

Raising  
Children  
in  
San Francisco



# A Survival Guide

*From Our Family to Yours*



Advice and suggestions were given by the following: First 5 Parent ACTION grantees including Whitney Young Child Development Center Family Field Trips and Parent Workshops in the Bayview, Families for Better Kids Project in the outer Sunset, Proyecto Familias Unidas in the Excelsior, the Children's Mobile Art in the Mission, Asian Perinatal Advocates Parent Support Group in Chinatown, and Kim Boyd Bermingham of Gokid.org.

# Dear Friends,



Welcome to *From Our Family to Yours: Raising Children in San Francisco Survival Guide*.

This guide is a volunteer effort by members of the San Francisco Children and Families Commission's Civic Engagement Committee. The Civic Engagement Committee is made up of a diverse group of parents representing families, neighborhoods, and cultures throughout the City. We are parents and caregivers just like you, who are working together to make San Francisco a great place to raise a family. Our greatest common ground is our love for our kids.

As a committee, we have several goals. One is to help ensure that the Commission's activities truly serve the needs, desires and realities of families of young children in San Francisco. Our other goal is help empower parents and community members to take action and develop their own solutions to make San Francisco a better place to raise our youngest children (ages 0-5).

We decided to create a parent-to-parent guide because we know that raising a family can be challenging. And because, we know that many of us have had the same parenting questions you do. How do I find childcare? Where can I meet families like my own? Where can I find someone to talk to who understands my situation? Is my baby's development on track?

While San Francisco has many parenting resources to offer us, sometimes the trick is finding them. This guide is a collection of "tried and true" resources, assembled by parents just like you. It offers suggestions on a variety of topics—from parent support groups and classes to money saving tips, health resources, and ideas for fun and free activities to do with your children.

*From Our Family to Yours: Raising Children in San Francisco Survival Guide* is not an all-inclusive guide. Use it as a starting point to find what you need. Perhaps some day you'll join us in sharing your tips to new families!

Working together, we believe we can make San Francisco a more child and family friendly city.

Sincerely,

Natalie Freeburg, Laura Rafferty-Jacobo, Emily Gillingham, Edith Guillen-Nunez, Mary Jue, Ellen Novogrodsky.



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## Guide to Guides

Babies by the Bay: An Insiders Guide for Everything from Doctors and Diapers to Playgrounds and Preschools in the San Francisco Bay Area. Written by two bay area parents, this comprehensive guide gives you the low-down from other bay area parents on tons of resources in San Francisco. Some say it might be skewed towards middle and upper middle income parents, but it is comprehensive!

Bay Area Parent is an excellent free magazine. A publication of theirs, "B.a.b.y." can be picked up at most libraries, or call to locate a distribution point near you.

phone: 408-399-4842  
[www.bayarearent.com](http://www.bayarearent.com)

Our Family Coalition has a website that lists tons of resources for LGBT parents. Check it out! <http://www.ourfamily.org/links.html>.

Parents Press has free monthly magazines with tons of tips about childcare, places to go, and more. You can find them at local libraries and stores. Call to learn where they distribute in your area. Check out their magazine on the web.

phone: 510-524-1602  
[www.parentspress.com](http://www.parentspress.com)

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*For a comprehensive list of Spanish and Chinese parent support services please see our Spanish or Chinese language guide.*

*Call First 5 at 415-934-4849 to get your copy. Or visit the First 5 San Francisco website [www.first5sf.org](http://www.first5sf.org)*



# Parent Education and Support

## **FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS**

Because raising children is a challenge and an enormous responsibility, all families can benefit from support and guidance to make possible the healthy development of their children. San Francisco is fortunate to have created a strong, neighborhood-based network of family resource centers (FRCs) that meet the every-day needs of parents/caregivers for “community” and are also hubs of a wide range of resources. First 5 San Francisco funds FRCs as key vehicles to reduce parents’ isolation, strengthen their parenting skills and facilitate constructive relationships between parents and their young children. Each FRC is unique but offers a similar menu of services including parent education and support, information and referral, parent child play groups, early literacy programming and community social events.

Below is a list of non- profit organizations that provide family support in different communities. Call them and ask about different services they provide.

### **Asian Women’s Resource Center**

(mainly for Chinese speaking families)  
940 Washington Street  
415-788-1008

### **Compass Community Services**

(providing services for homeless or at risk families)  
995 Market Street, 5th Floor  
415- 644-0504

### **Edgewood Center for Children and Families**

101 15th Street  
415-865-3000

### **Excelsior Family Connections**

458 Vienna Street  
San Francisco, CA 94112  
415-333-3845

**Good Samaritan Family Resource Center**

(mainly for Spanish speaking families)  
1294 Potrero Avenue  
415-824.9475

**Instituto Familiar de la Raza**

(mainly for Spanish speaking families)  
2919 Mission Street  
415-229-0500

**Inter-City Family Resource Network**

1325A Evans Avenue  
415-920-2850

**Portola Family Connections**

2565 San Bruno Avenue  
415- 715-6746

**San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center**

1757 Waller Street  
415-668-0494

**South of Market Family Resource Center**

790 Folsom Street  
415-820-3508

**Visitacion Valley Community Center**

161 Leland Street  
415- 586-6998

**Urban Services YMCA-OMI Family Resource Center**

650 Capital Avenue  
415-406-1370

**Wu Yee Joy Lok Family Resource Center**

(mainly for Chinese speaking families)  
888 Clay Street, lower level  
415-391-4890

*Mamas & Papas* is an LGBT family support organization offering conversation for parents and free child care for children 6 months and older. (Babes in arms are welcome.) They meet at the LGBT Community Center at 1800 Market Street in San Francisco on the second and the fourth Saturday of each month. Check out their website for more information. <http://mamaspapas.blogspot.com>

*Support for Families with Children with Disabilities*—If you are not sure whether your child has special needs, or if you are, and need more support, this is an essential starting place. This group provides free advocacy help to get the services you need. They also have free support groups and education workshops for parents with children with disabilities.

2601 Mission Street, Suite 606  
phone: 415 282-7494  
[www.supportforfamilies.org](http://www.supportforfamilies.org)

## OTHER RESOURCES

**Parent's Place** is comprehensive family support service that offers workshops, play groups, development groups, and more. Their classes and workshops are offered on a sliding scale.

1710 Scott Street  
phone: 415-359-2454  
<http://www.jfcs.org> (click on parent's place icon on left navigation bar)

**DayOne Center** is a resource for new and expectant parents. They offer drop-in parent support groups, parent education classes, workshops, and more. They charge a fee for service.

3490 California Street  
phone: 415-440-DAY1 (3291)  
[www.dayonecenter.com](http://www.dayonecenter.com)

**Natural Resources** provides education, services and products to expectant and new parents. They offer support groups for new moms, and information and services related to midwifery and doulas. They charge a fee for service.

1367 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110  
phone: 415 550-2611  
[www.naturalresources-sf.com](http://www.naturalresources-sf.com)

**City College of San Francisco Department of Child Development and Family Studies** offers “child observation” classes led by certified instructors.

While the kids play with age-appropriate toys and romp on climbing structures, parents learn about and discuss topics such as health and safety, sleep patterns, and toilet training. Classes are *free*, with locations throughout the City.

phone: 415-561-1921

**California Pacific Medical Center Support Groups—*Newborn Connections*** offers “New Family Forum,” a free drop-in group for new parents and their babies (newborn to eight months of age), held weekly. They also offer free postpartum depression support groups.

California East Campus  
Newborn Connections Library  
3698 California Street  
phone: 415-600-BABY (2229)  
[www.cpmc.org/services/newbornconnections](http://www.cpmc.org/services/newbornconnections)

**Kaiser Permanente San Francisco Medical Center** Kaiser’s S.F. Medical Center offers parenting classes for different age ranges, tot sign language classes, and even classes just for dads. These classes are free, or at reduced cost for non-members.

2425 Geary Blvd., Mezzanine Level  
phone: 415-833-3450  
<http://www.permanente.net/doctor/healthedsf/>

### **UCSF, Women's Health Resource Center**

In addition to numerous classes on women's health, the women's health resource center has a library full of books on children's development, children's health, and child rearing. You can look at books for free in their center, or pay a \$25 yearly fee to rent up to two books a month plus educational videos.

2356 Sutter Street  
phone: 415-353-2668  
<http://www.ucsf.edu/whrc>

**Dealing with Stress?** Check out the Health and Well-being section, pg. 21.

# Finding Child Care

## CHILD CARE

There are a variety of child care options available to you, depending on your preferences and financial resources: family child care homes, licensed child care centers, nannies, baby sitters, baby sitting cooperatives, preschools and cooperative preschools. The two best starting points are:

*Children's Council of San Francisco*  
445 Church Street  
phone: 415-343-3300  
[www.childrenscouncil.org](http://www.childrenscouncil.org)

*Wu Yee Children's Services*  
Multiple locations and services  
phone: 415-391-4956 (referral line)  
[www.wuyee.org](http://www.wuyee.org)

*The Children's Council* has a "Child Care Inclusion Challenge Program" that provides support for families seeking inclusive childcare for children with special needs.

phone: 415-920-5040

**For San Francisco's Preschool for All program**, please refer to page 27 in this guide.

Both organizations provide information on child care options, provide workshops on identifying quality child care, and can help you identify subsidies you might be eligible for to reduce the cost. They also can inform you of government funded programs like San Francisco Head Start and San Francisco Unified School District Child Development Centers.

### **CO-OP preschools: California Council of Parent Participation Nursery Schools, Inc.**

This is a statewide organization committed to supporting pre-schools (co-ops) in which parent participation is integral to the foundation of the school. Their website lists many of the co-op pre-schools in San Francisco.

[www.ccppns.org](http://www.ccppns.org)

*Co-ops* are less expensive than other private preschools because parents volunteer their time. They also provide helpful workshops and are a great way to get involved in your community.

