

# Letter: Child care choices lacking in SLT

To the community,

The 2015 Child Care Portfolio was recently released providing information about child care in El Dorado County. The report details information about the child care supply between 2012 and 2014. Despite an improving economy, child care continues to be a challenge for many working families due to the high cost of care and lack of subsidized slots. A minimum wage family will spend 50 percent of their budget on child care. This has forced many families to rely on alternative child care arrangements such as family, friends, and neighbors. The report is available **online**.

El Dorado County child care supply and family data shows a significant decrease in the number of licensed Family Child Care homes (24 percent) between 2012 and 2014. The decrease can be attributed to a reduction in the demand for licensed care that forced struggling providers with high vacancy rates to close.

The reduced demand is supported by:

- 9 percent reduction in the number of children between the age of 0-5 even though the population in the county increased by 2 percent.
- 20 percent reduction in the number of children 0-12 with parents in the labor force.
- 33 percent increase in the number of people living in poverty.
- 5 percent decrease in the number of children in subsidized care.

The increase in the poverty rate and the decrease in subsidized care highlights the struggles many families are experiencing. The cost of licensed care is well beyond the

reach of families who are looking for work or working in low wage part time jobs. Families are also struggling to find care during non-traditional hours and Holidays. The South Lake Tahoe community in particular lacks child care providers offering evening, weekend and holiday care. Based on research done by Choices for Children, only one licensed child care home provider will be open on New Year's Eve in South Lake Tahoe. The lack of affordable licensed care and child care options has a negative impact on families, child care providers who serve them and employers.

Choices for Children, a nonprofit resource and referral agency has information on how to become a licensed child care providers and programs to help off-set the cost of licensing fees and readying your home for children. For more information, call 530.541.5848.

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