

January 13, 2004

STAFF REPORT

MEMO TO: SUTTER COUNTY CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION
FROM: DEB COULTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON TRANSITION BACK PACK PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the recommendation of the Executive Director to modify the annual mini grant program in fiscal year 2004-2005 and enter into a kindergarten transition back pack project that will lead to Sutter County children being better prepared for the first day of school. The program will be designed to address and enhance:

- Family Literacy
- Family involvement with class room basics
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Parent Child Interaction

BACKGROUND:

For the past two years the Commission has sponsored a mini-grant project where community organizations and providers of services to children 0-5 years of age may apply for up to \$5,000 to improve services or provide information on topics important to children. \$101, 234.47,000 has been allocated to this effort in the last 12 months. In 2001 and 2002 \$66,202 has been provided to local child care facilities and \$132,402.00 for community activities.

The proposal for a transitional back pack project the Commission is being asked to consider will modify this annual effort by providing specific information, educational toys and games, as well as learning materials to Sutter County Families with pre-school children. This material will be provided in small lightweight back packs that will be given to children based upon their age. There would be one transitional back pack for children 2-3 years old and another for children 4-5 years old.

The transitional back packs contents will be determined through consultation with local Kindergarten teachers and other educators, and will feature items determined to be age appropriate.

The Kindergarten Transition back pack project will provide a universal opportunity to provide pre-school materials to all children through the age of 5. Previous mini-grant efforts focused on children who were in child care facilities, the Transition back pack project will allow information to be disseminated to all age appropriate children and will contain materials that will encourage parent interaction with their children.

The Commission staff has engaged in discussion with kindergarten and preschool teachers to establish information on use of the material in the transition back packs for

parents who may need it and cooperative planning for distribution of the transition back pack.

A collaborative partnership shall be formed with schools, WIC, health care organizations and Bright Futures. The Commission staff shall manage distribution data, ordering, storage and coordination of the project.

Initially an order for 1000 back packs will be placed. Following extensive evaluation by Duerr Evaluation Resources, subsequent orders may be placed.

CURRENT PROPOSAL:

It is requested the Commission modify the current mini grant project for fiscal year 2003-2004 to initially purchase 1000 kindergarten transition back packs. Implementation of this project will reduce the 2004 mini grant process by at least \$40,000 and may replace that process entirely for the 2004 year.

IMPACT ON COMMISSION RESOURCES: \$40,000 for the first 1,000 transitional back packs.

POLICY ACTION REQUESTED: Approval of recommendation.

DC:bd