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Subsidized preschools and childcare

August 19, 7:48 PM - San Jose Early Childhood Parenting Examiner - Kellie Tunbridge

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The average cost of San Jose preschool programs range from \$1,000 to \$1,800 per month. The high cost of early education in Santa Clara County can pose to be a hardship for families struggling with the current economic crisis.

Early childhood experts agree that early childhood is a time marked by unparalleled physical, emotional and mental growth. This critical time is a passage of growth that should not leave children disadvantaged by economic hardship.



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To be considered for a subsidized childcare or preschool program, placement on a central eligibility list is recommended. All counties in California offer a [Central Eligibility List \(CEL\)](#). [The Santa Clara Community Child Care Council \(4Cs\)](#) offers the CEL. The 4Cs not only provides the CEL, but also offers [resources](#) and [referrals for childcare](#) and preschool programs, and [special needs services](#). The Santa Clara County CEL can be reached by phone at (877) 235-0095.

Gross income, family size and need is considered in qualifying for the CEL. There must be a need for childcare and applicants must live, work or attend school in Santa Clara County to qualify. [Income guidelines](#) can be found at the Santa Clara County CEL website.

[Choices 4 Children](#) offers an alternative payment program for parents that meet income requirements. Choices 4 Children offers parent and provider resources and training, childcare food assistance programs, and professional development programs. Further information may be obtained by [contacting the Choices 4 Children website](#), or by calling the San Jose office at (408) 297-3295.

[Head Start](#) is a federally funded preschool program for children 3 to 4 years of age. Head Start offers half-day and full-day programs. Eligibility is based on family size, income and need. Children in foster care, children with disabilities, homeless families, parents enrolled in CALWORKs, children who receive SSI, and teen parents who live with a parent/guardian are eligible regardless of income. [Enrollment applications](#) can be mailed to the Santa Clara County Office of Education Head Start / Early Head Start Program.

[Kidango](#), a state preschool program offers half-day and full-day programs. Kidango provides breakfast, lunch, morning and mid-afternoon snacks, and will accommodate special dietary requirements. Early intervention and mental health services are also available. Families that meet income eligibility may participate free of charge. An application may be requested by calling (800) 262-4252, or by completing a [San Jose Kidango Child Care waiting list application](#).

Santa Clara County offers various resources for subsidized preschool and child care programs. Many state and federally funded programs are available to help children receive the best start possible for this time of unparalleled growth.

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