

Child Care

Issue: There are special planning concerns regarding child care facilities.

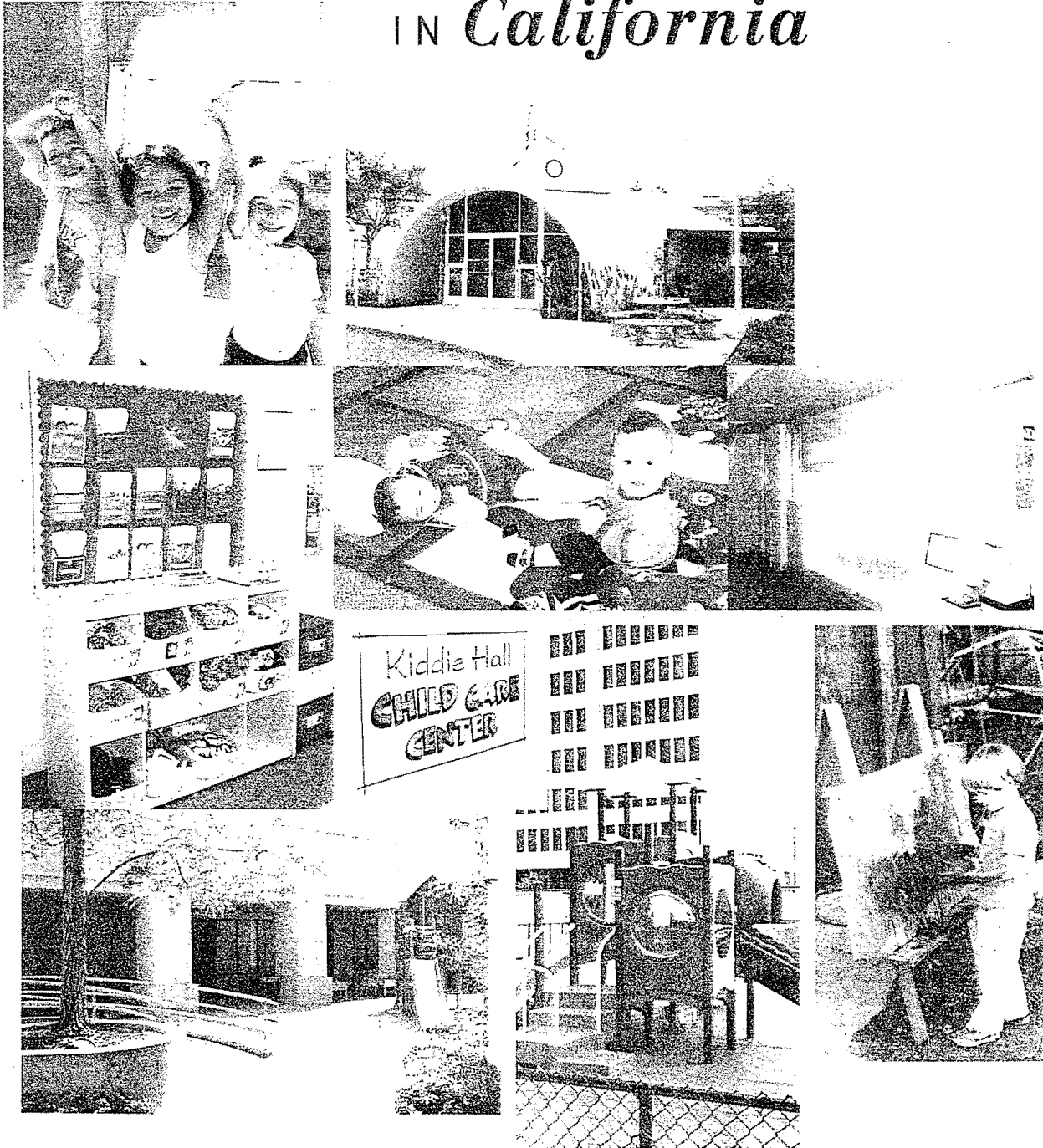
Constraint: These special concerns have too often been overlooked in general plans, including the Calaveras County 1996 General Plan.

Opportunity: *Planning For Child Care in California*, by Kristen Anderson is a wonderful planning resource that provides examples of successful Child Care planning from communities throughout California. We encourage the County to work with Kerry Williams, Project Coordinator for Constructing Connections, in developing successful child care planning policies and programs for Calaveras County.

