



**HISPANIC/LATINO QUALITY-OF-LIFE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
FY23-2024 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION 20230328-013  
SUPPORTING CHILD AND YOUTH IN AUSTIN**

Date: March 28, 2023

Subject: FY23-24 Budget Recommendation – Supporting Child and Youth in Austin

Motioned by: Commissioner Dulce Castañeda      Seconded by: Commissioner Daniela Silva

---

**Recommendation:**

For the past few years, and including at this year's Quality of Life Town Hall meetings, residents have expressed continued concerns regarding the lack of children and youth programs and services. The City of Austin needs to ensure equitable funding regarding early childhood services, mental health services, and recreational and educational programs.

**Description of Recommendation to Council”**

- Increase Austin Public Health’s funding for two-generation bilingual early childhood programs.
- Increase Austin Public Health’s funding for child and youth mental health services that serve Hispanic/Latino clients in the client’s preferred language.
- Increase funding for culturally and linguistically diverse programs including allocating \$550,000 for Academia Cuauhtli.

**Rationale:**

Regarding early childhood services, the City of Austin has an agreement with Any Baby Can of Austin, Inc. to provide early childhood services to enable families to achieve self-sufficiency. These services are provided to residents through agencies that comprise the Ready Families Collaborative. There are a few service providers subcontracted to provide two-generation bilingual early childhood education services. AVANCE-Austin is one of the agencies tasked to provide such services. They provide parenting and early education classes; home-visitation and case management; transportation; and food for clients. The Camp Fire USA Balcones Council provides the Play to Learn two-generation parenting program. The Literacy Coalition of Central

Texas provides the Playing and Learning Strategies (PALS) program in multiple sites and classrooms. Communities In Schools provides comprehensive dual generation family literacy programming, PAT home visiting, and Incredible Years group parenting classes. These programs combined serve a small number of clients. This is not adequate funding for high quality Spanish and bilingual (Spanish and English) early childhood education and services that also includes case management, parenting education, literacy and educational programming for parents, and community support. These programs help the child and parents by providing them with support in their preferred language. These programs help families establish networks of support.

Regarding children and youth mental health services, there are very few programs and services that either offer clinicians that can effectively and competently provide services to predominantly marginalized populations or that provide low-cost sliding scales services and almost none that offer both. According to the American Psychiatric Association, bilingual patients are evaluated differently when evaluated in English versus Spanish, and Latinx/Hispanic people are more frequently undertreated than whites. Hispanic children and adolescents are at significant risk for mental health problems, and in many cases at greater risk than white children. Barriers to accessing mental health care include lack of insurance or inadequate insurance; lack of knowledge/awareness about mental health problems and services available; cultural stigma associated with mental illness; language; lack of culturally tailored services and culturally competent mental health professionals; shortage of bilingual or linguistically trained mental health professionals; difficulties recognizing the first signs of mental illness; and problems identifying psychiatric symptoms when chief complaint is somatic symptom.

Regarding children and youth recreational programs, there is a lack of places where youth can go to connect with their culture and heritage while being provided academic support and life skills. Academia Cuauhtli is a free culture and language revitalization academy for school children and their parents, and uses a curriculum focused on Indigeneity, social justice, social history, traditional arts, and *danza Mexica*. The program serves a working class, mostly Mexican, immigrant community whose children attend schools within Austin Independent School District (AISD) and embraces Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center's (ESB- MACC) mission of collaborative engagement in service to our communities. Academia Cuauhtli also fulfills its mission through teacher preparation and mentorship by creating teacher support networks, hosting professional training workshops and conferences and a diverse array of teachers and educators throughout Austin. Due to the interruption of COVID-19, students have demonstrated delays in academics, as well as in social emotional skills. There is a need for additional supports to help get them back on track. Programs like Academia Cuauhtli are in an excellent position to help Latino/a/x students in our community.

---

**Vote**

Roll Call Vote: 7 – 1 – 0.

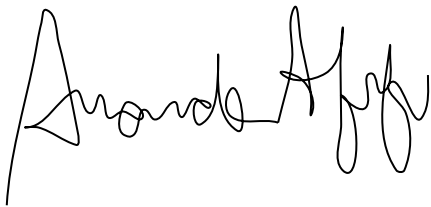
For: Commissioner Silva, Commissioner Afifi, Commissioner Maldonado, Commissioner Neri, Commissioner Perales, Commissioner Castañeda, and Commissioner Peña.

Against: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Commissioner Solis, Commissioner Ramirez, Commissioner Vigil

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Afifi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amanda Afifi, Chair