

**EARLY MATTERS
GREATER AUSTIN**
Steering Committee

CHAIR

Mark Williams, Trustee
ACC Board

Michael Burke, CEO
Tesoro Energy, retired

Colette Pierce Burnette, President
Huston-Tillotson University

John Cullen, Partner
Capstar Partners

Sandy Dochen, Former Manager
Corporate Citizenship
IBM

Libby Doggett, Community Advisor

Jesús Garza, Former CEO
Seton Healthcare

Kate Garza, Director of Advocacy
and External Affairs
Ascension Seton

Joene Grissom, Owner
Grissom & Associates

Tom Hedrick, Founder
Dillon Joyce, Ltd

Kirby Hiscox, VP Corp. Development
TX Association of Business

Ali Khataw, President & CEO
Encotech Engineering Consultants

Earl Maxwell, Former CEO
St. David's Foundation

Rosie Mendoza, CFO
Fiesta Tortillas

Catherine Morse, Partner
Enoch Kever

Rose Smith, Founder and CEO
Black Women in Business

Jeff Thomas, Sr. V.P. and GM
H-E-B

Jeanette Ward, Chief Operating Officer
Texas Mutual

Blanca Zamora-Garcia, Founder
Casa Blanca Realty

May 4, 2020

Members of the Austin City Council
Austin City Hall
301 West 2nd Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Esteemed City Council Members,

As we work together through this unprecedented moment, we lean into our shared values and use them to guide us forward. Now is the time to work collaboratively to get this right.

Therefore, we encourage you to support Agenda Items #23 and #64 slated for discussion during the May 7th City Council meeting. There are important aspects in both items that recognizing the critical role the child care industry plays in making it feasible for parents to return to work. Item #23 creates a \$1 million Child Care Relief Support Fund and Item #64 amends the General Fund Emergency Reserve to allow for COVID-19 relief response funding. This much needed funding would provide grants to childcare centers in Austin that (1) serve families that receive childcare subsidies (2) have at least a 2-Star quality rating and (3) have not received PPP money through CARES.

Relief support for child care is more critical now than ever. The current and necessary safety standards for providing child care during COVID-19 result in significantly higher costs with lower revenues for child care programs. Because centers are required to care for less children, they produce less tuition yet have significantly higher operating costs. These costs can't easily be absorbed by financially fragile businesses or passed along to parents through tuition.

Early Matters Greater Austin (EMGA) is a group of business leaders – of businesses big and small, non-profit and for-profit - that believe all children deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential. Thank you for recognizing the vital role of the child care workforce – many of whom are small business owners – in caring for our children so that our workforce can focus on the critical work that lies ahead.

As we rebuild, let's redesign our economy and systems so that they work for all of us. This includes supporting the child care industry so that families wanting to get back to work have access to safe and nurturing care and education for their children.

Sincerely,



Mark Williams, Chair
Early Matters Greater Austin