Travis County's School Readiness Action Plan 2012 - 2015

Prepared for the City of Austin Early Childhood Council and public, December 13, 2011

The early childhood stakeholders of Travis County are currently updating the School Readiness Action Plan. At a retreat held on October 17th and 18th, early childhood stakeholders came together to brainstorm and rank strategies which were used to craft the draft plan below. Feedback is currently being solicited from stakeholder groups over the next two months, including the Early Childhood Council and its constituents. Comments on the draft plan will be reviewed and considered by the Results Based Planning Committee. The next version of the School Readiness Action Plan is tentatively scheduled to be presented at an early childhood stakeholder meeting in early February. Updates and announcements will be sent through the Success by 6 list serve. If you are not currently subscribed, please email Leah.Meunier@UnitedWayCapitalArea.org.

I. Ready Children

Desired Outcomes: Low-income Travis County children ages 0-5 are happy, healthy, and prepared for school success.

Priority Activity or Strategy	Estimated Need Target	Next Steps	Responsible Entity	Time Frame
Measure and report children's developmental status on multiple domains using developmentally appropriate tools.		 Annually conduct school readiness assessment for Central Texas Children using E3's CTXGSRA. Analyze and present data based on gender, family income, previous early education experience and home language status. In 2014, use the EDI in selected neighborhoods to assess school readiness and to map the results. Analyze and present data. Explore the possibility of mapping health clinic ASQ developmental assessments through COH. If feasible, conduct study in 2014, and coordinate data presentation with the EDI results. Measure children's language development in Public School pre-K settings and in child care settings serving low-income children. Analyze and compare data. 		

	 Conduct assessments of children's social/emotional status in centers served by the SELC. Prepare annual reports of this data. Create a system to track school-readiness and long-term education outcomes of children receiving services in this plan by working with local ISDs Compare all data sets, when possible, with national norms and/or with cities of comparable size and demographics. 	
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II. Ready Community

Desired Outcomes: Public and private sectors in Austin/Travis County work together to ensure children's school readiness becomes and remains a top priority. Progress on all components of the action plan is measured and results are reported to the community annually.

GOAL	STRATEGIES	(SUGGESTED) ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION or: Community / public will be authentically engaged in	Create and collectively utilize a unified message(s) for public awareness activities (NEW)	 Workgroup develops message Entities who have committed to community plan agree to use message(s) 	RBPC?

GOAL	STRATEGIES	STRATEGIES (SUGGESTED) ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS	
ongoing community planning activities		 Develop and implement research-based participatory methods to include the voices of parents in the community planning cycle. Continue and/or expand UW community conversations and cafes 	TBD UW
	2) (Increase) Community and Public Participation	 Use community leaders to organize parents 	TBD
		 Integrate data and participants from parent groups Child, Inc. parent advisory committee Parent leader groups from UW community conversations and cafes Other? 	UW Child, Inc.
(INCREASE) COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, continued	Public Awareness Activities are implemented	 Schedule meetings with elected officials and executive HHS staff members in the City and County to share the published Action Plan. Host a UWCA Business Leaders 	
Travis County Farly Childhood Stal	ceholders RRPC - December 2011	Luncheon on January 26, 2011 to share the	Page 3 of 21

Travis County Early Childhood Stakeholders RBPC - December 2011

Luncheon on January 26, 2011 to share the importance of early childhood investments.

Include School Readiness Information

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GOAL	STRATEGIES	(SUGGESTED) ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
		 Develop communication tools that demonstrate gaps in service/pockets of need Air television and/or radio Born Learning PSAs with local spokesperson. Create video to inform business and civic leaders of the importance of early childhood investments to local economic development. Make presentations to service organization about the importance of the early years. 	
	3) Connect early childhood issues to other, related community issues	 Create plan for regular communication with applicable city boards and commissions 	Early Childhood Council
		 Meet with Primary Care providers, Housing advocates, and basic needs providers to share plan, and to determine if there are ways to link and leverage our respective arenas of work. 	

