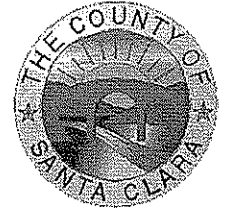


County of Santa Clara
Board of Supervisors
Supervisorial District Three
Supervisor Dave Cortese




BOSD3 13 06-21-11

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Chief Board Aide

DATE: June 21, 2011

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: 
Dave Cortese
Supervisor, District 3

SUBJECT: Child Impact Statements

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Recommendation:

1. Approve the recommendation by the Children, Seniors and Families Committee to include a Child Impact Statement on all Board transmittals effective July 1, 2011, with the following modifications:
 - a. Statements shall describe direct impacts to children as a whole, not to child services only.
 - b. Statements shall describe direct impacts to children in terms of positive, negative or neutral, and shall include (when known) future direct impacts.
2. Direct staff to return to the December 2011 CSFC meeting with ideas for aligning the statements to outcomes as delineated in the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth and an update on modifying Keyboard to create a separate tab for child impact statements.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Board of Supervisors has pledged its commitment to youth in various ways, including adopting a resolution in 2009 that prioritizes youth of the child welfare system as a priority population, and more recently, adopting in 2010 the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth. Both of these actions, amongst countless policy decisions the Board approves throughout the year, underscore this county's fierce belief in meeting the fundamental needs of children.

However, given both the multitude and complexity of actions the Board takes, it is not always easy to isolate what bearing an action will have on children, especially if a decision affects an area of service not typically associated with children.

Child impact statements will assist the Board in understanding the direct impacts of policy decisions to children. These statements will classify an action by the Board as having a positive, negative or neutral impact on children in Santa Clara County. Below are samples impact statements:

Positive impact

This action will have a positive impact on children and youth. The recognition of this grant funding will improve outcomes for youth in foster care by providing assistance and training to emancipating and emancipated foster youth. This funding will support foster youth becoming self-sufficient by providing training in financial literacy, support the development of Individual Development Accounts (IDA's), and leadership development activities such the Youth Advisory Board.

Negative impact

This action may have a negative impact on children and youth. By decreasing funding for Probation Dept. Community Workers, justice-engaged youth who are at home (in community care via Wraparound and other programs) will have less oversight and may be more likely to recidivate. In order to address this, the Probation Dept. is working with community based organizations to provide more community supports for youth through mentoring, wrap-around services provided by Medi-Cal, and full-service community partnerships funded by the Mental Health Service Act.

Neutral impact

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children and youth.

Child impact statements will provide an identifiable and quantifiable way to understand how a decision by the Board would directly impact youth. Given the special care and protection needed by children, child impact statements are an important tool to ensure that actions contemplated by the Board are contextualized in terms of potential impacts to children.

For now, these statements will be included as a separate paragraph in the "Reasons for Recommendations" section of every transmittal that goes for Board approval.

BACKGROUND

In my 2011 State of the County address and as part of the “Year of the Child,” I introduced a goal for Santa Clara County to become the first county in California to incorporate child impact statements into the Board’s decision making process. Noting the worldwide attention towards children’s needs because of their immaturity and vulnerability, the United Nations adopted a resolution in 1959 on the “rights of the child.” Child impact statements are an important tool to ensure the needs of children are systematically considered when policymakers are considering legislative actions.

Working in partnership with Kids in Common over the last two months, CSFC has discussed with county staff about what the most efficient way is to do the required analysis and include these statements for the Board’s review. Staff provided sample impact statements to CSFC in May 2011, which CSFC approved to be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. This memo contains refinements to the statement language, in order to make the statements easier to understand and more analogous to the fiscal impact statements the Board already considers on transmittals.

Child impact statements are used widely in Europe and are beginning to garner attention in the United States. Shelby County (Tennessee) is one of the first jurisdictions in the country to use these statements, in the context of safety, health, education and land use decision making.

Through adoption of child impact statements on board transmittals, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors would be making a bold statement about the primacy of serving a segment of the population that has not the maturity to speak for themselves.