**Parent's Place** offers classes on finding a nanny, and also hosts a "Preschool Preview Night" which features representatives from many of San Francisco's preschools. See pg. 5 for contact information.

**Finding a Preschool For your Child in San Francisco** by Lori Rifkin. This book provides information and contact information about preschools in San Francisco. The book outlines school philosophies, enrollment procedures, hours and fees. This book includes information about independent preschools, Head Start and San Francisco Unified School District.

### **San Francisco Head Start and Even Start**

Head Start and Even Start is a federally funded child development program that is designed to prepare children for elementary school. These programs provide educational experiences, meals and medical services for eligible for children under five. This program is funded to serve low-income families. For information Contact: 415-247-7826.

**Babysitters and Nannies**, check out "*In Your Neighborhood section*" on pg. 11.

**Community Care Licensing** can tell you if a daycare center or family care center in San Francisco has any history of complaints in the past 2 years.

phone: 650-266-8843

# In Your Neighborhood

## ONLINE MESSAGE BOARDS

[www.yahoogleroups.com](http://www.yahoogleroups.com) allows you to create an e-mail list of parents that you know in order to plan get-togethers, ask advice, etc. Always be aware that the groups/discussion forums below are public, so think carefully about giving out personal information such as your name and contact information. Examples of neighborhood message boards include:

- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/glenparkparents> (Glen Park)
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bernalheightsparents> (Bernal Heights)
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/noevalleyparents> (Noe Valley)
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/missionparents> (Mission)
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ourfamily-intouch/> (LGBTQ group)
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/phpa-all/> (Potrero Hill)
- [www.mochamoms.org](http://www.mochamoms.org) Mocha Moms is for women of color who are stay at home moms. Look for their East Bay chapter. Their website lists tons of information for African American moms and includes a message board.
- **Berkeley Parents Network** lists recommendations from other parents on many things (from child care to kid friendly vacation spots). Although their focus is the East Bay, there is a lot of information for San Francisco parents. Search their database at <http://parents.berkeley.edu>.

Check out play groups organized by your neighbors—they're free!

If you don't find one that meets your needs, start your own!

"Because I was staying at home fulltime, and my family wasn't near, I felt really isolated. Just getting together with other new parents helped me express my frustrations, laugh at mistakes, learn from other moms, and know that I wasn't alone."

## PLAYGROUPS

**Golden Gate Mothers Group** is a group for mothers in the San Francisco area with young children. Activities include playgroups, mom's events and holiday parties. There is a fee to be a member. <http://www.ggmg.org>

[www.Sanfrancisco.babyzone.com](http://www.Sanfrancisco.babyzone.com) lists playgroups in San Francisco and the Bay Area.

## MOMS Club of San Francisco-West

This group supports at-home mothers with young children in San Francisco with playgroups, stroller walks, babysitting co-ops, outings and social activities. There is a membership fee. [www.momsclubsf.8m.com](http://www.momsclubsf.8m.com)

**The Seven Principles Project** is a San Francisco Department of Public Health project aimed to eliminate the disparities in infant mortality rates and to improve African American infant survival. They host regular get-togethers to discuss and promote community awareness.

Phone: 415-581-2458

<http://www.sevenprinciples.org>

## **BABYSITTERS**

**The Golden Gate Mothers** The Golden Gate Mothers Group has general meetings the third Thursday of each month to discuss early mother-related topics such as finding a preschool, potty training, and saving up for college. These general meetings are open to the public. They also have many web resources about nanny/childcare issues, pregnancy and post-partum, and kid's services. You can choose to become a member for \$55 and receive monthly newsletters.

[www.ggmg.org](http://www.ggmg.org)

Try craigslist online resource for finding a nanny, a babysitter, or someone to share your provider with.

[www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org) (click on childcare in the community section)

**Babysitter Exchange** is an online co-op, where parents you know and trust, register to exchange babysitting with each other. There is no cost associated with this. You get points when you babysit and you spend points when someone babysits for you.

[www.babysitterexchange.com](http://www.babysitterexchange.com)

**Natural Resources** also has a binder of people offering childcare and people looking for sharecares. See page 6 for contact information.

**Parents Place** has an online and in-person bulletin board. They also have a class on finding a nanny. See page 5 for contact information.

Trustline provides free criminal background checks on nannies and babysitters. 1-800-822-8490. [www.trustline.org](http://www.trustline.org).

**Need Center based Child Care?** see page 8.

# Arts and Fun Activities

## **Parks and Recreation Tiny Tots Child Development Program**

provides supervised playground activities designed to promote young children's development. Curriculum includes creative arts and crafts, nature and science, and play activities. Classes range from free to \$40 for a 10-week series, or \$4.00 drop-in. The quality varies by playground. If you don't like a class in one neighborhood, try someplace else. Some are truly outstanding. Good for nannies and babysitters too!

phone: 415-666-7079

[www.sfgov.org/site/recpark](http://www.sfgov.org/site/recpark) (click on Child Development / Tiny Tots for locations and schedules- there isn't a ton of information on there, but we recommend that you give it a try!)