GOAL	STRATEGIES	(SUGGESTED) ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
	4) Educate elected and public officials about early childhood issues	Create plan for regular communication with Austin City Council members and Mayor	Early Childhood Council
COMMUNITY PLAN WILL BE COORDINATED, MONITORED AND MEASURED	1) Coordinate the plan	 Convene quarterly stakeholder meetings in which emerging participants can share information about emerging issues, participate in on-going planning work, network with their peers and colleagues, and learn new information from the field. Document processes and products Provide primary communication with stakeholders and other entities Enhance UWCA SB6 communication vehicles so that all stakeholders are aware of 	UW Staff
Travis County Early Childhood Stal	keholders RBPC - December 2011	relevant meeting times and can access meeting agendas and notes after meetings.	Page 5 of 21

Develop system and format for

GOAL	STRATEGIES	(SUGGESTED) ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
		 Childhood Council to ensure alignment of activities and clear communication of efforts. Facilitate an annual meeting of stakeholders to formally evaluate the progress of the Plan, and to make adjustments as needed based on changing community conditions. Convene working groups regularly to share best practices, avoid program duplication, identify problems, and work collectively on activities in this Plan. Working groups include: Family Support Group (open to all), Social Emotional Learning Network (open to all), Social Emotional Learning Collaborative (only UWCA funded agencies); Best Practice Review Group (open to all; new group to examine recent literature on early childhood and systems development). Participate in the QC3 leadership meetings and monthly mentor meetings. Participate in E3 Goal 1 meetings to ensure alignment of efforts and open communication between entities. Co-convene, with other partners including the E3 Alliance, a Business Leaders Roundtable to build interest in, and advocacy for, early childhood issues amongst high-level 	

GOAL	STRATEGIES	STRATEGIES (SUGGESTED) ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS	
		 Communicate at least quarterly with the identified "responsible entities" attached to each activity in this plan. Ascertain barriers to progress and successes, and report this information at quarterly stakeholder meetings. 	
	2) Monitor progress on the plan	 Generate and monitor agreements at respective agencies Align policy and funding decisions, when possible Review the City of Austin plan and make recommendations, if necessary, for revisions to include goals of this Action Plan. 	RBPC
	3) Develop systems for measurement and accountability	 Workgroup to develop systems Ensure plan activities are connected to ongoing planning cycle Develop and use, whenever possible, common outcomes and indicators for agencies receiving funding from multiple sources. 	TBD

GOAL	STRATEGIES	(SUGGESTED) ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
		 Track and communicate local public investment in early childhood services. Progress should be compared to communities with similar demographics. Review EDI maps, CTSRA, ASQ data, COH data, and make recommendations for geographic focus of service delivery . 	TBD
(FACILITATE) COORDINATED SERVICE DELIVERY		Explore how to share information and data (i.e. health info exchange) between service providers and ISDs	
(ENHANCE) PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	Develop strategy for use of publicly-operated spaces for early childhood and family support programs.	Libraries, public schools, WIC centers, and community centers will be examined for collaboration options.	TBD

III. Ready Services – Early Childhood Education

Desired Outcomes: Quality, affordable, accessible early education services are available for all families. Services are of sufficient quality to measurably impact school readiness outcomes.

Priority Activity or Strategy	Estimated Need	Next Steps	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Resources Needed
	Target		•		
Maximize impact of Head Start funding to local community.		 SB6 Stakeholders will participate in annual Head Start community assessment process to share emerging community needs and to identify high-quality partnership opportunities. Recommendations will be included in the final assessment. RBPC will work with Child Inc. staff to study the feasibility of shifting some of the head start slots from PreK and preschool age home based services to center-based care for three-year-olds. If feasible, assist Child Inc. in creating a business plan for securing additional dollars to make this shift possible. RBPC will work with Child Inc. to develop a standard referral system so that agencies that provide family support services to Head Start eligible families can help families easily access and complete enrollment applications for center-based services. Professional development opportunities sponsored by Child Inc. and Austin ISD will be available to early childhood professionals in the community. Information will be distributed through the SB6 newsletter, SB6 e-mail, Region 13 			

