



## County of Santa Clara

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Children and Families First Commission - Board Policy 3.31

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**Policy Type:** Board

**Category:** Board Operations    **Sub-Category:** Advisory Boards and Commissions

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### **3.31 USE OF SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS TO THE COUNTY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FIRST COMMISSION (Adopted 3-23-99)**

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that when making individual appointments to the County Children and Families First Commission, Board Members shall give strong consideration to the categories of persons described below.

- Parent who is a recipient of project services included in the county strategic plan;
- Educator associated with elementary level education and/or specializes in early childhood development;
- Representative of a community-based organization that specializes in parent education or represents children of special needs or specializes in prevention or early intervention for families at-risk;
- Representative of a community-based organization that specializes in early childhood development research and/or child advocacy; and



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- Physician of a local medical, pediatric, or obstetric association or society.

The one category of persons that is included in Proposition 10, but that is not listed among the categories described in the policy statement is “representatives of a local child care resource or referral agency or a local child care coordinating group.” The CFC (Children and Families Committee) accounts for this category in its recommendation establishing a designated seat for the Santa Clara County Local Child Care Planning Council.

The rationale for the categories of persons recommended by the CFC:

1. Parent who is a Recipient of Project Services included in the County Strategic Plan

This category is slightly different in that we emphasize a “parent who is a recipient of project services” rather than a “recipient of project services.” When we refer to a “parent who is a recipient of project services,” we mean that either the parent is receiving the services or the child of the parent is receiving services. In both instances, the parent would be eligible to serve on the county commission.

Any initiative focused on early childhood development cannot overlook the perspective of parents. We recommend that a parent who is a recipient of the services contained in the County Children and Families First Commission’s strategic plan be eligible for a place on the commission because he or she would have first-hand understanding of the resources and support that are needed to raise healthy children.

Parents may also be recipients of project services. Proper parenting skills, for example, are essential for the healthy development of



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children. We expect then that programs that teach parents nurturing and parenting skills will be among the services that are funded in the strategic plan.

2. Educator associated with Elementary Level Education and/or Specializes in Early Childhood Development

This category is slightly different in that we expanded it to enable “educators associated with elementary level education” to also be eligible. Recent research shows that a child’s first three years are the most critical in stimulating brain development. These three years offer opportunities that will enable children to enter school in good health, ready-to-learn, and emotionally well-developed. Educational practitioners are aware of the web of support that successful children have in their lives from a very early age, such as adult nurturing, access to quality medical care, and positive social experiences.

We recommend that an educator associated with elementary level education and/or who specializes in early childhood development be eligible for a place on the commission because he or she would bring first-hand knowledge of what experiences in the early years affect a child’s future success in school. This knowledge, which is obtained through direct interaction and observation of young children and their families, is distinct from the knowledge and experience that other members who have a theoretical background in child development would bring to the commission.

3. Representative of a Community-Based Organization (CBO) that Specializes in Parent Education or Represents Children with Special Needs or Specializes in Prevention or Early Intervention for Families At-Risk



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This category is different from that described in Proposition 10 in that we place a special emphasis on CBOs that specialize in parent education or represent children with special needs. The rationale for this emphasis is provided below.

### A) CBOs Specializing in Parent Education

Proper parenting and nurturing are vital to the healthy development of children. A number of community-based organizations provide support to parents to help them deal with the challenges of parenting, understand the benefits of nurturing, and celebrate the joy that children bring to their lives. The support and education provided by such organizations lead to enhanced child cognitive development, improved parent-child relationships, and the improved emotional well-being of children.

We recommend that a representative of a community-based organization specializing in parent education have an opportunity for a seat on the commission because one of the purposes of the county commission is to establish parental education and family support services relevant to effective child development, and this representative would inform and advance this charge.

### B) CBOs Representing Children with Special Needs

Parents of children with special needs often struggle to obtain access to critical services such as special education and child care. This population of children is often neglected because the type of support the child and family need to be successful are distinct from the support that children without these special



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needs require and the level of support that is required is more substantial.

We recommend that a community-based organization representing children with special needs have an opportunity for a seat on the commission because such organizations understand the types of support parents of children with special needs require as well as the barriers that preclude access to vital services. A place on the commission is one way in which to represent this population and advocate for services within the strategic plan to be directed toward this population.

C) CBOs Specializing in Prevention or Early Intervention for Families At-Risk

Family support services are sometimes necessary for proper parenting. Indeed, substance abuse, poor impulse control and anger management, and inadequate parenting skills can lead to domestic violence, child abuse, or poor parenting. One of the purposes of the county commission is to fund community-based family support services so that families can function more successfully and children can benefit from proper parenting and nurturing.

In addition to family support services, it would also be beneficial to have a representative of an organization involved in smoking cessation activities for three reasons: 1) Smoking and second-hand smoke endanger the physical development of a child; for example, smoking during pregnancy accounts for 20 to 30 percent of low birth weight infants; 2) One of the purposes of Proposition 10 is to promote smoking cessation activities and education on the dangers of smoking; and 3) The



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sole source of revenue for this initiative is a surtax on tobacco products.

We recommend that a community-based organization specializing in prevention or early intervention services for families at-risk have an opportunity for a seat on the commission because such organizations can assist the commission to make sound decisions with respect to the strategic plan and the funding of these types of services. We also want to call out that organizations such as the Tobacco Control Coalition and the American Lung Association which focus on smoking cessation efforts would qualify for participation on the commission under this category.

- D) Representative of a Community-Based Organization that Specializes in Early Childhood Development Research and/or Child Advocacy

This category is different from that described in Proposition 10 in that we place an emphasis on early childhood development research and child advocacy.

A number of local organizations conduct research and evaluate programs to educate practitioners and the public on the most effective strategies (best practices) to promote healthy early childhood development. Advocates use the findings from research and evaluation to influence public policy and leverage funds to enhance or create needed child development services.

We recommend that a non-profit or private community-based organization specializing in childhood development research and/or child advocacy be eligible for a place on the commission



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because such organizations understand what environments and services benefit children as they are developing and can advise the commission on steps to take to sustain our efforts far into the future.

- E) Physician of a Local Medical, Pediatric, or Obstetric Association or Society

This category is slightly different from that described in Proposition 10 in that we specify that the representative of a local medical, pediatric, or obstetric association or society be a physician, preferably a pediatrician. This recommendation came at the suggestion of our County Public Health Officer who felt it important that a physician be on the county commission.

The physical development of children is one of the foci of early childhood development. Conditions such as inadequate access to health care and poverty harm a child's physical health and can, in turn, diminish his or her life prospects. Research and studies show, for example, that low birth weight infants are especially at-risk for severe physical and developmental complications. We recommend that a physician of a local medical, pediatric, or obstetric association or society have an opportunity for a place on the commission because he or she would share the most current medical research and assure that the physical development of children is not neglected in the work of the commission and in the strategic plan

### Related Policies

None.



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### Related Forms and Information

None.

### History

Date	Changes Made
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3/23/1999	Policy Adopted. <a href="#">View legislative file.</a>