



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Early Childhood Council

20250212-003: Budget Recommendation Regarding Family, Friend, and Neighbor Childcare

WHEREAS, in the City of Austin, 32% of children under age 6 live in households with low income; and

WHEREAS, 94% of the children in households with low income under age 6 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 weight, or with chronic illnesses, and are less likely than their peers to be ready for, or successful at school; and

WHEREAS, many of the federal, state, and local economic recovery funds invested in early childhood systems and programs have expired or are expiring in 2025; and

WHEREAS, Child Care Scholarship programs through Workforce Solutions Capital Area are at capacity, no new funding is available at this time, and as of December 2024, the estimated amount of time a family applying for a scholarship at that time will likely remain on a waitlist before they could expect to be outreached for enrollment is 24 months; and

WHEREAS, FFN (Family, Friend, and Neighbor) care typically involves grandparents, aunts, close friends, or trusted neighbors who provide home-based childcare for three or fewer unrelated children; and

WHEREAS, Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care is often chosen for its flexibility, affordability, culturally and linguistically relevant early education, and the personal connection it provides—allowing parents to entrust their child’s learning and care to someone they already know and trust within their community; and

WHEREAS, there are legal issues to be resolved regarding direct financial support to the broad spectrum of FFN service providers; and

WHEREAS, the Early Childhood Council has had input from the community’s Success By 6 Coalition (SX6) and GO! Austin/iVAMOS! Austin (GAVA), all calling for significantly increased local government investment in the Childcare sector; and

WHEREAS, GAVA has requested \$350,000 for programs to help develop a pipeline of FFN service providers and \$200,000 to provide a mobile lending library for home-based family childcare providers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Early Childhood Council recommends the City of Austin direct Austin Public Health and the Economic Development Department to work with GAVA and other

community input sources during FY26, or sooner if resources allow, to develop an integrated plan for Family, Friends, and Neighbor support that:

- Resolves potential legal issues around providing financial relief grants to FFN providers.
- Finalizes any new FFN-related budget items that might result from the new plan.

Date of Approval: February 12, 2025

Record of the vote: The recommendation was approved unanimously on Member Hedrick's motion, Member Gordon's second, on a 9-0 vote.

Attest: _____

Caitlin Oliver, staff liaison