	newsletter, Workforce email, Travis County ISDs newsletters or AAEYC announcements. Participation may be limited, so "first come, first served" rules apply to enrollment. Child Inc. leaders will provide an annual update on Head Start enrollment and programming to the ECC Council and at a SB6 Stakeholders meeting.		
Advocate for full-day public school PreK slots for eligible families in all Travis County ISDs.	 Promote recent E3 data that suggests strong advantages of full-day PreK over part-day PreK services through SB6 newsletter and other print and electronic communication tools; visits to state representatives and local school board members; and the Business Roundtable. Share information about the benefits of full-day PreK with neighborhood parent leaders (promotorias) so that they can advocate for these services among peers and school leaders. Present information to Austin Interfaith leaders and ask them to advocate for full-day PreK services at relevant school board meetings. 		
Strengthen the QC3 Mentoring Collaboration by adjusting the service to meet emerging needs.	 Identify potential additional funders for the QC3 services (including Taking Charge of Change). Maintain and/or grow funding for director mentoring and leadership training by creating a compelling fact sheet about the impact of the multi-prong program. Share the fact sheet in individual meetings with current and potential funders. Work with the E3 Alliance to develop and implement a long-term child outcomes study for the children enrolled in centers meeting various quality standards. With the QC3 Leadership Team input, develop a "Next Generation" 		

	mentoring model that focuses on achieving and maintaining national accreditation standards (NAC or NAEYC). Set target goals and timeline for achieving them. When 75% of Travis County centers serving at least 25% low-income children have achieved at least a 3 star rating, shift mentors' focus to the "Next Generation" model.		
Improve the education qualifications of the Early Care and Education Workforce in centers that serve a minimum of 25% low-income families – or at least 25 low-income children.	 Maintain and/or grow funding for the Teacher TRAC scholarship program by: creating a compelling fact sheet about the impact of the program; 2) presenting information about the program to the Hispanic Chamber's scholarship committee and the CTEF; 3) sharing information about the program to City Council members annually. Expand scholarships for individuals who currently work in local early care and education settings serving low-income children for college-level child development course work leading to a certificate or degree from any accredited institution of higher education. Increase funding for the Jeanette Watson salary supplement program by seeking additional funding sources. To be eligible for at least one six month payment during the fiscal year, applicants must: work in a licensed child care program (center, home or public school site) earn below the income caps selected by the funding partnership have one of the education levels listed here (from regionally accredited schools) work at least six months in the same child care program be employed at this same child care 		

Expand availability of two-	program when funding is available and a final confirmation has been completed * Temporary levels of education (Levels 2-8): Teachers and directors awarded at one of these levels must move up to a higher level within two years in order to retain eligibility. Deadlines will be reestablished at each temporary level. Family child care providers have three years to achieve the education needed to move up • Partner with UT ACE program to secure Americorp slots for existing child care teachers who will use the education award after their year of service. • To address the inequity of lower teacher qualifications in centers serving low-income children, study the feasibility of creating a localized adaptation of "Teach for America" for early childhood programs. If feasible, create a business plan and begin to develop broader community support. • Provide these high-quality professional development opportunities to qualified early childhood teachers serving low-income children: 1) training for teachers of 4 year olds on how to use and integrate the Texas State Prekindergarten Guidelines; 2) West Ed and /or Zero to 3 infant/toddler training; 3) Teacher observation and coaching model (i.e. CLASS); 4) Promote Social emotional learning and behavior development. 5.) Strategies for English Language Learners		
generation education programs for vulnerable families.	 Study the feasibility of replicating the Tulsa Educare and Head Start model that includes career education for parents and high-quality early care and education for young children. If feasible, write a business plan and begin to develop broader community support. Seek funding to expand the ASPIRE 		

Maintain access to center- based early literacy and math Americorp coaches through UT partnership	and AVANCE programs that provide ESL and/or GED classes for parents and child development services for young children. • Partner with UT ACE program to secure slots for Americorp classroom coaches, and maintain community support for the supervision and monitoring of the coaches.		
Increase families' access to very high-quality early care and education by incentivizing centers to reach accreditation standards.	 Incentivize non-profit centers to provide the highest quality of early care and education by providing cash supplements to non-profit NAEYC accredited centers based on the number of low-income children served. Provide special recognition of NAC and NAEYC accredited centers at the AAEYC Annual Award Ceremony and at a Stakeholder meeting annually. Print the names of NAC and NAEYC accredited centers serving low-income children in at least one SB6 communication pieces annually. Offer access to special rewards, such as free professional development or curriculum resources, to centers that are NAC or NAEYC accredited. Advocate for increased COA funding for child care slots in NAC or NAEYC accredited centers. Solicit written parent testimonials and train at least two parents to provide testimony during COA Council visits. Seek partnership opportunities with ISD PreK and Head Start for very highquality centers with eligible children. 		
Increase child care centers'	Maintain and grow support for		