## **The Children's Art Center at Fort Mason**

phone: 415-771-0292. \$20-30 drop-in  
[www.childrensartcenter.org](http://www.childrensartcenter.org)

**Precita Eyes Murals** offers activities that include painting, printmaking and crafts, book making, puppet making, etc. Each program costs \$175 and lasts for one week. Scholarships are available.  
[www.precitaeyes.org](http://www.precitaeyes.org)

For listings of fun things to do with the little ones, check out these web sites:

- [www.noestrolls.com](http://www.noestrolls.com) offers numerous possibilities for fun things to do with your baby.
- [Sfkids.org](http://Sfkids.org) is the City's official website for families. It publishes a free on-line newsletter and calendar of activities for young children. It also lists a great range of resources from where to buy baby gears to how to choose a kindergarten. The service is free.
- [www.gocitykids.com](http://www.gocitykids.com) includes a lot of local listings for things to do and includes parent recommendations.

**Music and Movement Classes** for young tots to kindergarten age abound in San Francisco. Most offer free first demo classes and have locations throughout the city.

<b>Music Together of San Francisco</b> phone: 415-596-0299 <a href="http://www.musictogethersf.com">www.musictogethersf.com</a>	<b>JAM (Joy and Music) for Children</b> Phone: 415 661-1061 <a href="http://www.jamjamjam.com">www.jamjamjam.com</a>
<b>Music for Children</b> phone: 415-479-1121 <a href="http://www.musicforchildrenca.com">www.musicforchildrenca.com</a>	<b>LMNO Music with Enzo Garcia</b> phone: 415 652 2474 <a href="http://www.enzogarcia.com">www.enzogarcia.com</a>

**Parents Place** has regular music classes; See their listing page 5 for contact information.

**Randall Museum** offers regular and drop-in classes for a reasonable fee of \$3 to \$5 for both parent and child combined. They have workshop studios and certified instructors in activities that include clay, magic lessons, woodworking, and more! Admission to the museum is free.

Randall Museum is a beautiful spot, with nice outdoor space to enjoy. You can get there by public transportation but it is tricky. This museum has tons of fun, free events, and great animal and science exhibits.

phone: 415-554-9600  
199 Museum Way  
[www.randallmuseum.org](http://www.randallmuseum.org)

**Swimming lessons** are provided at a variety of city pools. The following pools offer swim programs for pre-school age children. Cost: \$1.00 for children and \$4.00 for adults.

- Coffman Pool, Visitacion & Hahn, phone: 415-337-4702
- Garfield Pool, 26th Street & Harrison, phone: 415-695-5001
- North Beach Pool, Lombard & Mason, phone: 415-391-0435
- Martin Luther King Pool, 3rd Street & Carroll, phone: 415-822-2807
- Rossi Pool, Arguello Blvd. & Anza, phone: 415-666-7014
- Sava Pool, 19th Ave. & Wawona, phone: 415-753-7000

Summer Camps: Check these sites for camp information:

- [www.sfgov.org](http://www.sfgov.org) (go to "agencies" and select Recreation and Parks)
- [www.childrenscouncil.org](http://www.childrenscouncil.org) publishes a list of camps by neighborhood. Call their Communications Office: 415-276-2904.
- [www.Sfkids.org](http://www.Sfkids.org) has a lot of information about camps. Go to [Sfkids.org/Out of school time/Camps](http://Sfkids.org/Out of school time/Camps)

## FREE CLASSES FOR KIDS and FREE MUSEUM DAYS

**First 5 San Francisco:** Produces a bi-monthly newsletter with free or low-cost children's activities and parent education information. To get a copy, please call First 5 at 415-934-4849 or check First 5 website at [www.first5sf.org](http://www.first5sf.org).

**San Francisco Public Library:** Offers tons of great free activities for children under five, including music classes, puppet shows, crafts, story telling, and more.

### Main Library

100 Larkin Street

phone: 415-557-4400

[www.spl.org](http://www.spl.org) (click on "events" and then "children")

or check your local branch

### Museums and Outings: Free days

#### Asian Art Museum

Free first Tuesday of the month, and family programs with the cost of admission  
200 Larkin Street  
phone: 415-581-3500  
[www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org)

#### Bay Area Discovery Museum

Free second Saturday of month, after 1:00 p.m.  
East Fort Baker  
557 McReynolds Road, Sausalito  
phone: 415-339-3900  
[www.badm.org](http://www.badm.org)  
Hours: Mon (closed), Tue-Wed (10am-5pm), Thurs (10am-9pm), Fri-Sun (10am-5pm)

#### California Academy of Sciences (Steinhart Aquarium)

Free first Wednesday of the month  
875 Howard Street  
phone: 415-321-8000  
[www.calacademy.org](http://www.calacademy.org)  
Hours: Everyday (10am-5pm). On third Thursdays of each month, the museum is open late until 9pm.

