



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES **FROM:** Jill Bourne
AND EDUCATION
COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: Family, Friends, and
Neighbors Caregiver
Support Network Status
Report

DATE: 01/28/2026

Approved

Date:

2/5/2026

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the Family, Friends, and Neighbors Caregiver Support Network Program.

BACKGROUND

A 2019 analysis of early education data showed that, due to challenges with the cost and availability of licensed care, families were relying on informal childcare provided by people within their social networks – family, friends, and neighbors to look after young children. Launched in January 2021, San José Public Library’s (“Library”) Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Caregiver Support Network was developed through partnerships with FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, the Santa Clara County Office of Education, the Program for Infant/Toddler Care, and the San José Public Library Foundation (“Foundation”). The FFN program was established as an Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce development program to meet the diverse training and support needs of informal caregivers and improve the learning and care environments of children as well as their likelihood of entering Kindergarten ready to learn.

The FFN program evolved from a pilot to an annual program, growing from 59 caregivers in the pilot program to a peak of 186 caregivers per cohort. In total, the FFN program has reached a total of 641 caregivers, representing 34 ZIP codes and 19 languages, directly shaping the early learning experiences of approximately 2,000 children.

The program consists of five main components:

- Monthly training in child development and health and safety, caregiver and child wellness; CPR/First Aid certification; training in emergency preparedness and the provision of emergency kit supplies
- College and Career Pathway opportunities and supports: ECE credits through Mission College and UCSC Extension; professional development stipends; and guidance on TrustLine, the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry, and pathways to Family Child Care licensure
- Access to quality learning materials and environments: curricular support, home library materials, early learning supplies
- High-touch navigation support: access to personal computers and digital skills training, guidance and support to navigate State and local permit pathways
- Regular peer and community support: regular weekly Community of Practice through Zoom.

The program has advanced workforce outcomes for childcare by providing access to ECE courses free of charge, which are needed to qualify to work in licensed childcare settings. In total, 50 participants have qualified for a California ECE Associate Teacher Permit, while an additional 48 participants have qualified for a California ECE Teacher Permit. The program delivered over 15,000 collective professional development hours across five cohorts. The key program goals and outcomes of the program are outlined below, highlighting measurable gains in caregiver knowledge, confidence, engagement, and access, and demonstrating the program's impact across diverse communities.

Goal 1: Empower caregivers through learning and skill-building: Outcomes and indicators demonstrate increased knowledge, sustained engagement, and confidence in caregiving practice.

- 87% of caregivers demonstrated a 20% increase in knowledge following training.
- 89% of caregivers completed at least 25 hours of professional development.
- 87% of caregivers reported increased confidence in making informed caregiving decisions.

Goal 2: Foster meaningful community connections: Outcomes reflect strong peer engagement and increased social support.

- 89% average weekly attendance at optional Community of Practice meetings.
- 89% of caregivers reported increased social connectedness and peer support through program participation.

Goal 3: Increase access to essential resources and supports: Outcomes demonstrate high utilization and perceived value of program resources.

- 96% of caregivers rated program resources as useful or very useful.
- 85% of participating caregivers completed certified CPR and health and safety training.
- 85% of caregivers completed at least one digital literacy course, and 70% received a laptop or similar device to support participation and access.

Goal 4: Promote equity and inclusion across services: Outcomes reflect culturally responsive design and participant-centered delivery.

- 95% of participants reported that the program respected and reflected their cultural practices and lived experiences.

An evaluation of the program conducted by Evalcorp in 2023 highlighted participant satisfaction with services such as professional development, workshops, and peer support (Attachment A).

ANALYSIS

The FFN Program is directly aligned with the Early Learning and Education and Meaningful and Sustaining Jobs Priority areas of the Children and Youth Services Master Plan and has been implemented through the Early Education and College and Career Pathways work of the San Jose Public Library.

The program is staffed by two full-time literacy program specialists (LPS) and a full-time clerk funded through the City's General Fund; supervision is provided by the Library's Early Education Manager. As part of the budget reductions approved in June 2025, the 2025-2026 Adopted Operating Budget eliminated the staff positions required to continue this program, effective July 1, 2026. The budget action eliminates 2.0 filled Literacy Program Specialist and 1.0 Library Clerk positions overseeing the program¹. The Library Clerk position was vacated through promotion in Fall 2025 and will be held vacant for the remainder of the fiscal year. All non-personal funding has been provided through philanthropic grants made to the Library Foundation.

