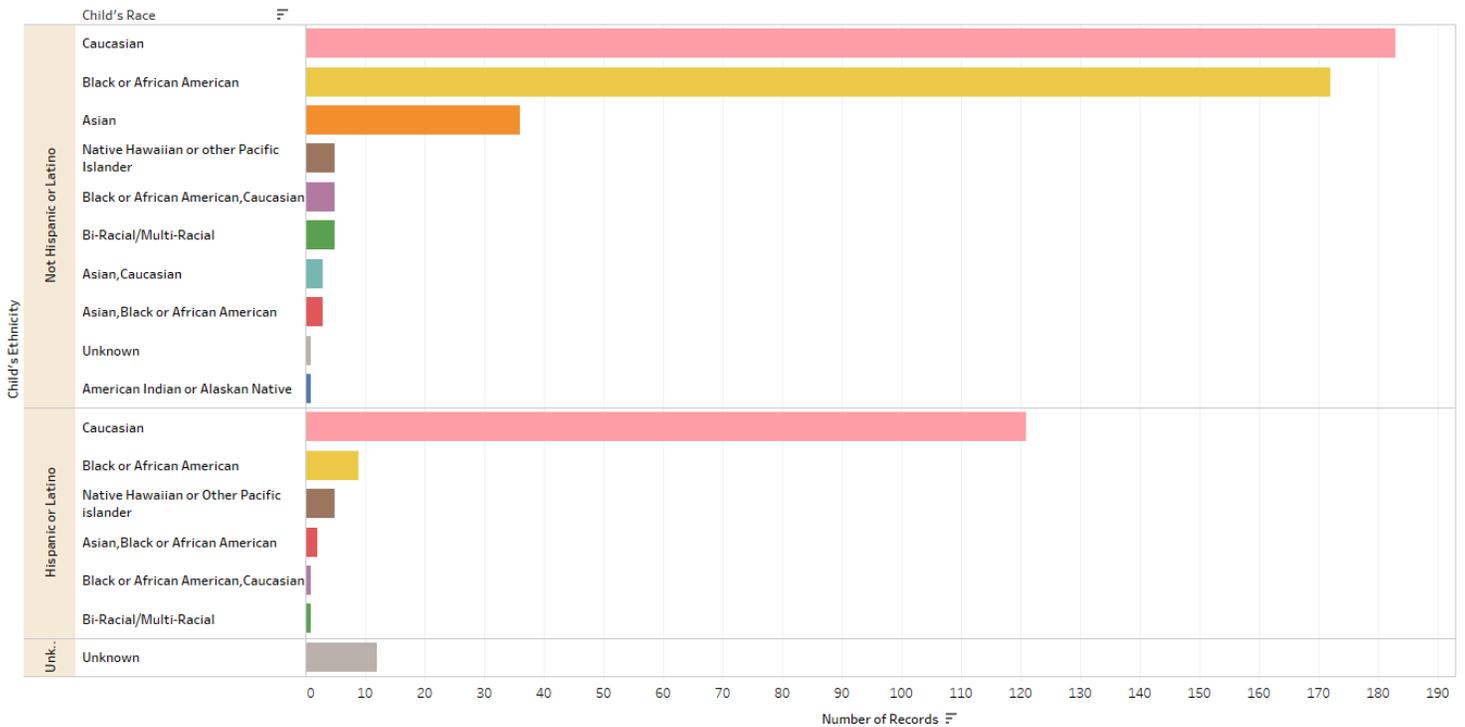
Children in Contra Costa County Emergency Child Care Program,  
by City of Residence  
March 17 - June 5, 2020



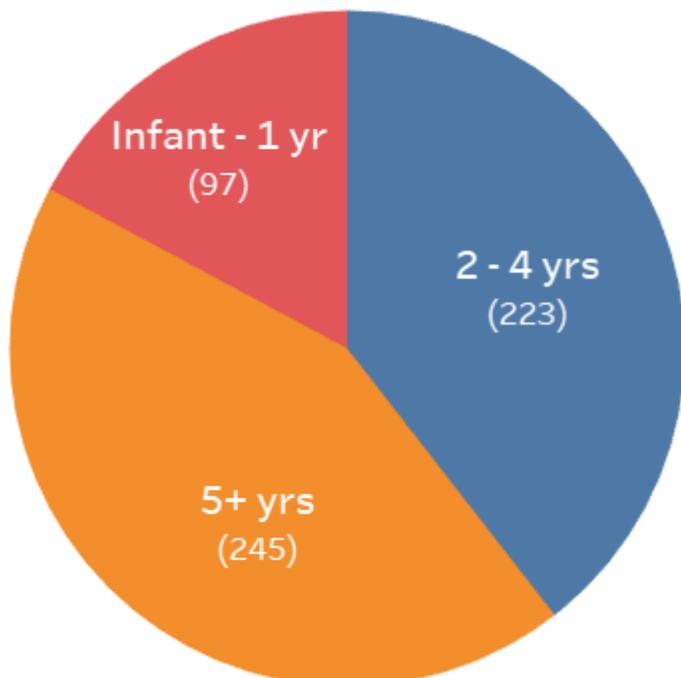
Not pictured: Daly City, Fairfield, Oakdale, Oakland, Pleasanton, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stockton, and Vacaville

## FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

Children in Contra Costa County Emergency Child Care Program, by Race and Ethnicity  
 March 17 - June 5, 2020



Children in Contra Costa County Emergency Child Care Program, by Age  
 March 17 - June 5, 2020



Nearly half the children in the Emergency Child Care Program were school-aged. Parents who would have normally relied on schools to provide daytime care and instruction for their children were left without this option when schools closed and home instruction began. This put an extra strain on essential workers who now had to find child care for their school-aged children and find help for daily studies. Emergency child care providers filled this gap.

## SUPPLIES & DEMAND

**Disrupted Supply Chain** - One of the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic posed was the nationwide depletion of essential sanitation, personal protective gear (PPE), equipment, and operational childcare supplies. Excess demand from public shoppers impaired the supply chain in the retail sector, making access to basic cleaning supplies, thermometers, masks and gloves almost impossible through local and online retail stores and grocers. Supply purchases were on back order and shipments delayed, in some cases for months, due to increased demand.

**Lack of Access to Supplies** - Limited access to basic sanitation and PPE precluded childcare providers from operating. Without the necessary supplies and equipment, childcare providers could not meet health and safety guidelines. Additionally, local grocers limited purchases, making it more difficult for childcare providers to buy the supplies they needed to operate. County officials issued a letter granting a waiver for purchasing limits, yet childcare providers still faced pushback and challenges from their local retail stores and grocers.

**Lessons Learned** - To prepare for a future resurgence of COVID-19, other natural disaster or crisis that requires timely coordination of Emergency Child Care, there are important ways to prepare.

### Preventive measures for the future include:

**1** Child Care Providers should have priority and streamlined access to key essential supplies to enable them to continue to operate their child care businesses and conduct purchases when convenient

**2** Maintain a reserve of supplies (PPE, health and safety, child-related) that are critical to operate child care services within city or county government locations

**3** Earmark State and County funds dedicated for child care supplies like PPE and cleaning.; Potential list of supply storage facilities by County or region

**4** Activate procedures and collection sites to receive and distribute donations from businesses and the public

## ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES FOR EXISTING CENTERS

- Keeping staff employed and paid
- Social Distancing
- Late start to funding for supplies
- Keeping the Centers clean and sanitized
- Center closures and occupancy limits

The requirement of only **10 children per classroom**, to observe social distancing guidelines, has reduced capacity of existing sites.

## CHILD CARE FOR ALL

Child Care gives thousands of families the support they need in order to go to work and provide for their families. Without Emergency Child Care efforts, many parents, including essential workers, would be tasked with child care and unable to work. Child Care teams continue to work to reopen existing centers to provide more care for all families.

**243 (69%)** of the **355** CocoKids Child Care Centers are open at *half* of their capacities as of June 5, 2020

*Each  = 71 Child Care Centers.*



**36%** of Existing Child Care Centers and **76%** of Family Child Care Providers **did not close** during Shelter-in-Place.

**Child Care is an essential service for essential workers. Today, reliable, trustworthy child care remains essential for economic recovery because it allows California parents to work. Preserving a strong and well-compensated child care workforce is vital.**

## IMPACT

In a time of crisis, we had a solid workforce of dedicated, caring child care professionals who were committed to providing quality care for essential workers.

Although child care is essential, child care is not treated as an essential service needing essential ongoing government support. Providers struggle to meet challenges and new requirements in an industry where profit margins are already slim. New costs of cleaning supplies make it almost unaffordable to maintain centers facing revenue loss from fewer children served.

The demand for child care has never been in question, and there is serious concern that the severity of the new care standards and health concerns may take some providers permanently out of business. Additional funding will be needed to support these critical services going forward.