



Felton Institute Newsletter

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SPOTLIGHT

Michelle Kaye

Clinical Director, Felton's
Children, Youth & Family
and Transitional Age Youth Division



Michelle Kaye's life adventure began in the Midwest, specifically, Evanston, Illinois, just outside of Chicago. The firstborn daughter among four children, Michelle has two older brothers and a younger sister; she fondly remembers always having someone with whom to play during her childhood. "My parents are both psychologists. When I was a kid, my siblings and I were encouraged to fight for what we believed was right. My family is Jewish, and I was lucky enough to grow up in a diverse community with people of all faiths and ethnicities.

"My parents taught me to think for myself. If I disagreed with a teacher or authority figure, they didn't want

me to be disrespectful, but they did want me to state my case and make a convincing argument. They encouraged my siblings and me to take on creative projects and we spent lots of time when we were kids making movies with an old school camcorder. We always felt like weirdos growing up, because my siblings and I were raised without television and we never knew what our classmates were talking about. My mom always liked to say, 'who cares what they think?' when I was scared of being seen as different as a kid."

As a teenager, Michelle loved writing and believed that would become her career. She majored in English at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, and Michelle wrote a young adult novel during her senior year. After graduation, she began working at a publishing company.

“ I am hard-pressed to think of another program in San Francisco that would be able to provide such comprehensive services to a family. Felton is a 131-year old nonprofit that is innovative and creative. That's an incredibly unique combination.

- Michelle Kaye

"I have always loved books. After working for a year in publishing, I knew that field wasn't for me. I hated sitting in a cubicle all day. Making a profit for a company wasn't motivating or inspiring. Since I have always loved children, I decided to pursue a career in teaching. I spent one year teaching at a school in New Haven, Connecticut. I loved talking to children about their problems but didn't like teaching. There was a social worker at the school I was working at. One day I asked her 'what is your job?' That's how I realized I wanted to be a social worker working with children."

Michelle attended graduate school at Smith College for Social Work in Massachusetts. She met her husband, a San Francisco Bay Area native, in graduate school, and love led them back to San Francisco 11 years ago. Michelle's first job was as a therapist in Visitacion Valley at Southeast Child and Family Therapy Center. She joined Felton last fall.



“I wanted to work at Felton because I knew about the Early Intervention program from my time working at Golden Gate Regional Center. I had visited Family Developmental Center a few times and loved the inclusive environment and the holistic, multi-faceted approach to serving children and families. Then I met Yohana Quiroz, COO (of Children, Youth and Family and Transitional Age Youth Services) and Alicia Torres, Education Director, at my interview, and I got super excited about working with them both.”

Michelle enjoys talking with teachers, therapists and supervisors about the needs of the children at the Family Developmental Center. “I love helping clinicians examine what thoughts and feelings they bring to the table and how that influences their work,” she says.

Citing examples of the comprehensive services that the Family Developmental Center (FDC) provides, Michelle notes a recent example of a mother who needed childcare for her child with a developmental disability while she is working full-time in order to qualify for subsidized housing. At FDC, the child will benefit from high-quality childcare with a full-time nurse on-site, in addition to the early interventionists, speech pathologists and mental health specialists who are available to consult with the family to meet the child’s needs. The mother will also have access to a weekly free farmers market and a case management team. “I am hard-pressed to think of another program in San Francisco that would be able to provide

such comprehensive services to a family. Felton is a 131-year old nonprofit that is innovative and creative. That’s an incredibly unique combination,” Michelle concludes.

To hear one mother’s story of how FDC’s inclusive services helped her daughter who had developmental challenges, watch the video below:



When she is not working, Michelle loves taking her children on adventures, especially in Pacifica, where both foggy coastal hikes and days at the beach are appealing. Her favorite television show is “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and her lifelong love of books continues; fantasy and science fiction are favorite genres.

