

Agenda Report

October 24, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF THE REVISED 2022 EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT POLICY

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed Revised Early Child Development Policy is not a "project" under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378;
2. Adopt the Revised 2022 Early Child Development Policy attached to this Report; and
3. Direct the City Manager to return during the first quarter of 2023 with recommendations for the implementation of key initial activities and areas of recommendation contained within the Revised 2022 Early Child Development Policy.

BACKGROUND:

Since 1989, the City of Pasadena has periodically adopted and updated policies in support of the health and development of Pasadena-area children ages zero to five. Among other things, these policies track population measurements of kindergarten readiness of children; establish goals intended to support quality, safe, accessible, and affordable childcare for all residents; set goals for improving the full range of early childhood experiences for families of young children; encourage cross-sector collaboration, and the use of data to understand the root causes of problems and track improved outcomes for the City's youngest children.

In 2014, the Human Services Commission formed the Early Child Development Ad Hoc Committee to review an earlier version of the City's Early Child Care Policy. The Ad-Hoc Committee met for a period of six months to revise said policy. The updated policy was renamed the Early Child Development Policy ("2015 Policy") and recommended the

establishment of the Office of the Young Child to carry out the implementation of the 2015 Policy's important work. The City Council approved the 2015 Policy in March 2015, and authorized a new City staff position, the Early Child Development Coordinator, with responsibilities for developing and implementing the 2015 Policy's action steps and Master Plan, as well as serve as a liaison to the early childhood leaders and organizations within the city and community.

As a result of the pandemic, the early childcare community as a whole has experienced disruptions in its work and delivery of services. Pandemic-induced impacts coupled with other immediate issues such as racial injustice, economic instability, and cycles of violence are of concern given their potential to impact to families with young children. Consequently, the City Council recommended the formation of an Early Child Development & Early Learning Task Force ("Task Force") at its February 28, 2022, City Council Meeting.

A Brown Act body, the Task Force convened for a period of six months from April, 2022 through September, 2022. The Task Force was comprised of 14 members representing a broad community cross-section of early childhood and early learning experts, practitioners and advocates; leadership and early childhood staff of the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD); parents of young children from PUSD; child-care professionals; brain science experts; and workforce, public health, and maternal care leaders. Meetings and the work of the Task Force were facilitated by Patricia Bowie, M.P.H, an independent consultant and expert in the field of early childhood outcomes. The Task Force had a prescribed work plan and was responsible for reporting back to Council on:

1. The current status of implementation of the 2015 Policy,
2. The 2015 Policy's alignment with the most recent science regarding best practices on implementing early childhood programs, and
3. Any revisions to the 2015 Policy needed to support the City's youngest children and families because of immediate issues including:
 - COVID
 - Racial injustice
 - Cycles of violence
 - Economic instability

As a result of its work, the Task Force is recommending revisions to the 2015 Policy to reflect the current state of the City's youngest children and families, streamline the policy and its component parts for focus and ease of implementation, consider the post-pandemic local context through the lens of data regarding children and families, maintain a systems approach, clarify the City's role as convener of the larger community in building and sustaining partnerships in this effort while serving as a catalyst for new approaches and ideas to take root.

Specific and action-oriented recommendations and revisions are contained within the 2022 Early Child Development Policy (“2022 Policy”). These recommendations and revisions serve to create a roadmap to inform the work of the Office of the Young Child and the City to continue as a convener and catalyst in achieving a shared vision whereby all stakeholders are linked in action.

The areas of recommendation contained within the 2022 Policy include:

1. Financing strategies for programming and support.
2. Strengthening data collection related to young families.
3. Enhancements to structure and support for the Office of the Young Child and implementation of the policy.

The 2022 Policy goes into greater detail with the above recommendations, but also provides specific key initial activities to create immediate alignment amongst stakeholders for immediate, impactful and visible results:

1. Analyze funds through Measure J and explore ways in which a portion of the funds could be re-directed to early childhood initiatives. This includes securing support and funding for EDI data collection for the years 2022-2023 to provide a more accurate snapshot of children post-pandemic.
2. Create a meaningful partnership with PUSD and others to assist with the design and support of early childhood programs, a campaign to introduce the District in beginning a relationship with new families, and the design of a mixed-delivery system responsive to the needs of a diverse population with families of young children.
3. Initiate a “Welcome Baby” Campaign for families of each newborn in Pasadena and establish a plan with set goal targets, utilizing birth to 5 population data, to fill all unfilled seats in high-quality early childhood programs.
4. Hold a launch of the 2022 Policy to reintroduce the community to the numerous resources and service providers that support children and families.

To assist the City with evaluating the recommendations and key initial activities contained within the 2022 Policy, the task force has also recommended forming a transition team comprised of a subset of the task force to assist Staff with formulating an implementation plan for the policy.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed action is consistent with the City Council’s Strategic Plan Goal to ensure public safety by meeting the early developmental needs of residents. The policy also promotes greater quality of life and supports the local economy and workforce by aligning with the K-15 academic agenda. A major focus of the Policy is ensuring the health and welfare of the city’s youngest children so that they are developmentally ready to enter kindergarten and on track through their educational careers.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The action proposed herein is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 21065 of CEQA and State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060 (c)(3) and 15378. CEQA Guidelines Section 15060 (c)(3) excludes from environmental review those activities that are not a "project" as defined in Section 15378. Section 15378's definition of "project" includes actions which have the "potential for resulting in either a direct or physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment." The proposed action consists of the approval of a City policy for early child development. There is no possibility that the policy will have a direct, or reasonably foreseeable indirect, physical change in the environment.

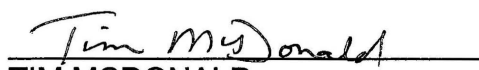
FISCAL IMPACT:

The costs related to the implementation of the 2022 Early Child Development Policy are currently unknown. As part of a follow-up report on the implementation of the Policy, staff will provide additional detail and information related to the potential fiscal impact of the policy's recommendations and key initial activities.

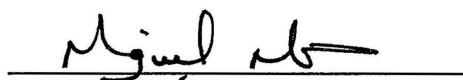
Respectfully submitted,


MICHELLE GARRETT
Assistant to the City Manager

Concurred by:


TIM MCDONALD
Acting Director of Libraries & Information
Services

Approved by:


MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager