

# Every day, an average of 38 babies are born in the Austin area. Thirty-eight new babies. Every. Day.

And those 38 vulnerable little human beings are born into wildly diverse circumstances. Some are healthy, some are not. Some have huge extended families full of experienced caregivers, some do not. Some are born into situations that include secure income and abundant resources, some are not.

But regardless of their individual situations, each of these 38 brand-new Texans is equally deserving of loving care and the opportunity to thrive.

This is exactly what the Success By 6 [SX6] Coalition is working to ensure.

We are a coalition of child and family advocates – providers, parents, policymakers, philanthropists, civic leaders, business leaders, and early childhood experts – working together on a community plan that reflects our collective wisdom and amplifies our collective voice. For the past seven years, SX6 has led this strategic plan [formerly the School Readiness Action Plan], designed to coordinate our efforts and give every baby born in Austin the best possible first 2,000 days.

Why a 2,000-day journey? Because research has proven that the first five years of a child's life strongly influence the rest. Ninety percent of brain development happens within the 2,000 days from birth to Kindergarten, so an early childhood full of rich experiences is essential for happy, healthy children who are ready to succeed in school and in life.

A child who begins Kindergarten ready to succeed is set on a path that predicts their third-grade reading level, high-school graduation, justice system involvement, college perseverance, and adult earning potential. So community investment in early childhood programs results in not only more successful individual citizens, but also significant economic benefits for the community as a whole.

To date, we have made substantial progress as a coalition, but we still have much to do.

Today, only about half of all babies born in Austin and Travis County enter Kindergarten 2,000 days later with the firm foundation they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

This SX6 strategic plan builds upon the work begun with the first two iterations of the plan [2012-15 and 2015-18], this time looking forward into our next 2,000 days. It plots a bold path onward, outlining the coalition and the community's activities to achieve our ambitious goals – healthy beginnings, supported families, high-quality care and education, and safe and stimulating communities for all Austin-area children.

SX6 is making solid strides to help these babies grow into contributing, productive, thriving members of our community – but we can't walk alone. We invite every Austin-area organization and each individual community member to join us in prioritizing, investing, and acting over the next 2,000 days to give our little ones all they need to succeed.



**Cathy McHorse**  
Vice President, Success By 6  
United Way for Greater Austin  
and the Success By 6 Coalition  
Leadership Team

