



# News Release

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## **New Early Head Start Center to Provide Educational Opportunities for South Austin Youth**

The first five years of a child's life are critical to his or her future outcomes. In fact, studies have shown early childhood education can help break the cycle of poverty.

The Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) in partnership with Child Inc., and Mainspring Schools today (April 21) hosted a ribbon cutting for a new Early Head Start Center at 1201 W. Live Oak, to encourage south Austin children to thrive by providing them with fundamental educational building blocks.

“This new Early Head Start Center is going to be a tremendous resource for underserved kids under age 3 living in the Bouldin Neighborhood,” said HACA President and CEO Michael Gerber. “This partnership between HACA, Child Inc. and Mainspring Schools further strengthens the continuum of the self-sufficiency programs we provide to our residents.”

The Early Head Start Center is funded by the Federal Head Start Program, the Early Head Start Expansion, and the Child Care Partnership grant. The center, located at Meadowbrook Apartments, one of HACA's 18 public housing properties, is designed to increase the accessibility of high-quality child care services to 32 underserved infants, toddlers and their families at Meadowbrook and neighboring public housing communities.

Child Inc. and its child care partner, Mainspring Schools, will leverage child care development funds, parent co-pay, and foundation dollars to blend local funding resources. Through this partnership, Mainspring Schools will provide full-day, year-round services to Head Start eligible infants, toddlers and their families.

“We value our partnership with HACA and Mainspring,” said Child Inc. Executive Director Albert L. Black. “These partnerships enable us to spend much needed time with each child for early education and social and emotional growth, because if we don't spend time with our children...the system will.”

Mainspring has hired new teaching staff, an Early Head Start program director, and enrolled six existing teachers in Child Development Associate programs to better support the additional children who will be enrolled.

“This partnership with HACA and Early Head Start through Child Inc. means that Mainspring will increase our enrollment by 16 children and deepen services to an additional 16 children. Yet, it means more than simply increasing enrollment; it means that we are welcoming 16 new families into our community where we hope to help them move forward in their life journey, in their role as parents, in their knowledge of how to raise school-successful children,” said Rudi Andrus, executive director of Mainspring Schools. “Mainspring is thrilled to be part of this innovative partnership where we are committed to doing our very best for children and families.”

The new Early Head Start Center at Meadowbrook will house two infant classrooms, staff offices, and a parent breastfeeding room and lounge. Early Head Start toddlers will be served in classrooms at Mainspring’s main building on West Live Oak.

**About HACA:** The Housing Authority of the City of Austin is a public agency whose mission is to cultivate sustainable affordable housing communities and partnerships that inspire self reliance, growth and optimism. For more information, visit [www.hacanet.org](http://www.hacanet.org), or find us on Twitter [@hacanet](https://twitter.com/hacanet).

**About Mainspring Schools:** Since 1941 [Mainspring Schools](http://www.mainspring.org), formerly known as Austin Community Nursery Schools, has been serving the working peoples of Austin. Our mission is to eliminate the school readiness gap for all the children who come to us. Through community partnerships and collaboration we provide a loving, rich learning environment at an attainable cost for working families. We are one of only 8 percent of centers in the U.S. accredited by NAEYC, the nation’s most rigorous early childhood accrediting body. We spend time strengthening our family units through monthly parent education seminars on topics like nutrition, discipline and helping children succeed in school. And by maintaining a diverse student population we offer our children and families a snapshot of our city today. We are aiming to do big things in the lives our little people through an early focus on learning, meeting physical and emotional needs and loving on families as a whole.

**About Child Inc.:** [Child Inc.](http://www.childinc.org) provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income families with children from birth to age five as Head Start grantee in Travis County since 1972. We promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other support services. Our services are provided in Stand Alone Centers, Home-Based Visitation and Collaborative Classrooms within area school districts.

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