



**Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department
Early Childhood Council**



October 27, 2011

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Early Childhood
Council
City of Austin HHSD
P. O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

(512) 972-5028

Mayor Lee Leffingwell and
Austin City Council Members
Austin, Texas

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

The Early Childhood Council, in its October 11, 2011 meeting, authorized this resolution regarding funding for early childhood to be forwarded the Austin City Council.

Resolution Regarding Funding For Early Childhood

After years of building a system of services that support early childhood development and quality child care, the recent social service contract process resulted in cuts of approximately 52% for these services. The Early Childhood Council wants to express its concern about the depth of the cuts to services that benefit young children, and make recommendations for the future. These cuts resulted in part from a set of criteria that were not reviewed by the Early Childhood Council and were disadvantageous to early childhood programs. For future decisions about social services, we support the strategic planning efforts at the Health and Human Services Department, which will lead to decisions based on careful assessment of community health needs and return on investment. It is well-established that the earlier in life investments are made, the greater the returns in the

form of reduction of deviant and antisocial behavior, better school performance, lowered costs of special education and grade repetition, more high school graduation, and eventual participation in the workforce. The Early Childhood Community Plan, currently being prepared by stakeholders throughout the community, offers carefully-vetted, evidence-based information about effective programs for vulnerable children.

In addition, the Early Childhood Council approved a recommendation related to a concern brought to the Council by a group of child care providers. The ECC's recommendation and the original providers' proposal are attached to this letter.

Sincerely yours,

Aletha C. Huston
Chairperson

xc: Marc Ott, City Manager
Carlos Rivera, HHSD Director

City of Austin Early Childhood Council October 11, 2011

Recommendation from the Early Childhood Council regarding the proposal for a city-funded Early Childhood Classroom Mentor.

Background

On August 10, 2011, a group of child care providers met with Shannon Jones, City of Austin HHSD Acting Director, and presented a proposal for a city-funded Early Childhood Classroom Mentor to “provide support for child development center classroom teachers with young children in an effort to prevent behavior challenges.” Mr. Jones referred the proposal to the Early Childhood Council (ECC) and tasked the group with reviewing the proposal and developing a recommendation.

Recommendation

The Early Childhood Council recognizes the great need to address challenging behaviors in early childhood classrooms and recommends that any city funding for this effort be used to expand the number of centers served by the United Way Capital Area Success by 6 Social and Emotional Learning Collaborative (SELC). This recommendation will be included in the overall Early Childhood Council recommendation to City regarding how city funding is allocated for early childhood services.

Rationale

The Early Childhood Council recommends an expansion of the SELC for the following reasons:

- It is a more efficient and effective use of city funds to expand existing services in the community rather than create a new program.
- The SELC model builds the capacity of child care centers to address challenging behaviors (versus intensive intervention with individual children).
- The model has been in practice in the Austin community since 2004 and has undergone iterative improvements.
- SELC utilizes evidence-based methods and has a collaborative approach that is coordinated by the United Way Capital Area Success by 6 Initiative.

The Social and Emotional Learning Collaborative

The Social and Emotional Learning Collaborative (SELC) began in 2004 as an intervention to promote the positive social and emotional health of children in child care centers. The partners in this collaboration include Austin Child Guidance Center, YWCA of Greater Austin, and Raising Austin. Collectively, the project partners provide consultation, training, technical assistance and psychological support services to child care center staff, teachers, parents and children. (Excerpt from “Promoting Children’s Success through Improved Behavioral Health.”)

Provide support for child development center classroom teachers with young children in an effort to prevent behavior challenges.

WORKING TITLE: Early Childhood Classroom Mentor

SALARY RANGE: \$43,516-\$52,200. Beginning AISD teacher is \$43,000. This is a specialist position requiring the person to have a large body of knowledge and practical experience...the lower the salary- the lower caliber you can expect and the higher turnover for this position. Recommend \$51,000- \$65,000. to ensure quality candidates and promote sustainability.

LOCATION: Serving Austin region

HOURS: Monday-Friday, occasional work on Saturdays

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Provides early childhood mentoring in the field of social and emotional development of young children in regulated child development centers.
- Works with child care providers and families for children and provides information on community resources and referral services.
- Adheres to and assures compliance with Texas Minimum Licensing Standards, and other standards as identified from time to time.
- Assists in program implementation and reporting, as required by supervisor.
- Participates in meetings and teams as requested by supervisor..
- Advises and coaches caregivers and parents in keeping with the strategies on the Positive Child Guidance Plan.
- Assists providers in making referrals of children and their families to appropriate outside services when necessary.
- Provides discussion and training opportunities for providers and families to help them develop new skills that will enable them to understand and more effectively support the social-emotional development of all children, including those with behavioral issues.
- Heightens community awareness of the mental health needs of young children in early care and learning settings.
- Assures confidentiality of children, families, and co-workers.
- Maintains a safe, healthy, clean and orderly work environment.
- Any other duties, as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED: Master's degree in special education, social work, psychology or related field. Minimum of six years working with children aged two to six years old in the mental health and/or early care and education field. A general knowledge of child development and assessment, young children's mental health, early care and education settings, community resources, and evidence-based practices related to mental health. Must be able to build relationships and motivate providers and parents. Two years experience providing workshop sessions to early childhood staff and/or parents on child development topics. Must be able to perform basic computer applications using Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Access) and Time Clock software.

QUALIFICATIONS PREFERRED: Experience working with families, providers, and reflective supervision preferred. Experience providing training, consultation, and observation preferred.