In fact, her personal motto that she has tattooed on her arm are words from the science fiction trilogy *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* – “Don’t Panic”. Those words of wisdom are very useful on the job and great advice for times like these. 📺

Felton's CYF-TAY Division: A Commitment to Serve

2020 and COVID-19 have everyone adjusting to the parameters of the "new normal" of the world today. With the ever-changing cultural and societal norms, health and safety practices, and economic challenges - the basic unit of society, the family, needs more support and protection than ever before.

Problems arise when the family is tasked with meeting the basic needs of those family members who can't provide for themselves. Children enjoy a healthy lifestyle when they live in a healthy family—the community benefits when healthy families produce positive contributions to the community. When you help one child, and that benefits one family - it all pays it forward to society. Felton Institute has family and child-centered programs that help fill those gaps of need.

“

Our mission is to provide access to comprehensive services to low-income at-risk children, youth, and families to give them a sound foundation for lifelong development, family economic success, and hope for a successful future.

The past year has presented challenges as the economic divide grows even wider between the San Francisco Bay Area's affluent and at-risk populations. CYF-TAY programs are geared toward improving the quality of life for those who need it most.



To hear Yohana Quiroz, COO of CYF & TAY share more about the mission, watch the video below:



Below are some of the accomplishments in Felton's CYF-TAY Division;

Improving Mental Health!

This year, Felton served 47 children, youth, and their families in need of intensive outpatient mental health services in their communities and at various San Francisco Unified School District schools.

Improving Young Children's School Readiness!

This year, Felton served 401 unduplicated children by providing a full year, full-time early care and education, and family support and inclusive services.

On August 7, 2020, 71 preschool children graduated in a virtual preschool graduation celebration. In August of 2019, 77 preschool children celebrated the milestone of graduating in a ceremony at San Francisco State University. Sixty-six percent of the children showed conventional literacy; between 75-80% of children demonstrated applied kindergarten readiness skills.

Improving Access to Healthy Food!

This year, more than 10,000 pounds of food were distributed to families and almost 600 children visited our weekly farmers market, greatly benefitting from fresh fruit, vegetables, and perishable foods.

Connecting Young Pregnant and Parenting Families to Basic Needs and Resources!

This year, Felton served 54 young families with comprehensive case management and family advocacy support. Felton's TAPP provided 1,250 first-year high school students with a preventative health workshop on teenage pregnancy and parenting education workshops.

For over 131 years, Felton Institute has been supporting families and children in need. The importance of family will likely never change. We strive to provide high-quality services that meet the highest standards of care and have the most significant impact on the lives of those being served. 📺

COMPLETE LIST OF FELTON INSTITUTE'S CYF-TAY PROGRAMS

FELTON'S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

- **Early Care and Education Programs (ECE)** – Felton has demonstrated a long term commitment to providing research-based early care and education services. It employs research-based assessments and curriculum aligned to the California Department of Education, First Five San Francisco and the Office of Early Care and Education standards. It ensures that even children with physical and developmental conditions can succeed in the classroom by providing extensive early intervention services.

Felton Institute has been providing comprehensive early care and education services in San Francisco since 1971. The ECE programs are primarily funded by the California Department of Education, the Office of Early Care and Education, First Five San Francisco, and the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families. They operate four programs in different San Francisco neighborhoods; Mission, Visitation Valley and Bayview/Hunters Point. Felton has nine (9) Infant / Toddler classrooms and ten (10) preschool classrooms, which serve approximately 350 children on a daily basis, full day/ year-round. The center's hours vary by site, but in general, service is provided between 7:30 am - 5:30 pm Monday through Friday.

License: 380 505 534
License: 380 505 568

FAMILY DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER (FDC)

2730 Bryant Street, 1st Floor
San Francisco CA, 94110

P: (415)282-1090

Hours: 7:30 am - 4:30 pm
Children served: Birth - Six Years

License: 384 002 728

SOJOURNER TRUTH CENTER (STC)

1 Cashmere Street
San Francisco CA, 94124

P: (415) 401-1379

Hours: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Children served: Birth - Three Years

License: 384 002 728

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CENTER (MLK)

200 Cashmere Street
San Francisco CA, 94124

P: (415) 401-1377

Hours: 7:30 am - 4:30 pm
Children served: Birth - Six Years

License: 384 002 729

FAMILY DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER (FDC)

548 Delta Street
San Francisco CA, 94134

P: (415) 401-1378

Hours: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Children served: Birth - Three Years

VOCATION SERVICES

- **Realizing Employment and Creating Hope (REACH)** – This program provides employment training and case management services to pregnant and parenting at-risk teens, promoting financial security for their families.

