



Community Investments with Precision Early Childhood Development Work Plan

COMMITMENT TO OUR NEIGHBORS

The McKenna Foundation is committed to addressing social disparities in New Braunfels and Comal County. Through strategic grant making, we empower nonprofits to meet critical needs focused on housing, mental and behavioral health services, and early childhood development. Our efforts, driven by the forces of inspiration, influence, and impact, reduce inequities and enhance the well-being of vulnerable populations. Through these community investments, the McKenna Foundation and trusted partners can address immediate challenges and build sustainable support systems for generations to come.

CURRENT STATE

Families and businesses in New Braunfels and Comal County are increasingly burdened by the cost of childcare, resulting in an unprecedented strain on our local workforce.

- 2 in 3 kids under age six have all available parents in the labor force.
- A 2024 survey revealed 25% of New Braunfels and Comal County centers have already reduced capacity due to staffing difficulties, and a further 25% expect to do so in the coming year.
- The average local family must allocate 11.5% of their income to childcare, far more than the affordable threshold.
- The average annual cost of infant child care in our community is more than annual cost of in-state college tuition.
- The number of local centers accepting subsidies for working families is steadily decreasing.

DESIRED FUTURE STATE

A thriving early childhood ecosystem that prioritizes the success of children through strategic support for families and providers to create a powerful future for children, their families, and the community

VISION

To be a leader in development of a vibrant and thriving community for all our neighbors

OBJECTIVE 1

Every family has affordable access to quality care in an environment that meets the needs of their children

OBJECTIVE 2

All families have access to tools and resources to support them in making the best decisions for their children and family

OBJECTIVE 3

Early childhood educators are professionally developed, compensated, and valued

PRIORITIES

- Explore initiatives and programs that support providers
- Promote inclusive training and resources
- Support Texas Rising Star certifications

PRIORITIES

- Provide resources and support to assist families with childcare costs
- Partner with businesses to raise awareness of Early Childhood as a workforce issue
- Develop partnerships with businesses to support working parents

PRIORITIES

- Support local childcare providers through connections to coaches and mentors
- Create a shared resources system
- Identify gaps and resources in professional development and training
- Foster collaboration and engagement

OBJECTIVE 1: Every family has affordable access to quality early learning and care in an environment that meets the needs of their children

Priority	Explore initiatives and programs that support high-quality providers to expand centers or open new sites in order to increase capacity
Priority	Promote training and resources to be more inclusive and adaptable while increasing the capacity of high-quality providers to serve children with special needs
Priority	Support Texas Rising Star certifications to promote high-quality learning environments and increase the number of providers that can accept childcare subsidies for working parents
Metrics	Increased number of early childhood slots available, decreased waitlist numbers, increased number of children meeting developmental milestones, increased number of Texas Rising Star certified facilities, improved access to child care subsidies, increased rates of kindergarten readiness

OBJECTIVE 2: Every family is aware of and connected to tools and resources to support them in making the best decisions for their young children and family

Priority	Provide resources and support that assist families with childcare costs, allowing them to make the best economic decisions for their household and remain in the workforce if desired
Priority	Partner with the business community to advocate and raise awareness about the importance of high-quality early learning and its impact on the future workforce
Priority	Develop relationships with businesses interested in supporting working parents through early childcare initiatives
Metrics	Increased number of community partnerships, referrals to social service organizations, subsidies and financial assistance provided, development of business-sponsored early learning spots, increased number of businesses offering childcare assistance as part of benefit package

OBJECTIVE 3: Early childhood educators are professionally developed, compensated, and valued to enable them to help each child reach their potential

Priority	Support local childcare providers through connections to coaches and mentors, to improve quality and financial stability
Priority	Create a shared resources system for providers to offer technical assistance and achieve economies of scale
Priority	Identify gaps and resources in professional development and training to ensure providers have easy access to local continued education opportunities
Priority	Foster collaboration and engagement among early childhood professionals
Metrics	Increased percent of EC professionals with CDAs and higher (certifications + degrees), increase percent of EC providers enrolled in TECPDS, improved early childhood professionals wages, increase in early childhood professional recruitment and retention rate

The McKenna Foundation prioritizes programs that develop or expand services to under resourced, economically disadvantaged, emotionally vulnerable and geographically and historically underserved populations.