



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL MINUTES

**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
Wednesday, January 13, 2021**

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) convened on Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

Board Members in Attendance: Chair McHorse, Vice Chair Worthington, Members Alvarez, Bliss-Lima, Conlin, Cortés-Castillo, Gordon, Hosking Pulido, Huston, Paver, and Wren

Staff in attendance: Rachel Farley, Larry Elsner, Cindy Gamez, Ashlee Kraus, Mary Jamsek, Donna Sundstrom

CALL TO ORDER – Chair McHorse called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATION- none

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES- Minutes from the November 17, 2020 meeting will be approved at the February 2021 meeting

2. PRESENTATION

- a. Parent Voice and Parent Leadership Initiative- Paola Silvestre Porras, Director Family Pathways, United Way for Greater Austin

The vision of Family Pathways is more parents attain economic stability and more organizations are family focused. Ms. Silvestre Porras reviewed the 2-gen strategic plan for our community and the theory of change that will lead to greater economic mobility for families. She then talked about the parenting groups they started in October 2019- the Family Leadership Council (FLC) and Link-Up Austin. Key goals of FLC include having the expertise of parents with young children inform community-wide strategic plans and helping parent leaders influence systems change. Link-up Austin is made up of young parents and key goals include connecting them with leaders and experts and supporting them as they grow leadership and problem-solving skills. Ms. Silvestre Porras noted that the parents are considered consultants and are compensated after each session. She explained some unique aspects of the groups: parents are provided training (examples- public speaking, leadership skills, racial equity, advocacy, equity and inclusion); the content is tailored to needs of the group and does not follow a curriculum; they make sure parents have a seat at the table where decisions are being made about them- not just a voice; and they connect parents to opportunities to share their stories with change agents. Participants have joined organizational boards, spoken to large groups, and helped make decisions about funding allocations. Ms. Silvestre Porras also outlined 8 principles for engaging and centering parent voices.

ECC members asked what issues were most important to the parents in the groups. Ms. Silvestre Porras said many are focused on digital equity issues especially since pandemic; access to child care and navigating a challenging child care system; and pathways to career and education so they can provide for their families. ECC members asked how Family Pathways is working with programs to assess how they work with families to help build social capital. She noted that they provided trainings for organizations on how to launch peer to peer groups and that Family Pathways emphasizes that parent engagement can be most effective when parents lead that work and organizations follow. ECC members thanked Ms. Silvestre Porras for being part of the ECC Community Engagement Work Group and noted that parents in

the groups are welcome to come to ECC meetings to provide public comment about the child care system or other topics.

3. NEW BUSINESS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS

a. Chair Updates – Cathy McHorse

i. Planning for setting ECC 2021 goals

Chair McHorse compiled an ECC Foundations document to guide the discussion that includes the charge of the ECC, the City's Strategic Direction 2023, goals of the Success by 6 and 2-Gen strategic plans. She encourages work groups to think about goals for the ECC ahead of the February meeting. 2 ideas are to increase communication between ECC members and Council offices and increase public awareness of the ECC.

ii. Email template for sharing ECC information with appointing Council office

Chair McHorse asks that each month after the ECC meeting, members send an email to the Council office that appointed them to share a few highlights from our meeting and extend the opportunity for them to share with the ECC. ECC members can take turns drafting and sharing highlights that members can include in the emails.

iii. State legislative updates

Chair McHorse noted that Success By 6 is tracking legislation related to young children, including bills to: form a commission to explore disparities in compensation among the early childhood workforce; make participation in Texas Rising Star mandatory; and support universal home visiting programs like Family Connects. There is also an Early Childhood Caucus that was formed by Diego Bernal and James Talarico

b. Topics to bring to Joint Inclusion Committee

ECC members were encouraged to let Members Alvarez and Hosking Pulido know if they have topics they want them to raise with the JIC.

c. Next meeting of Community Engagement Work Group (Jan. 26, 3:30-4:30 p.m.)

d. Vote on draft resolution to support the City of Austin state legislative agenda

Member Huston moved to approve the resolution, Member Wren seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 11-0.

4. STAFF BRIEFING

a. Austin Child Care Relief Grant

The application window is open- 125 applications submitted and another 105 in progress. The City has a dashboard that summarizes the COVID relief spending. This grant is available to programs in the City limits that have a Texas Rising Star (TRS) quality rating or national accreditation, or who are willing to make an appointment for a TRS assessment.

b. COVID-19 child care and schools response update-

An overview of key components of the work Austin Public Health has done since March 2020 to support child care programs and schools to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 was provided. This work has included the formation of a Child Care Task Force, a Schools Response group, guidance and recommendations for child care and schools, health and safety supplies for child care, and child care forum meetings for peer-to-peer support among providers, in addition work on the City child care relief grants.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- WIC- food access during the pandemic
- Maternal Health Equity Coalition
- Intergovernmental relations group- action item
- Census, demographers, projections for the future

- Process- think ahead about potential action or discussion questions related to presentations to the ECC

ADJOURNMENT – Chair McHorse adjourned the meeting at 9:58 a.m.