



2022 Family-Friendly Focus



JUNE HERO: Trust Automation, Inc.

When Ty & Trudie Safreno became new parents, they found out firsthand how difficult it was to find child care on the Central Coast. So, as business owners, they decided to do something about it. The vision for Trust Automation's own onsite child care center—was born. After a lengthy planning process, Trust Children's Center (TCC) opened in 2016, helping to meet the needs of employees who were experiencing the same challenges of finding care and the right work-life balance. It was a major undertaking that yielded big benefits for the 30-year company headquartered in San Luis Obispo, with 130 employees and a long-standing commitment to investing in its workforce. Parents appreciate having their children close by during the day, and Trust has seen a 100% return rate among employees who take family leave.

Customer Account Specialist Josie Low says the support makes her feel not only incredibly lucky, but also valued as an employee and mother. "Having my child at TCC is a benefit that cannot possibly be measured. Preston spends his day running, playing, singing, dancing, reading; his life is so enriched because he is allowed to express himself the way he needs to. Knowing my company supports and fosters this makes me feel not only so incredibly lucky but valued as an employee and mother. Trust and TCC understand that my number one priority always has been and always will be my family. When my company understands this, it makes me want to work harder and be better as an employee – because they care so much."

According to TCC Director Sarah Davis, Low is one of 14 Trust Automation families who take advantage of the center, typically representing between 45-60% of its overall enrollment (currently 29), as the program also accommodates non-employee families for any vacant spots. Trust heavily subsidizes the center to make it more affordable, and there are programs for infants as young as six weeks old and preschool children until they are eligible for Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten. The hope is to add a second site to better serve the community; hurdles to address include permitting fees and other startup funding, in addition to the often-complex issues surrounding state regulations and licensing requirements. Trust says any business wanting to provide on- or near-site child care for its employees should understand the costs associated but, equally, the merits: lower turnover, less absenteeism, reduced employee stress, increased productivity, and better morale. Full-time teachers at TCC receive the same benefits of retirement, health insurance, and paid vacation—a generous and rare practice that helps to ensure loyalty and quality within the center itself.

Family-friendly practices at Trust have evolved with changing needs, and the company also offers examples of other ways to support families if onsite care isn't feasible. Trust offers flexible work arrangements, a gradual return-to-work post leave option, and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts (DCFSA). Such policies and plans greatly enhance the lives of working parents and families who are squeezed by a multitude of modern-day demands. We applaud Trust, and the Safrenos, for recognizing this valuable, long-term investment in our community!

The Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program is a partnership among First 5 San Luis Obispo County, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce and the County of San Luis Obispo; this FREE initiative, housed within the Chamber, aims to help businesses hire and retain employees, support working parents' balance between job and home life, and bolster the economic vitality of our communities. The program builds on the SLO County Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit which was created by the "We Are the Care" Initiative – a countywide coalition dedicated to addressing local child care and related work-life balance challenges faced by local families.



To learn more about the Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit, visit slofamilyfriendlywork.org. For information on the Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program, contact the SLO Chamber's Workforce Development Manager, Christina Lefevre Latner, at (805) 786-2762 or christina@slochamber.org. To learn more about early-childhood related initiatives, go to first5slo.org.