



## **Annual Internal Review**

**This report covers the time period of 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023**

### **Early Childhood Council**

**The Board/Commission mission statement** (per section 2-1-123 of the City Code) **is:**  
The Early Childhood Council shall:

1. Make recommendations to the city council for the creation, development, and implementation of programs that promote optimal development for young children,
2. Develop, for recommendation to city council, programs and activities that contribute to the continued development of a system of high-quality early care and education and after-school programs for Austin's children;
3. Explore and develop, for recommendation to city council, cooperative arrangements with area governments in the metropolitan region to support a system of quality early care and education;
4. Encourage volunteerism and philanthropic efforts in order to generate broad-based community involvement and support for quality early care and education and promote the wellbeing of families of young children; and
5. Develop, for recommendation to city council, strategies encouraging individuals and agencies to continually improve the quality of their services for young children; and
6. Support innovative approaches to quality early care and education and leadership development in fields relating to the optimal development of young children.

1. **Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**

*(Reference all reports, recommendations, letters or resolutions presented to the City Council on mission-specific issues. If some of the elements of the mission*

*statement were not acted on by the board in the past year, the report should explain why no action was taken.)*

On September 14, 2022, the Early Childhood Council (ECC):

- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to direct staff to implement waivers of annual Austin Fire Department fees and project-specific development services fees for high-quality licensed child care programs (those that are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Program, or have a four-star rating from the Texas Rising Star program) that accept child care subsidies.
  - Outcome: In [Resolution No. 20230126-055](#) Council directs the City Manager to create an economic development grant program to pay for City fees assessed when opening or expanding a qualifying childcare operation, to be considered by Council during the annual budget process. The proposed program should cover annual Austin Fire Department fees and fees related to use of the property, like a right-of-way fee, assessed by the Austin Transportation Department. Austin Public Health is in the process of working with staff in other City departments in response to this Council resolution.
- Authorized the creation of the ECC Quality-of-Life Study Workgroup to begin the planning process of a quality-of-life study of families and young children in Austin and to work collaboratively with other Joint Inclusion Committee commissions on the study.

On October 12, 2022, the Early Childhood Council (ECC):

- Voted to convene 2 ECC regular meetings in 2023 at more convenient times for families, child care providers, and other stakeholders to attend, to increase access to community members and increase the opportunity to provide public comment to the ECC. One meeting was scheduled for the evening of Tuesday, April 11, 2023, and the other for the morning of Saturday, August 12, 2023.

On November 9, 2022, the Early Childhood Council (ECC):

- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to incorporate the following recommendation to the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Policy Plan:
  - In affordable housing development, consider capacity for including affordable, high-quality child care
  - Prioritize home-/family-based child care providers in homeowner and tenant support services
  - Include child care staff for eligibility/priority in the universal mobility pilot program
  - Incorporate access to child care as a community benefit on the equity score card

- Consider adding child care facilities in the development of station areas
  - Outcome: Additional details on these recommendations were submitted to the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Team at the Housing and Planning Department and were incorporated into the ETOD plan Policy Toolkit submitted to Austin City Council on March 9, 2023. In [Resolution 20230309-016](#) Austin City Council accepted the ETOD Policy Plan and directed the City Manager to present an implementation plan to clearly identify next steps and identify financing and programmatic support for meeting ETOD goals through implementation of the Policy Toolkit.
- Adopted the ECC Quality-of-Life Study Workgroup member description and commitments.

On January 11, 2023, the ECC:

- Approved the three community members to serve as parent/caregiver members of the ECC's Quality-of-Life Study Workgroup.
- Endorsed the 2023 Best Place for Working Parents initiative.

On February 8, 2023, the ECC:

- Endorsed the [definition of “affordable, high-quality child care” proposed to Council](#) by City staff for the purposes of City business and policy related to child care in new City facilities and City-sponsored projects. This definition was drafted by Austin Public Health staff with input from the Success By 6 Coalition and the ECC in response to [Council Resolution 20221201-044](#).
  - Outcome: ECC members are not aware of any action to date by City Council to adopt the definition proposed by staff and endorsed by the ECC.