#### de Young Museum

Free first Tuesday of the month  
50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive in Golden Gate Park  
phone: 415-863-3330  
[www.thinker.org/deyoung](http://www.thinker.org/deyoung)  
Hours: Tues-Sun (9:30am-5:15pm), Fridays (9:30am-8:45pm)

#### Exploratorium

Free first Wednesday of the month  
3601 Lyon Street  
phone: 415-561-0360  
[www.exploratorium.edu/](http://www.exploratorium.edu/)  
Hours: Tue-Sun (10am-5pm), Closed Monday except during Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day and Labor Day.

#### Fort Mason Museums and Galleries

Free First Wednesday of the month  
Marina Boulevard at Buchanan Street  
*Mexican Museum* [www.mexicanmuseum.org](http://www.mexicanmuseum.org),  
phone: 415-202-9700  
*San Francisco African American Historical and Cultural Society*  
[www.sblackhistory.org](http://www.sblackhistory.org)

#### Little Z's Preschool Program at Zeum

Free hour-long arts and crafts workshops with same day admission (Adults, \$7 free for kids under 4). Fridays, one-hour slots from 12-5.  
221 4th Street  
phone: 415-820-3320

#### Museum of the African Diaspora

Free for children under 12. Adults, \$8.  
685 Mission Street  
phone: 415-358-7200  
[www.moadsf.org/visit/index.html](http://www.moadsf.org/visit/index.html)  
Hours: Wed-Sat (11am-6pm), Sun (12pm-5pm), Mon-Tue (closed)

#### Randall Museum

Admission to Randall Museum is free! Donations are always accepted.  
199 Museum Way  
phone: 415-554-9600  
[www.randallmuseum.org](http://www.randallmuseum.org)

#### SFMOMA

Free first Tuesday of the month, kids 12 and under always free  
151 Third Street  
phone: 415-357-4000  
[www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org)

#### San Francisco Zoo

Free first Wednesday of the month  
Sloat at Great Highway  
phone: 415-753-7080  
[www.sfzoo.org](http://www.sfzoo.org)

# Money Saving Tips

## CLOTHING, BOOKS AND BABY GEAR

Places to shop for new and gently used baby gear and clothes:

### Bernal Heights/Mission

Chloe's Closet  
451A Cortland Ave. @Bennington  
phone: 415-642-3300

### Noe Valley

Peek-a-Bootique  
1306 Castro Street @ 24th Street  
phone: 415-641-6192

### Richmond

Clothes Go Round  
391 Arguello Blvd  
phone: 415-752-0665

### Citywide

Goodwill Stores  
Go on <http://www.sfgoodwill.org> for store locations.

### Online

Craigslist  
[www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org) (check out "For Sale – Baby + Kids" section)

### Sell Your Stuff

The stores listed in this section accept items for sale. Consignors might receive approximately 40% cash to 60% in store credit depending on the store. You can also sell your unwanted items from home by listing your sale items for free on Craigslist, [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)

For free or low-cost fun activities, see the *Arts and Fun Activities* and *Free Classes for Kids* sections in this guide.

### Books, kid videos and DVDs:

The children's consignment stores (listed above) often have used books and videos/DVDs for sale.

Libraries provide free book loans, but beware of \$1/day late fees on videos and DVDs on adult library cards. (no late fees on kids' cards). The following bookstores have kids sections with gently used books for sale:

- *Black Oak Books*: 630 Irving Street, 415-564-0877
- *Black Oak Books*: 540 Broadway Street: 415-986-3872
- *Green Apple Books*: 506 Clement Street, 415-387.2272
- *Red Hill Books*: 401 Cortland Avenue, 415-648-5331
- *Phoenix Books*: 3850 24th Street, 415-821-3477
- *Russian Hill Book Store*: 2234 Polk St., 415-929-0997
- *Forever After Books*: 1475 Haight Street, 415-431-8299
- *Bird and Beckett Bookstore*: 2788 Diamond St., 415-586-3733

You can get a free library card by visiting any one of the 27 library locations throughout San Francisco.

<http://www.sfpl.org/services/librarycard.htm>

## HOW TO SAVE ON BASIC NEEDS

### FOOD

**The Food Stamp Program** is run locally by the Department of Services. It is designed to help children and low-income households to improve health providing access to a nutritious diet. Eligibility is established by household income.

phone: 415-558-4186

<http://www.sfgov.org> (under city agencies, select Department of Human Services > Programs and Facilities > Health and Nutrition > Food Stamps.

You can use your food stamps/ebt card at most of San Francisco's farmer's markets. Call 415-252-3937 or [www.sffoodsystems.org](http://www.sffoodsystems.org) for a list of markets and dates.

### HEALTH CARE

**Women and Children's Health Referral Line** at the Department of Public Health offers general information and resources for pregnant women and their children.

