

## **Economic Stability Task Force K-12 Pandemic Childcare Recommendations**

Driven by the Covid-19 pandemic, Juneau's schools will be operating on a schedule in which pupils attend classes only part-time. To mitigate the economic impacts of this schedule on working parents and employers, the Economic Stability Task Force (ESTF) urges the immediate development of adequate childcare alternatives that would remain in place for the duration of the pandemic. The recommendations below are based on information gathered from stakeholders in the community including The Juneau School District (JSD), parents, The Juneau School Board, Southeast Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC), The Juneau Chamber of Commerce, and Tlingit & Haida Central Council.

### **Primary Recommendation:**

**Appropriate CARES Act funds to support a short-term K-12 childcare coordinator position. Estimated funding for six months \$60,000.**

**Under the purview of the Childcare Coordinator through CBJ:**

- A. Create a childcare program for school aged children for the duration of the pandemic.**
- B. Consider all locations to safely and efficiently distance students, while maintaining their cohort groups from JSD attendance.**
- C. Recruit childcare staff from the current labor force including substitute teachers, retired teachers, teachers in training, and childcare professionals.**
- D. Provide financial and implementational support to employers who choose to offer onsite childcare.**
- E. Provide support for families forming small "bubbles" of students to share the delivery of care.**

### **Current Environment**

The coming school year is scheduled to begin August 24<sup>th</sup>. The Juneau School District (JSD) has recently announced the school year will begin with entirely distance delivery for its 4,700 students. Of major economic concern is the impact on businesses and employees relative to available childcare while students are not receiving in-person instruction. The loss of working parents from Juneau's labor force would present huge barriers to economic recovery from the crisis created by the COVID pandemic.

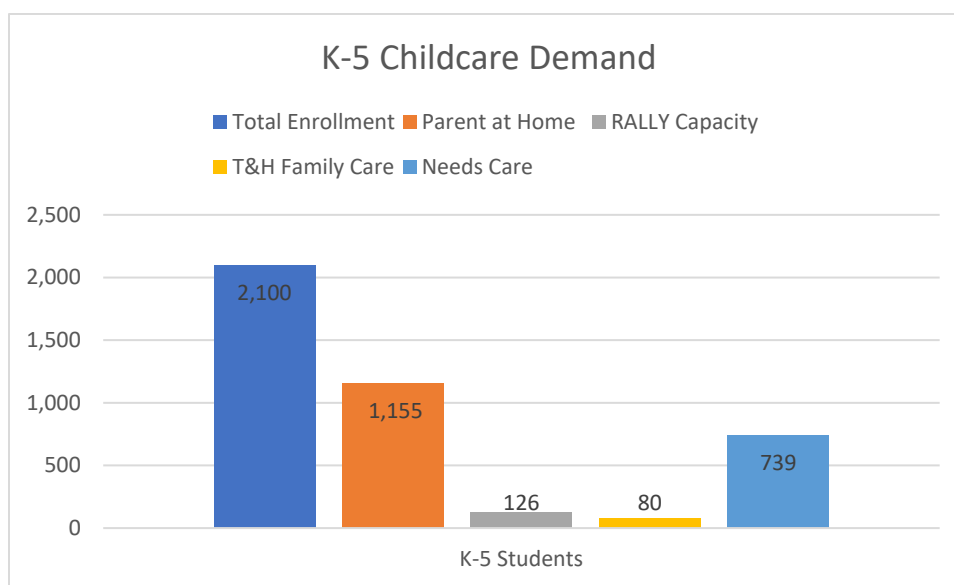
JSD recently conducted a survey of school parents and received 1,300 responses, representing 2,500 students. Based on the responses to this survey, approximately 66% of Juneau families report that reduced or eliminated in-person instruction for students this fall will create a hardship for their family. Over 95% of survey respondents have at least one member of their household in Juneau's workforce, and must continue to earn enough income to support their family needs, and 30% of parents report that it is likely or highly likely that an adult in their household will

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have to quit their jobs to provide care for their children. Meanwhile, 36% report that it is likely or highly likely that they will leave children home alone, and 55% of respondents reported that a parent will stay home to deliver instruction.

The current RALLY program is being expanded as space allows, to a capacity of 126 children districtwide. Of the 126, JSD estimates 84 of the spaces will be filled by teacher's children, leaving 42 spaces available for childcare onsite divided between three different school locations. As RALLY is a program operated through the JSD, these recommendations do not address the program's specific needs, *however the ESTF strongly urges the RALLY program to expand capacity while JSD is operating distance only delivery, as this allows more space for the program to operate.*

The Juneau Chamber of Commerce is currently conducting a survey to assess the demand for supporting on-site childcare for employees. 36% of preliminary respondents expressed interest in providing on-site childcare with financial and structural support. Additionally, businesses may currently deduct childcare expenses as a business expense and apply for a tax credit of 25% of childcare expenses up to \$150,000 (IRS 8882), however it is important to consider this tax credit it not helpful for the immediate cashflows of operations which have already been greatly impacted by the pandemic.