COMPLETE LIST OF FELTON INSTITUTE'S CYF-TAY PROGRAMS

CLINICAL SERVICES

- **Full Circle Family Program (FCFP)** – Founded in 2007, FCFP provides outpatient mental health services for multicultural, low-income children and families in the Tenderloin, South of Market, and Western Addition neighborhoods of San Francisco. Services include family, individual, and play therapy, as well as parent and treatment support.
- **Felton Early Autism Program (FEAP)** – FEAP is the first inclusive center-based program in San Francisco with a curriculum designed especially for children with autism. It brings together an evidence-based intervention model and the child's natural learning environment. See how FEAP made a difference for Josh and his mom, click here: <https://youtu.be/Tv5CaMFFUgU>
- **Infant Development/Early Intervention Program (GGRC)** – On-site developmental assessments and early intervention services for infants with special needs.
- **Medically Fragile Infant/Toddler/Preschool Program (MOLERA)** – Childcare services for medically-fragile infants and children.

PARENTING AND FAMILY SERVICES

- **Felton's Sunshine Community Center (SCC)** – The center provides workshops and training for low-income, at-risk parents on parenting, childhood development, and other fundamental child-rearing skills.
- **Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program (TAPP)** – For over forty years, TAPP has provided comprehensive case management for expectant and parenting teens up to 19 years old. It provides access to all available health, education, and social services for which they are eligible. A teen father from TAPP shares his story here: <https://youtu.be/FvhSNZTxqcs>
- **Young Family Resource Center (YFRC)** – Serving over 200 pregnant or parenting teens and their children, the Young Family Resource Center has now been fully operational for four years. It offers peer-to-peer service and comprehensive case management and GED classes. Our program blends local funding with statewide funding to improve the lives of teenage parents and their children.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION SERVICES

- **Child Care Food Program (CACFP)** – Operating within FDC and HDC, CACFP is a food program providing nutritious on-site meals to children and teens.
- **Healthy Families, Healthy Lives "Familias Sanas, Vidas Sanas" Wellness Program** – This on-site farmers market offers client families fresh foods, cooking classes, and exercise programs.
- **Teen Resources to Achieve Positive Practices (T-RAPP)** – Partnered with the San Francisco Unified School District, the T-RAPP program includes four components: peer counseling, peer education, community education, and teen peer groups. It focuses on Teenage Pregnancy & Parenting Awareness to high school and middle school-age students.

For more information, contact CYF-TAY Chief Operations Officer, Yohana Quiroz, EdDc., yquiroz@felton.org or (415) 474-7310 x 101

Felton's Children, Youth & Family and Transitional Age Youth Division COVID-19 Response and Challenges

Felton Institute has had a targeted, two-generation and culturally responsive approach to address COVID-19.

Since shelter in place, Felton's Children, Youth, Family and Transitional Age Youth Services Division launched these response services that included distance learning, mental health counseling, speech therapy, early intervention telehealth, access to food, essential household and baby items, financial and rental assistance, community resources and housing support.

During the past few months, our day to day has changed, and we have pivoted and worked diligently to support all children, youth and families with a targeted effort focused on the Latinx families and teen parents who are particularly vulnerable and have been impacted significantly as a result of COVID-19. Felton's CFY & TAY Division has been uniquely positioned to respond with effective strategies in times of extraordinary community need, due to COVID-19. We realize that now more than ever, our two-generation services are essential for our families and our city's economic recovery, health and wellness.

Improving Young Children's School Readiness!

