

## AIA Advocacy Platform Issue

### Childcare + Early Education

#### Challenge:

- High quality, affordable and available childcare is an essential part of a healthy community, work-life balance and a thriving economy.
- Early education has been shown to be significant in brain development but also in fostering social skills, cooperation and the kind of self-reliance now referred to as 'executive functioning'. Taken together, these advantages are a significant predictor of future success along with a primary factor in lifting children out of poverty.
- The provision of childcare has been overlooked and squeezed out of current conversations on transitioning our cities and our economies to be more urbane and more equitable.
- The way is being paved for the construction of new housing - affordable and market rate - at an unprecedented scale for our city without consideration of adding childcare sites [along with other types of school sites, but that's another position paper], leaving an enormous gap facing newly-forming families.
- The financing of childcare and opportunities for early education have fallen through the cracks; some funding is provided at the Federal level through Head Start grants for families below the poverty line, with the remainder provided privately. When available, the range of early education and childcare facilities is characterized by great disparities in levels of quality and affordability.
- Childcare facilities are uniquely difficult to site owing to a complex matrix of factors, some of which include:
  - a general lack of open space (to meet licensing requirements) in our city as a whole but in neighborhoods surrounding new housing developments in particular;
  - byzantine (frankly: sexist) and conflicting zoning code requirements that often either discourage or don't allow childcare facilities near where families live or parents work;
- We as a society have not kept up with the prevalence of dual-income households and single-parent households which require childcare as a necessity. Working parents should expect high quality early education to be both available and affordable.

Recommendations:

- Recognize childcare and early education as central to the success of housing construction throughout the city, particularly in new residential neighborhoods being created in DTLA and transit-oriented districts.
- Encourage/require the provision of substantial outdoor space to be available to childcare and early education centers during the day in both adaptive reuse and new housing projects.
- Remove regulatory obstacles to the development of childcare centers throughout the city, in both residential and commercial zones.
- Encourage innovation in both public and private financing and support mechanisms for childcare facilities to align with public schools, community centers and places of work.

Request:

- Support Council Motion 20-0652, introduced on 5-27-20 by Councilman Krekorian to:
  - Study the creation of an administrative approval process for childcare, eliminating the need for discretionary approvals and,
  - Study the use of public parks as outdoor space for childcare centers, following the lead of the City of San Francisco.

In line with this, we specifically request:

- Community Planners and DTLA 2040 work to remove obstacles to the approval of childcare centers in single family zones, all multi-family zones and commercial zones allowing clean tech industrial uses, in addition to commercial zones allowing more conventional office and retail uses, where childcare is currently allowed by right.