PLANNING FOR

Child Care

IN *California*



PLANNING FOR Child Care IN *California*

Planning for Child Care in California presents basic child care information and guidelines for municipal, county, and school district planners, and for child care professionals and their advocates.

The book provides resource material that defines child care, discusses how cities and counties regulate child care in its various forms through the General Plan and zoning, and features strategies for ensuring that child care needs are met locally.

Guidelines for incorporating child care goals into the public planning process are covered, with specific attention to the location, planning, and design of housing, centers of employment, and transit-based facilities.

Numerous examples of real child care projects, designs, and partnerships are included, along with sources of funding and other implementation strategies.



Kristen M. Anderson is Child Care Coordinator for the City of Redwood City, California, with responsibility for developing child care resources in both the public and private sectors, providing technical assistance to center-based and family child care home providers, promoting public awareness of child care issues, acting as public/private sector liaison, and preparing grant proposals for funding.

She received her Ph.D. in Early Education and Child Development from Stanford University in 1981.



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Contents

Table 8-1. Community Care Licensing Minimum Ratios	88
Table 9-1. Steps Required to Start a Child Care/Preschool Program	113
Table 10-1. Physical Plant Requirements for Child Care Facilities in California	123
Table 10-2. Range of Development Costs for Child Care Centers	129

Appendices

Appendix A Resources	167
Appendix B Suggested Reading for Non-Planners	173
Appendix C Child Care Offices— Community Care Licensing	175
Appendix D City of San Diego— Child Care Policy	177
Appendix E Strategies for Child Care Supply-Building	179
Appendix F South San Francisco— Impact Fee Ordinance	181
Appendix G Child Care Linkage Program— Primarily in California Cities	187
Appendix H American Planning Association— Child Care Policy Guide	193

Appendix I City of West Sacramento— General Plan (2000) Child Care Element	195
Appendix J Being a Good Neighbor— Tips for Family Child Care Providers	199
Appendix K City of Redwood City— Public Notice for a Large Family Child Care Home	201
Appendix L City of Bakersfield— Large Family Home Child Care Operating Standards	203
Appendix M Ventura County— Child Care Start-Up Guide	205
Appendix N City of Blythe—Child Care Zoning Regulations	211
Appendix O City of Santa Monica— Zoning Districts Guide	215
Appendix P Sample Child Care Center Floor Plan	217
Glossary	219
Acronyms	224
References	225
Index	229



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Park poor in the Lode

Mothers bemoan lack of areas for children to play

Dana M. Nichols
 Record Staff Writer
 Published Friday, Jul 28, 2006

VALLEY SPRINGS - Cherie McKelvie thought she had arrived in family paradise two years ago when she moved into a home in the La Contenta development just southwest of Valley Springs.

Then she tried to find a place close by where her kids could play.

Like most homeowners in Calaveras County, McKelvie has no neighborhood park and no sidewalks or bicycle trails that might allow her children - once they are old enough - to get to the one community park several miles away in the old part of Valley Springs.

McKelvie, 30, says it is an ordeal even to go for a walk with daughters Allie, 4, and Brianna, 3 1/2 months.

"For me to put myself and my stroller and my dog on the street, we kind of end up in the way of traffic," McKelvie said.

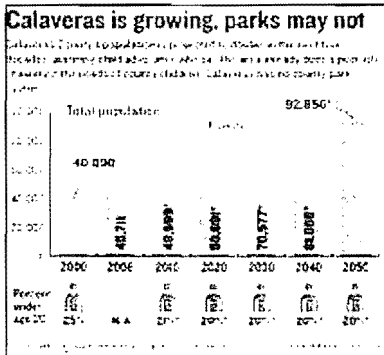
With Angels Camp the county's only incorporated city, no county-run park system and a history of voting down taxes to support parks, Calaveras County is park poor.

The county's vast lakes and national forests are not much used to the skateboard set. Parents and child advocates believe children need exercise close to home. And they worry that the lack of parks, sidewalks and other child-friendly infrastructure will drive out families with children, leaving the area's growing population of retirees with fewer working-age people to provide services.



Valley Springs resident Cherie McKelvie has lunch with her children Allie, 4, and Brianna, 3 1/2 months at Emerson Park in Lodi. She often travels to Lodi to play with her kids because of the lack of neighborhood parks in Valley Springs.

