

# A Special Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This is my last annual letter as Executive Director of Children's Council. As I reflect on my eight years in this position, I realize yet again how fortunate I am to have had the opportunity to lead an organization on the front lines of improving the lives of so many families and children.

We've come a long way in eight years. When I came to Children's Council, successive governors were slashing child care funding to balance the state budget. Today we have a governor who is putting early education at the top of his policy agenda, recognizing that families need full-time child care so they can work, and children need quality early education so they can succeed in school and beyond.

Last June, San Francisco voters passed a child care funding initiative (now referred to as "Baby" Prop C) that would double the city's investment in early care and education. Implementation is on hold until a lawsuit challenging the validity of the initiative is resolved, but I am heartened by the support of voters who recognize that investing in our families and children is a critical issue for our city.



**Affordable, quality care for all children in our city is within reach. We just need to make it a priority!**

While policy and advocacy is an important part of our work at Children's Council, it is only a small part of what we do. **Day after day, we are here supporting families, helping them**

connect with child care that meets their needs and helping families secure financial assistance to pay for care. We also work to expand the availability of quality care in our city by **helping individuals establish and run successful child care businesses** and supporting their professional development as early educators.

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We are constantly striving to improve our services, working to ensure that families know we are here for them, and responding to the interests and needs of providers.

## SERVICES WE CHAMPION

- Our **mobile-friendly [Child Care Finder](#)** modernized the way families look for care—and it keeps getting better! This year we added child care site photos, new search filters, and the ability to save searches and compare programs.
- Our nationally-recognized **Healthy Apple** program helps early educators adopt research-based nutrition and physical activity best practices. Be among the first to check out our new **[Healthy Apple Interactive Toolkit](#)**.
- **Parent and Caregiver Education programs**, such as our **New Moms Groups, Parent Cafés, and Tuesday Adult-Child Playgroups**, provide wonderful opportunities for families to share the challenges of parenting, build community and learn from each other.
- **City Kids Family Fair**, our annual fall event, provides fun activities for hundreds of families with young children, along with an opportunity to learn about Children's Council's services and other community resources.



## SERVICE INNOVATIONS TO COME

- Our **Family Child Care Business Incubator** will provide a comprehensive suite of services designed to encourage and guide individuals interested in opening a child care business, as well as support early educators already in the child care community.
- A new **PlayLab**, to be located on the entry level of our building, will be a “soft classroom” to host playgroups, peer support groups, workshops, and an expanded toy and book lending library.

As Children’s Council looks to the future, we see abundant opportunities to build on our legacy and leverage our expertise to **strengthen families, improve outcomes** for children and ensure that our city is one in which **families of diverse means can prosper**.

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## ON MY TRANSITION

As announced in October, I am coming to the end of my tenure as Executive Director, looking forward to retirement with more time for family, friends, golf and other interests. I intend to stay involved, as a volunteer, in early education advocacy to make quality early care and education a reality for all of San Francisco’s children. The search for my successor is progressing apace under the capable guidance of the Children’s Council Board of Directors and I am committed to ensuring a smooth transition in leadership.



I want to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the countless people—including Children’s Council staff, Board members, donors, public officials and colleagues in the community—who have honored me with their trust and support. I am grateful for the opportunity to have partnered with you to contribute to our community.



Thank you for sharing in our vision of a just society in which all families and their children can succeed and thrive!

All the very best,

Sandee Blechman  
Executive Director

P.S. I hope to see you all at our annual [Child Care Champions Luncheon](#) on **Friday, May 10** at the Four Seasons Hotel.

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