

Communication from Public

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Date Submitted: 04/21/2025 01:24 PM

Council File No: 24-0600

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Council, As a parent, I am greatly concerned about that many Los Angeles Recreation and Parks child care centers, will not be operational after the end of this fiscal year. It has come to our attention that the Department of Recreation and Parks has sent a proposed budget to the Mayor requesting funding to operate a reduced number of child care centers for FY 2025/2026. The proposed document requests funding for four childcare centers: Joy Picus Preschool Childcare Center (which serves city employees), Ralph M. Parsons Child Care Center and Jim Gilliam Child Care Center were named, while the fourth center is nameless. For instance, many of the families enrolled our children in Downey Child Care after the completion of its renovation at the end of 2022. A grant of \$20 million, allocated through the American Rescue Plan Act, funded the renovation of 10 of the city's child care buildings and the first year of operations. We believe that it is unjustified to complete these renovations between 2021-2023 without allocating the funds to provide services at said centers. As per the RAP Child Care site, "as a result of the Great Recession of 2008, Recreation and Parks was forced to close its licensed child care sites due to lack of funding. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted the need for licensed preschool programs. In response to this crisis, our City Council took immediate action by identifying funding to restore and open low cost licensed preschool facilities." These centers, statistically located in underserved neighborhoods, are now bustling with children. The need for affordable and quality childcare is just as prevalent now as it was during the height of the COVID pandemic. It would be irresponsible for the City Council to allow these vital centers to close. At our center alone there is a 53 child-long waitlist: the demand is obvious. RAP argues in the proposed budget that, "these variable costs were previously covered by the American Rescue Plan Act funds. It should be noted that RAP was previously directed to self- operate an additional 10 childcare facilities; however, the FY24-25 budget eliminated childcare staffing and directed RAP to operate childcare services through an alternative service delivery model. Therefore, this request is premised on the identification and selection of qualified childcare service providers, which is currently in progress." There is precedent for the Childcare Center

budget line to be zero with funding reinstated in the following year.¹ We do not agree with RAP's assessment. If the city cannot continue to subsidize the centers, we request that alternative funding options be presented. Currently, Downey Child Care is operational because of a grant, which is set to expire at the end of this fiscal year. The estimated grant line in the proposed budget shows an increase of expected grant funding. Have those funds been secured to continue operations at the current child care centers? Downey Child Care Center remains tuition-free; however, a fee was supposed to be instituted for parents who did not meet the financial obligations of the grant program. Many of us are still waiting and able to pay this fee (which we were quoted roughly \$200/week based on other child care centers). We request that the city implements a tuition fee for applicable families before closing the center altogether. We stand united with parents from other city child care centers, who will be similarly impacted if this valuable resource is taken away, and their childcare disappeared. We are asking for transparency on the state of not only ours, but of all of the RAP child care centers. We have seen our children thrive at Downey Child Care. We cannot sing praises loud enough about the director of the center, Allison Tillman and the teachers she has staffed to nurture and care for our children. It is a testament that parents do not have to pay thousands of dollars a month to ensure high quality child care. Witnessing our children flourish over the last few years has demonstrated beyond a doubt that these civically-run childcare centers are vital, safe, and essential for the community. Please do not take this resource away from the future residents of Los Angeles. Respectfully, Jess Rath

Los Angeles Parent 1 Figures collected from budgets posted on lacitycontroller's website. <https://controller.lacity.gov/budgets>
2024/2025 Child Care and Learning Centers -\$0 2023/2024 Child Care and Learning Centers - \$5,000,000 2022/2023 Child Care and Learning