



Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee Report

Presented on March 22, 2023

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Introduction

Early childhood education helps eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps, decreases the poverty rate by allowing parents to work, and provides an economic boost for families who no longer have to worry about the expense of care for their children.

Federal and state governments have failed to fully fund early childhood education, and more and more cities are stepping into the funding gap. In 2020, it was reported that 33 of the nation's largest cities were offering high-quality early care and education programs.¹ Early childhood education is a smart investment for cities, with long long-term benefits for communities as a whole.

The Saint Paul City Council wanted to explore whether and how to create a citywide program to realize these benefits for Saint Paul children, families, businesses, and the community at large. On July 27, 2022, the City Council passed Resolution 22-1183, which established the creation of an Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee.

Our Charge

The Legislative Advisory Committee was charged with:

- Evaluating a locally governed program to ensure universal and equitable access to early care and education for all Saint Paul children (the “Program”); and
- Exploring public funding, and any other relevant funding options, for the Program.

The Committee was tasked with exploring early care and education accessibility for all Saint Paul families, making recommendations to the City Council on the potential design and implementation of the Program and, if appropriate, to propose legislation that would establish the Program. The Committee was required to present its recommendations no later than March 26, 2023.

The Committee's membership represented multiple perspectives including child care providers, educators, and community members.

Committee Membership:

Maggie Barnes, Licensed Family Child Care Provider

Rachel Boettcher, Community Member*

Lynne Bolton, Saint Paul Federation of Educators*

Eric Haugee, Community Member*

Halla Henderson, Saint Paul School Board*

Mitra Jalali, City Council, Ward 4

Megan Jekot, Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood*

¹ (2020, December 8). *New Report on Pre-K in Cities Shows 33 of Nation's Largest Cities Now Have Public Pre-K Program*. National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). Retrieved March 15, 2023, from <https://nieer.org/press-release/new-report-on-pre-k-in-cities-shows-33-of-nations-largest-cities-now-have-public-pre-k-program>.

Hwa Jeong Kim, Minnesota Voice*
LaVon Lee, American Indian Montessori*
Nicolee Mensing, Head Start*
Camila Mercado Michelli, CLUES*
Kristenza Nelson, Community Member*
Rebecca Noecker, City Council, Ward 2
Khalid Omar, Kids Count on Us, ISAI AH*
Kera Peterson, Regional Labor Federation*
Tracy Roscoe, ISAI AH
Clare Sanford, Minnesota Child Care Association
Maria Scot, Community Member*
Sai Thao, Hmong Early Childhood Coalition*
Stephanie Thomas, Minnesota Child Care Association*
Brianna Trinidad Sprung, Saint Paul Public Library*
Leah VanDassor, Saint Paul Federation of Educators
Zang Vang-Lee, Hmong Early Childhood Coalition
Quentin Wathum-Ocama, Saint Paul Public Schools, Office of Early Learning*
Nelsie Yang, City Council, Ward 6
Barbara Yates, Think Small*

*Indicates Committee members who participated in the exit survey to determine the recommendations. For organizations with two representatives, only one representative completed the exit survey on behalf of the organization. City Councilmembers did not complete the exit survey.

Committee Process and Composition

The Committee met from late October 2022 to mid-March 2023. Over the course of these 12 weeks, committee members were presented with existing early learning program models from other cities and spoke with several experts from the field, using small- and large- group discussion methods to debrief and piece together recommendations that could help create a holistic program in Saint Paul. Topics discussed included governance, funding, eligibility, workforce support, and accountability. The committee used a number of online surveys to collect group feedback and guide discussion. A final online exit survey was used to assess agreement on aspects of the program and make recommendations.

The Case for Early Intervention

The City Council established the Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee with the knowledge that children's early years are critical for their future success. Children's brains develop rapidly in the first five years of their lives, acquiring language, motor skills, emotional capacities, problem-solving abilities, and pre-literacy skills. Early intervention in these critical

years has been proven to have significant impacts on children's future success in school, including reductions in special education placement and higher rates of high school graduation.² When children lack access to quality early learning, they are more likely to struggle in school – and the outcomes for low-income children can be especially stark. By the start of kindergarten, poor children perform significantly worse on tests of cognitive ability than children from higher-income families³. Poverty can impact attention, language development, emotional development and even the structure of children's brains.⁴

The benefits of early intervention extend beyond the individual child to the broader community . Over 16 years ago, economists Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis researched the potential benefits of providing the most at-risk children with high-quality early childhood programs. Looking at longitudinal studies and research on brain development, they found an 18% annual rate of return on investments in early childhood education.⁵ These benefits include a reduced need for special education, unemployment and public assistance, higher rates of college attendance and a better-educated workforce.

Stable and dependable care is critical to our economy as a whole. Nationally, the Council for a Strong America reported that the child care crisis has caused \$122 billion dollars in lowered earnings and productivity⁶. Because this study looked solely at parents of children 0 - 3, and did not include children ages 4 and 5 who are not yet in kindergarten, the economic impact is even greater than reported. When families are unable to find or afford child care, employers experience huge disruptions in their labor force from issues such as employee absences and turnover.⁷ Conversely, supporting early care for children can result in increased labor force participation. A study in Washington, DC, found that after the city began funding two years of universal preschool, labor force participation increased, particularly for women. Mothers of young children saw a 12% increase in workforce participation and women living below the poverty line saw an even greater increase – from 15% to 55%.⁸

²McCoy, D. C., Yoshikawa, H., Ziol-Guest, K. M., Duncan, G. J., Schindler, H. S., Magnuson, K., Yang, R., Koepp, A., & Shonkoff, J. P. (2017). Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium- and Long-Term Educational Outcomes. *Educational Researcher*, 46(8), 474–487. <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.3102/0013189X17737739>

³Roos, L. (2019). Poverty and Early Childhood Outcomes. *Pediatrics*, 143(6). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-3426>

⁴ Children's Bureau (2019, January 28). *Children in Poverty - Poverty and its Effects on Children*. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://www.all4kids.org/news/blog/poverty-and-its-effects-on-children/>

⁵ Rolnick, A., & Grunewald, R. (2005, June 1). *Early Childhood Development on a Large Scale*. Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2005/early-childhood-development-on-a-large-scale>

⁶(2023, February 2). *\$122 Billion: The Growing, Annual Cost of the Infant-Toddler Child Care Crisis*. Council for a Strong America. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from

<https://www.strongnation.org/articles/2038-122-billion-the-growing-annual-cost-of-the-infant-toddler-child-care-crisis>

⁷ (2022, May 24). *4 Reasons the U.S. Economy Needs Comprehensive Child Care*. Center for American Progress. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/4-reasons-the-u-s-economy-needs-comprehensive-child-care/>

⁸ Malik R. (2018, September 26). *The Effects of Universal Preschool in Washington, D.C.* Center for American Progress. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/effects-universal-preschool-washington-d-c/>

The Need in Saint Paul

Despite the clear benefits of early learning, many Saint Paul families are unable to access it. Twenty-seven percent of Saint Paul children live under the federal poverty level. Over half live under 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, a threshold used by the State of Minnesota to indicate the need for Early Learning Scholarships.



0 to 4 Year Old Saint Paul Residents by Income Bracket

November 15th, 2022 v3

	< 1 year olds	1 year olds	2 year olds	3 year olds	4 year olds	Total	Cumulative Total	% of Total
0-185% poverty	2,274	1,986	1,994	2,308	1,987	10,549		
0-100% poverty	1,142	1,137	1,195	1,228	925	5,627	5,627	27.0%
101-200% poverty	1,132	908	907	1,279	1,099	5,325	10,952	52.5%
201-300% poverty	713	566	666	631	718	3,294	14,246	68.2%
301-400% poverty	249	454	616	198	382	1,899	16,145	77.3%
401-500% poverty	731	164	242	200	116	1,453	17,598	84.3%
Over 500% poverty	630	538	1,060	436	612	3,276	20,874	100.0%
Total	4,597	3,767	4,686	3,972	3,852	20,874		

Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey data (range of years or midpoint of 2018 can be used for reference), United States Census Bureau, via IPUMS. The data is derived a survey rather than a census, each datapoint above represents an estimate rather than an exact count. Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center [producer and distributor], 2021.

Note: Census data determines poverty status at a family scale, and the assigned to every member of the family by size of family.

Produced by the Research & Mapping Team, Saint Paul Department of Planning & Economic Development, November 15th, 2022.

Finding child care is difficult and expensive. Minnesota is the 4th most expensive state for child care,⁹ and Ramsey County is the 6th most expensive county in Minnesota.¹⁰ Child care costs put a strain on families and force some parents out of the workforce. According to Child Care Aware of Minnesota, the median monthly cost for child care in Ramsey County is \$1,085 or \$13,021 annually. A family of three, living at the Federal Poverty line, would need to spend 63% of its income to place a child in care.¹¹ Even families earning the median household income would need to spend 19% of their income for care. This is significantly over the 7% of income benchmark for affordability recommended by the U.S. Department of Human Services.¹² Clearly, the cost of child care is an enormous barrier for Saint Paul families.

⁹Economic Policy Institute (n.d.). Retrieved March 7, 2023 from <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/MN>

¹⁰Child Care Access (n.d.). Retrieved March 14, 2023 from <https://childcareaccess.org/>

¹¹Child Care Aware (n.d.). Retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://www.childcareaware.org/our-issues/research/ccdc/state/mn/>

¹²(2016). Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program. *Federal Register*, 81(190), 67468. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2016-09-30/pdf/2016-22986.pdf>

The Current Funding Landscape

Current funding sources do not meet the extraordinary need. There are four early care and education programs that serve Saint Paul families. All are underfunded and all have families on waitlists.

Head Start/Early Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start are free early childhood programs, funded by the federal government, that offer care to infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children in families that meet the income guidelines. Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington County operates 17 program sites, 15 of which are in Saint Paul. Early Head Start serves infants and toddlers through three programs, serving a total of 275 children. Head Start, for 3- to 5-year old children, serves 710 children.

Families are automatically eligible for Head Start if they meet one or more of the following criteria: (1) receiving public assistance (MFIP, the Minnesota Family Investment Program) cash assistance or SSI (Supplemental Security Income), (2) be a foster care family, (3) be experiencing homelessness (lacking fixed, regular, and adequate housing), or (4) living at or below the current Federal Poverty Guidelines.

There are 185 infants and toddlers and 539 3- to 5-year olds on the waitlist for Head Start and Early Head Start programs through the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties. The waitlist is due, in part, to the inability to hire sufficient qualified staff.¹³

Saint Paul Public Schools

Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) provides free pre-kindergarten classes to 4 year olds in the City of Saint Paul. There are 62 school-based classrooms, across 34 different schools; each classroom can hold up to 20 students. SPPS Pre-K programs are funded by a variety of sources, including several state programs and local referendum dollars. Children are enrolled for full-day, school-year programming (approximately 6.5 hours per day during the September - May school year).

To be eligible, children must be 4 years old, and one of the following: (1) an English language learner; (2) eligible for free and reduced-price meals; or (3) receiving early childhood special education services. According to Saint Paul Public Schools data¹⁴, there were 1092 students enrolled in Pre-K on October 1, 2022, and an additional 930 in Early Childhood Special Education.

There are currently 817 children on the waitlist for both in district and out of district placement.¹⁵

¹³ N. Mensing, personal communication, February 24, 2023.

¹⁴ Saint Paul Public Schools (n.d.). *Data Center*. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from <https://www.spps.org/Page/27991>

¹⁵ L. Erickson, personal communication, February 23, 2023.

Child Care Assistance Program

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is a state program that provides a benefit to families who meet program eligibility.¹⁶ Of the children served by CCAP funds, 60% are children ages 0-5 not yet in kindergarten, and 69% are children of color or American Indian children.

To be eligible to receive CCAP, families must: have an income below 67% of the state median income (\$55,266 for a family of four); have children age 12 or younger, or 13 or 14 with special needs; cooperate with seeking child support; participate in authorized activities (such as work, school, job search, or employment plan); and have children who meet citizenship and immigration status requirements.

In Ramsey County, there are currently 3661 children on the waitlist to receive CCAP funding.¹⁷

Early Learning Scholarships

Early Learning Scholarships (ELS) are a state program to “close the opportunity gap for low income children through increased access to high-quality early childhood programs.”¹⁸ Families must meet income eligibility requirements: earn less than 185% of the FPL or show proof of participation in a number of other means-tested programs.¹⁹ Children must be 3 or 4 years old or younger if they are: (1) a child of a teen parent, (2) currently in foster care or in need of protective services, (3) have experienced homelessness in the previous 24 months, or (4) are the sibling of a 3 or 4-year-old who is receiving an award and attending the same program.

Currently, the program is capped at \$8,500 annually (or \$12,000 for children in the priority populations) for a 4-star Parent Aware-rated program, Minnesota’s quality rating system. The scholarship amount decreases for lower-rated programs. Families cannot use their scholarships at unrated programs, which are the majority in Saint Paul: 4586²⁰ or 51% of licensed family child care and child care center seats are unrated.

In Ramsey County, there are currently 373 children on the waitlist.²¹

¹⁶ Possin, L. (2022, November 18). *Child Care Assistance Program, Minnesota Department of Human Services* (Invited talk).

¹⁷ B. Yates, personal communication, February 16, 2023.

¹⁸ Meyers, S. (2022, November 18). *Early Learning Scholarships Overview, Minnesota Department of Education* (Invited talk).

¹⁹Families are eligible if they participate in any of the following programs: free and reduced-price lunch, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Food Distribution on Indian Reservations, Head Start, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Supplemental Nutritional Aid Program (SNAP), or Foster Care.

²⁰ E. Lewis, report to Saint Paul 3K steering committee, June 28, 2018.

²¹ B. Yates, personal communication, February 16, 2023.

