



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021

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 August 10, 2020, the Early Childhood Council (ECC):

- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to share and amplify these five Key Messages for families with young children through all available channels including social media, council office communications, and communications from city staff.
 1. Wear a mask every time you leave your home. If you must enter a public building such as a grocery store, try to keep the number of people with you to a minimum. Remember, kids under the age of two should NOT wear masks because of the risk of suffocation.
 2. Sign up for Bright By Text for timely resources, simple encouragements, and supports for caregivers: <http://www.bit.ly/SMARTATX>
 3. For the well-being of young children, keep home routines going as much as you can, include daily talking, playing, reading, and singing.
 4. Fill out the Census at <http://www.mycensus2020.gov> to ensure our community has the resources and representation we need for the next 10 years.
 5. Call 2-1-1 or visit <http://www.connectatx.org/> to access information about basic needs, including food, childcare, mental health, physical safety, and more.
- [Encouraged](#) the Austin City Council to support the recommendations in the forthcoming report to Council in response to Council Resolution 20200739-089 and act in a timely manner to fund and implement them. At that time, Austin Public Health staff and members of the Task Force were finalizing that report which, as directed by Council, included recommended measures for stabilizing the local child care system and actions that may be taken at the local, state, and federal levels, including an assessment of the viability of establishing a Child Care Stabilization Fund that may award immediate and ongoing stabilization grants and other solutions to increase equitable access to quality child care.

On October 21, 2020, the ECC:

- [Thanked](#) the Austin City Council for including child care as a vital economic sector in the SAVE(S) Resolution as well as including an early childhood sector representative on the Board of the Austin Economic Development Corporation. The ECC noted that, taken together, these actions will provide critical support to the child care sector in the short-term and will help to build a more resilient, sustainable industry for the long-term.

March 10, 2020, the ECC:

- [Recommended](#) that the City of Austin maintain all existing funding for early childhood programs and services through Austin Public Health including social services contracts for the Ready Families Collaborative, Teacher and Director TRAC, after school and summer early care and education, Continuity of Care, and child care quality, as well as funding for the Bergstrom Tech child care facility lease and start-up costs for Pre-K classrooms in area school districts.
- [Recommended](#) that the City of Austin, through Austin Public Health, consider opportunities to re-purpose designated funding for Pre-K classrooms in area school districts into a contract for supporting the administrative hub for Austin ISD's Pre-

- K Partnerships managed by the United Way for Greater Austin IF local districts did not plan to expand capacity in the 2021-2022 school year.
- [Recommended](#) that the City of Austin prioritize selection of redevelopment proposals for sites adding affordable housing units which include site plans for affordable high quality child care (defined by those that contract to accept child care subsidies and commit to meeting Texas Rising Star 4 quality rating).
 - [Recommended](#) that the City of Austin incorporate and adopt all “Recommendations for Transforming the ATX Early Childhood System” submitted by the Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Coalition in the spending framework for COVID-19 relief and recovery and American Rescue Plan Funding. The goals of the recommendations submitted were to:
 - Mitigate the “Benefits Cliff” by supporting parents with bridge funding to access child care
 - Support parents with funding to access child care who are ineligible for subsidy due to unemployment or loss of hours.
 - Increase access to and enrollment in high-quality child care programs for children living in households with low-income
 - Use recovery dollars to address the structural problems in the child care system by building shared service supports to strengthen systems.
 - Recruit and retain qualified teachers and administrators necessary for high quality child care.
 - Expand capacity and participation in home-visiting, parent education, & family support services.

On May 12, 2021, the ECC:

- [Recommended](#) that the City of Austin expand the reach of the Family Connects program by 2,000 births per year to provide the healthiest possible start for newborns and their families in Austin/Travis County, noting that an investment of \$1.18M a year (\$3.54M for 3 years) would enable the Family Connects program to add an additional 2,000 births a year with an emphasis on serving births covered by Medicaid and families served by our community’s Federally Qualified Health Centers.
- [Recommended](#) that the City of Austin incorporate and adopt the addendum entitled “Expand access to dual-language full-day Pre-K for 4 year-olds” as part of the original recommendations submitted to the City of Austin by the Early Childhood Council entitled “Recommendations for Transforming the ATX Early Childhood System,” which were submitted by the Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Coalition in the spending framework for COVID-19 relief and recovery and American Rescue Plan Funding.

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.)

In the new calendar year, the ECC will:

1. Create avenues for community voices including families, child care providers, and organizations, and serve as a conduit to carry their voices and perspectives to City Council
2. Influence City investments in early childhood education and advocate on policies related to child care
3. Articulate how actions/recommendations align with City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023 outcomes
4. Articulate how actions/recommendations align with the Success By 6 and 2-Gen community strategic plans
5. Increase communication between ECC members and City Council and Mayor's offices