



MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jessica Matson, Legislative & Information Services Director/City Clerk

SUBJECT: Supplemental Information
Agenda Item 12.a – Discussion of Preschool and Childcare Programs Offered Through the Recreation Services Department and the Mark M. Millis Community Center

DATE: April 24, 2023

Attached is correspondence received for the above referenced item.

cc: City Manager
Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director
Recreation Services Director
City Attorney
City Clerk
City Website (or public review binder)

From: Stacy Hall [REDACTED] >

Sent: Saturday, April 22, 2023 9:58 AM

To: Kristen Barneich <kbarneich@arroyogrande.org>

Subject: Parks and Rec Preschool

Dear Arroyo Grande City Council Members,

I am writing to you, asking for your consideration to keep the Arroyo Grande Parks and Rec preschool program open and available for AG kids and families.

I am an AG resident and my own children attended this valuable preschool program. It made such a huge difference in preparing them for kindergarten and elementary school and beyond. As a teacher since 2000, I have seen the value of preschool first hand.

This is an essential program that allows our children to grow, learn and prepare for kindergarten. It is a very well run and affordable program and without it many families would be at a huge loss.

Losing this program will cost us jobs and will make preschool a financial hardship for many of our families. Please continue to keep this valuable program up and running.

Thank you for your consideration. Please read this letter aloud at your next board meeting.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hall

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Caitlin Radtke](#)
To: [AG City](#)
Subject: Parks and rec preschool
Date: Sunday, April 23, 2023 9:00:16 AM

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you after hearing about the potential closure of elm street parks preschool program. My daughter attended that program for almost 2 years and grew exponentially during that time. It is a wonderful program and I look forward to signing my son up once he is old enough. Not only is it a great program, with a big emphasis on play learning, IT IS AFFORDABLE!! The most affordable preschool I was able to find in the area. Please do your community a favor and keep this program in place.

Best,

Caitlin Radtke-Hoffman

Sent from my iPhone

From: Mike Blanchard [REDACTED] >

Sent: Sunday, April 23, 2023 3:09 PM

To: Kristen Barneich <kbarneich@arroyogrande.org>

Subject: AG Pre-School Program

Mayor Pro Tem Barneich,

Please do not vote to close the Arroyo Grande Parks and Rec pre-school program.

We need to be doing MORE to support children and their families in this community, not less. There is no basis for this decision.

We implore you to reconsider.

Respectfully,
Mike and Melissa Blanchard

From: Matt Flores [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, April 23, 2023 12:01 PM

To: Caren Ray Russom <crayrussom@arroyogrande.org>; Kristen Barneich <kbarneich@arroyogrande.org>; Lan George <lgeorge@arroyogrande.org>; Jim Guthrie <jguthrie@arroyogrande.org>; Kate Secrest <ksecrest@arroyogrande.org>

Subject: Saving the preschool program!!!!

My son who's now 5 almost 6 went there and grew up going there until he graduated and still to this day won't stop talking about how much he misses his "baby school" the staff, teachers and everyone we've crossed paths with there has made such an amazing impact with all of us and have such untouchable spirits that closing this program is just beyond words and devastating on so many levels. The bonds and friendships created are second to none and why go about changing them and stopping them in there tracks? The staff made it undeniably and undoubtedly so safe and easy to just leave your son and daughter and not think twice about it as you go on with your day. The most affordable preschool program around with the most social and loving staff you'll ever find. All I can ask and beg for is keep this program going strong and take all these emails and requests into consideration seriously. There's a reason we went always and actually stepped foot on the premises and know the people and know who or what we're talking about. Thank you. -1-

From: [niccola.nelson](#)
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: Preschool closure
Date: Sunday, April 23, 2023 5:29:05 PM

My daughter Ainsley has been attending Arroyo Grande's preschool and all the events that have taken place at Elm St., Park for the last few years, and she has learned so much from the teachers, students and our community. The teachers have taught her to be empathetic, which I appreciate more than words can express. I teach Chair Yoga to the elderly for the city and many of their children and grandchildren have attended the preschool and for many families, it's a right of passage or a tradition. I urge you not to close the preschool and find other ways of funding for this valuable gem in our community.

Sincerely Niccola Nelson and [REDACTED] Nelson, aged 5 and a current attendee at the school

From: Sarah Estrada [REDACTED] >

Sent: Sunday, April 23, 2023 4:09 PM

To: Kristen Barneich <kbarneich@arroyogrande.org>

Subject: Parks and recreation preschool

Hello,

I am aware that the city council will be voting to continue the preschool program through parks and recreation. I believe the program is valuable and needed in our community. I am asking that you vote to maintain the program for our area children. The parks and rec preschool is an affordable option for families in the Five Cities. My son attended the program previously and was well prepared for kindergarten. I urge you to find the program.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah Estrada

From: Stacy Millard [REDACTED] >

Sent: Sunday, April 23, 2023 5:17 PM

To: Kristen Barneich <kbarneich@arroyogrande.org>

Subject: Preschool

Hello Ms. Barneich,

I would like to address the potential closing of the AG Parks & Rec. (Play and Learn) Preschool. This is our second year attending the preschool & we are so sad to hear the idea of it closing. As a twin mom, finding affordable childcare is next to impossible. Play and Learn has allowed our twins to take part in a school atmosphere, meet new friends & gain much-needed preparation for Kindergarten. As you are probably aware, sending two kids to preschool costs nearly a mortgage these days. We almost gave up hope for preschool until Play and Learn crossed our paths.

We are so thankful for our time there & can only hope Play and Learn stays in our community for many years to come. If not for its amazing staff, but to also help families like ours who would not be able to offer preschool to their kids, otherwise.