30 Van Ness Avenue, ste 260

Phone: 1800-300-9950

<http://www.youthline.org/>

**The WIC program** provides vouchers for nutritious food for pregnant and their children age birth-5. There are several offices located in San Francisco.

phone: 1-888-942-9675 (enter your zip code to find your nearest location)

**AIM (Access for Infants and Children)** provides affordable health insurance for moderate-income women not eligible for Medi-Cal.

phone: 1-800-433-2611

[www.aim.ca.gov/english/applying.html](http://www.aim.ca.gov/english/applying.html) (to download an application)

**Healthy Kids**—Affordable health care for children is provided through HEALTHY KIDS at the San Francisco Health Plan, a comprehensive health care insurance program offering medical, dental, and vision services to children and young adults (birth to age 24) of low to moderate-income families.

201 Third Street, 7th Floor  
phone: 415-547-7818  
[www.sfhp.org](http://www.sfhp.org)

San Francisco Health Plan has many free and low-cost, quality health plans available, and can help you find the right plan for your family.

Many families who think they don't qualify actually do, and the health care provided is excellent.

**Other resources in health, see pg. 21**

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

For income requirements and the variety of affordable housing programs available, visit the SF Mayor's Office of Housing's Affordable Housing Information System at:  
[www.sfmoh.org/home.asp](http://www.sfmoh.org/home.asp)

**San Francisco Housing Development Corporation** (SFHDC) is a non-profit, community agency benefiting low and moderate income families and individuals who are interested in achieving homeownership. They provide free housing counseling and workshops. Call the below number to learn how you can own a home in San Francisco.  
SFHDC: 415-822-1022

**Mission Economic Development Agenda** (MEDA) home ownership program provides low and moderate income first-time home buyers with relevant financial education, credit counseling, and information on mortgage assistance programs. All services are free and offered in English and Spanish. Call them and find out more!

Mission Office  
3505 20th Street  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
415.282.3334 ex.16

Excelsior Office  
4651 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94112  
415.334.3216

## UTILITIES

**PG&E's discount programs**, California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) and Family Electric Rates Assistance (FERA), provide reduced rates for low-income households. CARE provides a 20 percent discount on monthly bills and FERA (for large households) bills the household for energy use at a lower rate. Both homeowners and renters may be eligible depending on income.

phone: 1-800-PGE-5000

[www.pge.com/res/financial\\_assistance/care/](http://www.pge.com/res/financial_assistance/care/)(CARE)

[www.pge.com/res/financial\\_assistance/fera/](http://www.pge.com/res/financial_assistance/fera/) (FERA)

**SBC's Universal Lifeline Service** provides a discount on telephone connection charges and monthly telephone service to low-income households.

For income qualifications:

phone: 1-800-310-2355

<http://www.sbc.com/gen> (>>SBC Home>>Residential>>CA>>Products and Services > Low-income Phone Service)

## FINANCIAL AND TAX ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES

**City of San Francisco – Working Families Credit** is a direct cash payment available to low-income, working San Francisco families with at least one dependent child. Eligible families will receive payments based on a percentage of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit payment (EITC), subject to available funds. This line can also help you learn what other tax credits you might be eligible for. Any tax credits you receive will not count as income for determining eligibility for most public benefit programs.

Contact the Office of the Treasurer & Tax Collector at:  
phone: 415-554-5678  
email: [wfc@sfgov.org](mailto:wfc@sfgov.org)

**Costs related to child and health care** may be deducted pre-tax via payroll deduction, which can help you and your employer save a significant amount on taxes. Ask your employer about providing a Section 125 Cafeteria Plan.

**The VITA Program** offers free tax help to low- to moderate-income people who cannot prepare their own tax returns. Call for a VITA site location.

phone: 1-800-829-1040

### Tax Aid

Tax-Aid provides free income tax preparation for low-income families throughout the Bay Area.

Contact Tax-Aid at:  
55 Second Street  
Suite 1400  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Tax-Aid Hotline: 415 963 5133  
E-mail: [us-tax-aid@kpmg.com](mailto:us-tax-aid@kpmg.com)

## **Bank on San Francisco**

Bank on San Francisco is a City initiative developed to help unbanked San Franciscans enter the financial mainstream and start saving for the future. A number of financial institutions have collaborated with the City in this effort. Bank on San Francisco hotline: 415-554-4409  
Email: [bankonsf@sfgov.org](mailto:bankonsf@sfgov.org)

# Health and Well-Being

## CPR

**The Bay Area Red Cross** offers child and infant CPR classes in English, Spanish and Chinese. Fee is \$55. Call and ask about CPR parties—where instructors will meet with a group of you and your parents at your house.

phone: 1-800-520-5433

[www.bayarea-redcross.org](http://www.bayarea-redcross.org)

**Natural Resources (See pg. 6), and California Pacific Medical Center New Born Connections (see pg. 6) also offer classes in infant CPR.**

## LEAD

**Home Testing**—San Francisco's Department of Public Health Child Lead Prevention Program will provide free testing for lead in renting households with children that rent. They also help you talk to your landlord about removing lead based paint and make sure the work is done by a quality professional.

