Executive Summary of Key Findings From the 2023-2024 City Seats Program Evaluation Study

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Research demonstrates the critical role of nurturing relationships with adults and caregivers in setting a strong foundation for healthy child development.[1] Most families depend on child care settings to provide consistent, responsive, and supportive care to their young children so that they can work or attend school. However, across the country, infant and toddler child care is widely inaccessible and cost-prohibitive, especially for families living in households with low incomes.[2-5]As a result, state and local early childhood leaders face the complex task of developing innovative policies to address significant infant and toddler child care shortages. In New Orleans, an estimated 59 percent of children under age 4 in households with low incomes don't have access to high-quality early childhood education.[6]

The City Seats Program

The New Orleans City Seats program was established in 2018 to address the pressing need for high-quality early childhood education (ECE) for families with low incomes with children from birth to age 3. The program began with a historic investment from the City Council and mayor, initially creating 50 new seats for young children. City Seats has remained committed to achieving three primary goals: (1) to increase access to early learning for those with the greatest need; (2) to improve the quality of participating early learning centers; and (3) to ensure that children and families have access to necessary supports and early interventions. City Seats has continued to grow over the years, with a significant increase in seats in 2022 when New Orleans residents voted to approve a millage[a] that provides approximately $21 million in annual funding through 2037 for City Seats, wraparound services, workforce development, facilities investment, enrollment and family navigation support, and program evaluation and management. Beginning with the 2021-2022 program year, City Seats funding has been matched with funding from Louisiana's Early Childhood Education Fund (ECEF) at a 100 percent match rate. For the 2023-2024 program year, the combined total investment in City Seats, ECEF programming, and quality and capacity-building initiatives funded through the millage and ECEF was over $42 million, with $21 million allocated from the Early Childhood Education Fund (ECEF) state match. This funding structure allowed participating centers to be reimbursed at an annual flat rate of $12,000 per child, with additional augmented funding available for students enrolled in an ECEF seat. In the 2023-2024 program year, City Seats was able to expand its reach dramatically, serving 1,167 children and nearly doubling the number of participating providers from 22 to 40.

[a] The term millage describes the tax rate levied on real estate or other property.

To achieve its goals, Agenda for Children, which oversees the implementation of City Seats, "purchases" seats at early learning centers across Orleans Parish, prioritizing areas with high numbers of eligible children who have limited access to high-quality child care. The program strategically distributes seats across infant, one-year-old, two-year-old, and three-year-old classrooms. City Seats also provides additional wraparound support services for participating children, early learning center staff, and families. These additional services provide support on nurturing teacher-child interactions, training on play-based learning and professional development for early learning center staff, ongoing developmental screenings and assessments, vision and hearing screenings, responsive medical care, and support for the overall well-being of participating children and families. Wraparound services are provided to participating children, families, and providers by Children's Hospital of New Orleans ThriveKids, TrainingGrounds, the Tulane University Institute of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (TIKES), and the Tulane University's School of Social Work.

The 2023-2024 City Seats evaluation study

Committed to continuous quality improvement, Agenda for Children contracted with Child Trends—a national, nonprofit research organization—to conduct an independent implementation evaluation. The unprecedented increase in funding created a new set of implementation circumstances for City Seats, which shaped the goals of the study. For instance, due to the structure of the funding, there was no opportunity for a planning year to prepare for expansion. As a result, many of the processes, systems, and procedures needed to support scale-up were piloted as they were implemented during the 2023-2024 program year. These circumstances effectively reset certain aspects of the program back to an initial or piloting phase of implementation. Given this context, the study focused on research questions relevant to these unique conditions, which included:

- What were families', early learning center staff members', and wraparound service providers' experiences with City Seats?
- What are the strengths of City Seats that should continue?
- What are potential areas of improvement for future years of implementation?
- To what extent is City Seats expanding equitable access to high-quality infant and toddler child care in Orleans Parish?

Multiple methods were used to answer the evaluation questions, including (1) document reviews, (2) process mapping, (3) surveys with City Seats families[b] and providers, (4) virtual focus groups with City Seats providers, and (5) interviews with City Seats families and wraparound service providers. The Child Trends team held bi-weekly meetings with Agenda for Children staff to confirm and document the implementation structure and processes, roles of implementing partners, and scope of the City Seats program.

Findings

There were several key findings related to the successes, challenges, and future considerations for the implementation of City Seats. In this document, findings are organized by study participant groups, which include City Seats families, providers, and wraparound service providers.

[b] For clarity and readability, we refer to families enrolled in a City Seats-funded program as "City Seats families."

City Seats families

All City Seats families (n=829[c]) were invited to participate in a survey that 231 families completed, for a 28 percent response rate. A small group of families also participated in semi-structured follow-up interviews (n=11). The survey covered topics related to the application process, enrolling in child care, screening and assessments, and experiences at families' child care centers. The survey also aimed to identify successes and areas of improvement. To understand the extent to which City Seats is helping increase equitable access to high-quality early care and education programs, this study drew upon the Access Framework.[d] The Access Framework considers a combination of four interrelated dimensions of child care, which include: (1) affordability,[e] (2) reasonable effort to locate care, (3) the extent to which child care meets families' needs, and (4) care that supports children's development. Applying this family-centered definition of access can help identify existing bridges and barriers to equitable access. The family findings can be summarized across three of the four dimensions of the Access Framework.

Overall, parents reported positive experiences with City Seats: 92 percent of families would recommend their current City Seats Program to a friend or family member who was looking for care. However, some families encountered challenges, described further below.

Reasonable Effort refers to a dimension of the Access Framework that involves making information accessible to families and supporting their decision making about finding and selecting child care without placing an undue burden on their time or ability to apply to, participate in, or access early childhood programs or services. The research team sought to understand how families enrolled in City Seats experienced the application process and accessed their center.

- **Learning about City Seats.** Families learned about the NOLA,[f] Public Schools (NOLA-PS) Early Learning and Child Care options primarily through their child's school (26%) or via word of mouth (19%). To learn more about the steps within the application process, over half read the "How to Apply" section on the NOLA-PS website (53%) and many found this very helpful (87%).
- **NOLA-PS enrollment application.** Most families found the application easy or very easy to complete (79%) and finished in one sitting, in 30 minutes or less (73%). However, some families (6%) found the application difficult due to its length, because of challenges obtaining verification documents, or because they did not have enough information about centers to confidently select their top centers. A few Spanish-speaking families reported difficulty due to insufficient Spanish translations, requiring a couple to restart the application multiple times.
- **Selecting top centers.** Families could select up to eight of their top choice centers when completing the application. Most families (80%) indicated that it was either easy or very easy to select their preferred centers. The factors that families most frequently ranked as incredibly or very important when selecting their top choice centers included:
    - **Children's learning and development:** The use of high-quality learning activities or curricula (98%) and the center's emphasis on social-emotional behavior and development (98%)
    - **Program characteristics:** The center's ability to care for all the children in their family (93%), the center's operating hours (92%), and that the center was within driving distance of their home (81%) or workplace (71%)

[c] Please note that surveys were sent to active City Seats families, many of whom had multiple children enrolled in the program.

[d] Friese, S., Lin, V., Forry, N. & Tout, K. (2017). *Defining and measuring access to high quality early care and education: A guidebook for policymakers and researchers.* OPRE Report #2017-08. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[e] Note that since the City Seats program is cost-free for families, the affordability dimension of the Access Framework was not applicable in this study.

[f] New Orleans, Louisiana (NOLA).

- **Enrollment in or moving to a top choice center.** Most families (79%) were enrolled in one of their top choice centers. For families who were not enrolled in one of their top three centers, nearly one third of families (29%) indicated that Agenda for Children[g] contacted them with an offer to move to one of their top three choice centers when a space became available. Of those families, only half changed centers. Reasons parents cited for moving centers included wanting to move to a higher-quality center or a center that was closer to their home or workplace. All families who moved centers said that the transition was very easy.
- **Transportation.** Many families (87%) did not have trouble transporting their child to their center; however, those who did (13%) report having trouble reported not having a reliable vehicle or depending on unreliable or time-consuming transportation. While City Seats offers transportation vouchers, some families shared that private van or bus transportation services provided by their center would be more helpful.

