

RESOLUTION NO. 20200729-116

WHEREAS, child care is a critical piece of our economic infrastructure, allowing parents to work while providing enriching experiences children need; and

WHEREAS, a survey released on July 13, 2020, by the National Association for the Education of Young Children reveals that nationwide, 40 percent of child care centers that responded say they will be forced to permanently close if they do not receive additional financial support to help them remain operational, threatening any chance of broader economic recovery; and

WHEREAS, the lack of available and affordable child care has a negative impact on the U.S. economy of over \$57 billion in lost revenue, earnings, and productivity, according to a 2019 report published by ReadyNation; and

WHEREAS, reported cases of COVID-19 transmission associated with child care centers in Texas have skyrocketed in recent weeks, resulting in alarming numbers of employees and children infected, and threatening to necessitate the closure of more child care centers, while the costs of safely operating increase; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the Bipartisan Policy Center ranked Texas last out of all states on the state-level administration of a coordinated and integrated early care and education system, meaning that the disruption of that already-precarious system resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic may cause irreversible damage if not addressed quickly and sufficiently; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Austin has approved more than \$2 million in grants and other support for child care centers and providers struggling with financial hardships resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, but this support is still insufficient without continued support and coordination at the state level; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The State of Texas should immediately take action to address the impending economic and public health crisis that will result from the closure of child care centers in Texas due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adequate response to this looming crisis should include:

- The creation and dissemination of a clear, action-oriented plan to release and distribute adequate resources from the state to meet the financial demands on child care facilities with the goal of assisting them in remaining safely operational during and after the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Spending sufficient federal and state dollars to provide relief for child care centers at risk of closing because of financial distress;
- Clear guidance for child care facilities on safe operations to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, with recommended best practices and guidance on implementing state and local orders, such as the wearing of face masks;

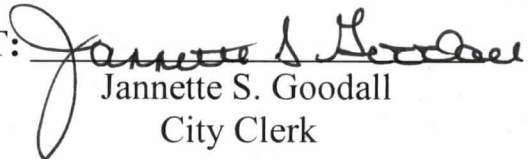
- Increased coordination between public health and licensing entities at the state to ensure that child care centers maintain a central focus in Texas's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Guidance and assistance for child care programs that do not serve families receiving subsidies, including private-pay and family programs;
- Guidance for parents to help them make informed decisions about their children's safety;
- Adequate monitoring of child care centers to ensure that licensing standards and guidance on safe operations are being followed;
- Resources and financial assistance available for employees providing care in child care facilities, the majority of whom do not have employer-provided health insurance and who earn low wages;
- Reauthorizing the essential worker subsidy so that essential workers can be assured that they will have child care available;
- Additional funding and support for full-day child care for eligible school-age children in school districts that have opted to provide virtual instruction at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year; and
- Continuing the standard of enhanced payments based on enrollment, rather than attendance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager will deliver this resolution to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, the Chair and Commissioners of the Texas Workforce Commission, the Chair and Commissioners of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, and Austin's state legislative delegation.

ADOPTED: July 29, 2020

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk