

AUSTIN

TEXAS

Child care equitably prioritized in Austin and Travis County Covid-19 relief and emergency funding support efforts

The team continued to balance priorities around Bright By Text, Family Connects, and Coordinated Enrollment throughout 2020 despite the increased pressures emerging during the pandemic. The team identified critical needs in the local early childhood system and effectively responded to support child care providers. Efforts ranged from distributing funds for providers, providing vital information through the Covid-19 Nurse Telephone Line and email distribution list, and ensuring the state's Child Care Availability Frontline portal remains up to date.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2020 BY THE NUMBERS

1,899

active Bright By Text accounts for people with children in the PN-3 period

99.8%

satisfaction rate with the Family Connects ATX services

87

WIC staff trained on PN-3 topics

248

child care providers received health and safety supplies

SUCCESS IN 2020

- Due to previous efforts to elevate early childhood across the city, child care was top of mind in Austin for Covid-19 relief efforts.
- Almost \$6 million in relief funds has been made available to child care centers, with a special focus on centers that serve low-income families and participate in Texas QRIS.
- Travis County allocated a portion of its federal Covid-19 relief funds to support local child care centers.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

- WIC services continued throughout the pandemic for 10,415 infants and toddlers and 6,361 pregnant clients.
- The Child Care Task Force met 113 times in 2020 to respond to the needs of the local system during the pandemic while strengthening local relationships between 8 systems partners and 21 child care programs and providers.
- Austin Public Health conducted webinars for child care programs for over 300 participants and continues to provide key information to over 600 registered and licensed child care providers through their email distribution list.

Austin-Travis County Prenatal to 3 Group

MISSION

The mission of our community's Success by Six strategic plan is to ensure that the programs and policies are in place in our community so that families are supported and live in safe and stimulating communities, children have healthy beginnings, and children have high-quality early care and education, in order to give every baby born in Austin-Travis County the best possible first 2,000 days.

VISION

At the end of each child's first 2,000-day journey, they are happy, healthy, and ready to succeed in school and in life.

ALL THE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS ARE NOW REALLY SEEING THE CITY AND THE COUNTY AND OUR COALITION AS PARTNERS WITH THEM, AND THEY'LL CONTINUE ON WITH US, KNOWING THAT THE CITY GOVERNMENT HAS THAT SECTOR ON ITS RADAR SCREEN AND ARE TRYING TO HELP THEM WEATHER THIS STORM.

AUSTIN: TEXAS STATE CONNECTION

Coalition representatives continue to sit on the state steering committee on policy agenda for the state Prenatal-to-Three Coalition. They played an integral role in encouraging the Governor's Covid-19 Taskforce to reinstate emergency rules for child care during summer 2020. Additionally, key team members continue to play a key role on the Governor's Child Care Taskforce to ensure that the new statewide portal developed and launched to connect essential workers to child care is responsive to community needs.

STRENGTHENING OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

- Bright By Text enrollment declined during the pandemic, however the team continues to provide high quality information to enrolled families, with approximately 47% of accounts for families with a child PN-3.
- Austin Family Connects modified services to reach 856 families in 2020 with a 99.8% satisfaction rate.
- The APH COVID-19 Nurse Telephone line took 534 calls from child care programs between July and December 2020 while also reaching out to over 124 child care providers in hot spot areas.

CATALYTIC OPPORTUNITIES

- The Family Child Care Emergency Relief Fund, aided by over \$5 million from the City of Austin, \$1 million in CARES Act funding, and additional philanthropic dollars, provided up to \$1500 in emergency support for family and home-based child care providers.
- The community will receive \$3.5 million in CARES Act funding through 2024 for child care for essential workers and emergency child care.
- The City of Austin will allocate \$95,326 for an Early Childhood Coordinator position in 2021.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to build upon the success and trust build with local child care providers through the child care task force.
- Further align coordinated enrollment efforts with state-wide child care portal
- Move forward with implementation and expand reach of Family Connects and Bright By Text while implementing lessons learned during the pandemic.