For almost 50 years, Felton has been providing early care and education (ECE) services to countless Bay Area families. Every year, approximately 430 children are served across four ECE programs in San Francisco's Mission, Bayview and Visitation Valley neighborhoods. On March 16, 2020, when shelter in place was established, Felton's ECE programs closed its doors. This was a very difficult decision, because we knew the challenges this would represent for predominately low-income families,

who rely on Felton's ECE services to attend school or go to work. We also knew that it was the right thing to do until further guidance was provided from our local department of public health. After about two weeks, when the staff members were able to settle into this new reality, and once we knew it was going to be extended, we decided to implement distance learning.

At that point in early April, Felton recognized that there was a need to extend early care and education program closures due to the COVID-19 crisis and the lack of adequate Personal Protective Equipment, cleaning supplies, and staffing to re-open. Therefore, in early May, we prepared and launched our "Distance Learning" programming to allow for social distancing as recommended by public health officials and as per the directive and new guidelines from the CA Department of Education. The plan includes opportunities for classroom teaching teams to provide teaching and engagement opportunities for each child that can be incorporated into their daily routine and assists with creating a predictable routine and schedule in their home. Classroom teams were able to create a sequence of engagements and activities for children to have access and support building family capacity and provide activities to promote developmental progress of social-emotional, language, and literacy, problem-solving skills, math, science, and physical health. All activities, to the greatest extent possible, have been provided in the preferred language of each family.

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Early Care and Education Services

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What does distance learning mean for children and the impact on school readiness?

The artistic rendering illustrates the realities and living conditions of many low-income children and families. It is a good reminder, and important to highlight, because, as educators, we need to consider what expectations we are setting forth with our children (such as expecting all children to join a Zoom video session at a specific time of the day), without taking into consideration the reasons why a family may not want to join or turn on their camera, or if they even had a digital device. Many of the families are using their smartphones to use FaceTime, but we have noticed that not all want to engage in video calls. Distance Learning has also exposed the gaps to formal education of the families, the majority of whom are immigrant and monolingual in Spanish or Cantonese. The reality is that the inequities that will be exacerbated by a lack of routine, less support from teachers, and more chaos due to the stressors of unemployment, lack of food, domestic violence, etc... will impact children's wellbeing, particularly children with special needs that require accommodations. Felton will continue to do our best to offer support and fill the gap during these unprecedented and difficult times for all. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the inequities in early care and education programs' learning opportunities for children. Sadly, child abuse and domestic violence are more prevalent and at all-time highs right now due to stress and financial hardships families are experiencing. These can have a detrimental and long-term impact on young children. Felton has responded to these needs and has continued to offer services to support families.

Distance Learning

Felton's newest justice service program is in Alameda County and is known as CORE, Center of Reentry Excellence. It provides a one-stop hub of reentry services working with the Alameda County Probation Department to serve all justice-impacted individuals in Alameda County. It puts Felton front and center with residents returning to their community from jail or state prison. These individuals are among the highly vulnerable in our community. The traumatic impacts of incarceration are undeniable, and many returning residents come home not only with the challenges they experienced prior to incarceration, but with an additional layer of trauma from incarceration itself.

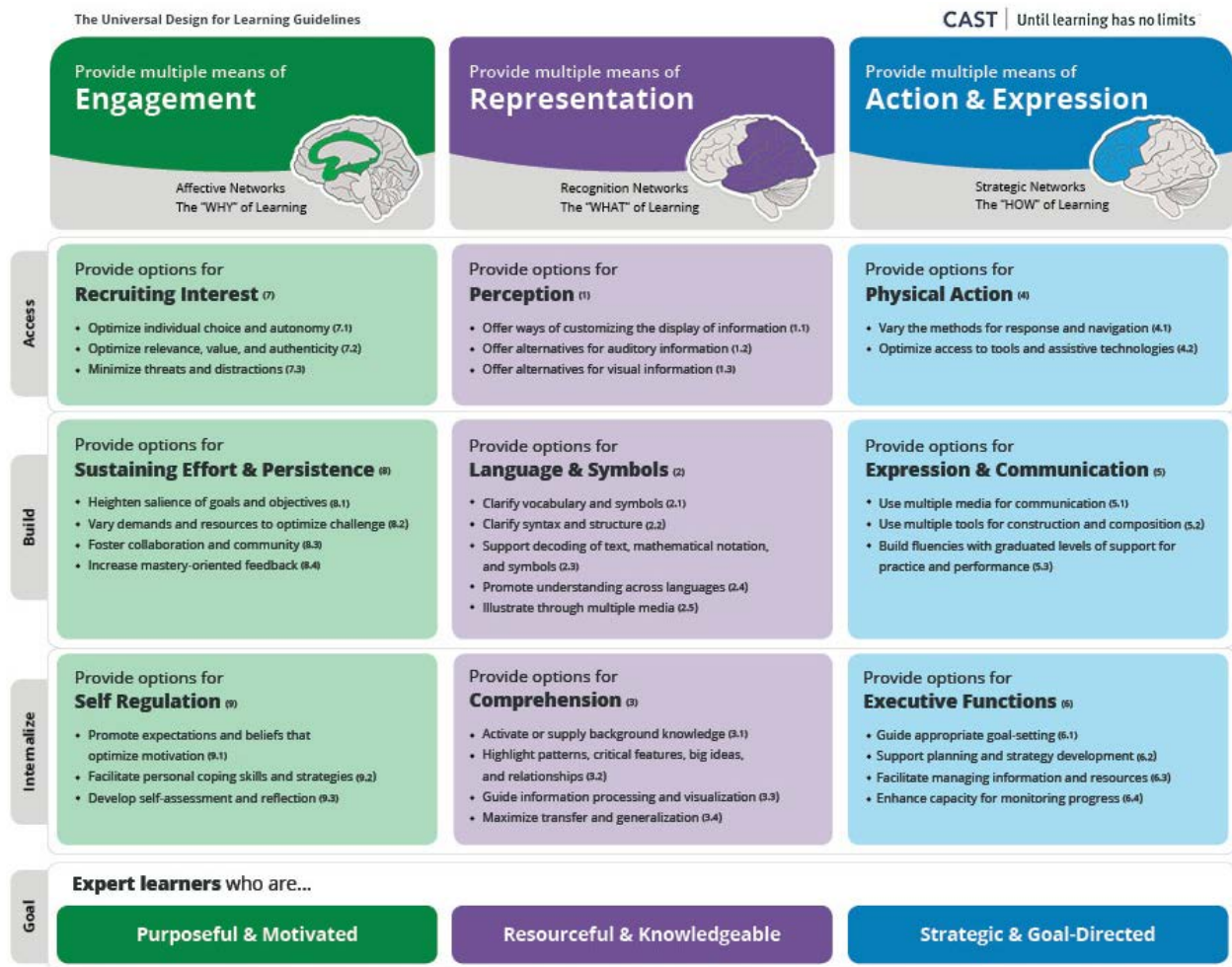
Within the first six weeks of the program, Felton received over 100 referrals and in accordance with COVID-19 practices served 98% via telehealth. Felton's Director of Business Development and Justice Services, Dr. Robin Ortiz notes that this provides "an opportunity to support the vision of Chief Wendy Still. Felton will

implement the team case management approach we have used so successfully in LEAD to ensure that each client who comes to CORE has at least three team members who can support them. In this way, we support great connectedness, higher levels of engagement, and a dynamic service process."

How will Felton apply Universal Design Learning to Distance Learning in the new school year?

Felton has been using the California Department of Education guidelines for universal learning to support children and families.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a lens, not a checklist; it is a marathon and not a sprint. It is standard-based, but not standardized. This lens supports the focus of a journey for learning. The UDL is a framework with clear, rigorous goals, and allows educators to anticipate barriers and design options for children and families.



Felton will apply Universal Design Learning to Distance Learning using:

- Flexible Methods
- Flexible Materials
- Two-Way Family Communication and Support

Felton's Education Director has engaged and implemented several different distance learning methods to meet the needs of teachers, children, and families. The following will be the continued guidelines to continue distance learning to all families that chose DL:

- Under a 1:14 ratio, a dedicated team of distance learning teachers will be available to support and engage with children in a virtual format.
- Children will be in small cohorts of 3 - 4, referenced as learning pods.
- Children will participate in a maximum of 180 minutes of virtual experience daily for 4 days a week.
- Children will participate in 2-3 social group dates on a monthly basis.