Thank you for considering these thoughts.

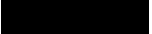
Best,
Stacy & Evan Millard

From: [Adam Troia](#)
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: Agenda item 12A comment
Date: Monday, April 24, 2023 3:26:45 PM

Hello Arroyo Grande City Counsel,

As a member of the community whose child has aged out in your program I can attest to the critical need for affordable childcare and I am unsure what my family would have done without this service. Not only did the program care for our son, it also provided additional socialization which was a huge benefit to our son. Additionally, as you are all aware, the cost of living in our beautiful area generally requires two full time incomes and I fear that by eliminating this program you will be removing a vital lifeline that working families in our community need so that parents are able to work and be assure that their children are cared for while they are working to put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

It is understandable that tough decisions must be made to bring budgets into balance and that in general cutting any program will have negative impact on some in the community, but I hope you reconsider cutting this program which helps those in our community who are least equipped to bear the burden of program cuts.

Respectfully,
Adam Troia
Arroyo Grande


From: [Erin Alves](#)
To: [Carrie Vanbeveren](#); [Sheridan Bohlken](#); [AG City](#); [AG Recreation Department](#); [Caren Ray Russom](#); [Jim Guthrie](#); [Kristen Barneich](#); [Kate Secrest](#); [Lan George](#)
Subject: Re: Child care in Arroyo Grande
Date: Monday, April 24, 2023 2:50:30 PM

Hello AG City Council members and staff,

I am writing you all to ask you to please reconsider closing down our beloved preschool program.

When I first heard this news I thought... Oh no, closing down our affordable and trusted community preschool will be a detrimental loss. It is such a awesome and enriching program and will not only cost jobs but greatly impact options for an affordable preschool!

It's made such a positive impact on the community and is very well run! The staff is top notch and so caring. So many kids have benefited from the preschool program - it will be a huge heartbreak to the 5 Cities community if it is shutdown.

AG Parks and Rec have helped my family with their affordable and trusting preschool summer programs and art/sports/science for kids. Please don't cut this much needed program out of our community.

Thank you,
Erin Alves
[REDACTED], Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
&
Mom of [REDACTED], 10 years old kiddo

From: [Jessica McNally](#)
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: Keep AG parks and recreation preschool open!!
Date: Monday, April 24, 2023 4:04:27 PM

To whom it may concern,

After hearing that, there is a potential to shut down the Arroyo Grande parks and recreational Preschool, I have to stand up and say, “this shouldn’t happen.” This is one of the best and most affordable places to send preschoolers. I have enrolled 3 of my children at this preschool and I think this is such a wonderful opportunity to help our preschool population grow and learn in this community.

Another reason to support this amazing program is this program offers a great robust program with little cost to the parents. So for parents who are struggling to make it here in this super expensive town, there’s an opportunity to support families who have a need and want to start educating their children early. This not only helps our community and provides jobs, it provides an opportunity for kids to learn. It doesn’t stop there, it also carries over into the elementary schools. Children who receive early education do better in school and have better social emotional skills.

I don’t think the answer is to remove this program from our town, but to support this program and families who utilize this opportunity to educate their kids. You’re doing a disservice to the community by shutting down a program like this. People will lose their jobs, and families will no longer have this affordable option.

This town shouldn’t just cater to retired folks that have lots of money, but it takes middle class families a lot of money to live here.

Sincerely,
Jessica McNally

From: [Jackie Wienold](#)
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: AG REC PRESCHOOL PROGRAM
Date: Monday, April 24, 2023 3:23:35 PM

Dear Arroyo Grande City Council Members,

Firstly, thank you for your service to the community and for reading my message.

I have come to learn only in the last two days that the preschool program is being brought to an end this fall by the city. Hearing this through social media outlets and families not being notified by the program or the city about a potential closure well *before* a vote on this subject unacceptable. ***I would like to point out that this proposal is coming at a time when “TK for all” is not yet available in the Lucia Mar school district.*** My daughter, misses the TK eligibility cutoff (turning 5 by April 2, 2024) by a mere week, would be continuing preschool next school year at this program where she currently is enrolled, before entering kindergarten. Many local families are in the same situation and there are waiting lists at all preschool programs in our area. Many local families struggle to find an affordable option for their preschooler. This program provides a financially accessible option with an exemplary and wonderful staff.

As a lifelong Arroyo Grande resident and graduate of the very same preschool program once located on Mason St, I can say this program has always been needed and will continue to be needed for many years. Please consider finding a solution and keeping this program available to families in our community.

DO BETTER! DON'T CUT OUR RECREATION DEPARTMENTS INCREDIBLE PROGRAMS!

-Jackie Ralph.

From: [lynsi steele](#)
To: [public comment](#)
Subject: AG recreation
Date: Monday, April 24, 2023 3:13:18 PM

Hello,

My oldest [REDACTED] attended AG Rec for 2 years and currently my middle son [REDACTED] is attending. [REDACTED] entered into Kindergarten ahead of most students in regards to knowing letters, numbers, shapes and was even able to read and spell his name as well as some other words. My son [REDACTED] is trending to do the same and enters Kinder next school year. I was hoping to have my youngest attend the same pre school in a year to get the same education.

This school has been a huge help for a family with 2 working parents that often don't have the extra time to teach these items but also this school has provided the perfect amount of socialization. My boys absolutely loved their teachers and the staff has always been kind and accommodating.

I know so many parents that are currently looking for a half day school option for their pre schoolers and it's near impossible to find. Closing this down would really impact Arroyo Grande and our community. Our kids have already had the most impacts over the last 3 years it would be sad to see another.

Thank you