



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Early Childhood Council

20220309-3a: Budget Recommendation that Current Early Childhood Investments be Maintained

WHEREAS, in the City of Austin only 36% of children under age 4 living in households with low-income are receiving any early learning services at all; and

WHEREAS, 90% of these children age birth to 4 are children of color; and

Whereas, decades of research prove that disadvantages begin the moment children come into the world because children born into poverty and children of color are disproportionately born early, at low-birth-weight, or with chronic illnesses, and are less likely than their peers to be ready for, or successful at school; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the early childhood sector in Texas with an estimated loss of 22% of the state child care supply, as well as disproportionate impact on communities of color in Austin; and

WHEREAS, current City investments in early childhood programs align with the goals and strategies of the Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Strategic Plan – a robust, data-driven community strategic plan designed to coordinate efforts, improve child and family outcomes as well as build more efficient and coordinated systems for equitable access; and

WHEREAS, the investments align with the City of Austin Strategic Direction Strategic EOA.10: “Create equitable access to quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) by supporting families who do not qualify for existing free programs and cannot afford quality programs on their own, increasing availability of quality ECE programs, and encouraging living wages for ECE providers”; and

WHEREAS, these investments also align with the Strategic Anchors of SD 2023 including equity, affordability, sustainability and resiliency, proactive prevention and community trust and relationships;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Early Childhood Council recommends that the City of Austin maintain all current investments in early childhood programs and infrastructure including but not limited to:

- Social Service Contracts
- Staffing (2 FTE) positions specifically for early childhood through Austin Public Health
- Leases for city-funded early childhood facilities
- Essential infrastructure such as Family Connects and WIC programs that specifically serve families with young children prenatal to age 5.

Date of Approval: March 9, 2022

Record of the vote: Unanimous on a 10 – 0 vote

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_

