



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Early Childhood Council

20230308-10: Budget Recommendation Regarding Current Early Childhood Investments

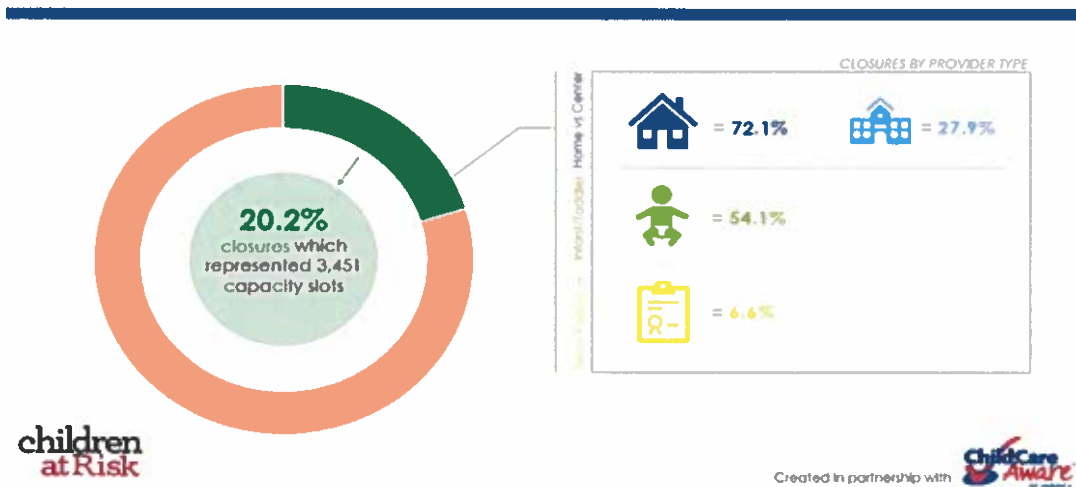
WHEREAS, in the City of Austin, only 36% of children under age four living in households with low income are receiving any early learning services at all; and

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 childcare supply, as well as a disproportionate effect on communities of color in Austin; and

Capital Area Closures as of September 2021



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 maintains all current investments in early childhood programs and infrastructure, including but not limited to:

- Social service contracts
 - Ready Families Collaborative for Home Visiting/Parent Support
 - Teacher-Director TRAC (Scholarships)
 - Afterschool & Summer Care - Early Head Start & Head Start
 - Quality Child Care Initiatives and Continuity of Care
- Start-up costs for PreK classrooms in Area School Districts
- Staffing (2 FTE) positions specifically for early childhood through Austin Public Health
- City-funded early childhood facilities
- Essential infrastructure such as Family Connects, Maternal and Infant Outreach Program, and WIC programs specifically serve families with young children from prenatal to age 5

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Early Childhood Council recommends that the City of Austin also do the following:

- Allocate full funding to pilot the innovative Economic Development Grant Program for Child Care Programs, which has been identified in City Council Resolution No. 20230126-055 as a mechanism to increase access to high-quality affordable early childhood services; and
- Incorporate inflation-adjusted increases of 20% for early childhood social service contracts

Date of Approval: March 8, 2023

Record of the vote: Unanimous on an 8-0 vote

Attest:

