



Office of the Mayor

CONSENT CALENDAR

June 12, 2007

To: Members of the City Council

From: Mayor Tom Bates

Subject: Budget Referral - Berkeley Assessment, Screening, Treatment and Referral (Be A STAR) Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Request that the City Council refer to the 2008-2009 Biennial budget process \$50,000 in one-time only funds for development of an implementation plan for Berkeley Assessment, Screening, Treatment and Referral (Be A STAR) program for healthy child development.

BACKGROUND:

The first few years of a child's life are an especially sensitive time in development – laying the foundation for cognitive functioning; behavioral, social and self-regulatory capacities; and physical health. Unfortunately, many stressors in the early child years can impair healthy development. Poverty is especially detrimental in early childhood in terms of children's subsequent educational, health, and other life outcomes, and economically disadvantaged children are often educationally disadvantaged even before the start of kindergarten. Early childhood intervention programs can mitigate the factors that place children at risk of poor outcomes, including improving school readiness.

Coordinated systems of care for young children – especially ages 0 – 3 – identify children at risk through regular screening (for perinatal substance abuse, maternal depression, and social-emotional-cognitive development of young children), assessment, and referral to appropriate interventions – many of which are community based programs designed to support parents and improve parenting skills, provide appropriate emotional support and cognitive stimulation for children, and provide mental health and child development consultation to child care and health care providers.

Early childhood intervention programs have been shown to yield benefits in academic achievement, behavior, educational attainment, delinquency and crime, and labor market success. Well-designed early childhood interventions generate a return to society ranging from \$1.80 to \$17.07 for each dollar spent.

Alameda County First Five (Every Child Counts) is currently engaged in an intensive planning effort to develop a coordinated system for Screening, Assessment, Referral, and Treatment (SART) in Alameda County. This effort includes representation from three cities – Fremont,

Oakland, and Berkeley. Several other counties have implemented coordinated SART systems to ensure healthy child development, including Fresno and San Bernardino.

Alameda First Five is interested in exploring the feasibility of more decentralized structures than in other counties. Berkeley is unique in that many of the stakeholders that would need to participate in such an effort have initiated meetings through the BIRI Birth to Five Action team. The requested funding would be used to create an implementation plan for a Berkeley coordinated system to identify, assess, and provide appropriate community-based services to ensure healthy child development for all at risk Berkeley children.

If money is allocated, the intent is to use the Berkeley contribution to leverage additional funding from Alameda County First Five.

The planning process would include:

- Convene a project advisory committee (medical, mental health, child care and services providers, and parents)
- Assessment of training and other needs of child care and health care providers to ensure participation in universal screening
- Develop a services matrix and perform a gap analysis to identify areas in which additional resources are required
- Identify consensus validated screening tools (alcohol and drug-use during pregnancy, domestic violence, maternal depression, social-emotional development, cognitive and language development)
- Determine implementation options for one-stop assessment and referral
- Matrix analysis of existing services, gaps, and redundancies
- Evaluation of funding streams and agreements regarding weaving together of multiple funding streams to provide coordinated, stepped services for children and families

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

\$50,000 in General Fund One-Time Only funds.

CONTACT PERSON

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