

7 CHILDREN AND YOUTH

GOAL

In recognition of the right of children and youth of the City of Watsonville to live in a community which ensures a secure, healthy, and safe environment, the City is committed to establishing programs, services, and facilities which support and address the needs of children, youth, and families.

Goal 7.1 Children and Youth

Ensure a secure, healthy, and safe environment for the children and youth of the City of Watsonville and provide opportunities for them to develop to their fullest potential.

POLICY STATEMENTS

Policy 7.A Planning for Children, Youth, and Families.

The City of Watsonville is committed to providing and promoting a safe, secure, protective, healthy, and stimulating community environment for its children, youth, and families.

With regard to both existing and future conditions, the City of Watsonville shall bear this commitment in mind as it considers the direct and indirect impact of its actions on children, youth, and families as it makes decisions and during the planning processes in all areas of land use, development, zoning, transportation, human services, social services, health services, and mental health services.

Policy 7.B Affordable Housing and Adequate Shelters.

The City of Watsonville shall be an active participant in community efforts to facilitate transitional and affordable housing resources and services. Additionally, the City shall promote and expand existing services such as temporary shelters and shelters for

runaways. The goal is to assure each child, youth, and family a permanent home, reducing and preventing the trauma of chronic homelessness.

Policy 7.C Food for All Children, Youth, and Families in Time of Emergency and Daily Survival.

The City of Watsonville shall cooperate with appropriate agencies to establish nutritional standards for food and daily meals for children, youth, and families and shall cooperate with non-profit and governmental agencies in Watsonville toward the goal of adequate and appropriate nutrition for children, youth, and families in time of emergency as well as for daily survival.

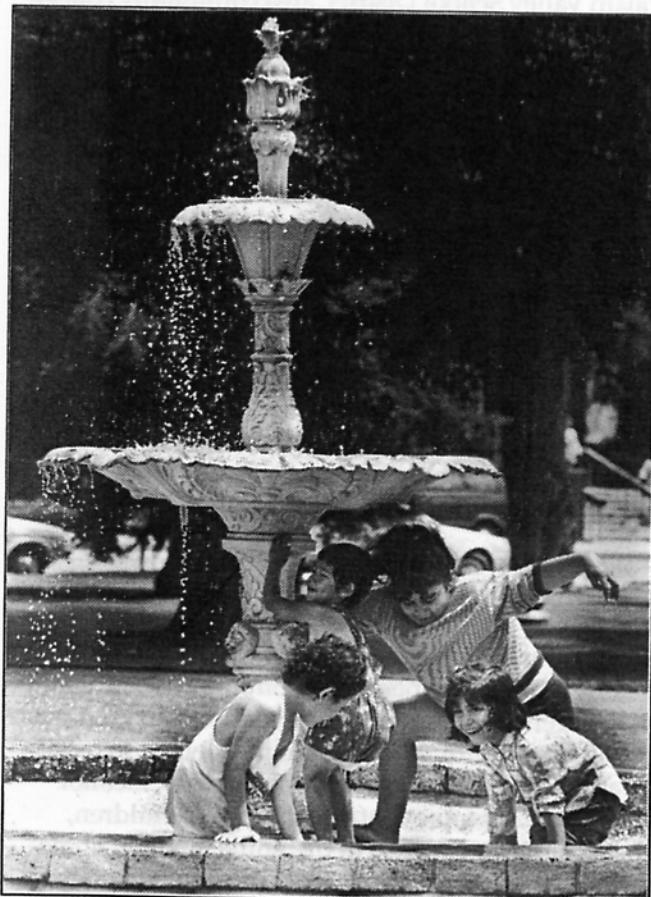


Photo: Courtesy of the Register-Pajaronian

Children enjoy the Plaza fountain in downtown Watsonville.

Policy 7.D Expansion of Transportation Systems for Children, Youth, and Families.

The City of Watsonville shall participate in the coordination of transportation access, education, and safety of current transportation systems, and shall create guidelines for future development of public transportation for children, youth, and families.

The City of Watsonville shall work cooperatively with the County of Santa Cruz, school districts, the County Office of Education, and other organizations and agencies that serve children to coordinate viable transportation systems for children, youth, and families.

Policy 7.E Educational and Training Systems.

The City of Watsonville shall collaborate with the Pajaro Valley School District, area community college districts, private schools, and the University of California in order to maximize educational, developmental, and learning opportunities for all children, youth, and parents. Through joint use of facilities, cooperative agreements for staffing, sharing of expertise, and provision of programs and services, the City of Watsonville shall participate in the development of innovative methods by which developmentally appropriate activities, educational opportunities, and training can be provided.

The City of Watsonville is committed to working with educational, health care, social service, and recreational organizations to provide training opportunities for those professionals who work with children, youth, and families.

Policy 7.F Truancy/Drop-out Prevention.