The Distance Learning team will provide the following engagement strategies:

- Daily Circle Time (15-30 minutes)
- Small-Group Activity x2 daily (60 minutes, 30 minutes each in a group of children)
- Reading and Project-Based Work (15-minute Reading, 15-30-minute topic exploration and Play)
- 1:1 Support (1x Weekly for 15-20 minutes)
- Kimochis Social-Emotional activities (2x/week, 20-30 minutes)
- Bi-Weekly Family Engagement Zoom Call
- Bi-weekly Early Literacy bags and learning materials for home engagement

Felton's ECE programs will collaborate with the following partners:

- **Performing Arts:**
 - » A Workshop of Music and Movement Zoom calls for 3 times a day for 10 weeks.
 - » Performing Arts Workshop Lesson Plans for Teachers to facilitate via Zoom
- **EDvance** Jumpstart Virtual Learning Curriculum Zoom calls, 30-minute lessons for 4x/ a week.

Our goal was to ensure we continue to develop a culturally and developmentally appropriate distance learning plan that addresses the needs of children, families, and early childhood educators. In understanding the experiences of children and families during this world crisis, we can begin to understand the special challenges and play a critical role in facilitating the reduction of educational gaps, including the digital divide for this unique population. The digital divide is an equity issue on the ground level, particularly for low-income children and families. The limited, almost non-existent access to technology equipment, high-speed internet, and fear of the unknown have been contributing factors that have made distance learning a challenge, particularly for our families. The economic challenges faced by families compound the ability of the children to be emotionally ready to engage in any type of learning, making it more difficult. Yes, implementing Distance Learning has been difficult, not only for the children and families but also for providers of ECE services, due to the limited time we had to prepare, the available resources and capacity to transition and for staff to adapt to a "new" normal. As educators, directors, and educational leaders, we have been asked to implement distance learning for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, which philosophically does not align with our educational model, what we know about brain development and what is developmentally appropriate.

An underlying issue to add to all of this was the public perception of what it means to be an early childhood educator. Many people have historically viewed the work of early care and educators as glorified babysitters focused solely on watching children play, feeding, and supervising them. The reality is that ECE educators do so much more than that; they are engineering young minds and preparing children for academic success through caring relationships and fun, engaging and developmentally appropriate activities. There are still a lot of unknowns about this pandemic, but one thing about which we are clear is that we will be able to reflect on this moment in time and acknowledge the lessons learned, the practices we should keep and the things we can discard. We will never go back to what it used to be; we will re-invent ourselves to continue to improve the outcomes for those we serve.

Felton's Re-opening of In-person Early Care and Education Services

Felton reopened our ECE programs on July 1st, 2020. We are currently serving 228 children in in-person care across four programs.

Our programming is guided by our four center expectations; **we are friendly, we are healthy, we are safe; and we are respectful!** We use these to teach children about new COVID-19 guidelines as directed by the Department of Public Health.





We are friendly! Our morning starts with a greeting to all children and families. “**Good morning, Welcome back, it’s good to see you, my friend!**”



We are healthy! Followed by a wellness and temperature check for all children by one of the members of our teaching teams.



We are safe! After their temperature is checked, parents support children to wash their hands for 20 seconds!



Before entering the building all children clean and sanitize their shoes.



We are respectful! Teachers wear their masks and individually serve each child breakfast.



The child respectfully sits in their assigned space and enjoys breakfast.



As a result of COVID-19, we also modified our classroom environments to ensure children can follow social distancing guidelines and engage with the learning materials individually.



We added tables and chairs to our outdoor areas and divided the yards to allow a group of 10 children from the same classroom to play outdoors for at least one hour a day.

Family Support Services

Our staff has been working tirelessly to assure the continued availability of essential services while addressing the many challenges our families are facing.

Through different community partnerships with Care and Doordash, every week we deliver food, and essential items consisting of baby and household cleaning and necessities to 25 families. In a recent family survey, it was reported that 65% of the families were working full-time. After COVID-19, only 28% of families are working full-time; 23% of families have been furloughed, 24% reduced to part-time work and 12% are seeking employment.

Felton Institute can't solve generational poverty that already existed before COVID-19 and will be here after COVID-19. However, understanding this revolving cycle of perpetual poverty speaks to the need to continue our two-generation approach to support young children and offer wrap-around support and access to resources for their families. With the generous support of a private funder and First Five San Francisco, we have been able to respond to our families' changing needs, not only before COVID-19 but also during this crisis. As part of our family support programming, Felton has continued to respond to all families via a two-generation approach. A two-generation approach will allow us to measure a degree of interruption of the perpetual cycle of impoverished households, bolster their children's opportunities for learning and success in education and beyond, and to empower families to have a more resilient outlook for themselves and their children, particularly after COVID-19.

We continue to be the one-stop-shop for families. We know that families are struggling right now and since COVID-19, we have been distributing essential food, household, and baby items to more than 250 families every week. We have also distributed three rounds of early literacy, arts, and craft materials bags for all children. Since the COVID-19 school closure on March 16th, 2020, the education team has made weekly phone calls to families, created at-home developmentally appropriate activities, and has provided a weekly educational family newsletter.



Graduation

On August 7, 2020, we celebrated our annual Preschool Graduation and seventy-one children graduated to kindergarten. Our theme “cradle to college” is rooted in the belief that, when afforded the opportunity to access quality early care and education, young children and families can reach their full potential and reduce the opportunity gap, particularly for black and brown children and those with disabilities. We reminded families of the important role they play in their child's growth and development as the first and most important teacher and advocate.

We wish our graduates lifelong success and a bright future ahead! 🎓

San Francisco and Felton Institute Prepare for Possible Temporary Hospital Opening

With many hospitals being stretched to capacity due to COVID-19, health officials in San Francisco are preparing to open a new low acuity medical facility in order to free up hospital beds and make room for coronavirus patients.



Felton Institute will provide mental health support and assessments within the “pop-up hospital”. The temporary health center is designed to provide medical care for people who have been recently hospitalized and need short term care.

The site will not serve any people diagnosed with COVID-19. It will be able to accommodate an initial group of 25 patients and eventually expand to serve as many as 100 patients. Felton Institute is closely working with city and county officials by staffing health workers and behavioral health specialists at the centers.

The goal of the service is that non-COVID-19 medical patients with behavioral issues can keep their hospital beds and continue receiving treatment. Felton will help identify and intervene with patients whose behaviors could lead to decompensation and forced removal from the hospital.

To help support the new temporary hospital site, as well as other programs, Felton Institute welcomes donations of personal protective equipment. Needed supplies include unused N95 respirators, disposable gloves, as well as unopened containers of hand sanitizer and disinfectants.

To coordinate a donation, please contact Jturner@felton.org.

Felton's ECE First Virtual Graduation: A Joyful Success!

August 7, 2020, Felton's Children, Youth & Family and Transitional Age Youth Division celebrated 71 preschoolers jubilantly making the transition to kindergarten.

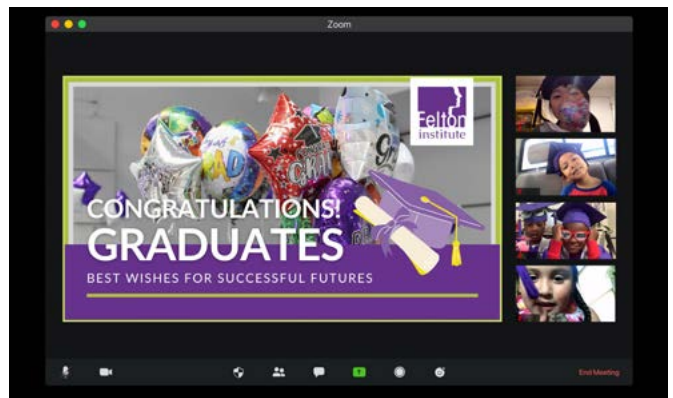


Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's milestone ceremony was a virtual graduation, but the cheers and tears of joy were just as heartfelt as in years past.