Program Comparison

	Income Eligibility for Family of 4		Waitlist
Head Start and Early Head Start	\$ 27,750	100% FPL	724 ²²
Saint Paul Public Schools	\$ 51,338	67% Area Median Income (eligibility for free and reduced price lunch)	817
CCAP	\$ 55,266	67% State Median Income	3,661 ²³
Early Learning Scholarships	\$ 51,338	185% of FPL	373 ²⁴

Current investments at the federal and state level are not enough to support Saint Paul's youngest children at this critical time in their development. While it isn't possible to ascertain exactly how many families are unable to access care, the size of current wait lists suggest that there are many families, living at very low incomes, who are unable to access public funding to place their children in care. For families who do receive Early Learning Scholarships, scholarships are capped at \$8,500 (unless families meet priority criteria), which can require some families to pull their children from care in late summer when funds run out. And many families earn more than these low minimums and while still struggling, have no access to these public funds. For example, a single mother with one child, earning \$34,000 per year, would be over the income maximum and ineligible for any support at all.

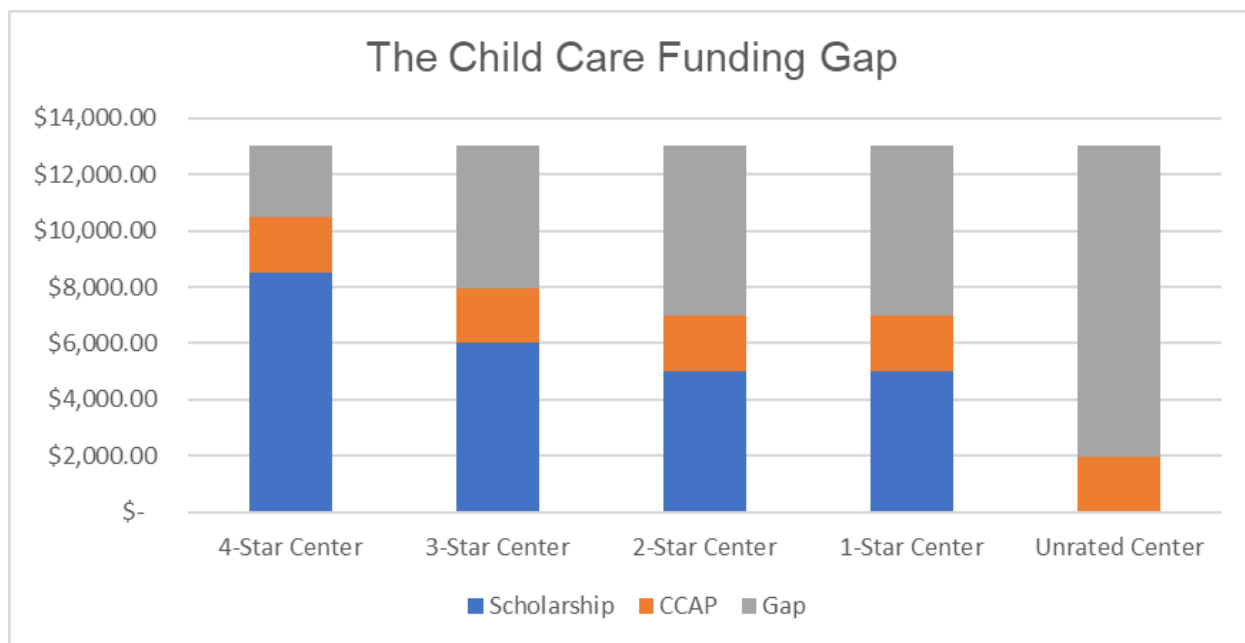
The following chart shows the funding gap for a family of 4, under a best-case scenario – receiving both Early Learning Scholarships and CCAP funding. It assumes a family income of \$50,000 and one school-aged child and another child under 5 needing child care. Using the median cost of child care in Ramsey County of \$13,021, there is still a significant gap between the cost of care and the availability of public funds.²⁵ This gap is made even larger by the fact that just 51% of Saint Paul's child care centers and licensed family child care programs are Parent-Aware rated, and thus are ineligible for scholarships.

²² Includes two programs outside of Saint Paul in Ramsey County. N. Mensing, personal communication, February 24, 2023.

²³ Ramsey County Data. B. Yates, personal communication, February 16, 2023.

²⁴ Ramsey County Data. B. Yates, personal communication, February 16, 2023.

²⁵ CCAP benefit was calculated using the Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota's Bridge to Benefits tool: <http://bridgetobenefits.org/Home2>.



Help from the State and Federal Governments

Advocates have been seeking more funding for decades. At the federal level, President Biden's Build Back Better framework contained transformative changes to child care, but these portions of the bill were stripped before it passed as the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.²⁶ In Minnesota, the 2022-23 legislative session is poised to be the most generous toward early learning in many years, but even if passed, a significant gap is likely to remain.

Rob Grunewald, former economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and co-author with Art Rolnick of the seminal return on investment study on early childhood education, estimates a cost of \$6 billion per biennium to serve Minnesota's children age 0-5, fully fund children from low-income families (185% of FPL), and ensure that no household spends more than 7% of its income on child care, and providers are paid based on the cost of providing high-quality care. The Governor's proposed budget has approximately \$1.5 billion in the next biennium and \$2 billion in the following biennium dedicated to early childhood and early childhood workforce, about a quarter of the \$6 billion dollar investment needed. The Minnesota House of Representatives is expected to propose more than the Governor, around \$3 billion, or half the total need.²⁷

Should either proposal pass, thousands of families will still be left struggling to afford care.

²⁶ (2022, August 22). *President Biden Signs Scaled-Down Reconciliation Bill into Law*. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Retrieved March 15, 2023, from <https://nlihc.org/resource/president-biden-signs-scaled-down-reconciliation-bill-law>

²⁷ Based on calculations done for Think Small. B. Yates, March 15, 2023.

Guiding Principles for Recommendations

The Committee strived to provide recommendations that would be feasible and actionable by the City, supported by relevant community data and information, make use of all existing resources and fill the gap to implement a program that centers children and their working families, and not duplicate work that is already being done.

Summary of Recommendations

After months of discussion and learning, the Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee strongly recommends that Saint Paul create an early learning program to meet Saint Paul's need for stable and affordable early care and education, in accordance with the following recommendations.

The program should be housed within the City of Saint Paul - either in an existing department or in a new office for early learning. Funds for the program should come from a special levy that would be approved by voters, increase property taxes over time and be dedicated to early learning for Saint Paul children, ages 0 to 5.

All families residing in Saint Paul, without regard to immigration status, should be eligible for program funding. Program funding should fully cover the cost of care for the 51% of Saint Paul children living at or below 185% of the federal poverty level and be available on a sliding scale for families above that threshold. Program funding should supplement, and not supplant, existing state and federal funding for early care and education.

Recognizing that there may not be sufficient funds to ensure that all children 0-5 have early care and education on day one, the Committee recommends that the program develop a point system to prioritize families in the most need. The system should take into consideration factors such as income, homelessness, foster care, and being parents under 21.

To fully meet the needs of families, the Committee recommends that the program funds be available for any scheduling option, from part-time up to and including year-round, full- and extended-day care. Depending on the age of their child, families can choose among licensed family child care providers, child care centers, Head Start and Early Head Start, and Saint Paul Public Schools.

Given the current complexity of navigating the early learning space, the program should be as easy as possible for providers and parents to access and an online tool should be used to make it easier for parents to find care and apply for programs and public assistance. Other ideas should be explored to simplify the process, such as a single application and navigators.

To be eligible to receive program funds, child care providers must operate in Saint Paul and, at a minimum, be licensed by the state of Minnesota or be a legal-non-licensed provider. There

should be a waiver process for extenuating circumstances, when the program might consider funding a provider outside of Saint Paul.

The Committee felt strongly that the program should be accountable to Saint Paul taxpayers and be held to clearly defined performance indicators and annual financial audits. It should also include a strong parent, provider and community voice in policy decision-making through a governing body, advisory committee or some similar structure.

Recommendations

The recommendations below were generated using a final exit survey. Eighteen of the 19 voting Committee members completed the survey. For organizations with multiple representatives, only one representative completed the exit survey on behalf of the organization. City Councilmembers did not complete the exit survey.

Questions that received an answer of “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” by at least 75% of respondents were considered recommendations. Complete vote distributions and comments are available in Appendix A.

Recommendation: The City should have a locally-governed child care and early learning program.

The Committee agreed (89%) that Saint Paul should move forward with a program.

Recommendation: The program should be primarily funded through a new, dedicated, public revenue source.

The Committee agreed (83%) that a new revenue source should be developed to meet the needs of Saint Paul’s children.

Recommendation: To be eligible for program funding, all families must be residents of the City of Saint Paul.

The Committee agreed (89%) that recipients of Program funding must be residents of Saint Paul. Three committee members expressed that they want to ensure inclusion of families who are experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation: Families should be eligible to receive program funding without regard to immigration status.

Committee members unanimously agreed (100%) that program funding should not be tied to immigration status. As one committee member commented, “All children have the right to an education.”

Recommendation: Program funding can cover tuition or costs at the following settings: Saint Paul Public Schools, Head Start and Early Head Start, licensed family child care, and child care centers.

The Committee agreed that Saint Paul Public Schools (89%), licensed family child care (89%), child care centers (89%), and Head Start and Early Head Start (78%) should be eligible for program participation. During the process, many Committee members advocated for parent choice in choosing the best setting for their children. Some commenters wrote that public funding should go to care that meets some measure of quality.

Recommendation: Saint Paul should continue to evaluate how best to support unpaid family, friend, and neighbor care.

Committee members strongly agreed (94%) that the program should continue to explore how best to support and include these caregivers in a Saint Paul system. Five members commented that this is a prevalent form of child care for many families, including and especially BIPOC families with specific cultural needs and should be carefully considered for inclusion/support within a future program.

Recommendation: Program funding should be available for any scheduling option that meets families' needs, from part-time up to and including year-round, full- and extended-day care.

Committee members unanimously agreed (100%) that program funding should meet families' needs for care. A commenter wrote that families have varied needs and so varied schedules should be honored. A couple of committee members expressed that expanding access and the workforce will be critical to meeting this recommendation.

Recommendation: Program funding should fully cover the cost of care for families at 185% federal poverty level and below. Families who earn more should be subsidized on a sliding scale.

Committee members strongly agreed (94%) that the program should start with those most in need and expand to additional families on a sliding scale.

Recommendation: When fully funded, the program should serve all Saint Paul children ages 0-5.

Committee members strongly agreed (95%) that this goal is foundational to the program. A committee member stated, "Our ultimate goal should be to ensure that every kiddo in Saint Paul has access to reliable, quality care from birth until they enter school." Another says that "0-5 ... is where we have the best opportunity to reach and support ALL of Saint Paul's children through quality care."

Recommendation: If program funding is not available for all children, the program should prioritize families with the most need. To determine need, the program would create a point system (to be developed later) that takes into account factors like income, homelessness, foster care, parents under 21, etc.

Committee members agreed (89%) that the program should develop a mechanism to target funds to children most in need.

Recommendation: The program should be as easy as possible for providers and parents to access and should explore ideas like a single application, translation, navigators (both centrally located and community-based), etc.

The Committee agreed (89%) that the program should be easy and support both parents and providers in accessing it. One committee member stated, "This is the piece I agree MOST STRONGLY with. It is so challenging to navigate all of the pieces of accessing quality child care and education, even for those of us who are in this space consistently and have been for years."

Recommendation: The program should create an online tool (or link to a tool that already exists) and employ staff to help families find the right program and apply for aid.

The Committee agreed (89%) that the program should create the means, through technology and staffing, to assist families in finding care that best meets their needs and for applying for public assistance.

Recommendation: If the revenue for the program is raised solely by Saint Paul taxpayers, program funding should only go to providers located in Saint Paul.

Committee members agreed (89%) that program funds should go to providers that are located in Saint Paul.

Recommendation: A process or waiver should be developed for granting program funding to a provider outside of Saint Paul in extenuating circumstances.

The Committee agreed (83%) that there may be instances in which a family needs to use a provider outside of Saint Paul. Circumstances such as lack of available care or care specific to a child's special needs, a child experiencing homelessness, or a provider from their cultural background were mentioned as possibilities by committee members.

Recommendation: Providers receiving program funding must, at a minimum, be licensed or a legal non-licensed provider.

The Committee agreed (89%) with requiring these state minimums. It should be noted, however, that in a previous recommendation the committee didn't reach the 75% level of agreement

required to recommend legal non-licensed providers. Some members expressed a desire to continue to explore how to support unlicensed family, friend and neighbor care. One committee member stated that the licensure minimum “aligns with the goal of ensuring quality programming, which will do the most good for Saint Paul kids and the Saint Paul community.”

Recommendation: The program should develop ways to support providers in obtaining licensure and meeting program standards.

Committee members agreed (83%) that the program should support providers in being eligible for the program and meeting any program standards. Three committee members commented that the program should make use of existing support and funding that is already in place.

Recommendation: Program funding should follow the child or fund seats at providers for any child to use (similar to Pathway I and II Early Learning Scholarships). Both ways should be included.

The Committee agreed (78%) that both funding following a child and funding seats at some providers should be included as options, following the model set by Early Learning Scholarships Pathway I and II scholarships. One commenter expressed, “I believe that there should be some level of flexibility. The combination of Pathway I and II scholarships allows us to ensure that, in some cases, centers receive support without the fear of the funds leaving with a child, and in others, families have the ability to seek care that best meets their needs.”

Recommendation: The program should be operated by the City of Saint Paul, via a new or existing city office or department.

The largest number of committee members (83%) supported housing the program within the City of Paul as the best choice, versus a nonprofit organization or Saint Paul Public Schools. Comments by committee members included statements that a program funded by tax dollars should be housed within the City, and that being within the City would provide the most transparency. “This must be housed in the city since it will be funded by tax dollars. A new office/department made up of people who know and understand early childhood education will be necessary in order to ensure kids, families, providers, and teachers are getting their needs met. There will be a lot more trust in this program if it is housed in the city rather than a non-profit.”

