

Santa Barbara News Press

IN BRIEF : Lack of licensed child care prompts survey

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SANTA BARBARA COUNTY The county's First 5 organization will be conducting a survey in an effort to alleviate a shortage of licensed child care providers available to parents working downtown.

Downtown business owners with more than 20 employees are invited to attend an inaugural meeting of the Downtown Santa Barbara Employee Child Care Survey from 9:30 to 11 a.m. on March 26 at the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce, 924 Anacapa St., Suite 1, according to a news release.

The meeting will offer an opportunity to learn about the impact the shortage has created. The survey results should be available by October and will be used to help find a solution.

"There is a critical shortage of child care in the downtown Santa Barbara area, which impacts employee productivity, absenteeism and recruitment in workplaces across the city," First 5 director Pat Wheatley said in a prepared statement. "Employees in downtown Santa Barbara are competing with each other for more than jobs -- they are competing for child care. For every licensed child care space, there are three working parents needing that space."

The survey is being funded by First 5, the County of Santa Barbara, the City of Santa Barbara, the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce and several local businesses that teamed up to form the Downtown Santa Barbara Employer Child Partnership.

To reserve space at the event or to learn more, contact Holly Goldberg of First 5, at 884-8062 or visit www.countyofsb.org/ceo/ece/survey.