

1 [Encouraging San Francisco to Take Action to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect During the
2 COVID-19 Shelter in Place Order]

3 **Resolution encouraging San Francisco to take strong action to prevent child abuse and**
4 **neglect during the shelter in place order and to adopt policies to protect our children**
5 **during the COVID-19 crisis.**

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7 WHEREAS, On March 17, 2020, San Francisco issued a “Shelter in Place” order in an
8 effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19; and

9 WHEREAS, Shelter in place requires that individuals stay home except to perform
10 essential activities including: grocery shopping, obtaining medical supplies or medication,
11 engage in outdoor recreation, and to work in essential businesses; and

12 WHEREAS, This Order puts children at greater risk for abuse and neglect by keeping
13 children in homes with abusive individuals and removing the safety net of support in public
14 schools, child care settings, and social workers; and

15 WHEREAS, The pandemic has exacerbated the stress on families who are dealing
16 with a potential job loss, loss in wages, mounting economic pressures, and the stress of being
17 sheltered at home without the social or mental health resources to cope; and

18 WHEREAS, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) declared that public
19 schools would remain closed for the remainder of the school year eliminating the ability for
20 educational professionals to report child abuse to Child Protective Services; and

21 WHEREAS, In the past two weeks organizations like Childhelp have fielded 20% more
22 calls, yet the Child Protective Services hotline has decreased by 42% - 55% nationwide
23 indicating that mandated reporters are not reporting suspected child abuse cases due to the
24 lack of visibility of children in traditional settings such as school and child care; and

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1 WHEREAS, Programs that offered supports and resources for families like supervised
2 visits and in person support groups have been suspended during the Shelter-in-Place; and

3 WHEREAS, Many of these supports are seen as vital to support children and families
4 and in the absence of these supports child abuse advocacy groups are calling on neighbors
5 and community members to take on the responsibility of reporting suspected child abuse as a
6 way to protect our children during this very vulnerable time; and

7 WHEREAS, Family Resource Centers play a critical and central role in preventing child
8 abuse and neglect by offering welcoming places to learn about child development, build
9 parenting skills, get much needed peer support, receive comprehensive case management
10 and a connection to resources; and

11 WHEREAS, On April 13, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom announced a \$42 million
12 investment to protect children at heightened risk for abuse and mistreatment due to COVID-19
13 including \$3 million toward Family Resource Centers to provide direct support and services to
14 families in need, \$7 million to social workers to provide support, and \$250,000 towards the
15 expansion of helplines; now, therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors work to create a strong plan to support and
17 protect children suffering and at-risk of suffering during this time, including but not limited to:
18 expanding capacity and language supports for the 24-Hour Parental Stress Support Line,
19 providing additional virtual support groups for caregivers in various languages working in
20 partnership with community based organizations, allocating additional funds during shelter-in-
21 place order to allow organizations dealing with abuse prevention the ability to hire more staff
22 to provide more frequent virtual support for families during crisis, safely provide respite care
23 for caregivers experiencing severe stress, and continual funding for Family Resources
24 Centers; and, be it

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors will work with the Human
2 Services Agency and The Office of the Mayor to finalize and create a funding plan to
3 implement specific supports for this vulnerable community as expediently as possible.

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