Felton Training and Volunteer Supervisor Phyllis Hogan served as Emcee. Phyllis has been with Felton for more than 35 years and looks forward to each year's graduation. Felton President and CEO Al Gilbert welcomed the graduates and their parents, praising them for being the first teachers in their children's lives. The Felton teaching staff was acknowledged for their dedication to shaping young minds into passionate learners.

“ Today, you are you! That is truer than true. There is no one alive who is youer than you! – Dr. Seuss

Yohana Quiroz, Felton's Chief Operations Officer of CYF and TAY, spoke about the challenges the preschools faced during COVID-19 pandemic and distance learning. She said, "The heart of our work is the belief that individuals and families must have access to quality, culturally responsive inclusive early care and education services and resources that build on children's and family strengths assets and resiliency."





Young students and their families watched with rapt attention as graduates from Felton’s Family Developmental Center, Felton Learning Center and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Center were acknowledged in musical slide shows featuring student-submitted photos, their class songs and the traditional “Pomp and Circumstance”. Parents and teachers gave their well-wishes via warm video salutations. Time was scheduled before and after the ceremony for people to wave to each other through the Zoom gallery view setting. It was a special treat for the kids who hadn’t assembled in person since shelter-in-place started. Many of the children created their own celebrations by decorating their home space and dressing up for the ceremony.

Speaking in English and Spanish, Felton’s Education Director Alicia Torres wonderfully summarized the celebration with her message of inspiration and praise. “As we navigated a new normal, thank you for bringing your children to Felton and our schools, trusting us with them, and helping them the best way you could from home. Cheers to our graduates. Keep reading and exploring the world.”

The virtual celebration coordination was a collaboration of Felton’s Communications Department and Family Support Director Rosaura Diaz and her committee. 📺

To the graduates of 2020: Off to kindergarten, you go, where you will continue to blossom! The best is yet to come!



Text ‘FeltonCYF’ to 41444
Make a mobile donation today!

Tips For Preparing Kindergarteners in the Time of COVID-19

The CDC recently released guidelines to keep kids safe at school. But with new information changing week to week, it looks as though our school children will be learning remotely until future notice. Here are some ways for parents to prepare our children for a school year of learning ahead!



1.

Communicate concerns!

Kindergarten can be a scary time for children and not knowing what to expect from the school year can cause worry. Give your child space and time to express their concerns about the school year. Tell your child because of the coronavirus, nobody really will know for sure what school year will look like, and things might change after a few months.

3.

Encourage curiosity and love of learning.

Most kids think that kindergarten is going to be fun! And it is! Teachers are working hard to keep the children engaged through virtual learning. While the platform may be different, kids will do all the same amazing things they can do at school: games, activities, playtime, storytelling and crafts. Talk to your child about the world of learning that will be gently opening up for them.

5.

Carve out social time for your child.

With a remote learning plan, many kids will be missing out on social interaction. It's important that you maintain social connections safely. Create a social pod with another kindergarten family, so you can plan some safe socially distanced activities with other children. Your child can also have zoom "play dates" with fun activities.

2.

Emphasize safety and health.

Talk to your child about the safety precautions everyone is taking to ensure the health of teachers and students. New rules will have to be enforced: physical distancing, mask-wearing and frequent sanitizing of hands. Let them know that there might be some restrictions around the playground and face-to-face activities. It's important for the children to understand in simple terms why following the rules is very important. By being team players, the children are doing their part.

4.

Create a fun environment for distance learning.

Before the school starts, make sure your child has a device to access the internet and reliable Internet service. Many schools are distributing WIFI hotspots and loaner laptops for children who need them. Create a schedule so your child can keep up with assignments and create a routine that they can stick to. Set up a learning space that is free of noise and distractions. Consider getting your child noise-canceling headphones.

Check the [CDC's website](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information about getting ready for school.

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