A great starting point for information and help with lead poisoning is the California Department of Health Services. Their website has tons of information. <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/childlead>

phone: 415-554-8930

**Test Your Drinking Water**—San Francisco Water Department does free testing of your water for lead.

phone: 1-877-737- 8297

**Test Your Child**—Ask your physician to test your child for lead if you suspect anything. If you don't have a doctor, call the Child Health and Disability Prevention program and ask your child be tested as part of a “well-child” examination.

phone: 415-575-5712

## CAR SEAT INSTALLATION

For help with babyseat car installation:

- California Highway Patrol: 415-557-1094
- California State Auto Association: 415-565-2305
- San Francisco Child Safety Program: 415-575-6363

Car seats and booster seats keep your child safe!

By California law, children must ride properly buckled up, in the back seat, in a safety seat or booster until they are at least 6 years old or weigh at least 60 lbs.

Many baby furniture stores will also offer a car seat installation service for about \$25.

## BREAST FEEDING

Breast feeding can be a wonderful experience. It can also be difficult for some new mothers. These organizations have breast pumps for sale or to rent, loan or sell videos and books on breast feeding, and provide classes and consultation about breast feeding.

### Natural Resources

816 Diamond Street (at 24th Street)  
phone: 415-550-2611  
[www.naturalresourcesonline.com](http://www.naturalresourcesonline.com)

### California Pacific Medical Center Newborn Connections

3698 California Street  
phone: 415-600-2229  
[www.cpmc.org/newbornconnections](http://www.cpmc.org/newbornconnections)

### DayOne Center

3490 California Street  
phone: 415-440-DAY1 (3291)  
[www.dayonecenter.com](http://www.dayonecenter.com)

### San Francisco General Women's Health Center

1001 Potrero Avenue  
phone: 415-206-6719  
(English, Spanish and Chinese,  
accepts MediCal and Healthy Kids)

For a complete guide to breast feeding resources in San Francisco, check out [www.sfdph.org/DPHMENU.htm](http://www.sfdph.org/DPHMENU.htm)

La Leche League of Northern California and Hawaii (LLL NCA/HI) provides information, support, encouragement and education to women who want to breastfeed. All breastfeeding mothers, as well as future breastfeeding mothers, can attend the meetings or call their Leaders for breastfeeding help.

For further information, contact their leaders or visit their website at <http://lllnorcal.org/groups/PeninsulaCA.html>  
Elisabeth 415-255-7514  
Anna 415-876-0603

## HOME VISITS FOR NEWBORNS

Many new moms have questions about their new baby. Some hospitals offer home visiting options for you and your baby, but some don't.

**Black Infant Health** provides regular home visits to African American newborns in their first year of life.

Western Addition phone: 415-776-4439

## POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

It's natural to be nervous and overwhelmed upon the arrival of a new baby. Your mood might also be at the mercy of hormonal swings. Postpartum Depression is more serious than these normal reactions, and needs quick attention. Check with your health care provider for information on postpartum depression and support groups.

You might want to do a little reading about postpartum depression before the arrival of your baby, and share the info with your partner or close friend.

Having someone informed and sensitive to the warning signs of postpartum depression can help reduce the risk of serious illness.

See the listing for **California Pacific Medical Center Newborn Connections** on page 6.

## SUPPORT HOTLINES

### 3-1-1

The **311** Customer Service Center was established in 2006 and activated in 2007 to provide San Franciscans with ready access to information and service from the City and County of San Francisco. 311 provides around-the-clock service and can help with all non-emergency City and County of San Francisco government matters. To access 3-1-1, simply dial 3-1-1 or call 415-701-2311 if outside of San Francisco.

**HelpLink** is an information and referral program that provides assistance to individuals who need access to community resources, health care, employment, housing, substance abuse programs and food programs. HelpLink's operators are available 24 hours daily. Services are available in 150 languages.

Phone: Simply dial 2-1-1 if you are in San Francisco or 1-800-273-6222 if you are outside of San Francisco.

**TALK line** (Telephone Aid in Living with Kids) is a 24-hour crisis and counseling line for parents to call for support, information and referrals. The Talk Line Family Support Center also offers free drop-in support groups and regularly scheduled support groups.

1757 Waller Street  
phone: 415-387-3864  
[www.talklineforparents.org](http://www.talklineforparents.org)

If you are being abused, you do not deserve it. And neither do your children. Kids who witness violence may show aggressive behavior or extreme shyness, be slow to walk and talk, or have nightmares and stomach aches. Talk to your doctor, or call the hotline to get some help.

Call SafeStart, which provides high quality free help to families with young children exposed to violence.  
415-565-SAVE (7283)

# Enrolling Your Child In School

## Preschool

Preschools usually enroll two- to five-year olds. Every preschool has their own enrollment processes, so call to learn the requirements. Some preschools offer scholarships or are low cost. Ask about this when you call or visit. Remember, other parents you trust are always a good source of information.

## Preschool for All (PFA)

First 5 San Francisco's Preschool for All (PFA) program provides free half-day preschool for four-year-old San Franciscans who'd like to attend, regardless of income. By 2009, children living in all San Francisco neighborhoods will be eligible. PFA funds a wide array of enhancement services to its participating programs, from child developmental screenings to consultation and professional development for classroom staff. To find a Preschool for All program, please call the PFA line at (415)354-3873.

