



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2018 to 6/30/2019

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 April 10, 2019, the Early Childhood Council took the following actions:

- [Recommended](#) that City Council:
 - Endorse the Early Matters Greater Austin Family-Friendly Toolkit <https://www.earlymattersgreataustin.org/toolkit>;
 - Pilot an assessment of the family friendly policies and practices of the City of Austin as an employer, identify areas in which the City could improve to become a more family friendly employer based on the assessment, and implement identified improvements; and
 - Encourage employers within the City of Austin to likewise assess their family friendly policies and practices, identify opportunities for improvement, and implement the identified improvements.
- [Recommended](#) that City Council and the City of Austin Intergovernmental Relations office support the following bills that have been introduced in the Texas Legislature that would benefit young children and their families:

Pre-Kindergarten

[HB3 Reps. Huberty, Bernal, Zerwas, Ken King, Allen](#)- Relating to public school finance and public education.

[HB55 Rep. González / SB818 Sen. Menéndez](#)- Relating to class size limits and student/teacher ratios for prekindergarten classes provided by or on behalf of public schools. Collect data on class sizes and ratios.

[HB189 Rep. Reynolds / SB36 Sen. Zaffirini](#) - Relating to providing free full-day prekindergarten for certain children.

[SB287 Sen. Miles](#) - Relating to the availability of universal optional free prekindergarten programs in public schools.

[HB612 Rep. Thierry](#) - Relating to providing free full-day prekindergarten for certain children.

[HB752 Rep. Wu](#) - Relating to providing free full-day prekindergarten for certain children.

[SB301](#) - Relating to limits on the size of prekindergarten classes in public schools. Except as otherwise authorized by this section, a school district may not enroll more than 18 students in a prekindergarten class or 22 students in a kindergarten, first, second, third, or fourth grade class.

Child Care safety and standards

[HB680 Rep. Deshotel](#) / [SB1002 Sen. Watson](#)- Relating to the evaluation of and improvements to the quality of the Texas Workforce Commission's subsidized child care program.

[HB568 Sen. Huffman](#) - Relating to the regulation of child-care facilities and family homes; providing administrative penalties.

[HB1682 Rep. Raney](#) / [SB708 Sen. Zaffirini](#) - Relating to collection and use of child safety data for licensed day-care centers.

[HB4259 Rep. Bonnen](#) / [SB569 Sen. Huffman](#) - Relating to the regulation of listed family homes – protection of health and safety, providing adequate supervision.

[SB952 Sen. Watson](#) / [HB1808 Rep. Lucio III](#) - Relating to standards for nutrition, physical activity, and screen time for certain child-care facilities and homes.

[HB2883 Rep. Bernal](#) / [SB1744 Sen. Menéndez](#) - Relating to training requirements and prohibited discrimination for child-care facilities and registered family homes.

Category: Prevention of child abuse and neglect

[SB355 Sen. West](#) - Relating to developing a strategic plan to ensure the provision of prevention and early intervention services complies with federal law.

Category: Health and Mental Health

[SB189 Sen. Miles](#) - Relating to the automatic enrollment of certain women in the Healthy Texas Women program.

[HB 1879 Rep. Davis of Harris](#) - Relating to the automatic enrollment of certain women in Medicaid and the Healthy Texas Women and CHIP perinatal programs.

[HB342 Rep. Cortez](#) - Relating to the period of continuous eligibility for the medical assistance program.

[HB1292 Rep. Price](#) / [SB436 Sen. Nelson](#) - Relating to statewide initiatives to improve maternal and newborn health for women with opioid use disorder.

[SB750 Sen. Kolkhorst](#) - Relating to maternal and newborn health care and the quality of services provided to women in this state under certain health care programs.

[HB25 Rep. González of El Paso](#) - Relating to the provision of services to certain children under the Medicaid medical transportation program.

[HB18 Rep. Price](#) - Relating to consideration of the mental health of public school students in training requirements for certain school employees, curriculum requirements, counseling programs, educational programs, state and regional programs and services, and health care services for students and to mental health first aid program training and reporting regarding local mental health authority and school district personnel.

Category: Workforce Support

[HB52 Rep. Hinojosa](#) - relating to a franchise tax credit pilot program for taxable entities that contribute to an employee dependent care flexible spending account.

- [Recommended](#) City Council include in the **2019-2023 Consolidated Plan** being developed by the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Office a strategy for promoting “Family Stability” that includes establishment of a “Family Stability Fund” that:
 - Helps to assess the needs of low-income individuals and families at risk of displacement and stabilize their situation by alleviating the impact of the largest cost drivers in their household budget; and
 - Provides funding for transportation, quality child care and other obstacles to accessing adult education and job training opportunities that can lead to financial stability and success.

and encouraged Council to develop an office or program that is charged with proactively informing families at risk of displacement about programs and resources that can help provide financial stability and expand economic opportunity.

On May 2, 2019, the Early Childhood Council submitted the following recommendations to Council for the City’s fiscal year 2020 budget:

- Maintain or increase funding for Continuity of Child Care Services Program, noting the following:
 - Program funds have been expended every year in existence with an ongoing waitlist for services (782 children as of 4/29/19). Continuity of Child Care increases efficiency for our child care system because children are stabilized in

care, providing stability for their caregivers to work and maintain employment and children to receive long-term benefits of continuous care. In the long-term, this will decrease need for more expensive interventions down the road. This recommendation will increase equitable access to affordable, high-quality early care and education, thereby helping to eliminate racial and socio-economic disparities in rates of school readiness and associated longer-term outcomes.

