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## Childcare bootcamp helping to revive entrepreneurship

Daily Republic Staff  
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**FAIRFIELD** — Nearly half of Solano County's child-care providers closed their doors during the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, the industry has bounced back, with many more providers seeking state licensing. Many of those individuals did not have childcare on their vocational radar before the pandemic.

“For many of them, it’s just been the perfect time to make that career change because they were already at home with their children. Others are looking for a new opportunity, and this is a way for them to have their own business,” Cinda-Rae Clemente, Resource and Referral Program manager for Solano Family and Children’s Services, said in a statement released through the Solano Workforce Development Board.

"Much of the growth has occurred in recent months, thanks to the new Childcare Entrepreneurship Bootcamp, a free 25-hour training for new childcare providers offered through a partnership with the Workforce Development Board of Solano County and Solano Family and Children Services," the statement said.

"This in-person training, offered to each cohort over a three-month period, includes a combination of classroom learning, group activities and panel discussions. Participants learn childcare best business practices, marketing for their business, infant and toddler development and receive access to provider resources and a business start-up kit."

Joselyn Jones went through the first bootcamp last fall. She is fully licensed by the state, and recently set up a website for her childcare business and is working to becoming a limited liability corporation.

“Soon, I will be working with a child needing extra assistance, so I am grateful for the training I received for inclusion (and) special needs,” she said in the statement. “I would not have been able to purchase many of the items we have on my own as a new provider and business owner so I am forever grateful for all the help provided from the trainings, workshops, funds, toys, and just being available to answer my questions,” Jones added.

Clemente said the bootcamp provides individual support, too.

“We also work hand in hand with each individual as they go through the process of becoming a licensed childcare provider,” Clemente said. “We help them with their application for licensing and we help them prepare for their home visits, so they are

ready for Community Care licensing to come out and do their inspections.”

Bootcamp participants earn a certificate of completion and are ready to submit licensing documentation to Community Care.

“Ideally, they would be licensed to care for children in just a few months,” the statement said.

Four cohorts, each with 10 to 12 participants, are being funded through Solano County American Rescue Plan Act allocations. The first three were in 2023 with a fourth planned this year.

Clemente said there are additional Spanish-speaking providers interested in future programs.

“We are lacking in providers in general but we are really lacking in providers who can take Spanish-speaking families,” she said. “We’ve tried to recruit for years and this program has been the first time we’ve been able to find this many Spanish-speaking individuals who can provide these services to our families.”

Childcare access is linked directly to economic sustainability, and following the pandemic, economic recovery.

“Having access to stable childcare is a vital component for parents who want to enter the workforce or maintain their current employment,” said Heather Henry, executive director of the Workforce Development Board of Solano County. “The significant decrease of family childcare providers during the Covid pandemic catalyzed the need for this initiative that blends workforce development and entrepreneurship.”

For more information about starting a childcare business, call 707-863-3950, Ext. 752.