### Talk to parents on the playground!

On a playground visit with our two-year-old, we met a family, the girls started playing and the parents started talking. Next thing we knew we had a new family friend and a referral to a great school—the school we eventually enrolled our daughter in.

Call **Parents for Public Schools** to speak to a parent ambassador from a particular school or who has experience with special education programs.

You can also download a checklist for school visits and learn what other parents have to say about their schools on their website.

Parents for Public Schools also trains parents to give enrollment presentations to parent groups, organizations or preschools. Phone 468-7077.

## How to enroll your child in kindergarten

Incoming kindergarteners must be 5 years old by December 2nd (private schools may have a different cut-off date). Follow these steps to find the right school for your child and family.

1. *Create a list of what you are looking for in a school.* Consult your preschool teacher, your friends and relations, and other experts. Things to consider:
  - the learning style of your child
  - special learning needs or physical abilities
  - test scores (the school's)
  - location, accessibility to school bus routes or MUNI
  - cost of private schools
  - availability of before- or after-school care
  - quality of parent involvement at home and at school
2. *Learn about the schools.* The SFUSD publishes an *Enrollment Guide* for public schools every fall. This Guide will be your ticket to all you need to know about enrolling your child in SF public schools: important dates and deadlines, how to choose a good school, locations, how to fill out an application, descriptions of every school, and more.
3. *Visit the schools you are interested in.* Visiting times are listed in the *Enrollment Guide* or you can call the individual school.
4. *Learn About the Enrollment Process.* The SFUSD holds enrollment information workshops throughout the city and an annual Public School Enrollment Fair. Parents Place also hosts a “Pre-School Preview Night” which features representatives from many of San Francisco’ preschools.

## Parents for Public Schools

phone: 415-468-7077

[www.ppssf.org](http://www.ppssf.org)

**SFUSD Education Placement Center** (responsible for educating families about the enrollment process assigning applicants to public schools)

555 Franklin Street, Room 100

phone: 415-241-6085

[www.sfusd.edu](http://www.sfusd.edu)

# Get Involved

Parents know a lot about what's good for their child and for their community. The needs of children can change as we know more about child growth and development. The needs of a community can change as families and businesses move in and out. Who is looking out for your family and your community? We can all be advocates. Here are two great places to start:

**Coleman Advocates for Children & Youth** is one of the oldest child advocacy organizations in the country. Visit their website and go to the "Take Action Now" section for ideas on how you can be an advocate for children and families—the site lists ideas such as sending an e-mail to the Mayor, testifying before a committee at City Hall, and more.

459 Vienna Street  
phone: 415-239-0161  
[www.colemanadvocates.org](http://www.colemanadvocates.org)

It's important that City officials hear from parents as they make decisions that affect our families.

The first time I "testified" at City Hall in front of the Board of Supervisor's Budget Committee, I was a nervous wreck. The second time was a whole lot easier.

## Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco

Parents for Public Schools of San Francisco (PPS-SF) is an advocacy group that actively recruits families into the public schools and works towards reforms that will improve public schools for all children. You can get involved at any level—from signing up to receive their newsletter to becoming an active task force member.

9 Silliman Street, Suite 6  
phone: 415-468-7077  
[www.ppsf.org](http://www.ppsf.org)

Almost all of us writing this guide have run, or are running Parent ACTION grants. It's a great way to build your community and your own confidence.

**Parent ACTION** (Achieving Change in our Neighborhoods) is a small grants program with First 5 San Francisco.

If you are interested in getting together with your neighbors with young children to change some conditions in your neighborhood, give each other support, or provide developmentally appropriate classes, apply for a First 5 Parent ACTION grant. With \$3,000-\$5,000 a year, these grants enable you to hire consultants, conduct outreach, and get child care to conduct activities that create opportunities for young children's development. See First 5 San Francisco's Website [www.first5sf.org](http://www.first5sf.org) or call First 5 San Francisco at 415-934-4849.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**First 5 San Francisco Children and Families Commission**  
**Fox Plaza, 1390 Market Street, Suite 318**  
**San Francisco, CA 94102**  
**phone: 415.934.4849**  
**fax: 415.565.0494**  
**email: [admin@first5sf.org](mailto:admin@first5sf.org)**  
**[www.first5sf.org](http://www.first5sf.org)**

The mission of the San Francisco Children and Families Commission is to instill an enduring obligation in San Francisco residents and government to ensure the opportunity for optimal health and development for every child born and raised in this county. This means a commitment to support young children and their families from prenatal to five years of age through abundant opportunities to be healthy, learn, and grow. Children will reach their full potential. Families will be empowered and engaged civic partners in the work of the Commission.

**For a comprehensive list of Spanish and Chinese parent support services please see our Spanish or Chinese language guide. For your free copy, contact:**

**First 5 San Francisco**  
**Tell: 415-934-4849**  
**[www.first5sf.org](http://www.first5sf.org) (then click on "parent's space").**