



Updates: High Quality Child Care and Pre-K 3 Resolution Work Group 2018 recommendations to Council

Early Childhood Council

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DONNA SUNDSTROM, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

RACHEL FARLEY, EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Background

- Sept. 2017 Council Resolution [20170928-057](#)
 - 12 deliverables
- APH convened work group of early childhood stakeholders
- April 2018 [staff response to 2017 resolution](#) sent to Council
 - [Interactive Map](#)
 - 14 recommendations from work group
- August [2019 staff update to Council](#)

Policy Recommendations

Policy Recommendation 1

RECOMMENDATION

Explore fee waivers for expenses related to opening, expanding or operating high quality child care centers

Explore increasing zoning categories where child care is a permitted use or consider waiver for the condition use permit process and/or waiver for condition use permit fees

UPDATES

Council Resolution 20181004-036 – evaluate fee and zoning regulations relating to child care centers.

January 2019, APH amended the Fee Schedule and City Code Chapter 10-3 – waived fees for food establishment permits (\$359 annual savings) and general environment/licensing inspections (\$110 annual savings) for high quality child care centers that accept scholarships

[April 12, 2019, response to Council](#) from Planning and Zoning and Development Services Departments with recommendations

APH is in discussion with Planning & Zoning Dept. and Austin Fire Dept.

Policy Recommendation 2

Develop a policy in consultation to include the option and related price estimate for an affordable, high quality child care facility for Request for Proposals (RFPs), Request for Applications (RFAs), and other competitive processes that the City conducts to lease or develop space for projects such as affordable housing, office space, Parks facilities, and/or mixed use development.

- Consider feasibility
- Consider if quality child care needed in the area

Any future City projects that will house a significant number of employees such as the space for the Development Services Department on the Highland Mall campus, the future headquarters for Austin Energy, the future headquarters for the Austin Police Department, and any other large facilities should include a cost estimate and option for inclusion of an onsite quality child care center for Council to consider as part of each project.

Policy Rec. 2 Updates

2019 – Revised of guidelines for Low Income Housing Tax Credit Resolution program

In process – Rental Housing Development Assistance Program (RHDA) scoring system application and scoring being updated to incorporate access to affordable, high-quality child care

2021 – Council resolution 20210826-108 reaffirming that new City facilities and City-sponsored public oriented projects include family-friendly features; directing consideration to include child-care facilities in City-owned redevelopments and cost estimates to include onsite child care for City projects that will house a significant number of City of Austin employees.

- In process – Office of Real Estate Services and APH drafted policy and scoring criteria to evaluate inclusion of child care in development of City-owned or leased properties. Implementation in apx. 1-2 months.

Funding Recommendations

Funding Recommendation 1

Provide areas school districts with one-time start-up funding to set up new Pre-K 3 classrooms at \$16K per classroom. Classrooms with two half-day sessions of 16 children could leverage \$112K in state funding per year.

New Pre-K Classrooms

- \$608,000 invested since FY2018
- 37 new classrooms
- 5 school districts
- Serving up to 984 students per year
- Leveraging up to apx. \$4.2 million in state funding per year

Fiscal Year	School District	Number of Classrooms	City Investment
FY2018	Austin	3	\$48,000
FY2019	Manor	4	\$64,000
	Del Valle	4	\$64,000
	Austin	5	\$80,000
	Austin	5	\$80,000
	Del Valle	3	\$48,000
FY2021	Del Valle	7	\$112,000
	Pflugerville	1	\$16,000
FY2022	Austin	4	\$80,000
	Leander	1	\$16,000
Total		37	\$608,000

Funding Recommendation 2

Partner with the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC) and invest \$41,500 annually to provide 5 scholarships each year for eligible child care and Head Start teachers to earn Texas State Teacher Certification through an Alternative Teaching Program (ACC, Huston-Tillotson, Region XIII Service Center) in order to expand community-based Pre-K partnerships.

Funding Rec. 2 Updates

Not initially funded

Work group reconvened in 2019 and withdrew this recommendation

2019 staff update to Council raised consideration of providing education awards to incentivize qualified teachers to serve in community based Pre-K programs and to retain qualified teachers in those programs.

\$713K in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to United Way for Greater Austin for management of Pre K Partnerships Hub

- Coaching for teachers & directors
- Enrollment & attendance tracking support
- Submission of Average Daily Attendance invoices to AISD
- Payments to partner centers
- Stipends to partnership classroom teachers

Funding Recommendation 3

RECOMMENDATION

Invest \$137,600 annually to accelerate 20 students per year through the CDA Preparation Certificate program with Austin Community College (ACC)

UPDATES

Not funded

Recommendation prompted City, County, ACC, and TXAEYC/T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship program to coordinate

- Ensure state funds used before tapping City and County dollars allocated to locally funded Teacher & Director TRAC program
- ACC checks applicant eligibility for T.E.A.C.H. before awarding TRAC funds

\$157K in ARPA funds supporting wrap-around incentives for T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients

Funding Recommendation 4

RECOMMENDATION

Invest an estimated \$75K to hire a consultant to study potential incentive programs and public private partnerships that could be effectively implemented in Austin around quality child care

UPDATES

TXP, Inc. report – [Child Care and Economic Development in Austin](#), July 2019

Report helped inform Success By 6 recommendations to Council about ARPA funding

One report recommendation was for the City to identify dedicated, long-term funding for early care & education

Bond Recommendation

Bond Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION

Include Dove Springs Health Center in the 2018 Bond Package and expand project scope and funding to include an affordable, high quality child care center onsite.

UPDATES

Council included this item in the bond package. Prop E passed with 70% of voters approving. The Dove Springs Public Health Center is set to include Neighborhood Center Services (basic needs services, social work case management, preventive health services, WIC, immunizations, and an affordable high-quality child care center to serve approximately 75 children.

Architectural plans are complete

Project in permitting phase

Funding & Policy Recommendations

Funding & Policy Recommendation 1

RECOMMENDATION

Formal discussions with AISD to use underutilized classrooms in elementary schools for high quality affordable child care for City and AISD employees and/or community members, including families receiving child care scholarships.

City investment in minor capital improvements and/or ongoing costs associated with agreements with child care providers.

UPDATES

The City, County, and AISD have a joint committee that coordinates. No action taken to date.

Funding & Policy Recommendation 2

Raise the family income level required to qualify for the Income-Eligible Child Care Assistance program available for City employees, and/or

Set the assistance level at a tiered rate to correspond with the higher cost for services per child at younger ages, and/or

Raise the financial assistance rate overall for all children.

Funding & Policy Rec. 2 Updates

Family Size	Income limit before 2019	2019 Income limit	2022 Income limit
2	\$59,366	\$68,800	\$78,234
3	\$62,710	\$77,400	\$88,026
4	\$72,698	\$86,000	\$97,818
5	\$81,098	\$92,900	\$105,621
6	\$89,498	\$99,750	\$113,475

Income limits raised and reviewed annually

2019 – City promoted Family Friendly Toolkit to Austin businesses

2020 – [City completed Family Friendly Workplace assessment](#); designated a Best Place for Working Parents

Informed staff throughout pandemic about child care for essential workers & finding child care

Emphasize child care benefits to new employees and to current employees during open enrollment periods

APH & Human Resources Dept. presentation to City staff about child care benefits, importance of choosing high quality

APH/HRD/PARD webinars for staff planned twice yearly with incentives through City's Healthy Rewards program

Agreement with KinderCare Education at Work for 10% tuition discount for most locations

Family Connects program as health benefit for employees as of January 1, 2022

Funding & Policy Recommendation 3

Initiate and fund planning of a Coordinated Early Childhood Enrollment and Resources and Referral System among high quality child care providers, Workforce Solutions Capital Area, school districts, & Child Inc.