On March 8, 2023, the ECC:

- [Recommended](#) that the City of Austin maintain 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 that specifically serve families with young children prenatal to age 5
- Further [recommended](#) 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 increased of 20% for early childhood social service contracts
- Endorsed the ECC Quality-of-Life Request for Proposals (RFP) drafted by the Quality-of-Life Study Workgroup.

On April 11, 2023, the ECC:

- [Endorsed](#) the LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission Recommendation 20230313-2a that the Austin City Council approve additional funding for emergency housing assistance to mitigate the affordability crisis and to accomplish strategic goals related to housing stabilization, economic opportunity, and affordability at an amount to be determined by the Joint Inclusion Committee.
- Appointed ECC representatives to the Joint Inclusion Committee.

Progress was also made this year on recommendations made by the ECC in the previous years, including

- In April 2022, the ECC [encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to increase funding for child care services under the Community Development Block Grant for a) Early Head Start and b) expansion of the Teen Parent Child Care Program to provide child care for teen parents who are enrolled in districts other than Austin Independent School District (AISD).
  - Outcome: The City anticipates the Early Head Start and Teen Parent Child Care Program Community Development Block Grant agreements will be increased for FY 2023-24. However, the increase is not guaranteed and may be subject to change until the grant is received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in September 2023. Additionally, the FY 2023-24 funding for the Teen Parent Child Care Program, while likely to increase, will still be restricted to AISD.
- In January 2022, the ECC [encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to identify ways to alleviate the financial burden that is leading to increasing displacement of these essential workers out of Austin, such as property-tax relief, assistance for child care and work-related expenses, transportation subsidies, housing subsidies, etc.
  - Outcome: In May 2023, the City of Austin Economic Development Department (EDD) and community partners [announced](#) over \$1

million in funding for workforce development initiatives targeting early childcare educators. EDD and Austin Public Health is partnering with Workforce Solutions Capital Area to distribute \$1 million in premium pay wage stipends to child care teachers. Additionally, local non-profit, Together4Children, was awarded \$351,271 to provide leadership training and coaching to childcare center directors and assistant directors.

- In April 2018, the ECC [endorsed and recommended](#) City Council action on all items for Council consideration included in the High Quality Child Care and Pre-K 3 Report developed in response to Council Resolution 20170928-057. One of those was a policy item for Council consideration related to increasing zoning categories where child care is permitted.
  - Outcome: [Resolution No. 20230126-055](#) directs the City Manager to amend Title 25 Land Development Code to create separate zoning use classifications, and modify definitions, parking, and occupancy allowances pertaining to child care and daycare services to increase opportunities for child care services around the city. Per a [June 5, 2023, memo](#) to Mayor and Council from City staff, the Planning Department and the Development Services Department are set to provide a memo to City Council on July 20, 2023, proposing to split these tasks into two phases, with completion of phase 1 anticipated by October 2023, and completion of phase 2 anticipated by December 2024.

**2. Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**

*(If any of the board's actions were outside the scope of the mission statement, the report should explain the non-compliance issues.)*

Yes, the board's actions comply with the ECC mission statement.

**3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.**

*(Make sure the goals and objectives fall within the mission statement of the board/commission.)*

**In the new calendar year, the ECC will:**

1. Explore and create additional avenues for community voices including families, child care providers, and organizations, and serve as a conduit to carry their voices and perspectives to City Council to align with the Strategic Direction 2023 goal of "A Government that Works for All."
2. Influence City investments in early childhood education and advocate on policies that support the continued development of a system of high-quality early care and education for all Austin families.

3. Articulate how actions/recommendations align with City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023 outcomes.
4. Articulate how actions/recommendations align with the Success By 6 Coalition and 2-Gen community strategic plans.
5. Increase the impact of Early Childhood Council actions by continuing to improve communications between ECC members, Joint Inclusion Committee, and City Council and Mayor's offices.