Recommendation: The program should be held accountable for fiscal and program performance according to clearly defined performance indicators and annual financial audits.

The Committee (83%) agreed that the program should be accountable for fiscal and program performance. “I agree with clear accountability for fiscal and program performance. Regular checkpoints, goals and reports to its governing body are important and necessary,” stated a committee member.

Recommendation: The program should include strong parent, provider and community voices in policy decision-making through appropriate structures like a governing board, advisory committee, or other structure.

The Committee strongly agreed (95%) that parent and provider voices are critical to the program. “Parents, providers and community members should be a priority and have a seat at the table when policy decisions are being made that impact them, their child and community. Whether the structure is a governing board, advisory committee or other structure, all need to be at the table from the very beginning of the discussion.”

Recommendation: Program revenue should supplement and not replace funding available from other sources, such as Early Learning Scholarships, CCAP, and any other state or federal funding.

The Committee agreed (84%) that program funds would be “last dollar in,” and used to fill the gaps of other public sources. “These local dollars can help close existing gaps and make transformational change possible for a number of families through fully covered care.”

Recommendation: The City should pursue a special levy approved by voters that increases property taxes over a period of time for a dedicated use.

The Committee agreed (78%) that a special levy, approved by voters, was the best choice for funding the program. Other funding sources the Committee considered were: 1) an annual levy set by the Council during the budget process, 2) a local sales tax on sales within the City of Saint Paul, which is approved by the Legislature and then approved by voters for any eligible use, and 3) a reallocation of funds from other programs or services in the current city budget. “After going through the various local revenue sources listed above and talking them through several times, to me it seems as though a special levy is the only consistent, sustainable way to fund this program – and the only one that has a real chance at being approved by voters,” said one Committee member.

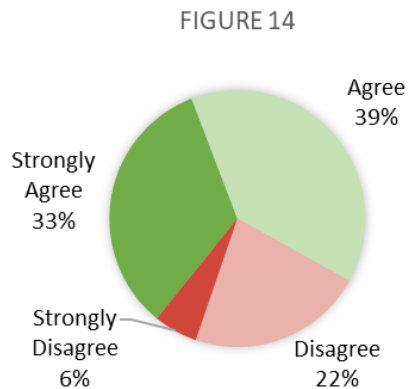
Recommendation: The program should be designed to take advantage of future additional state or federal funding to ensure that local dollars can be directed to Saint Paul children's unmet needs.

The Committee strongly agreed (95%) that the program should be designed in a flexible manner so that the program can adapt if additional state or federal funds become available. “If the state passes and allocates some big dollars, we should be poised with a bucket, aka a framework, so that we can be ready to absorb resources!”

Topics for Future Consideration

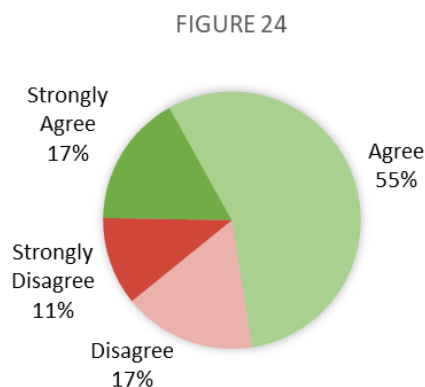
While the following two issues showed a significant amount of support, they didn't reach the 75% threshold to be considered a recommendation. The City Council should consider exploring these topics further.

Over time, to continue to receive program funding, providers should be expected to meet specific program standards (yet to be developed) to ensure children are making strong progress.



Two committee members felt that program standards should align with Parent Aware. Other members (2) stated that cultural competence and needs should be a key part of any new standard. Others (2) felt it should not be a recommendation without clarity on who is developing the standard and what it entails.

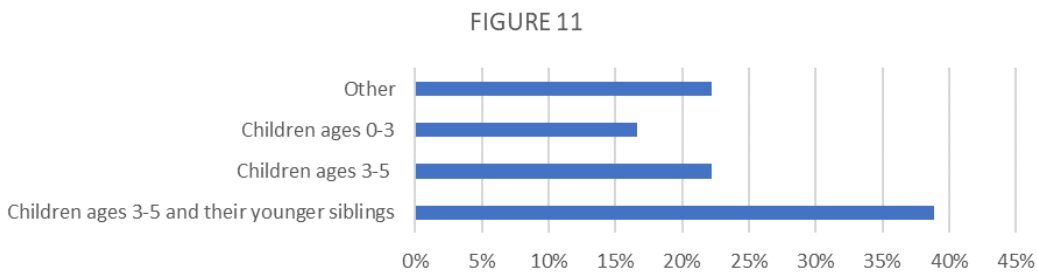
The program should be able to accept donations from philanthropic and private sources, as long as there is accountability to stated program goals.



While 72% of the Committee agreed with accepting private and philanthropic donations, five members of the Committee expressed concerns that private, corporate and philanthropic funding often comes with strings attached and should be viewed with scrutiny. Three other

members commented that private funding could be accepted for certain uses and with a strong review process in place.

Until the program is fully funded, the program should prioritize children in the following age groups:



The Committee didn't make a clear recommendation on how to prioritize children by age until the program is fully funded. One member felt the answer was conditional upon the outcome of the legislative session: "The Governor has proposed changing early learning scholarship funding to 0-5, currently it is 3-5. If that change happens, along with the significant funding being proposed, then I would prioritize 0-3 as research indicates the biggest positive impact on children. If that change does not occur, then I would prioritize based on Early Learning Scholarship funding guidelines (currently that is children 3-5 and their younger siblings)."

Workforce

Throughout the Committee process, many members expressed concern over the early care and education workforce and felt action needed to be taken to ensure there were financial and other supports available for providers.

Among the recommendations to explore are:

- The program should ensure that there is competitive pay and benefit on par or aligned with K-12 Education.
- Classrooms and seats should be funded to expand capacity.
- The program should consider developing a professional development fund or pay for certain training opportunities.

Additional Trends and Themes in Comments

Committee members presented a wide range and depth of additional opinions in comments to the recommendation questions, including points of view that emerged as trends but did not garner majority committee support. Some of these points of view are summarized here, and the full analysis of trends and themes in comments can be found in Appendix E in this report.

Numerous comments (7) advocated for **ensuring competitive pay and benefits on par and aligned with K-12 education** for childcare workers in the program and as an employment expansion strategy (rather than taking away from the current childcare workforce).

Numerous comments (5) advocated for **funding seats and classrooms to expand capacity in the current system**, rather than delivering the program as a scholarship or “voucher” model.

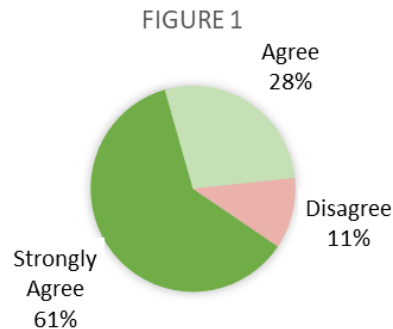
With regard to **potential program standards for a future program** in order for providers to continue receiving funding, committee members shared a range of views, including that some felt program standards should align with Parent Aware (2 comments), that cultural competence and needs should specifically be a key part of any new standard (2 comments) and that no standard should be required without clarity on who is developing the standard and what it entails (2 comments).

With regard to a program being primarily funded through a new, dedicated, public revenue source, multiple commenters (2) stated they believe **there should be no levy without a plan in place**.

When asked what else members want to share with the Council regarding this process or the recommendations, multiple commenters (2) shared they believe **the City should wait to see what the legislature does with childcare funding and act once that is known**.

Appendix A - Full Results of Exit Survey

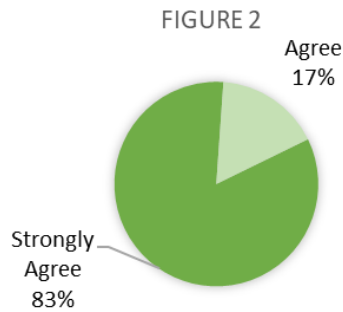
To be eligible for program funding, all families must be residents of the City of Saint Paul.



Comments:

- People who work in the city should have access as well. Many parents may work in Saint Paul and need childcare in St Paul. Our workforce mainly lives in nearby cities within Ramsey county. Maybe making it Ramsey county residents vs just stp.
- As long as there are provisions in place for families experiencing homelessness to also be included (example-using a shelter address as their address would be sufficient proof of St. Paul residency).
- One detail to work through is how often eligibility is "redetermined" and if a family moves out of St. Paul after initial enrollment, will they become ineligible and how will this be monitored.
- Not all families receiving care in Saint Paul are residents of Saint Paul. It is common for parents to work in a different city and opt for child care services near their workplace.
- I agree that families should currently be residing in St. Paul in order to be eligible for program funding- this includes families who are experiencing homelessness.
- I agree with this, but there needs to be consideration/something in place to ensure that families that are currently unhoused can access the program.
- A waiver process for parents working in Saint Paul that make less than 185% of the federal poverty level should be considered.
- Taxpayers may be more amenable to support a special levy if funds are dedicated to St. Paul residents.
- If this is a St. Paul City tax funded program.

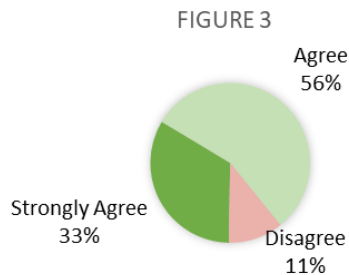
Families should be eligible to receive program funding without regard to immigration status.



Comments:

- All children should be eligible to receive support for early learning and not be penalized because of immigration status.
- All children have the right to an education.

If the revenue for the program is raised solely by Saint Paul taxpayers, program funding should only go to providers located in Saint Paul.

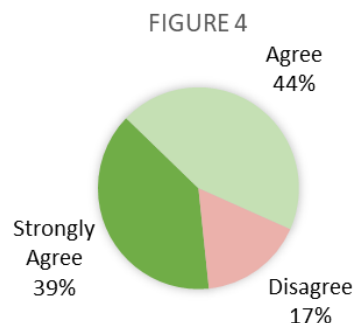


Comments:

- While I think that helping child care providers in St. Paul is a worthy goal, finding child care is very difficult at this time and family needs can vary greatly- if the goal is to support families, then maybe you allow them to choose programs best for their family. You could design the program to incentivize families to use St. Paul providers, without fully prohibiting them from making a different choice for their child. NOTE: if there is a waiver process as described in the next question, I would change my answer to this question to AGREE- that is if there is enough support for a waiver process, you can mark my answer to this question Agree
- I am a bit conflicted on this question. I think it would be great for the city if only St. Paul providers were eligible. If this is the case, I think capacity (enough slots for all eligible children) could become an issue and it could take away some family choice. However, there are many wonderful providers in St. Paul and it would be easier to manage (especially initially) if only providers located in St. Paul could participate.

- I think an option for a waiver should at some point be brought into play in specific situations (example-family lives in St. Paul and parents work at an office outside St. Paul that has a childcare center in-house. Their child should be able to attend that since it is most convenient for the family.) I think this is an additional provision necessary down the line, but maybe not in the first phase of introducing this program.
- I only marked agree here in that family choice and need is important in this process - while I would prefer presence to Saint Paul providers, I do think the program should be mindful of the shrinking childcare landscape and that often family need for work, special services, or cultural preference.
- I do understand that folks living in St. Paul but working elsewhere may be looking for quality care at providers closer to their work, but I don't see St. Paul taxpayers agreeing to support this program unless the funding stays within the city.
- I generally agree with this, but a process should be considered to allow families who live in Saint Paul but choose childcare outside of Saint Paul to still access and benefit from the program.
- Funding should follow the child. Depending on funding and further developed program options there could also be support/funding options for Early Childhood centers in St. Paul.
- I agree, however, I also think St. Paul folks who receives funds should have a choice of where they want to use their funds given their place of work.
- As long as it occurs in conjunction with a waiver/flexibility for particular circumstances. See next question for more.
- There should be a way for programs outside of St Paul to apply to opt in, if they have currently enrolled families

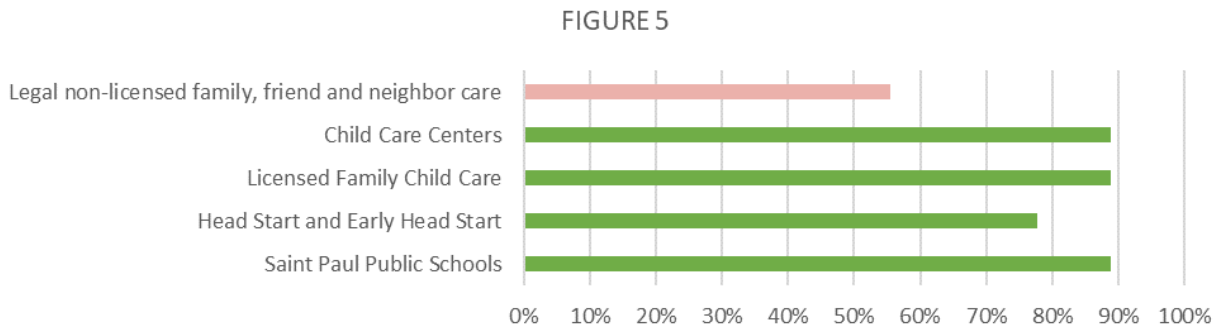
A process or waiver should be developed for granting program funding to a provider outside of Saint Paul in extenuating circumstances.



