



United Way for  
Greater Austin



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## **United Way and Austin ISD Partner to Expand High-Quality Pre-K Options for Families**

United Way for Greater Austin and the Austin Independent School District are expanding an established collaboration to increase access to high-quality Pre-Kindergarten.

Austin ISD trustees approved an innovative solution that will serve as a model in the state for how communities can make high-quality early education accessible to all families.

Through Pre-K Partnerships (PKP) United Way will create a hub to manage partnerships between Austin ISD and high-quality child development centers (CDCs) to offer both three-hour Austin ISD Pre-K3 classes (program that serves children who turn 3) and full-day childcare in community settings.

For working families – particularly those with low income – this will be a game changer that provides access to high-quality care and education in a location and on a schedule that is convenient for them.

“Access to high quality pre-kindergarten programs is critical for all children to ensure students are on a trajectory for success in kindergarten and beyond,” said Austin ISD Director of Early Childhood Ami Cortes-Castillo. “We are happy to provide yet another option for our Austin ISD families.”

The first five years are a critical period in a child’s life when more than 90 percent of brain development occurs. Children who enter Kindergarten school-ready are set on a path to success that predicts third-grade reading levels, high school graduation rates, and other critical life outcomes.

Less than half the children in Austin and Travis County enter Kindergarten ready for school. Children from families with low income and children of color are disproportionately behind. Locally 35 percent of children under the age of six live in families with low income and nearly 90 percent are children of color.

Currently fewer than 30 percent of eligible three-year-olds are able to take advantage of the high-quality education offered through AISD Pre-K3 programs. Through PKP, AISD will reach vulnerable children with high-quality education and CDCs will have access to an additional revenue stream that will allow them to serve more children from families with low income.

United Way for Greater Austin brings people, ideas, and resources together to fight poverty in our community. Together with community leaders and partners, we are leading the charge to create sustainable and lasting solutions to poverty and the cycle that holds people in it. We know quality early education is the key to future economic success.

“This is an equity issue that has far-reaching and long-lasting impact. All children deserve access to high-quality education,” David C. Smith, United Way for Greater Austin CEO said. “This partnership between United Way and Austin ISD is an important step in that direction.”

Under the umbrella of the Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Coalition, United Way and Austin ISD are working to create a community where all children enter Kindergarten happy, healthy, and prepared to succeed.

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