access to high-quality, intensive mental health consultation and support.	existing mental health services provided by the SELC by creating compelling fact sheets that can be distributed to existing and potential funders. Convene monthly meetings of the SELC to coordinate services and to build a higher-quality delivery system. Investigate potential for funding through insurance systems for elements of the consultation services.		
	 Provide a Second Step teacher training program and curriculum kit for 5 centers serving at least thirty low-income pre-school age children. Track relevant data to ascertain 		
	effectiveness of the services.		

IV. Ready Services – Preventive Primary Care and Mental Health

Desired Outcomes: Children and family members receive preventative physical and mental health services and treatment as needed; children with developmental delays are referred to appropriate services

Priority Activity or Strategy	Estimated Need	Next Steps	Responsible Entity	Time Frame	Resources needed
	Target				
Increase access to free or affordable health services for children and their family members.		 Schedule a program for one of the 2012 Stakeholder meetings on accessing health care. Invite Insure-A-Kid, Amerigroup, 211 to present. Distribute printed information to service providers. Include information about health access in at least 2 of the SB6 Stakeholder newsletters annually. Train parent promotorias on health care access, with a focus on calling 211 to help families determine eligibility for services. Maintain support for existing home-based mental health services provided by Head Start, Relief Nursery, Any Baby Can and others by creating compelling fact sheets that can be distributed to existing and potential funders. Enhance referral system for families seeking/needing primary care and mental health services by(need more info here) 			
Integrate early childhood screening and other services into health care settings that		Meet with local public health clinic administrators to understand what developmental screening tools are being used with young children. (Note: Screening			

serve low-income families.	is required in order to receive Medicaid reimbursement.) If desired and/or needed by the clinics, offer a community training on the ASQ that would be open to health care providers as well as early childhood service providers. Provide information to health clinics about services available to families with young children. Seek funding to place a social worker into the 4 largest WIC clinics on training days. Social worker could assess needs to families and provide referrals to relevant services. Partner with People's Community Clinic to maintain and expand their group pre-natal and well-child check-up program. Seek funding to expand evidence-based Reach Out and Read program to at least two more Carousel Clinics in Travis County.		
Increase child care centers' access to high-quality, intensive mental health consultation and support.	 Maintain and grow support for existing mental health services provided by the SELC by creating compelling fact sheets that can be distributed to existing and potential funders. Convene monthly meetings of the SELC to coordinate services and to build a higher-quality delivery system. Investigate potential for funding through insurance systems for elements of the consultation services. Provide a Second Step teacher training program and curriculum kit for 5 centers serving at least thirty low-income pre-school age children. Provide DECA screening training for teachers using Second Step Curriculum. Track relevant data to ascertain effectiveness of the services. 		

V. Ready Families

Desired Outcomes: Parents have a secure attachment to their infants and young children. Parents respond appropriately to their children's cues. Families provide stimulating learning experiences to their children prior to school entry. Families are financially stable.

GOAL	Priority Activity or Strategy	Estimated Need	Next Steps	Responsible Entity	Time Frame
		Target			
Improve Parental knowledge, skills, and behaviors in order to foster optimum child development.	Improve access to research-based home visiting and parent education services to families with children under the age of 5	There are approximately 22,000 infants and toddlers and 14,000 preschool age children living in low-income households in Travis County. Only 1,200 infant/toddlers and 2100 preschoolers ,are currently receiving or have completed these proven services. Target: 25% of children living in low-income households will have parents who complete home visiting or seriesbased parent	 Maintain support for all existing sources of funding by creating simple ROI documents with community data and sharing information with policy makers and current funders. Explore potential local, state, and federal funding options, and create plan for securing new funding. Implement the plan and track new investments for parent education. Provide public comment related to the use of Child Care Development Funds to the Texas Workforce Commission State Plan. Present information about early brain development and proven family interventions to the Central Texas Education Funders. Coordinate services among multiple providers to prevent duplication of services, and to share parent education curriculum materials. Prioritize services to teen parents, English Language Learning parents, and/or parents in the high-need areas 		2012-13