System should make families aware of all the options that fit their needs and location, including high quality child care, child care scholarships, free public Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4, tuition-based public Pre-K, Early Head Start and Head Start.

Funding & Policy Rec. 3 Updates

Pritzker Fellow initiated work

- Convened work group, identified common enrollment elements, planned key search tool elements

Pandemic disruption

- Texas Child Care Availability Portal launched by state
- ConnectATX and 2-1-1 refer to the portal

APH work to promote Pre-K enrollment

- Facebook Live events

ARPA funds for two Family & Community Engagement staff positions for two years at Workforce Solutions Capital Area

- Moving children off waitlist into care
- Determine eligibility for care through various funding streams
- Develop systems of warm referrals to Early Head Start, Head Start, public Pre-K

Funding & Policy Recommendation 4

RECOMMENDATION

Cover the funding gap child care providers experience for each high quality subsidized seat between the cost for providing high quality care and the amount reimbursed for that care through scholarships.

UPDATES

No action taken

Texas Workforce Commission has increased child care scholarship reimbursement rates to providers, though cost of care gap remains.

Funding & Policy Recommendation 5

Pursue creation of City-owned or leased facilities for high-quality affordable child care, which should include options for contracted and City-run high quality child care services at the facility.



Funding & Policy Rec. 5 Updates

KinderCare at Bergstrom Tech

- Opened Nov. 2021
- Operates by NAEYC standards
- 72 seats, 10 for children on scholarship
 - 56 enrolled; 7 are children of City staff; 2 on scholarship, 3 more pending approval; 29 on waitlist, 10 are infants
- OLE (Outdoor Learning Environment) playground
- Child care at Dove Springs Public Health Center



Funding & Policy Recommendation 6

RECOMMENDATION

Explore options for the Parks and Recreation Department to expand existing programs and/or create new enrichment programs for children 3-5 years old that comply with quality standards.

UPDATES

PARD operates one location as a licensed provider – Nature’s Way Preschool at Austin Nature & Science Center

Not feasible for PARD to expand programming for 3-5 year-olds. Limitations are:

- Space constraints due to after-school & summer camp programming
- Increasing programming time would require PARD to become licensed child care provider for more sites
- Staff capacity

Cities Connecting Children to Nature



Pease Park, Photo by Roger Ho



MLK Station Neighborhood Park



Walnut Creek metropolitan Park

Funding & Policy Recommendation 7

RECOMMENDATION

Explore options to alleviate tax burdens for quality child care centers through abatement and/or leasing City-owned property for child care centers.

UPDATES

2019 – Updated scoring system the Economic Development Department uses to evaluate and determine the level of economic development incentives to offer firms relocating or expanding

- Amount of parental leave
- High-quality child care onsite
- Extent of subsidies provided to employees for child care
- Provision & amount of paid Family Medical Leave (FMLA)

Pandemic Response

SUPPORT FOR CHILD CARE & PRE-K

COVID-19 Relief Funding

- \$1 million to support child care provider relief grants through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- \$5,048,000 to support childcare provider relief grants through the City of Austin's Save Austin's Vital Economic Sectors (SAVES) Fund
- \$2.6 million to support childcare for essential workers through the federal Community Development Block Grant- Covid Relief
- \$11 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) local fiscal recovery funds for child care and early childhood supports

Other supports

- Health and Safety supplies
- Dedicated nurses staffing calls
 - 3,142 calls between July 2020 and May 5, 2022
(1,004 of those this year)
- COVID-19 email updates
 - 61 emails sent with information, resources, and guidance



Conclusion

Investments made

Other funding sources leveraged

Completed work

Work in progress

Ongoing efforts



Questions

DONNA.SUNDSTROM@AUSTINTEXAS.GOV

RACHEL.FARLEY@AUSTINTEXAS.GOV