Comments:

- Generally speaking, I agree with funding following a child/family rather than staying at a certain provider, but it's a bit more nuanced in this situation with St. Paul taxpayers raising the revenue. I agree with this "waiver" process in actual extenuating circumstances (not just "I work in Woodbury and want my kid to go to a program there")- for example, if a family who had been experiencing homelessness were to move from St. Paul where they were doubled up to more stable housing in, say, St. Louis Park, I think there should be some mechanism to let the program funding follow that child/family to a new provider, but with a timeframe on the St. Paul program funding- only until the family can access other funding, for example.
 - Many programs have waiting lists, so would be good to have a process that allowed for more choice for the family, if needed. See comment in question above. Family needs might include finding openings, finding specific hours open, finding programs that can serve special needs, finding home language, etc. Also, continuity is very important when serving children in the early years. If a child is already being served, regardless of location, maintaining continuity is very beneficial if a child is in a quality program.
 - I feel like this could overcomplicate the program when, in my opinion, the core lens through which I approach this potential program is "Saint Paul Dollars for Saint Paul Scholars receiving care and education from Saint Paul Providers." I believe we should be keeping the money as local as possible considering the mechanism we'll most likely need to raise it through - i.e. a special levy.
 - There should be an option for families to bring their child to a program located in close proximity to their work. If a parent works in Eagan they should be able to apply to bring their child to a provider in Eagan. As long as the parent and child are Saint Paul citizens. We should support working families through this option.
 - Parent choice is important. If this is needed for parent choice to be in place then yes, I believe there could be a delivery system where waivers are not needed for a parent quality care choice to work.
 - I agree -- and would like to see a way to particularly provide supports for families seeking particular care (cultural, needs based, family-based, etc)
 - Yes and would prioritize if clients are using a care provider who is from their cultural background.
-

Program funding can cover tuition at the following settings (check all that apply):

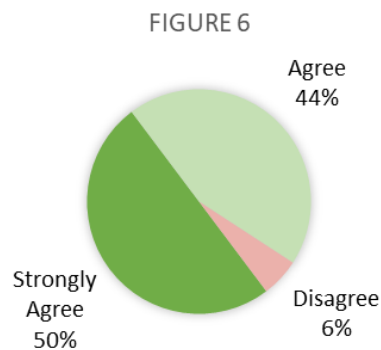


Comments:

- I checked "agree" with funding covering legal non-licensed family, friend, and neighbor care, because I know that is what many families feel comfortable accessing for their care. That said, I really believe quality standards should be developed ASAP for family, friend, and neighbor care. The point of this funding program is to support kids and families in accessing quality care and education programs that will support their development across domains (while also supporting the families)- from what I can see about FFN care, there are as of yet no quality standards and minimal safety standards.
- I'm a strong supporter of family choice when it comes to accessing early care and education AND we need to ensure funding is going to care (even in legally non-licensed family, friend and neighbor care settings) that has some form of baseline training/development associated with it - considering the main outcome these dollars are hoping to result in is fostering strong early brain development so our city's littlest learners are entering kindergarten ready to succeed for years to come.
- I feel confident about the first 4, but feel somewhat unsure about legal non-licensed family/friend/neighbor care. I think if the city is using tax dollars, it needs to ensure that quality programming is what the money is going towards. Right now it seems like in these alternative settings it might be challenging to measure quality performance. I am not 100% no but also cannot say yes with 100% certainty.
- While the program should work towards supporting legal non-licensed family, friend and neighbor care more work is required to assess programming in these situations. There are not currently any standards that are measured through this care. An accreditation could be created in the future for this care.
- I strongly believe that all programs need to have quality standards (either Parent Aware or accreditations, as currently accepted in Child Care Assistance Program). There is no measure of quality currently available for legal, non-licensed programs. Licensing is considered foundational for quality.
- I have selected SPPS because it is not an option to select none. This program should prioritize increasing the number of seats available by funding classrooms, not vouchers for tuition.

- This funding in cases for SPPS & Head start should be for needed wrap around care, outside of already funded program day.
- I would support LNL but not FFN, and only if a program agrees to pursue licensure within a certain time frame.

Saint Paul should continue to evaluate how best to support unpaid family, friend, and neighbor care.

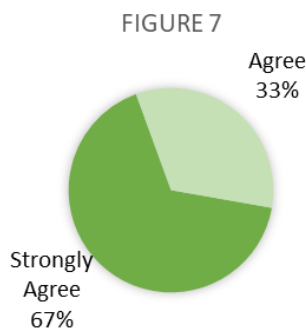


Comments:

- Most families use family, friend and neighbor care to some degree regardless of financial circumstances to fill in, even if they are using full-time year around child care programs. Families, if given a choice and resources, will often choose a child care program, because it is more stable, reliable than patching together care so you can work, without burdening family members. Obviously, there are those that choose this kind of care that don't fit what I just described and have other reasons for their choices. An example of this might be a grandmother that is available to take care of an infant in the first year of life- depending on circumstances, this would be preferable for many and is a huge economic benefit to the family. And there are other reasons, including culture, why this might be a preferable choice.
- Absolutely - especially since I feel that formally supporting current unpaid family, friend, and neighbor caregivers could ultimately be a strategy for tackling the workforce crisis we're facing in more established family child care and center-based settings. Formally supporting FFN folks could serve as a pipeline for caregivers to continue on, even after the kiddos they're watching age out of care, into an early childhood care and education career.
- I have concerns about this because I think the program should look at using a tiered reimbursement system similar to Pathway scholarships based on a program's Parent Aware status. Unlicensed programs are not eligible to participate in Parent Aware. Parent Aware is based on a lot of research that tells us what indicators of quality are required for the highest quality early learning experience.

- There are certainly numerous benefits when children are in the care of loved ones. I think if tax dollars were to go towards these providers, there would need to be some accountability in professional development and safety trainings in order to help ensure quality care. I don't have a fully formed opinion on this so I think more evaluation is necessary.
- Absolutely agree with this. Families might feel much more comfortable bringing their child to a FFN provider, rather than a center or licensed family program- how can St. Paul develop quality standards that fit with FFN care in order to support THEM in supporting the kids in their care across all developmental domains?
- When families opt for such care, they may end up with insufficient resources, which is not conducive to the well-being of the child. Personal care assistants can receive training and payment while caring for their family members. Similarly, there should be no hindrance in compensating those who care for children.
- I agree -- to account for potential costs of care outside of tuition and to ensure that families are able to seek the care that works best for them, I can see how continuing to consider how to support families who seek unpaid care is important.
- This program should be as inclusive as possible, supporting families in the care that they choose works best for them, and this includes unpaid family, friend, and neighbor care.
- I think this is a unique need that will require more research and ideas on how to best support but generally I agree with this in principle.
- Yes, because even if it's unpaid there is still a cost to the family.
- It is unclear what this actually means
- See above

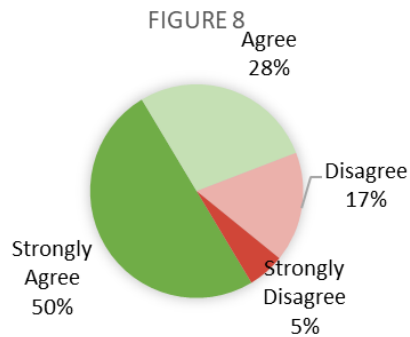
Program funding should be available for any scheduling option that meets families' needs, from part-time up to and including year-round, full- and extended-day care.



Comments:

- Yes, in theory - however I do not believe we currently have the workforce or infrastructure to put that into practice.
- Again, this program should prioritize expanding access by increasing the number of seats.
- This scheduling option provides reliable care and stability for working families.
- Families have varied needs and so varied schedules should be honored.

Program funding should follow the child or fund seats at providers for any child to use (similar to Pathway I and II Early Learning Scholarships). Both ways should be included.

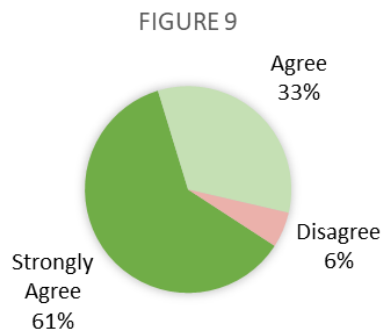


Comments:

- The goal should be to increase the number of slots available. Funding should be primarily focused on expanding access through expanding care. Vouchers/scholarships with public dollars are simply expanding the charter school ideology to child care. The city of Saint Paul should not be participating in privatizing public services.
- To start and keep this program straightforward for initial implementation, I believe the funding should follow the child. As the program gets underway and saint paul providers become more aware and connected to the program, then I think funding could be allocated to fund seats at providers to foster such partnerships.
- I agree that there should be some level of flexibility. The combination of Pathway I and II scholarships allows us to ensure that, in some cases, centers receive support without the fear of the funds leaving with a child and in others, families have the ability to seek the care that best meets their needs.
- The funds allocated for childcare should not follow the child but instead should fund the availability of seats in childcare centers. This ensures that all children have access to quality care, regardless of their family's financial situation or geographic location.

- This makes the most sense to me, especially after talking with other members of the committee who are directors at programs who receive both PW1 and PW2 funding).
- This type of funding supports both families and providers.
- Build capacity by funding classrooms.

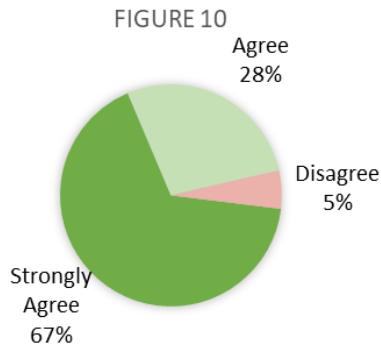
Program funding should fully cover the cost of care for families at 185% federal poverty level and below. Families who earn more should be subsidized on a sliding scale.



Comments:

- It is important to make childcare affordable for families of all income levels. One way to achieve this is by capping the cost of care at 7% of the family's income. This will help to ensure that families can access quality childcare without being burdened by exorbitant costs, which can have negative impacts on both the family's financial stability and the child's well-being.
- I agree and would like us to be mindful of the families who are left out of receiving potential support. Similar to the conversation regarding the ages to serve, we could/should develop goals that move to a place of funding gaps for families who are unable to receive support either due to the poverty level or other potential prioritizations.
- Absolutely - start with those most in need and expand from there as the available dollars allow. This is how we can hopefully foster universal access to early care and education for all our city's families over time. #Scale!
- In addition to federal poverty guidelines, other income categories such as children experiencing homelessness, child in foster care or child protection and families receiving SNAP or MFIP should also be eligible.
- I think this is a good jumping off point, with the long term goal of fully funding all St Paul kids.

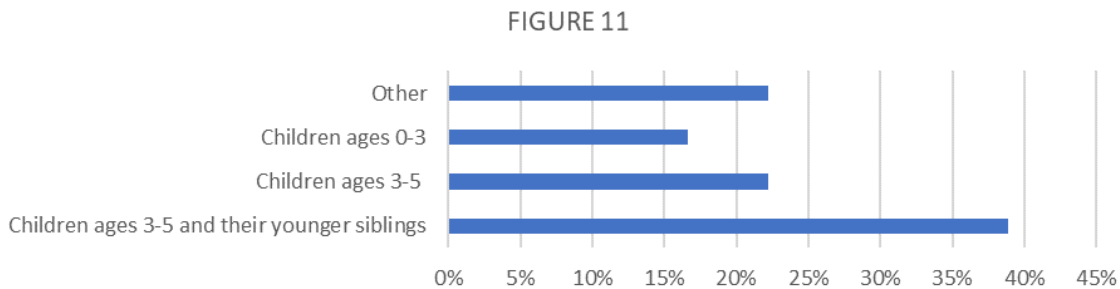
When fully funded, the program should serve all Saint Paul children ages 0-5.



Comments:

- Research shows that nurturing care for young children positively impacts their developing brains through connecting neurons. Young children perceive the world around them through experiences, care and relationships. Through healthy brain development and rich experiences the very young develop a positive foundation for who they become and how they will learn. Negative experiences lay a negative foundation. We have an opportunity to positively impact our youngest citizens through providing quality early care. Our young children develop and learn more rapidly during their early years than at any other stage in life. 0~5 is the optimal time to create and support positive connections and relationships in a child's life. This is where we have the best opportunity to reach and support ALL of Saint Paul's children through quality care.
- Key words - "when fully funded"... meaning it makes the most sense, economically, to start with all 3 & 4 year olds and then expand from there to serving other age groups at 185% poverty and then families who earn more should be subsidized on a sliding scale... it doesn't make sense to serve 0-2 year olds and then have a gap in care for two years and then have them entering kindergarten...
- To ensure that children have access to quality care and education from the earliest stages of life, childcare programs should include children aged 0 to 5 years from the outset. This comprehensive approach to early childhood education can help to support children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, laying the foundation for future academic success and overall well-being
- Our ultimate goal should be to ensure that every kiddo in Saint Paul has access to reliable, quality care from birth until they enter school. It could be helpful to name when we expect to reach that as well.
- This goal needs to be foundational to the program

Until the program is fully funded, the program should prioritize children in the following age groups:



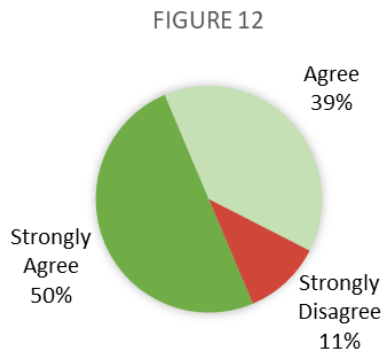
Comments:

- Based on the data, I'm going to say children ages 3-5... however, I am very open to the option of Children ages 3-5 and their younger siblings... so long as the data shows we can support that model and still have a population-level impact. While serving Children ages 3-5 and their younger siblings takes a great deal of burden off a parent with lets say a 3 year old, 4, year old, and a 1 year old - the cost of that one year old is going to be much higher... so how much more money would it cost to be serving families in this "3-5 year olds and their younger siblings model"? Since that cost per younger child would go up, that leaves less money in the pot for serving more 3-5 year olds - thus affecting the potential for population-level impact. And for me, considering the ask we're making to saint paul tax payers, I have to prioritize the need to see population-impact come out of this investment as number one.
- I work with families with infants and toddlers, and have seen over and over again how their 3 and 4 year old siblings are able to go to Head Start, Pre-K through SPPS, or get early learning scholarships, while the babies and toddlers cannot access any funding and are home with parents/caregivers who are stressed about money and needing to go back to work, but can't. I think that prioritizing children who are 3-5 makes sense, as they can then enter elementary school with a year or two of quality care/education under their belt- AND their younger siblings would also benefit from the same quality care (as would their entire family unit).
- It is important to prioritize early childhood education by funding childcare programs that cater to children aged 0 to 5 years. Splitting children into different age groups can be detrimental as it places value on one age group over another. Instead, by funding programs that include all age groups from the outset, we can provide children with equal opportunities to learn and grow. This comprehensive approach to childcare can also help to support working families and promote a more equitable society.
- The Governor has proposed changing early learning scholarship funding to 0-5, currently it is 3-5. If that change happens, along with the significant funding being proposed, then I would prioritize 0-3 as research indicates the biggest positive impact on children. If that change does not occur, then I would prioritize based on Early Learning Scholarship funding guidelines (currently that is children 3-5 and their younger siblings).
- I agree that children 0-5 should all benefit from this program. As the program is being established and getting funded, we should be focusing on children 3-5 and their younger

siblings. The information we have been given and read through during this process has shown that tax payers support 3-5 and as the program scales and the funding scales, then we can scale the age range including in the program to 0-5.