	education services.	 identified by SB6 EDI and WIC maps. Identify 5 to 10 parents who have received services and would be willing to talk about their positive experiences to policy makers and/or funders. Provide training and support for them. Secure funding for and deliver at least one Incredible Years train-the-trainer program for Head Start parent educators, Child Care center directors, ISD parent support reps, and qualified faith-based volunteers. Secure funding for IY curriculum materials which can be shared between and amongst community partners. 	
Improve access to neighborhood-based early childhood services.	There are multiple communities within Austin/Travis County with vulnerable families. Parent leadership target: At least six neighborhoods will have on-going support for parent leadership and group problemsolving Play and Learn Target: 25% of the estimated 6000 lowincome three-year-olds not enrolled in Head Start or child care will participate	 Provide training and on-going support to selected parents as parent leaders who can provide support to new parents in their neighborhood. (Promotoria model) Provide play and learn groups in easily accessed locations, and with curriculum targeted to the neighborhood needs. Secure funding for on-going community cafes so that parents have space, time, and support for selecting priority issues to work on within their neighborhoods. Provide training and on-going support to parents of children ages 0 – 5 at neighborhood schools. 	2012-15

	in Play and Learn. Fewer than 300 are currently participating.		
Integrate early childhood screening and other services into health care settings that serve low-income families.	Medicaid requires that all children receive regular developmental screenings in order to receive reimbursement. Clinics are adopting screening tools currently. Target for embedded early childhood referral services – 100% of clinics participate. Currently, no formal system exists. Target for ROR – 100% of health clinics serving low- income families participate. Currently, clinics participate.	 Meet with local public health clinic administrators to understand what developmental screening tools are being used with young children. If desired and/or needed by the clinics, offer a community training on the ASQ that would be open to health care providers as well as early childhood service providers. Provide information to health clinics about services available to families with young children. Seek funding to place a social worker into the 4 largest WIC clinics on training days. Social worker could assess needs to families and provide referrals to relevant services. Partner with People's Community Clinic to maintain and expand their group pre-natal and well-child checkup program. Seek funding to expand evidence-based Reach Out and Read program to at least two more Carousel Clinics in Travis County. 	2012-15
Distribute culturally and linguistically relevant information to parents about school readiness.	Target: School readiness materials will be distributed at all PreK and child care sites in Travis County. At least 25% of families enrolled in family support services will sign up for text for	 Meet with ABBA and other interfaith groups to share information about Born Learning materials and messages. Provide free materials that can be distributed in church bulletins or other faith communication tools. Provide electronic tips for fostering school readiness to PreK teachers and 4-year-old teachers in child care settings. 	2012 – 15

		baby information.	 Explore early learning partnership opportunities with HEB. Promote the use of social media for sharing child development information, including Text4Baby, which provides cell phone texts to new parents, among all early childhood service providers. Pilot and gather efficacy data on a cell-phone application project for sharing child development and local family information to low-income families.
Increase the number of families that are financially stable.	Increase access to family financial literacy information with a goal of increasing their financial stability.	Need: All low- income families with young children can benefit from financial literacy information and services such as tax preparation. Target: 5,000 ? families with young children participate in one or more training or technical assistance sessions with financial literacy specialists.	 Meet with providers of financial literacy training to explore opportunities for partnership with early childhood providers. Partnership may mean offering services at non-profit agencies or child care settings, or distributing information through these channels. Offer financial literacy training for low-income child care providers and/or family support workers at United Way Capital Area. Provide incentives to increase attendance such as gift card drawing. Use Workforce Solutions as a potential training site and also partner with the Career Center who offers weekly professional seminars with tips on resume writing, interviewing, and more.
	Provide professional development opportunities for family support professionals	All family support service agencies should provide culturally sensitive and strengths-based services to families. There are # of agencies # have participated in	 Offer at least two Touchpoints trainings annually to professionals. Create and implement a plan for follow-up support to individuals who completed Touchpoints training. Offer at least one training annually for family support professionals on culturally competent practices.

	Touchpoints or		
	another research-		
	based cultural		
	competency training		
	program.		