- Allocate funding to hire an additional full-time regular staff person at Austin Public Health to work on Early Childhood issues, noting the following:
 - Efficiency: This recommendation will improve efficiency and effectiveness of city investments and community efforts by increasing staff capacity to:
 - Contribute more deeply to planning and coordination with community partners on the Austin/Travis County Success By 6 and 2-gen strategic plans;
 - Expand and deepen collaborations with other city departments to improve policies, resources, and services related to early childhood, such as collaborating with the Human Resources Department to develop trainings for City staff about early childhood issues, programs, and services;
 - Maintain and update data on the availability of high quality, affordable child care in Austin for use by various City departments;
 - Respond to Council directives; Equity Children of color are disproportionately represented in the population of children from home with low income. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of early childhood programs and services will help build equitable access to resources and opportunities for these children, and therefore is also likely to improve school readiness and later educational achievement such as 3rd grade reading. Collaborations across city departments, programs, and initiatives can improve awareness of, and existing inequities in, access to high quality early learning programs.
- Keep \$128,000 in the COA FY2020 budget to provide area school districts start-up costs to open 8 new Pre-K classrooms in the City of Austin, noting the following:
 - This one-time funding would allow school districts to serve up to 32 additional children per classroom each year. Ongoing expenses for the classroom would be covered by the school districts drawing down state Average Daily Attendance funding for each eligible child enrolled. In FY2018, the City of Austin funded 3 classrooms in Austin ISD. In FY2019, the City funded 5 classrooms in Austin ISD, 4 in Del Valle ISD, and in 4 Manor ISD. These classrooms are able to serve nearly 500 children per school year. Nevertheless, there is continued need and waiting lists for additional Pre-K 3 seats in Austin area school districts.
 - Efficiency: \$16,000 for a classroom allows schools to draw down \$3500 in Texas state funding per student, or a total of \$112,000 per classroom. A one-time capital investment by the city allows the districts to leverage available state funding for operational costs for future years. Pre-k reduces the need for special education and grade retention, both of which are costly.
 - Equity: Public school pre-k serves primarily children from low-income families, English-language learners, and other children of color, allowing them to access educational experiences that more affluent families typically purchase.

- Effectiveness: Pre-kindergarten is demonstrably effective for improving children's readiness for school; it leads them to have a better chance for success as they move through school. Not only do individual children benefit, but also such programs have "spillover effects" that can improve outcomes for all students enrolled because teachers can raise the level of expectations while spending less time on remediation and discipline.
- Include any expenditures necessary to support implementation of the remaining recommendations from the High Quality Child Care and Pre-K3 Report, per the report the City Manager provides to Council in response to Item 20 on the 4/11/19 City Council agenda (Council Resolution 20190411-020), noting the following:
 - Efficiency: These actions are aimed at improving efficiencies because funding recommendation 4 would help to better understand how incentives and private-partnerships might increase access to and availability of affordable, high quality child care in Austin, and Consideration C would help to establish a coordinated system of enrollment in and referral to high quality early care and education opportunities.
 - Effectiveness: Funding recommendations 2 and 3 involve increased access to training for child care and Head Start teachers, which would increase the quality and effectiveness of the early care and education provided in our community. Because policy recommendation 1 and Consideration G are meant to remove barriers to opening, operating, or expanding high quality child care centers, these actions could expand the availability of high quality child care thus more effectively meeting our community's need for these services.
 - Equity: These actions will help address inequities in access to high quality early education and the disadvantages that relate to this lack of access because:
 - Policy recommendation 2; funding recommendations 1 and 5; and considerations A, B, D, E and F from the High Quality Child Care and Pre-K 3 Report would help to expand access to free or affordable high quality child care, and because
 - As noted in the data section, 90% of low-income children are children of color and only 39% of children from households with low income begin kindergarten ready to learn and succeed.

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.)

Goal: Support/expand the City's early childhood efforts and support the community's Success by 6 Strategic Plan

- ❖ Support strategies within the **Safe & Stimulating Communities** section of the Success by 6 Strategic Plan
- ❖ Support strategies within the **Supported Families** section of the Success by 6 Strategic Plan
- ❖ Support strategies within the **High-Quality Care and Education** section of the Success by 6 Strategic Plan
- ❖ Support strategies within the **Healthy Beginnings** section of the Success by 6 Strategic Plan

Goal: Expand ECC representation on boards and committees

- ❖ Participate in any Dove Springs Health Center planning committees and/or receive updates about the project
- ❖ Explore ECC becoming part of Joint Inclusion Commission
- ❖ Appoint an ECC member to APH work group if it reconvenes

Goal: Ensure ECC members and their City Council Sponsor are well-informed about early childhood issues

- ❖ Create fact/data sheet for each Council district in partnership with Success by 6
- ❖ Develop orientation process/materials for new ECC members
- ❖ Appointees build relationships with their council members by checking in with them regularly
- ❖ Encourage dialogue about recommendations that haven't been acted on yet
- ❖ Receive regular updates from SX6 data committee