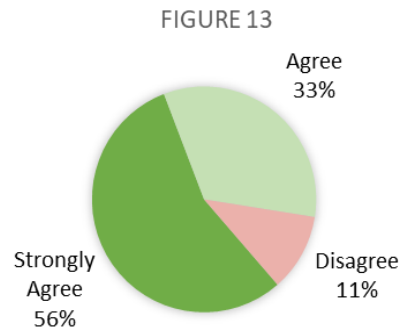
- Understanding the lift of serving families 0-5, I believe we should first start with children ages 3-5 and include potential younger siblings when providing funding. This will provide us both an understanding of what funding for 0-5 could look like in practice without attempting to meet the entire need from the starting point.
- I believe starting with 3-5 year olds is most crucial as they will be entering kindergarten soonest. The goal of expanding to 0-2 should be built into the program's foundation though, it should not be just a hope but a legitimate piece of the plan.
- I selected this answer but I think what would make sense based on demand is 3-5 first, then their siblings, and then children 0-3. My hope is that the option I selected would be immediately available.
- Once funded children 0~3 should be included to provide the best outcome for all of Saint Paul's children.
- This plan should prioritize expanding the number of seats by funding classrooms.
- Children 0-3 and their older siblings.

If program funding is not available for all children, the program should prioritize families with the most need. To determine need, the program would create a point system (to be developed later) that takes into account factors like income, homelessness, foster care, parents under 21, etc.



No comments.

The program must ensure that providers who receive program funding are keeping children safe. For that reason, providers receiving program funding must, at a minimum, be licensed or a legal non-licensed provider. (See these links for more information on [licensure](#) and [legal non-licensed providers](#).)

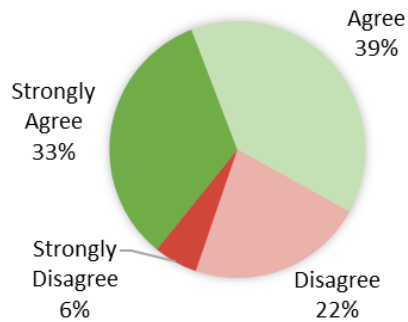


Comments:

- Access to quality childcare is essential for families, and non-licensed providers can play an important role in meeting this need. To ensure that all families have access to quality care, non-licensed providers should be able to receive public funding. By expanding access to public funding, we can help to promote a more diverse and inclusive childcare system that can better meet the needs of families from all backgrounds and income levels.
- I agree with a caveat that the program should look towards figuring out how to support FFN providers who do not meet any legal or non-legal criteria and what supports and systems the city can put in place to support them.
- I agree with this, but I am concerned that with this, families that would benefit from this program but choose care outside of licensed or LNL providers that works best for them will not be able to access the program.
- This aligns with the goal of ensuring quality programming which will do the most good for St Paul kids and the St Paul community
- Uncomfortable making this recommendation without guidance about what should be considered and who will inform the process.
- Children are vulnerable and their safety needs to be assured.

Over time, to continue to receive program funding, providers should be expected to meet specific program standards (yet to be developed) to ensure children are making strong progress.

FIGURE 14



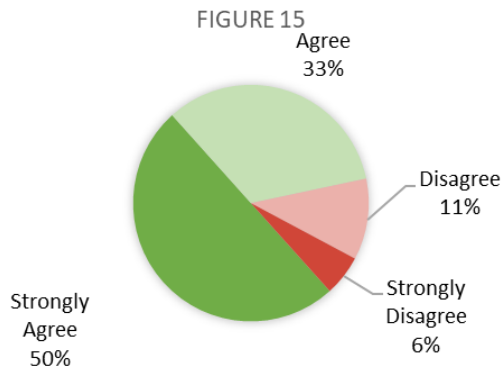
Comments:

- Existing funding (early learning scholarships and child care assistance) already recognize Parent Aware and accreditation as being indicators of quality and award resources accordingly (for early learning scholarships, you have to be in Parent Aware to receive and for child care assistance, you receive additional funds, tiered reimbursement if you are Parent Aware rated or accredited- currently most child care assistance funds are going to rated or accredited programs. To fully leverage existing funds, I would recommend those measures of quality, while working to fix any deficiencies (I describe this in my final comment). I would also note that the number of Parent Aware rated family child care programs in St. Paul is 32% vs 17% statewide. For child care centers, 61% are rated (mostly four stars) compared to 52% statewide. St. Paul has been, and continues to be a leader in participating in the quality rating system. I would also note that of the 32% of family child care programs that are rated, historically 80% were BIPOC providers (race/ethnicity data has not been available in last several years).
- Yes - similar to what I said above... considering the larger 'why' behind this effort and ask to saint paul tax payers, I strongly believe we need to ensure funding is going to care (even in legally non-licensed family, friend and neighbor care settings) that has some form of baseline training/development associated with it - considering the main outcome these dollars are hoping to result in is fostering strong early brain development so our city's littlest learners are entering kindergarten ready to succeed for years to come. I believe some form of program standards need to be in place to demonstrate children are making strong progress. We need to be able to prove this investment is doing good, not just feeling good.
- I agree though I remain concerned that culturally-specific centers, home and family care, and smaller centers struggle to meet standards/obtain the accreditation necessary to meet specific standards. I would like to see us (1) provide support and opportunities for under-represented and smaller child care providers to maintain specific standards and (2) potentially have a waiver/special consideration for culturally-specific and relevant centers with a plan to eventually meet the yet-to-be-chosen standards.
- These standards should be very clear for families and providers, be evidence-based, and also include the importance of cultural experiences. The program's standards should not be another thing providers have to meet, so could we possibly give providers a

choice on the standards they will need to meet? Whatever the specific programs standards become, once developed, there needs to be proper supports--and associated funding--to help providers get to and maintain said standards.

- There is a lot of data from studying preschool and early childhood programming that highlights the importance of quality in programming. There are so many potential measurable benefits of ECE but those benefits only come to fruition in quality settings with effective teachers, curriculum, etc. There need to be quality standards in order to ensure tax dollars are being put to good use and that the city is doing the best possible work for kids and families.
- I agree with this, but also don't want to reinvent the wheel. There are a lot of quality rating systems already in play for early learning programming. I've not seen any quality standards related for legal non-licensed friend, family, and neighbor care- I wonder if some of the quality rating systems in place (parent aware, accreditation through NAEYC or NECPA, etc.) could be St. Paul's guidepost in developing something for FFN care.
- While I want to incentivize providers to be high quality and to grow as a program - I am hesitant to require this in order to be into the program as it may overly complicate who is eligible and turn off providers from seeking out the program.
- Strongly agree, and these program standards should be aligned with Parent Aware instead of creating new indicators of quality.
- Uncomfortable making this recommendation without guidance about what should be considered and who will inform the process.
- Without recommendations on who should be included in developing standards, this should not be presented to the council.
- Program standards should align with Parent Aware

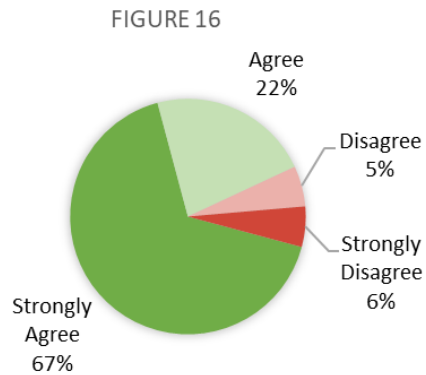
The program should develop ways to support providers in obtaining licensure and meeting program standards.



Comments:

- While I agree with this statement, the state already provides resources to support providers in obtaining licensure (Wayfinder) and provides resources to support programs meeting quality standards (Parent Aware). The latter includes coaches and financial supports and has historically helped programs stay in business, compared to those not in Parent Aware.
- I believe it will be important to have the majority of this funding follow the child. In doing that the best use of funds will be to collaborate with current programs in our state to assist in supporting care providers in meeting standards. There will need to be assistance in connecting to those resources that are already in place.
- I think the program could refer program to resources that already exist for assistance in becoming licensed. I do not think this program should pay for care with providers until they are licensed.
- The program could partner with scholarships/programs out there that are working towards this goal of professionalizing the field of ECE. An example would be TEACH and RETAIN scholarships.
- Absolutely - any support that can be provided to combat this early care and education workforce crisis and start transforming this area into more of a respected career path.
- Without recommendations on who should be included in developing supports, this should not be presented to the council.
- Supports are already funded and in place with state dollars.

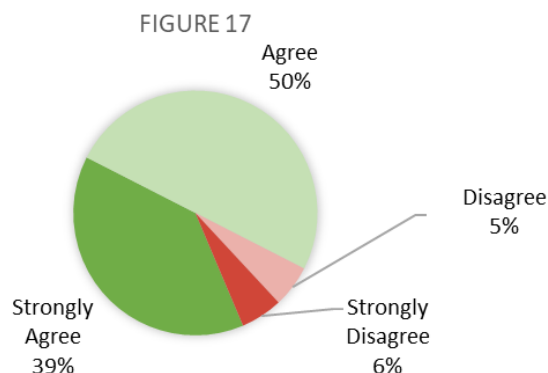
The program should be as easy as possible for providers and parents to access and should explore ideas like a single application, translation, navigators (both centrally located and community-based), etc.



Comments:

- This is the piece I agree THE MOST STRONGLY with. It is so challenging to navigate all of the pieces of accessing quality child care and education, even for those of us who are in this space consistently and have been for years.
- and look for opportunities where they might already be using access points to services, like WIC or SNAP with Ramsey County - things that are already use income and family size as qualifying factors.
- Without recommendations on who should be included in developing this process, this should not be presented to the council.

The program should create an online tool (or link to a tool that already exists) and employ staff to help families find the right program and apply for aid.



Comments:

- I believe in the beginning of the program there will need to be support for building knowledge of the program, knowledge of resources and access points in the community. Potentially staff need will decrease as the program is connected within other resources and programs that are already in place to assist families in finding care/aid.
- I agree that we should utilize tools that already exist -- should we find they are difficult or failing to meet the needs of our families, I would ask that we consider a different tool.
- I think a full staff dedicated to the program will be more than necessary, and yes, this would be one of their major roles.
- No "existing tool" should be used to support a unique Saint Paul program.
- this would be costly, and there already are some tools that do this
- Is there a tool that already exists?
- ParentAware.org

What other considerations should be made when considering program design of a potential future early learning program for the City? Please share any additional thoughts, ideas or concerns here as you have them.

- Providing high quality early education to children has a strong research base that supports a significant return on investment. There is a triple bottom line impact-1) support young children by preparing them for success in kindergarten and beyond , 2) support employment for working families, and 3) support business performance through increased employee productivity, lower turnover and reduced absenteeism. St. Paul should design a program that maximizes existing resources (early learning scholarships, child care assistance). With a comparatively modest investment, St. Paul can leverage existing resources to have a significant positive impact for St. Paul families. Currently Parent Aware and accreditation are used to measure quality in Minnesota. Both are research-based tools and Parent Aware is aligned with K-12 standards in Minnesota. School-based programs and Head Start programs currently have highest ratings in Parent Aware and St. Paul has almost twice as many family child care programs rated as the rest of the state and the vast majority of these are run by BIPOC providers. The criticism of current methods of measuring quality is that they do not include indicators that reflect the early educator's competence in supporting racially diverse young children and families. This is a valid criticism- and one that is being addressed by DHS and also by a pilot project that is currently being conducted using the AssessingClassroom Sociocultural Equity Scale. This tool has been validated with preschool aged children and Minnesota's pilot (along with other sites around the country) is assessing it's use in family child care and with infants. I recommend a both/and approach- that we proceed with what exists, while continuing to push for equity measures to be added, as available.

- Just making sure that we have an inclusive measuring system(s) for qualifying as well as determining quality of services; e.g. maybe some providers only speak Hmong, so having a center that is run and has an emphasis on cultural background should be very seriously considered as a measurement of quality as well. Thinking of the baby strapped to grandma's back and how we ensure their inclusion.
- Programing should recognize the important work of social and emotional development that is learned during the early years. When children are learning social skills like empathy and regulation they are getting ready for kindergarten! This work is just as important as letter and number recognition. Maintaining developmentally appropriate practice is crucial to quality.
- Most low-income families that lives in St. Paul utilizes family members for caretaking or have come home to care for their children. We should consider these members essential in our community and support their growth and development as they care for our children and family in the same way we considered supporting and developing care providers.
- Any program design should be done in a way that centers the input of families, providers, and educators. This process should be open to the public. NO levy should be considered until design is completed.
- It will be important to have parent voice and quality as key factors when developing and moving forward.
- There needs to be a way to measure quality and performance in programming. This is extremely important.
- Educational equity should be evident in the program design and its policies and practices.
- As much as possible, program should build on existing programs

What actions can the program take to ensure competitive pay and benefits for childcare workers in the program?