Credit: Calixtro Romias/The Record



Already, McKelvie makes almost daily trips to allow her children to play in other cities, and she and husband George are discussing whether to leave the area.

"We drive to Jackson on the days we are doing errands, or to Lodi, and we make play dates out of them," McKelvie said.

Karen Pekarcik, executive director of First 5 Calaveras, found the same struggle when she and her three young children moved into a home in the Rancho Calaveras development in 1994.

"Every day, I would drive to Angels Camp to let them play in a park," Pekarcik said.

Now Pekarcik and leaders from several other child-advocacy agencies are trying to change that. They are inviting builders, government officials, parents, grandparents and recreation leaders to attend a Children's Summit on Oct. 13 at Kautz Ironstone Vineyards in Murphys. Their goal is to mobilize county residents to pressure county leaders to put the interests of children into the county's General Plan, which

is soon to be revised.

Pekarcik said she and other child advocates are reaching out to community groups that have sprouted around the county in the past few years to push for a wide array of controls on growth to do everything from preserving the beauty of lakes to preventing traffic jams and conserving wildlife habitat.

Writing strict requirements for parks into the county's General Plan sounds like a good idea to Vicki Autrey, 40, of Valley Springs, a single mom who is raising sons Victor, 8, and Dillon, 6, on her salary as a family advocate for Head Start.

"The libraries are a great thing, but there's no sidewalks; there's no way for them to go," Autrey said. "With all the new houses, you'd think they'd come up with something to make it a more kid-friendly place."

The struggle to create child-friendly spaces in Calaveras has had several setbacks in recent years. Because many parks, even Little League fields, are on private property, they are subject to closure when the property changes hands or uses.

That is what happened two years ago in Rail Road Flat, when a rancher introduced buffalo to his pastures and closed a longtime ball field.

In 1999, Little League boosters learned that a Valley Springs ball field on a piece of private land known as the Clay Pits might close. That prompted real estate agent Judy Allen and others to lobby for creation of a county parks department. She said that effort went nowhere.

"It was kind of an overwhelming thing and not on the county's priority list," Allen said.

So the following year, Allen and several others formed a nonprofit organization to create park space in western Calaveras County. That organization, Foothill Communities Parks and Recreation, is only now on the verge of getting its first piece of land - a trail easement around the Gold Creek subdivision built in Valley Springs by developer Ryan Voorhees.

Ultimately, park advocates and builders in the area hope those first trails will link to others, eventually making it possible for McKelvie's children and others to ride all the way from La Contenta to Valley Springs Elementary School on the north end of town.

The big challenge is money for park maintenance. The Jenny Lind Veterans Memorial District, which cares for the veterans hall and the one community park in Valley Springs, found that it is easier to get land for a park than to get the money to maintain it. Now, most of the district's slightly more than \$100,000 in annual revenue goes to maintain the park behind Valley Springs Elementary School, rather than to the veterans hall that was the district's original purpose, said Karyn Larson, administrator for the district.

In 2002, the veterans district asked for voters to approve a \$15 per year parcel tax. It was rejected by a ratio of 74.9 percent to 25.1 percent.

Still, advocates are hopeful that the county's growing neighborhoods and an influx of newcomers may mean that measures to build parks - even if new taxes are required - have a chance.

"I really think we are going to get a lot more support at this time," Allen said.

Contact reporter Dana M. Nichols at (209) 754-9534 or dnichols@recordnet.com

Calaveras Children's Summit

The Calaveras Children's Summit will be Oct. 13 at Kautz Ironstone Vineyards in Murphys. Parents, builders, business leaders, land-use planners, government leaders and others concerned with the needs of children are invited. Exact details are yet to be announced. There will be a small fee for lunch, but scholarships will be available to allow families to attend. Information: Arleen Garland at (209) 754-1205

Parks And Recreation Commission Formed In Calaveras

Tuesday, May 22, 2007 - 01:15 PM

Vanessa Turner

MML Calaveras Bureau

San Andreas, CA -- A new Parks and Recreation Commission has been formed in Calaveras County.

The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to that effect Tuesday.

The commission will consist of five residents appointed by their respective supervisors, one member from the Calaveras County Water District and one member from the San Andreas Parks and Recreation District.

The idea to form the commission came from the Parks Recreation Task Force, which gave its final report to the board last week.

As a result, the board will decide on forming a Parks and Recreation Agency or Department and hiring a parks manager during preliminary budget in June.

Written by vanessa.turner@mlode.com.