

2019-2023 School Readiness Action Plan – Goals and Strategies

Ready Children

Travis County children ages 0-5 are healthy, happy, and prepared for school success

Ready Families

Goal: Families have access to and use the resources that provide them with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and social supports to positively nurture the health, safety, and development of their children, and develop greater financial stability.

Strategies:

- 1) Maintain/expand capacity and participation in research- and evidence-based, culturally competent home-visiting, parent education, and family support services for families with children under 6.
- 2) Optimize connections to basic needs services (e.g., food, housing) and financial stability resources for parents/caregivers of young children.
- 3) Improve recruitment, pre-service training, high quality professional development, and retention of family support professionals.
- 4) Connect parents/caregivers of young children with adult education and workforce development opportunities leading toward greater economic stability.
- 5) Ensure that parents/caregivers and young children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or other significant trauma receive specialized interventions and advocacy support services.
- 6) Ensure that parents/caregivers and young children have at least twenty early childhood books in their homes.

Ready Services: Early Childhood Education

Goal: Children and families are informed and able to access high quality early learning environments that demonstrate positive developmental outcomes for all children (including children with unique developmental and cultural needs) through competent, responsive, and caring relationships.

Strategies:

- 1) Increase the availability of very high quality early care and education providers for low-income families in Travis County.
- 2) Recruit and retain qualified teachers and administrators.
- 3) Increase the number of children birth to 3 years old served by Early Head Start.
- 4) Develop a coordinated enrollment system for families to access high quality child care.
- 5) Create and implement a Quality Child Care Shared Services Alliance for functions such as payroll, staff recruitment and pre-service training, and bulk purchasing.
- 6) Increase the number of eligible 3 and 4 year old children enrolled in Public Pre-K in Travis County school districts and other high quality early education settings.
- 7) Every district has and implements a plan to increase Public Pre-K quality through teacher coaching, full-day / low ratio programs, and supporting principals and other leaders to lead quality programs.

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Ready Services: Preventive Health and Mental Health Services

Goal: Children receive early and regular developmental screenings and immunizations and are linked to accessible, coordinated, integrated, and responsive basic needs, physical, dental, and mental health services, including services for children with developmental delays.

Strategies:

- 1) Connect eligible child care centers to the CACFP and food services coordination community-wide, to address early childhood hunger, obesity, and nutrition issues.
- 2) Expand the evidence-based Family Connects model.
- 3) Align current resources for mental health in schools to serve younger children.
- 4) Screen children for developmental delays and ensure service providers have access to the data so that young children get the right services more quickly.
- 5) Increase the number of system providers (school, health care, etc.) who assess for adverse childhood experience (ACEs) and/or maternal depression and refer to appropriate community supports.
- 6) Expand early childhood mental health consultation services to early childhood education sites in private and public settings.

Ready Communities

Goal: Public and private sectors in Austin/Travis County work together to ensure that the community has the resources and infrastructure to deliver services to children and their families, and to provide a safe and healthy environment in which to raise children.

Ensure progress on the school readiness action plan.

- 1) Sustain and expand partnerships with the City of Austin (COA) Public Library, Parks and Recreation Department, Public Health Department, Equity Department, and Travis County Neighborhood Centers to increase programming and services for families with young children.
- 2) Work with GAVA and other neighborhood, planning, and quality of life initiatives to integrate early childhood into their master plans.
- 3) Identify and cultivate private funders and business leaders to support early childhood advocacy, resources, and services.
- 4) Create and sustain a strong Parent Leadership Initiative to amplify parent/caregiver voice in planning and advocacy efforts.
- 5) Build public awareness of the importance of the first 5 years, brain development, and supporting parents/caregivers in their caregiver role.
- 6) Support parents/caregivers navigate the early childhood system through an accessible and specialized resource and referral system.
- 7) Build/strengthen community capacity to collect, analyze, and use data to support school readiness.