The current year's expenditure plan of \$633,158 is broken down as follows:

Category	Cost
Personnel: 2 FT Literacy Program Specialists 1 FT Library Clerk	\$494,758
College & Career Pathway: ECE Credits - UCSC Extension	\$50,000

¹ <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/121168/638817196167330000>

Category	Cost
Certification & Permits: Pediatric CPR/AED/First Aid certification, Livescan fingerprinting, TrustLine registration and Assistant Teacher Permit processing	\$28,400
Supplies & Materials: Early learning supplies and resource materials, Health and safety supplies, meeting and event supplies.	\$22,000
Marketing and Outreach: translation services, portfolios, certificates, and multilingual outreach materials.	\$18,000
Devices: Chromebook and laptop lending	\$12,500
Consultants / Contract Management: Professional Development Instructors	\$7,500
Total	\$633,158

The 2025–2026 program year focuses on sustaining the most impactful components while preparing for a potential transition to elimination of the program or operation by a long-term host organization, if possible.

In the current year, enrollment in the program was reduced significantly to 51 participants to account for the transition of the program. Of these 51 participants, 26 caregivers live in the zip codes associated with the Children and Youth Services Master Plan demonstration sites of Mayfair/Poco Way and Seven Trees/Santee (95111, 95112, 95116, 95122 and 95127). Caregivers within the demonstration sites accounted for 21% of the overall participation. Data on the participants by zip code is provided as Attachment B.

In prior years, ECE courses were provided through Mission College. In the current year, ECE courses are provided through the UC Santa Cruz Extension in Santa Clara. Twenty caregivers comprised the first Spanish language UCSC FFN cohort, while a second Spanish language cohort of an additional 20 caregivers began in early January. UCSC courses are free to FFN participants and are funded through grants and philanthropic funding made available through the Foundation.

Weekly Community of Practice meetings have become one of the most popular aspects of the program, averaging 40-60 FFN caregivers (active and alumni) per week. These meetings provide a relational and culturally responsive learning model for professional development, while also creating consistent spaces for caregivers to build trust, share lived experiences and create the opportunity for peer learning and reflection. Held weekly via Zoom and offered in both Spanish and English, Communities of Practice are designed to maximize accessibility and support flexible participation for working caregivers. Participants earn professional development hours through structured professional development workshops embedded within the Community of Practice sessions and receive certificates documenting their hours.

The current program structure is not sustainable due to the staff time required and demand for program services. In alignment with stated Council priorities of workforce development and educational outcomes for children, staff will focus on preserving and embedding high-value aspects of the program into the Children & Youth Service Master Plan and Education Strategy:

- Advance the College & Career Pathways – Meaningful & Sustaining Jobs framework: seek philanthropic funding for continued provision of child development courses through local higher education institutions and provide workforce support to interested residents;
- Preserve Institutional Knowledge and Relationships: preserve curricula and program materials to draw on as needed for future caregiver-specific programming;
- Transition to a Resource and Access Model: shift from a cohort-based program to drop-in workshops, toolkits, and multilingual online resources;
- Embed FFN Supports into Core Library Services: integrate FFN-focused content into story times, family workshops, and play-based programming; offer periodic caregiver learning circles; and create informal/formal childcare-aligned resource kits and lending collections as resources allow; and
- Leverage Community Partnerships: collaborate with community-based organizations with SJPL serving as a convenor, space provider, and resource curator rather than the sole program operator.

While certain aspects of the FFN program may continue to be available in the formats listed above, direct navigation and case management support, monthly trainings and certification opportunities, and community of practice facilitation will no longer be provided after the current cohort concludes in Spring 2026. At least two local community-based organizations host programs similar to the FFN, but at a significantly smaller scale. Staff will continue to assess whether there are interest and capacity to transition the program to another organization.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the City Manager's Office.

/s/
JILL BOURNE
City Librarian

For questions, please contact Ann Grabowski, Deputy Director, Library Department, at ann.grabowski@sjlibrary.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

January 28, 2026

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: FFN Evaluation, 2023.

Attachment B: Participant Zip Codes