\*Data based on 1,300 responses from JSD parents, representing 53% of enrolled students.

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### Primary and Immediate Recommendation:

Appropriate CARES Act funds to support a short-term K-12 childcare coordinator position to facilitate and to oversee the creation and implementation of childcare options for school aged children for the duration of the pandemic and to support businesses offering flex schedules and remote working options for employees, as well as support for families forming small “bubbles” of students to share the delivery of care.

***Operated by:***                      ***City Entity or Non-profit Organization***  
***Source of funding:***        ***CARES Act***  
***Funding needed:***           ***\$60,000 (Salaried Position for 6 months)***

### Childcare Coordinator Implementation Recommendations:

1. Create a childcare program for school aged children for the duration of the pandemic. Priority should be given to the youngest children first. Providing care for K-5 aged children is imperative to allow parents to remain in the workforce, and to maximize structured, in-person development. Given that students are already receiving distance education through JSD, the intent of this program should be to safely care for children during their parent’s workday.
  - a. Of the 4,700 students in the JSD – approximately 2,100 are in the K-5 age range. Based on survey response data, RALLY capacity, and potential Tlingit & Haida supported family care, a minimum of 739 pupils will need childcare in order for their parents to maintain their income.
  - b. Of the 2,100 K-5 students, 500 are enrolled as having special needs and have individual education plans (IEP’s), these pupils will be prioritized for full-time in person instruction, which takes place when JSD is operating under yellow or green risk conditions.

Low Risk <i>Minimal to no Community Transmission</i>	Medium Risk <i>Some Community Spread</i>	High Risk <i>Widespread Community Transmission</i>
*Minimal to no level of community transmission in the school’s behavioral health region and/or town or municipality.	*Low to moderate level of community transmission in the school’s behavioral health region and/or town or municipality.	*High level of community transmission: Outbreaks or increases in cases and recent laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the school’s behavioral health region and/or town or municipality.
Wednesday will be used in the beginning of the year for staff preparation time, professional learning, and disinfecting as we establish our blended learning model.	Wednesday will be home learning (e learning) all day for all students to provide staff preparation time, professional learning and disinfecting.	
Given sustained low risk status, there will be an increase in face to face learning time.		

- c. As JSD operates under the current protocol of 100% distance delivery during “orange” risk conditions, childcare should be provided for a minimum of 740

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students. Further consideration should be given to this demand for care, as these estimates are based on one survey during rapidly changing market conditions.

- d. As the childcare coordinator begins to design this program, the ESTF will work closely alongside to define the market in terms of costs, funding, and demand.
2. Consider all locations to safely and efficiently distance students, while maintaining their cohort groups from JSD attendance. Potential spaces include city facilities, faith-based organization locations, and privately owned venues. Locations which have been previously licensed for childcare can obtain licensing in the most streamlined manner. Fact finding research has identified the following potential locations for short term childcare facilities:
  - Public Libraries
  - The Dimond Park Field House
  - Mt. Jumbo School
  - Centennial Hall (If emergency tents already in CBJ's possession can be used for quarantine sites)
  - Church gathering spaces
  - The former Wal-Mart building
  - Available UAS spaces
3. Recruit childcare staff from the current labor force including substitute teachers, retired teachers, teachers in training, and childcare professionals. Additionally, a training program should be created *immediately* using CARES Act funds to increase the potential labor market.
4. Provide financial and implementational support to employers who choose to offer onsite childcare. Based on the DHSS childcare cost assessment, a subsidy of \$350 per-month, per-child should be created for employers who offer on-site or off-site informal child supervision with connection to school instruction assignments. Either may be in association with other employers. Based on JSD survey responses, the potential demand for onsite employer provided care would accommodate approximately 120 children districtwide.

<b><i>Operated by:</i></b>	<b><i>Private Employers//Childcare Coordinator</i></b>
<b><i>Capacity:</i></b>	<b><i>120 students</i></b>
<b><i>Facilities:</i></b>	<b><i>private donated</i></b>
<b><i>Source of funding:</i></b>	<b><i>CARES</i></b>
<b><i>Funding needed:</i></b>	<b><i>\$630,000 (300 students x \$350 per month x 6 months)</i></b>

5. Based on JSD survey responses, interest in family pods to provide “bubbles” of care could potentially serve up to 200 K-5 aged pupils. Structural, curriculum, and organizational support for these families should be provided though the childcare coordinator.