The City of Watsonville shall work with school districts, juvenile justice agencies, recreation departments, law enforcement, and community-based non-profit agencies to provide intervention and guidance to children, youth, and families in an effort to reduce truancy, drop-out rates, teen pregnancies, alcohol and drug abuse, preventable injuries to children, abuse, neglect, violence in the home, hunger, homelessness, and other factors that contribute to educational failure.

Policy 7.G Quality Child Care.

The City of Watsonville is committed to expediting and facilitating the development of accessible, affordable, and quality child care spaces to meet the demand for services.

The City of Watsonville shall encourage private and non-profit development of child care spaces through the development of partnerships and shared resources.

Policy 7.H Families in the Workplace.

The City of Watsonville shall assume leadership in providing a workplace supportive of families by implementing family-oriented employment policies that enable all families to meet their responsibilities at home and at work. These may include health insurance, child care, elder care, employee assistance, family leave, flexible work hours, and pro-rated benefits for less than full-time work.

The City of Watsonville shall encourage the private sector to implement similar family-oriented personnel policies.

Policy 7.I Awareness of Watsonville's Rich Cultural Diversity.

The City of Watsonville shall provide an atmosphere for children, youth, and families that encourages understanding, awareness, and respect of the community's cultural diversity.

The City of Watsonville shall serve as a model, as well as encourage the public, private, and non-profit sectors in the development of programs for children, youth, and families that promote understanding, appreciation, and respect for cultural diversity.

Policy 7.J Youth Participation and Opportunities for Leadership Development.

The City of Watsonville shall take a proactive role in the development of youth issues and programs by supporting existing programs and services as well as promoting expansion of such services as the need demands. The City shall promote youth leadership programs through youth-serving agencies. The City shall concentrate on the development of youth

empowerment and on developing self-esteem-building programs for children and youth.

Policy 7.K Enrichment Opportunities through Recreation and Cultural Arts Programs.

The City of Watsonville shall provide a full range of recreation and cultural programs and activities for all children, youth, and families in Watsonville. The City shall promote and encourage these programs and activities in cooperation with cities, agencies, and organizations.

Policy 7.L Safe, Protective Environments.

The City of Watsonville is committed to promoting safe and secure environments wherever children, youth, and families gather.

The City of Watsonville, recognizing that its responsibility for protecting children, youth, and families can best be met by preventing the potential causes of harm, commits itself to aggressive prevention and early intervention efforts to reduce the likelihood of youth violence, violence against youth, gangs, childhood injury, prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol, abuse, neglect and exploitation, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, youth homicide, and unsafe sexual practices.

Policy 7.M Access to Physical and Mental Health Services for All Children, Youth, and Families.

The City of Watsonville shall assume a leadership role in promoting community awareness of children/youth's physical and mental health issues and in developing appropriate resources for children, youth, and families.

Policy 7.N Advocacy for Children, Youth, and Family Concerns.

The City of Watsonville recognizes the need for increased resources and services for children, youth, and families. The City also recognizes that legislative action may be necessary to establish funding priorities and enact health and safety measures for children and youth. The City of Watsonville shall advocate for legislation supporting better child,

youth-, and family-centered policies and increased funding for programs and services at the local, state, and national levels.

The City of Watsonville recognizes its responsibility to raise the awareness of the general population regarding the plight of children, youth, and families in Watsonville. The City Council shall therefore consider preparation of an annual "State of Children, Youth, and Families in the City of Watsonville" report to be prepared and made public.

Policy 7.O Financial Support.

The City of Watsonville recognizes its responsibility in identifying and establishing broad-based funding sources and priorities in order to meet the goals of this policy. The City shall:

- Establish children, youth, and families as a priority throughout the annual budget process
- Annually review the city budget to determine where funds can be re-directed to children, youth, and families
- Enlist the business community to support the policies in tangible ways
- Identify public and private sources of funding for children, youth, and families.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter on Children, Youth, and Families is to assure that as Watsonville grows and develops, the safety, health, education, and care of children, youth, and families is considered in every phase of growth.

The City of Watsonville will continually seek to maximize existing resources and services as well as seek new broad-based resources to support services for children, youth, and families. Coordination of the delivery system for services to children, youth, and families is a high priority. It is hoped that the county, state, and federal governments will join the City of Watsonville in its commitment to plan for our collective future by caring for our children, youth, and families.



A. Students at Watsonville High School have taken the popular Broadway play "West Side Story" and presented it to a packed house at the Henry J. Mellow Performing Arts Center at the school.



B. Strong pitching and a good-hitting lineup were the keys for the 1993 SCCAL champion Watsonville High School softball team.



C.

Photos: Courtesy of the Register-Pajaronian

- A. Students at Watsonville High School have taken the popular Broadway play "West Side Story" and presented it to a packed house at the Henry J. Mellow Performing Arts Center at the school.
- B. Strong pitching and a good-hitting lineup were the keys for the 1993 SCCAL champion Watsonville High School softball team.
- C. Watsonville High graduate hugs mom after the ceremonies.