



# Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department



*The role of public health is to:*

**PROMOTE** community-wide wellness,

**PREVENT** disease, and

**PROTECT** the community from infectious diseases,  
environmental hazards, and epidemics

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# Early Childhood Services

Community Action Network Presentation

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# Overview

## City Early Childhood Programs

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- **Eligibility: low-income families and their children**
- **Services are defined in 3 areas:**
  - Direct child care -- \$921,904
  - Child care quality improvement -- \$667,294
  - Child development -- \$1,036,528

# Direct Child Care

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- 1. Child care for families working, in school or job training \$331,832 -- 470 children**
- 2. Gap Program \$25,000 – Very short term - # children varies as needed**
- 3. Bridge child care \$283,272 – short term care for families in crisis – 184 children**
- 4. Child Care Teen Parents \$281,800-72 children**

# Direct Child Care

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**Outcomes: family stability, optimal child development, better school performance**

**Challenges:**

- **Long waiting lists**
- **Reimbursement rates between 30th to 40th percentile in local market rate study**

# Quality Improvement

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## **Strategies to improve Quality**

- Director and teacher training especially college courses and intensive training
- Mentors working onsite primarily through directors
- Wage supplements to prevent teacher turnover
- Targeted efforts: mental/behavioral health, health, playground safety/design
- Voluntary quality standards – Texas Rising Star or Accreditation

## **System coordinated & organized by providers and funders**

- Since 2005, quality services have been provided through a coordinated system organized by providers and funders (ACC, WFS, City, County, SB6) Quality Child Care Collaborative (QC3).

## **Focus on low income children**

- Focus is on providers that serve a significant number of low income children.
- Center Directors as change agents.

# Quality Improvement

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**Outcomes:** Better learning outcomes in higher quality especially for low income children, optimal child development 850 childcare staff.

**Challenges:**

- Only 16.4% of providers meet quality standards
- Disparity – Degreed teachers between West Austin centers and East Austin centers (60% to 19% -SB6 study)
- Low wages and benefits produce turnover that negatively impacts children especially infants and toddlers

# Child Development

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**Services that may address children and/or parents - \$1,036,528:**

- Home visiting for at-risk families**
- Parent Education**
- Head Start & Early Head Start**
- Family support services**
- Developmental delay prevention/mediation**

# Child Development

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**Outcomes:** Optimal development, prevention of more serious problems, increased parenting skills, increased positive behaviors child and parent, reduced abuse/neglect

144 children, 167 parents

**Challenges:** Immigrant and isolated populations, Capacity for families that present with complex, multiple needs/risk factors, Services to pregnant & new parents