- When addressing the childcare issue, it is essential to prioritize both fair wages for childcare workers and affordable care for parents. We cannot solve one segment of the issue without addressing the other. Ensuring fair wages for childcare workers can help to attract and retain qualified professionals in the field, which can lead to improved quality of care for children. At the same time, providing affordable care for parents can help to reduce the financial burden of childcare and promote more equitable access to early childhood education. A comprehensive approach that addresses both of these factors is necessary to promote a sustainable and effective childcare system.

- The program's pay and benefits should parity K-12 educator's pay and benefits in their contracts, but needs to be a full year pay. Compensation should also factor in more than just education, including provider's experience, and expertise/skill from experiences.
- I think this will be a difficult task for this program. The program could start by collecting wage information from all participating providers and then using that data to set goals and benchmarks for all participating providers.
- This is an area I'm unclear about. I think using some of the funds raised to offer additional pay to childcare teachers/providers and possibly tuition support to earn CDAs, BAs, etc. in early childhood education could be helpful.
- Offer paid trainings for teachers as well as having centers be required to meet certain employment standards like benefits and higher pay rates if they are wanting to be eligible to accept the funding
- When adding St. Paul funds to the program's mix, you can ask them to describe what steps are being taken to ensure competitive pay and benefits and/or ask St. Paul funds to be used for that purpose
- This program should prioritize expanding access by fully funding classrooms (staffing). Any classrooms funded by this program should use the SPPS pay and benefit scales for parity
- As a place to start, explore the range of salaries and benefits for childcare workers, including salary for St Paul Public Schools, K-12, for possible alignment.
- The mixed model of funding (pathway example) should maybe think about requiring proof that costs are going to support wages to some percentage or extent.
- Placing value on this work by compensating pre-k teachers with pay that aligns with SPPS K-12 teachers. Including health care and retirement benefits.
- The program and the community should continue to advocate for wages, benefits, and growth opportunities as afforded to educators in K-12.
- It will be important to ensure that there are many paths to measure qualifications, especially taking into account years of experience.
- Pay a thriving wage, including benefits. Support and incentivize professional development so folks can ladder up in pay.
- Not my area of expertise but with competitive pay and benefits, comes higher rates for care.
- Expand capacity by funding classrooms. Build wages and benefits from SPFE contracts.
- We try to match or mirror the same scale and scope as teachers.
- pay parity/aligned benefits package with K-12 SPPS teachers
- Begin aligning with K-12 pay structures.

How do we ensure the program expands employment rather than takes away from the current childcare workforce?

- To improve the quality of childcare, it is essential to invest in better wages for childcare providers. This can help to attract and retain qualified professionals in the field, which can lead to improved quality of care for children. Additionally, it is important to fully fund existing childcare programs to ensure that families have access to affordable, high-quality care. Adequate funding can also help to ensure that childcare programs are able to maintain safe and appropriate facilities, invest in educational resources, and provide a supportive and stimulating environment for children.
- Expanding benefits, opportunities, plus wage increases on par with workload and experience should only further incentivize workers to join and stay within the workforce. We, as advocates, should also be intentionally working to shift the narrative on who works in childcare and what that role consists of. If we're funding it and calling for it to be recognized as necessary educational work, then we need to recognize it's workers as the educators that they are.
- Since the program would be funding current child care programs/providers, I don't believe it could take away from the current childcare workforce. Also, the current childcare workforce has seen such a blow to its numbers- perhaps the benefits that would come from this program would encourage folks who were on the fence about pursuing teaching in child care to make the leap.
- Prioritize supports for independent, in-home, and family providers. Fund the expansion of seats available through these models by funding staffing. No chain, large-scale private or non-profit provider should receive staffing funding unless they agree to accept new students that meet the 185% guideline, and any new staff should be paid at comparable rates to SPPS staff.
- There should be training funding that is dedicated to supporting training expenses as well as professional development such as earning a CDA or taking college coursework in early childhood. This funding should not supplant the existing TEACH scholarships, but could supplement this funding.
- Make sure the amount of scholarships cover the cost of participation in the program- if necessary, layer St. Paul funds on top of existing funds to get to actual cost of care. Current early learning scholarships often do not cover cost of 12 months in a child care program.
- Employees stay with jobs where they are valued and compensated fairly. Equitable pay, benefits, and livable wage will retain staff across the current childcare workforce, rather than take them away for a better paying job.
- Ensure that there are pathways in place for providers to meet standards and criteria of program, including removing barriers, financial funding or stipends, and supports for professional development.
- Supporting teachers with mental health and other areas that impact their overall wellbeing as well as providing ways for centers and family child cares to participate without too many barriers

- Fund staffing by funding classrooms. Put some guiderails up around chain centers by requiring them to take children whose families meet the income requirements listed above.
- I still don't know how to answer this, but it seems like with more kiddos qualifying for care, there would increase the demand for care providers?
- I do not believe that any program the city could offer , outside of directly competing with childcare centers, would harm the workforce in anyway.
- Given the crisis we're in, I don't see how any investment could take away from the current childcare workforce...
- Evaluate unintentional consequences with stakeholders throughout program development.
- pay parity/aligned benefits package with K-12 SPPS teachers
- Requiring a mixed delivery system
- see above
- NA

What, if any, professional development and support should the program offer to participating providers?

- Investing in the childcare industry is crucial for improving the quality of care and education that children receive. By providing support and resources to teachers and providers, such as more time for professional development, we can help to ensure that the workforce is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to promote children's development and well-being. Currently, many childcare providers are overworked and underpaid, which can lead to high turnover rates and a lack of continuity in care. By investing in the industry, we can create a more sustainable and effective childcare system that benefits both children and providers.
- The first focus should be on funding the child's care at a quality parent choice provider. This program should link to resources for professional development. Look at Denver preschool model for potential supports and how they have built out those supports or connections to development opportunities. Reciprocity of professional development between public schools and the childcare field.
- Providers know what providers need. Instead of prescribing professional development, it could be more beneficial to allocate a pool of dollars providers can access - through like a scholarship application - to support provider-specific/provider-relevant professional development and supports for their staff.

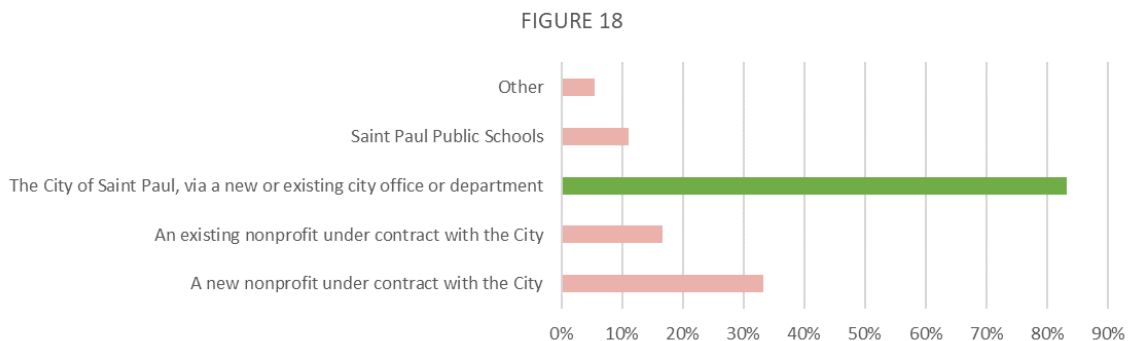
- Grow-your-own programs to move from aide or assistant to lead teacher (including opps for grants/scholarships), equity trainings, child development and classroom skills trainings should be encouraged and made accessible.
- Professional development opportunities and support should be offered to participating providers, strengthening competencies and building skills for teaching staff, aides, program directors and administrators.
- You can probably always do more in the area of professional development- just make sure that it is coordinated with what is already available to programs with state/DHS resources.
- There should be a requirement to keep up with professional development and continued improvements, but I don't think program funds need to provide those opportunities
- The program should offer support navigation for safety trainings and ways to help providers keep their licenses and areas of care up to code
- Free trainings toward keeping up with the requirements for their roles; possibly tuition support toward earning CDA, BA, etc.
- Training, scholarships, connection to higher education (thinking a partnership with Saint Paul College?), site visits?
- Stipends to achieve degrees, considerations of experience counting towards advancement on a career lattice.
- Professional development support and pathways should be developed with educator and care providers say.
- PD and support should be designed by educators and providers so it is appropriate to their needs.
- Profession Development opportunities, mentorship, coaching, and peer collaboration opportunities
- The program should give incentives for continuing education and professional development.
- There should be some type of central professional development fund.
- This should be figured out with educators and providers.
- NA

What other considerations should be made to support workforce development of a potential future early learning program for the City? Please share any additional thoughts, ideas or concerns here as you have them.

- Childcare/preschool is expensive and often parents, who want to work are unable to do so because they cannot afford the exorbitant cost of child care. Early Learning Scholarships & Child Care Assistance Program are underfunded and not adequate to meet the needs of children in underserved communities. Adequate early learning funding would allow parents to join the workforce, provide for family economic stability and prepare children to enter elementary school prepared and confident.
- Paying ECE teachers more is a major issue and I think we are approaching a catastrophic staffing crisis in this field if we as a society do not start treating ECE providers as the skilled professionals they are. Raising pay to be on par with K-12 teachers would do so much for retention and attraction of high quality teachers. This needs to be a top priority.
- Incentivize folks looking to enter the field by paying for a healthy portion of required coursework/certifications.
- Continue to look at models across the country that have had success.
- Just making sure we have funded career pathways!
- NA

Governance models

The program should be operated by (check all that you would support):



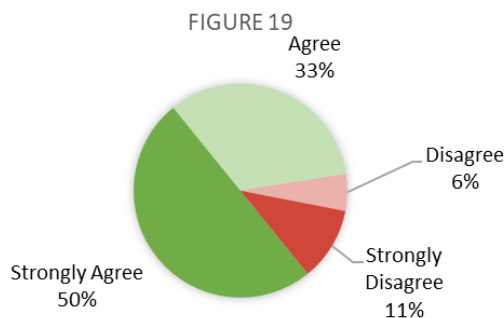
Comments:

- Often nonprofits are used for these kinds of efforts as they historically do a better job of outreach and responding to the needs of families and families perceive less stigma (when funds are distributed on income guidelines). Presumably any of the entities listed

above could do the work. The entity would need to be able to pay SPPS, Head Start and approximately 100 child care programs or maybe design a combination of having the city (or some other entity, like DHS) issue the checks to programs and someone else do the outreach and technical assistance to families. Not sure about new vs. existing, maybe run an RFP to decide. I would recommend the entity that does this be housed in St. Paul

- This must be housed in the city since it will be funded by tax dollars. A new office/department made up of people who know and understand early childhood education will be necessary in order to ensure kids, families, providers, and teachers are getting their needs met. There will be a lot more trust in this program if it is housed in the city rather than a non-profit
- I do not feel particularly strongly for or against nonprofit or city operation of the program, but I think that the organization or body that is decided to oversee the program should be solely focused on the program, not added on to an existing department or organization. I am leaning more towards a new city office or department in the City of Saint Paul.
- I think it makes sense to have this program operated by the city, with clear timelines for when key components of the program will be in place in order to keep things moving along.
- While I recognize some hesitancy with the city undertaking it, I think keeping with the city of Saint Paul would be best for transparency.
- Whatever entity is recommended, it should have a department and staff dedicated to early care and education.
- If public funds are used, then only a public entity should manage this program.
- I do not think a program of this nature should be run by SPPS.

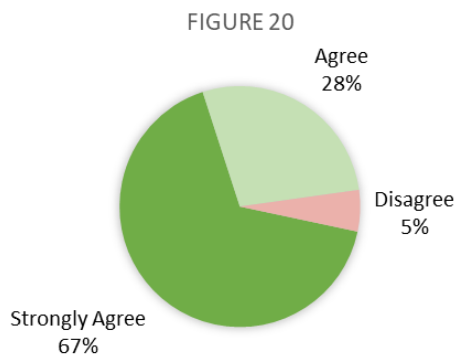
The program should be held accountable for fiscal and program performance according to clearly defined performance indicators and annual financial audits. If it is run by a nonprofit, this accountability should be stimulated through a contract with the City of Saint Paul.



Comments:

- The first part of your question is clear and valid. However, in order to ensure accountability and transparency, the childcare program should not be overseen solely by a non-profit organization. Instead, it should be overseen by the city council. This can help to ensure that the program is held to high standards of quality and safety, while also promoting community engagement and input.
- I agree with clear accountability for fiscal and program performance. Regular checkpoints, goals and reports to it's governing body are important and necessary.
- Public funds should not be handed over to a nonprofit. If this is a public good then it shouldn't be privatized or outsourced.
- IF it's run by a non-profit. I don't want it to be run by a non-profit.
- No non-profit should be responsible for this program.

The program should include strong parent, provider and community voices in policy decision-making through appropriate structures like a governing board, advisory committee, or other structure.



Comments:

- To ensure that the childcare program is responsive to the needs of families and providers, there should be an advisory board consisting of parents, teachers, and childcare providers. This advisory board can provide valuable feedback and input to the city on program design and implementation. However, the ultimate oversight of the program should be the city council.
- Parents, providers and community should be a priority and have a seat at the table when policy decisions are being made that impact them, their child and community. Whether

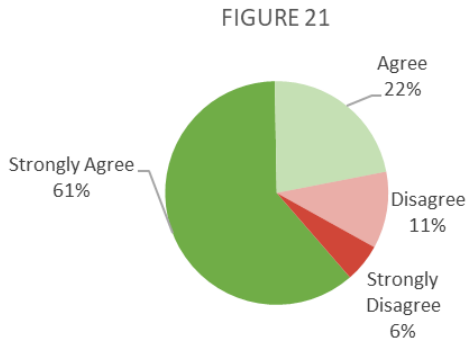
the structure is a governing board, advisory committee or other structure, all need to be at the table from the very beginning of the discussion.

- The combination of parent, provider and community members keep the board or committee grounded in the needs of the community. Their voices should be part of the dialog.
- This governing board, advisory committee, or other structure should be comprised of equal seats of parents, providers and community voices.

What other considerations should be made when designing governance of a potential future early learning program for the City? Please share any additional thoughts, ideas or concerns here as you have them.

- I'm open to either the nonprofit model or the program living within a city office. If it lives within a city office, it would be handy for the program to align with and be implemented like other similar initiatives - i.e. College Bound Saint Paul as well as our city guaranteed income pilot.
- The governance design should not create barriers to participation by stakeholders. Often community voices are lost and service stymied when working in the constraints of a bureaucracy.
- The city council should oversee the advisory board, not a nonprofit, because the program is funded by public funds and is designed as a local city program.
- I feel very strongly that in order to protect the integrity of the program, it needs to be housed within the city as opposed to a non-profit
- I would like it to be delivered through the city via a committee and provides recommendations to the city council.
- Ensure that the requirements do not create undue burden in being able to run the program.

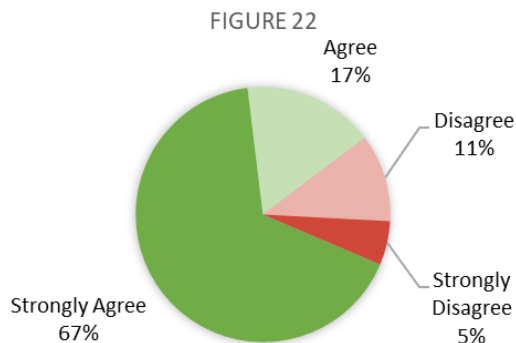
The program should be primarily funded through a new, dedicated, public revenue source.



Comments:

- The childcare program can be funded through new public funding sources or by reallocating existing public funds, such as the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding. By investing in childcare, we can support working families and help to ensure that all children have access to high-quality early education and care. Additionally, investing in the childcare industry can also help to create jobs and stimulate economic growth.
- No levy should be sought until there are recommendations in place for design. It is a disservice to the residents of Saint Paul to ask for money without a plan.
- This may be the way to go but I can't support moving forward with raising public dollars until there is a plan in place.
- special property tax levy

Program revenue should supplement and not replace funding available from other sources, such as Early Learning Scholarships, CCAP, and any other state or federal funding.



Comments:

- 100% - local funds should be used to supplement, not supplant, federal and state funding sources. these local dollars can help close existing gaps and make transformational change possible for a number of families through fully covered care.
- No levy should be sought until there are recommendations in place for design. It is a disservice to the residents of Saint Paul to ask for money without a plan.
- The goal should be to fill the funding gap where other funding streams have left families or providers behind.
- I actually would like it to fill the gap between these programs. So we serve the family fully.
- braiding and blending all possible funds is highly necessary
- See above.

Following are the options for local revenue sources we've discussed. Please indicate the extent to which you agree that the city should pursue each option as the primary source (the explanation of each source and considerations are available [here](#)).



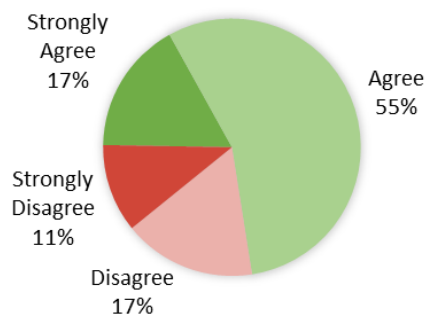
Comments:

- After going through the various local revenue sources listed above and talking them through several times, to me it seems as though a special levy is the only consistent, sustainable way to fund this program- and the only one that has a real chance at being approved by voters.

- Even with the trifecta, getting a waiver AND legislative approval from mnleg to go the local sales tax route is a long shot. Given the state of our city's infrastructure, those dollars should be used for what they're intended for - not siphoned away to meet other needs.
- A special levy seems to be the most viable option. Voters have the opportunity to decide how Saint Paul will move forward on the work of caring for our youngest citizens.
- No funding should be sought until there are recommendations in place for design. It is a disservice to the residents of Saint Paul to ask for money without a plan.
- Of the four options presented, a dedicated special levy seems to be a viable option, lending to sustainability and decided by voters in St. Paul.
- I would support a special levy for a future program but could foresee scenarios where an annual levy could be needed in addition or as a stop gap.
- A Waiver for sales tax would be needed so the tax could be used for this program, if that happened then we support its use.
- The special levy seems most realistic. I don't think sales tax or annual levy would be reliable enough
- See above.

The program should be able to accept donations from philanthropic and private sources, as long as there is accountability to stated program goals.

FIGURE 24

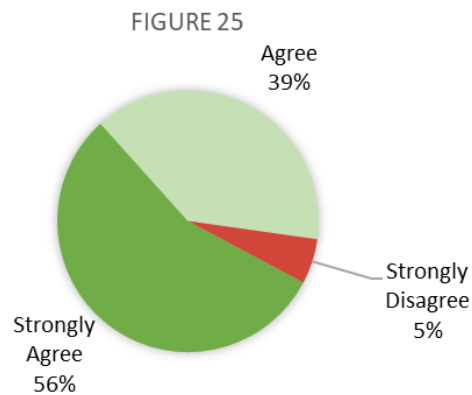


Comments:

- I am hesitant to agree to this. We would need a clear plan for how we are vetting and approving grants, an understanding of what those funds would be used for and I would be unwilling to agree to accepting donations should we move forward with a model where the program was housed in a non-profit. If we're accountable to the city, I'm willing to accept it. If not, I would disagree.

- I want the program to get all of the funding possible, but am uncomfortable with the possible influence/steering of program by donors. Taking donations could make funding of program unreliable, and I wouldn't want the program to be dependent on donations and have the program suffer if donors decide to pull or reduce their donations.
- These sources should only be accepted if the funding does not have any stipulations for extra reporting other than what is already in place for the program. Because there is a need for an ongoing program funding level any one-time funding should not be used for the base of the program but for special projects or one-time needs.
- Using the other city programs as a model that currently take private donations, I would be comfortable with a strong policy to review and administer donations. This process would need to be rigorous, transparent, and ensure there is no mission creep of the program,
- The future of our children is at stake. Funding is scarce for early learning and consideration of funding from other sources should not be dismissed, if there is compatibility, accountability, no strings attached, and alignment with program goals.
- We are already doing this through transformational economic justice initiatives in our city (i.e. college savings accounts and UBI). Private dollars can help stretch and deepen the impact of public dollars.
- Corporate and private donations have historically been used to fund only what the funder wants and not what is needed. They have also been used historically to change and drive program goals.
- As long as there is a checks and balances system in place to ensure the integrity of the program is protected and private funders couldn't influence policy requirements of the program
- If this is a public good then we should not create a process that allows corporations on nonprofits to shape the program based on their funding priorities.
- As many committee members noted, donations from philanthropic and private sources often come with strings attached.
- Philanthropic and private donations should be accepted for general operating and not tied to specific programming.
- Corporate dollars should fund add ons but not be relied upon as core program dollars.

The program should be designed to take advantage of future additional state or federal funding to ensure that local dollars can be directed to Saint Paul children's unmet needs.



Comments:

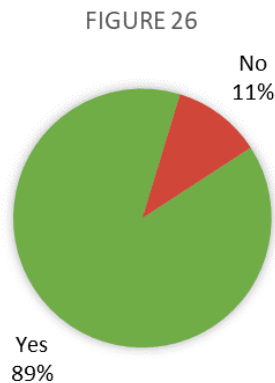
- The program should not be a charity program and should instead be fully funded from a public source. By relying on public funding, we can ensure that the program is sustainable and accessible to all families, regardless of their financial situation. Additionally, public funding can help to raise the standard of care and support for childcare providers and ensure that they receive fair compensation for their valuable work
- Yeah! If the state passes and allocates some big dollars, we should be poised with a bucket, aka a framework, so that we can be ready to absorb resources!
- Again, the goal is to fill the gaps, not to recreate the wheel.
- All potential funds need to be utilized
- It is unclear what this means.

What other considerations should be made when exploring funding for a potential future early learning program for the City? Please share any additional thoughts, ideas or concerns here as you have them.

- A couple of folks in the group seemed to be concerned about the use of taxpayer funds for early learning programs. I think their concerns can be addressed. Since early learning scholarship funds are already being used throughout communities in Minnesota, I am confident that St. Paul can design a program that will be a good steward of the resources. I also think it is appropriate to give citizens of St. Paul the opportunity to decide.

- There is not enough funding streams available to support early learners. It is important to explore potential funding sources to support early learning opportunity, particularly for communities with the least access for their children.
- The funding routes should be always a mix of state, federal and private so all those needing the program can apply without creating barriers of eligible requirements when it comes to mix status families.
- No levy should be sought until there are recommendations in place for design. It is a disservice to the residents of Saint Paul to ask for money without a plan.
- Funding will need to be ongoing so the funding source needs to be responsive to care needs. One-time funding is not a strong fit to support an ongoing program.

Do you think the City should have a local childcare and early learning program at all?



What else do you want to share with the Council regarding this process or your opinions on the recommendations?

- The above question does not reflect a third option - wait to decide this question until the current legislative session has concluded. Given that this opinion was expressed by many at the last meeting, it is a disservice to participants and the City Council to have neglected to include it here. While many of the recommendations of this committee would put forward for creating a public child care program are positive, the Saint Paul Federation of Educators believes that the problem of childcare deserts cannot be addressed simply by using public dollars to fund scholarships for private, and non-profit institutions. Without drafting specifics regarding issues such as providing living wages, professional development for staff, increasing the actual number of child care slots available, financial accountability, and program oversight any recommendations this committee makes around these concerns are merely statements of belief. And while statements of belief are an important part of creating a long-term solution, more than belief is required if we are to ask the residents of Saint Paul, many that are already in a

financially precarious place, to take on the additional burden of another levy. These are the same concerns that we raised during the initial SPARK campaign. It was our hope that this committee would be able to address them. Despite some positive movement forward on some of these concerns, there are not enough specifics for the Saint Paul Federation of Educators to support these recommendations as anything other than a starting point for a conversation to develop a program. In addition, the Saint Paul Federation of Educators is committed to supporting the many small, independent, and in-home providers that serve our Saint Paul families. These providers – often BIPOC and immigrant women – play a vital role in offering a culturally relevant option for families. The recommendations that we have seen thus far do little to lift up and support this vital component of child care in Saint Paul. A program that does not prioritize support for these providers becomes a program that simply funnels dollars to private and non-profit institutions that should not be recipients of additional public funds. The Saint Paul Federation of Educators is committed to continued engagement with the City Council and community to develop long-term, sustainable access to childcare resources. We look forward to continued conversation to ensure that kids, families, providers and teachers across race, class and geography have an experience of our childcare system that is a model for our state and the country.

- The process lacked creativity and had a narrow view, with the apparent goal of recommending another program to the industry. However, a program designed for the city could have had a significant impact, and the process should have included more public conversations to recommend a strong program. In addition, I believe that the city council should explore opportunities to partner with the state in developing a childcare program for Saint Paul that could ultimately be rolled out statewide. Given the significant work already being done at the state level, it would be a missed opportunity to not consider their efforts in our own program design.
- We know we have to do better for our children in Saint Paul. Many of our young children are in crisis. The best way to reach and to help our youth is to be there for them while they are young. To create positive, nurturing and educational experiences is to give them tools for life long success. We have an opportunity to create action that we know will benefit our children. Other cities have created programs that actively support young children, we can too!
- This is such important work. Going through this process has made it clear just how urgent the need is for a program such as the one we are recommending. We need to show up for the children of Saint Paul and I urge you all to take up this work and develop a program that can change the lives of so many children and families and can hopefully lay the framework for cities across Minnesota.
- I think the Council created a group with wide diversity of opinion, including some conflicts of interest. I think we benefited from hearing all of the ideas, concerns, opinions and research. I did not hear anything that led me to believe this was not a good, worthy idea, in fact, I strongly believe that St. Paul can build a model for the state and country.
- Other levels of government do not have adequate resources to take on this full responsibility and we can no longer wait. Children are slipping between the cracks, without funding to support their early learning access and opportunity. The City has an important role to play in this effort, by investing and making our littlest learners a priority.

- Overall, this process was incredibly fair and transparent. Meetings were well balanced through many presentations, time for Q&A, large group discussion, small group discussion, and post-meeting surveys. Whatever the results are of this report, know they're the product of a robust community engagement effort and should be implemented accordingly.
 - I am very grateful for the opportunity to sit on this committee. I deeply believe the city needs to do something quickly to support our community through the mighty tool of early childhood education
 - Why is there not a third option? Namely wait to see what the legislature does this session and assess where we are in response. Several people spoke to this during the last meeting.
-

What other actions or topics for future exploration do you recommend to the City Council?

- There will be many more details and questions further along in the process of building the program. This survey included solid foundational questions and a good framework for the city to use as a jumping off point for this program. I think it is important to continue to seek answers and opinions from people with expertise in the field of early childhood education as the program gets built.
- The City Council should explore more in-depth the complexities of FFN providers and ways to uplift and support them. In my opinion, there could be a future study or even committee just on the diverse FFN providers in Saint Paul alone.
- As City Council moves forward in this work, there should be continued discussions around unintended consequences for each piece of the program's development and look to how those consequences can be mitigated.
- The city should explore the recommendations of the Great Start Task Force and prioritize the input of real parents, providers, and teachers in designing the program.
- Depending on the group's recommended funding mechanism, please put this on the ballot for voters to decide come November!

Appendix B - Presenters

Date	Presenter
October 27, 2022	Josh Wallack, Founder of Children’s Funding Project and Former Deputy Chancellor for Early Childhood Education and Student Enrollment in the New York City Department of Education
November 17, 2022	Laurie Possin, Manager of Child Care Assistance Program, Minnesota Department of Human Services
	Sandra Myers, Supervisor of Early Learning Services, Minnesota Department of Education
	Robert McDaniel, President of MetrixIQ
	John McCarthy, Finance Director, Saint Paul Office of Financial Services
December 1, 2022	Ingrid Mezquita, San Francisco Department of Early Childhood
	Raka Bhattacharya, Department of Education and Early Learning, City of Seattle
	Sarah Baray, PreK 4 SA, San Antonio
	Ellen Braun, Denver Preschool Program
	Clare Sanford, Minnesota Child Care Association
January 5, 2023	Hannah Queen, Coordinator, Great Start for All Children Task Force
March 9, 2023	Representative Dave Pinto 64B, Committee Chair, Children and Families Finance Policy

Appendix C - Committee Syllabus

Date	Time	Place	Topic	Learning/Meeting outcomes
10/27	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	Why Early Learning Matters + City's Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group introductions, establish norms/scope of work - Why early learning matters and how cities are playing a role in it
11/10	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	St. Paul's Work To Date + Setting our Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share context/history of this idea over 7 years, learn about the need in Saint Paul & hear from local efforts - Include specifics on pre-work to date about 3 & 4 year olds vs. broader age group - Agree on and finalize scope of work encompassing key topics and concerns across the group
11/17	4-6 pm	Neighb House	<p>Learning: Potential funding sources and governance structures for early learning initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research on funding sources/concerns/questions to date & governance models, including collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn from models in other cities/places as well as what's been discussed in STP
12/1	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	<p>Learning: Family-centered program design and workforce development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equitable early learning program designs around the country & locally for diverse families and workers, including scope of ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn from models in other cities/places as well as what's been discussed in STP
12/15	4-6 pm	Neighb House	Discussion: Program design & workforce development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore key questions together as a group on how such an initiative in STP could be designed and staffed for equity and success
1/5	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	Discussion: Program design & workforce development (additional time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore key questions together as a group on how such an initiative in STP could be designed and staffed for equity and success

1/19	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	Discussion: Governance models & funding	- Explore key questions together as a group on how such an initiative in STP could be governed and funded
2/2	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	Recommendations: Program design & workforce development	- Come to final recommendations & remaining Qs
2/16	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	Recommendations: Governance models	- Come to final recommendations & remaining Qs
3/2	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	Recommendations: Funding	- Come to final recommendations & remaining Qs
3/16	4-6 pm	Rondo Library	Planning Meeting - Council Presentation	- Wrap up process and prepare for presentation to the City Council
3/22	3:30 PM	City Hall	Council Presentation	- Present to City Council: recommendations, topics for future

Appendix D - Other Cities with Early Childhood Programs

	San Francisco	Seattle	San Antonio	Denver
Funding Source	Varied – California tobacco tax; voter approved city/county Public Education and enrichment fund; tax on commercial rent; city/county general funds for early care and education	Property tax levy for universal preschool. \$335M over 7 years. Goes back to voters every 7 years. (State fully funds preschool for low income families.) Goal to serve by end to serve 2500 3- and 4-year-olds.	City-funded; 1/8 cent of local sales tax; voter-approved. \$47M annually in 2018-2019.	City sales tax, .15%. \$30M per year. Voter approved.
Program Location	City Department (Department of Early Education) and through public grant-making, they fund a mixed delivery system of early care and education settings	City Department (Department of Education and Early Learning)	Both a city department and a separate 501(c)3. Employees are city employees and they can take part in city resources like finance department and human resources.	Stand alone 501c3, contract with City and County of Denver. Subprogram of the city, open to city audits and a direct relationship with the Mayor. Only operates in the City and County of Denver.
Governance	Two oversight bodies – The First 5 Children and Families First Commission and the Early Childhood Community Oversight and Advisory Committee		Have a c3 board can authorize them to enter into contracts and approve day to day operations. Dual reporting relationship to city administrator and board of directors.	Governed by a board of directors (11-17 members)

Eligibility	Children less than 5; San Francisco resident; and families earning below 200% of Area Median Income (AMI)	3 and 4 year olds; Seattle residents; tuition is calculated on a sliding scale based on family size and household income, with most Seattle families qualifying for free preschool tuition.	Until this year, only served 4 year-olds. Now serve 3 year olds. And in next few years will be opening up some infant/toddler classrooms. San Antonio residents. Prioritize children who meet state qualifications for free preschool education such as homelessness, income, foster system, children of military families, children of first responders.	4 year-olds. Denver residents. Just launched a pilot of 600 low-income 3 year-olds. They provide 70% of funding to lessen tuition burden.
Fully Scaled?	No. Have a phased-in approach due to limitations in funding availability to reach the 25K children are are eligible. Currently funding 10,000 children with incomes below 110% of AMI	Not yet.	No. Seats are first-come, first-serve, with seats reserved for children who qualify under state pre-kindergarten guidelines. A sliding scale programs exists for those who fall outside the guidelines but with to attend.	60% of Denver 4-year-olds utilize the program.
Mixed Delivery	Yes: schools, child care centers, family child care, Head Start. Do not fund FFN care; not a mandate through their voter-approved propositions	School-district (1/3 of system); community based organizations -- licensed child care providers, family child care providers, Head Start; braid and blend all funding.	Operate 4 early learning centers, 500 children in each center. Supports public schools, charter schools, child care centers in the city through grants.	Yes. Licensed facilities.

Program Options	Program options are based on family/community needs. 80% of programs offer full-day, year-round care.	Full-day (6 hours); school- year (180 days). Just began offering a separate summer program	7 am - 6 pm. Operate on a school calendar. When they begin infant/toddler care, will be year-round.	Part-day, full-day, or extended day.
Provider Rec's	To participate as a city-funded site, must meet 10 quality standards: child assessment, curriculum, developmental screening, family partnership, interestions, environment, ratio & group size, professional development, qualifications and continuous quality improvement.	Floor is aligned to state quality rating system; minimum is a 3 on a 5 point scale. Use two curriculums. Want children to meet Kindergarten Readiness goals of state. Require lead teachers to have a Bachelor's in ECE or have Bachelor's + 30 ECE credits. Provide scholarships.	They grant \$4.2M to other ECE organizations to improve their programs. Their four centers are NAEYC accredited; all teachers have bachelor's degrees in early education. Assistant teachers have at least a Child Development associate credential and receive ongoing training.	Must be rated 1-5 on the state quality rating system.

Appendix E - Analysis of Trends in Comments by Question

From full survey results in Appendix A.

To be eligible for program funding, all families must be residents of the City of Saint Paul.

- **Additional consideration:** ensure inclusion of families who are experiencing homelessness (3 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** determine whether/how to include parents who work in the city of Saint Paul but do not live here, due to the realities of how people find and access childcare

Families should be eligible to receive program funding without regard to immigration status.

- No trends in comments/general agreement

If the revenue for the program is raised solely by Saint Paul taxpayers, program funding should only go to providers located in Saint Paul.

- **Additional consideration:** explore a potential waiver process for qualifying families who need a provider outside of Saint Paul, due to realities of current childcare landscape (4 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** a general desire for families to be able to choose providers outside of Saint Paul due to realities of current childcare landscape (2 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** if this is a Saint Paul taxpayer funded program, beneficiaries (providers/families) should be only in Saint Paul (2 comments)

A process or waiver should be developed for granting program funding to a provider outside of Saint Paul in extenuating circumstances.

- No trends in comments, general additional insights on scenarios that policymakers should consider

Program funding can cover tuition at the following settings (check all that apply):

- **Additional consideration:** Legal non-licensed family, friend and neighbor care is an important option and should meet a baseline quality standard for safety (4 comments)

Saint Paul should continue to evaluate how best to support unpaid family, friend, and neighbor care.

- **Additional consideration:** This is a prevalent form of childcare for many families, including and especially BIPOC families with specific cultural needs, and should be carefully considered for inclusion/support within any future program (5 comments)

Program funding should be available for any scheduling option that meets families' needs, from part-time up to and including year-round, full- and extended-day care.

- No trends in comments

Program funding should follow the child or fund seats at providers for any child to use (similar to Pathway I and II Early Learning Scholarships). Both ways should be included.

- **Additional consideration:** Instead of funds following individual children in a voucher style, the funds should primarily expand capacity in the system by funding seats and classrooms at the provider level (3 comments)

Program funding should fully cover the cost of care for families at 185% federal poverty level and below. Families who earn more should be subsidized on a sliding scale.

- No trends in comments

When fully funded, the program should serve all Saint Paul children ages 0-5.

- **Additional consideration:** funding care for children in the earliest years of life is critical for early social and emotional development (2 comments)

Until the program is fully funded, the program should prioritize children in the following age groups:

- **Additional consideration:** comments seem to just restate what was asked in the Q

If program funding is not available for all children, the program should prioritize families with the most need. To determine need, the program would create a point system (to be developed later) that takes into account factors like income, homelessness, foster care, parents under 21, etc.

- No comments or trends

The program must ensure that providers who receive program funding are keeping children safe. For that reason, providers receiving program funding must, at a minimum, be licensed or a legal non-licensed provider. (See these links for more information on [licensure](#) and [legal non-licensed providers](#).)

- **Additional consideration:** Legal non-licensed providers are important and should be included, also the general caveat that they can meet basic safety standards (3 comments)

Over time, to continue to receive program funding, providers should be expected to meet specific program standards (yet to be developed) to ensure children are making strong progress.

- **Additional consideration:** Program standards should align with Parent Aware (2 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** Cultural competence and needs should be a key part of any new standard (2 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** This should not be considered a recommendation without clarity on who is developing the standard and what it entails (2 comments)

The program should develop ways to support providers in obtaining licensure and meeting program standards.

- **Additional consideration:** Please make use of existing supports and funding that is already in place (3 comments)

The program should be as easy as possible for providers and parents to access and should explore ideas like a single application, translation, navigators (both centrally located and community-based), etc.

- No trends

The program should create an online tool (or link to a tool that already exists) and employ staff to help families find the right program and apply for aid.

- **Additional consideration:** Please use or consider tools that already exist (3 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** Please develop unique tools or resources for the program (3 comments)

What other considerations should be made when considering program design of a potential future early learning program for the City? Please share any additional thoughts, ideas or concerns here as you have them.

- No trends in comments

What actions can the program take to ensure competitive pay and benefits for childcare workers in the program?

- **Additional consideration:** ensure competitive pay and benefits on par/aligned with K-12 education (5 comments)

How do we ensure the program expands employment rather than takes away from the current childcare workforce?

- **Additional consideration:** Competitive pay and benefits as a strategy (2 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** Fund seats and classrooms to expand capacity (2 comments)

What, if any, professional development and support should the program offer to participating providers?

- **Additional consideration:** central professional development fund (2 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** pay for certain training opportunities (2 comments)
- **Additional consideration:** let educators decide what educators need and offer/develop resources on their terms (3 comments)

What other considerations should be made to support workforce development of a potential future early learning program for the City? Please share any additional thoughts, ideas or concerns here as you have them.

- No trends

The program should be operated by (check all that you would support):

- Comments seem to restate the options given.

The program should be held accountable for fiscal and program performance according to clearly defined performance indicators and annual financial audits. If it is run by a nonprofit, this accountability should be stimulated through a contract with the City of Saint Paul.

- **Additional consideration:** This program, if taxpayer-funded, should not be run or administered by a non-profit (3 comments)

The program should include strong parent, provider and community voices in policy decision-making through appropriate structures like a governing board, advisory committee, or other structure.

- Comments seem to restate the question in the affirmative/strong agreement

What other considerations should be made when designing governance of a potential future early learning program for the City? Please share any additional thoughts, ideas or concerns here as you have them.

- No trends in comments

The program should be primarily funded through a new, dedicated, public revenue source.

- **Additional consideration:** There should be no levy without a plan in place (2 comments)

Program revenue should supplement and not replace funding available from other sources, such as Early Learning Scholarships, CCAP, and any other state or federal funding.

- **Additional consideration:** Any local funding should fill the gap left by all other funding sources (3 comments)

Following are the options for local revenue sources we've discussed. Please indicate the extent to which you agree that the city should pursue each option as the primary source (the explanation of each source and considerations are available [here](#)).

- Comments seem to restate the options given

The program should be able to accept donations from philanthropic and private sources, as long as there is accountability to stated program goals.

- **Additional considerations:** Private, corporate and philanthropic funding often comes with strings attached and should be viewed with scrutiny, general discomfort with accepting private funding (5 comments)
- **Additional considerations:** Private funding could be accepted for certain uses and with strong review process in place (3 comments)

The program should be designed to take advantage of future additional state or federal funding to ensure that local dollars can be directed to Saint Paul children's unmet needs.

- No trends in comments

What other considerations should be made when exploring funding for a potential future early learning program for the City? Please share any additional thoughts, ideas or concerns here as you have them.

- No trends in comments

Do you think the City should have a local childcare and early learning program at all?

- No comments

What else do you want to share with the Council regarding this process or your opinions on the recommendations?

- **Additional consideration:** The City should wait to see what the legislature does with childcare funding and act once that is known; this should have been included as a clear option (2 comments)

What other actions or topics for future exploration do you recommend to the City Council?

- No trends in comments.