Meets Families' Needs refers to factors that address the needs and preferences of the entire family. Across data collection activities, families were asked about how their current center aligned with their child care needs and preferences as well as families' overall satisfaction with their child's center.

- **Extent to which centers met families' identified priorities.** Of the three factors families considered most important (i.e., use of high-quality learning activities [98%], centers' emphasis on social-emotional behavior [98%], and ability to care for all the children in their family [93%]), almost all families (95%) reported that their center met or exceeded their expectations. However, of the families who reported that it was incredibly important that transportation was provided at no additional cost (49%), the majority (73%) shared that their center was not able to provide this support.
- **Child care availability.** Of families who ranked the center's hours of operation as being an incredibly important factor when selecting top choice programs, most families (87%) shared that the hours they needed for care were met by their current center. However, some families expressed a need or interest in weekend (85%), evening (58%), or early morning care (39%), but reported that these options were not offered at their child's center. This need or interest was also relevant for all Spanish-speaking families who participated in interviews.
- **Honoring family culture.** Nearly all families (94%) strongly agreed or agreed that their child care provider makes them feel that their family's culture, language, customs, and traditions are valued.
- **Extent to which families would recommend their center.** Almost all families (92%) would highly recommend their child's center to a friend or family member citing reasons such as a safe, nurturing, and family-oriented environment; high-quality education; responsive staff; and noticeable developmental progress in their child. On the other hand, some families expressed concerns with the reliability of the center's schedule, its professionalism, and staff's ability to meet the needs of their children. For example, some families who have been referred to services or who have a child with a disability thought staff needed better training to support their child. Additionally, some families noted that they wanted more communication from providers about their child's progress and developmental goals.
- **Positive experiences with providers.** Over half of families (59%) reported a consistently positive experience at their center; over one quarter (28%) noted that their experiences improved over time. The remainder shared their experience was neutral.

Supports Children's Development refers to how well an early childhood program or service supports a child's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. Families were asked about their perceptions of screening and assessments, wraparound referral and support services, and their experiences with parent engagement and communication with the center.

[g] Please note that NOLA-PS manages the enrollment application system, while Agenda for Children is responsible for contacting families regarding their placement in the City Seats program.

- **Screening results.** While most families (67%) received information about their child's screening results, about one quarter of families did not. Of those who did, most found the hearing and vision screening results very helpful and over half found the Ages and Stages Questionnaire development and social-emotional domain results helpful.
- **Referrals.** About one quarter of families (23%) received a referral to agencies like Early Steps, TIKES Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and Support, or the Children's Hospital ThriveKids team. Of the families that received a referral, 64 percent of families were referred to a doctor for further assessment of their child's vision or hearing rather than a City Seats-affiliated program. Of the families referred to Early Steps, seven (78%) did not find the service beneficial. Similarly, of the families referred to Child Search, five (63%) did not find it helpful.
- **Parenting resources.** Less than one quarter of families participated in support services like the Parent Cafés, the Parent Advisory Board, TrainingGrounds, transition planning, or transportation support. Those who did generally found these services helpful.
- **Discussing child development with providers.** Most families discuss their child's behavior (71%), experiences (68%), and learning (68%) with their child care provider daily, with less frequent conversations about their child's developmental goals and expectations.
- **Volunteering in the classroom and meeting with staff.** Over half of families (58%) also reported visiting their center or meeting with staff more than five times. However, nearly half (46%) have never volunteered or attended parent events.
- **Parenting skills.** Many families (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that City Seats has improved their parenting skills by teaching them about child development and appropriate techniques for handling challenging behaviors, and by offering a support system.

City Seats providers

Data collection with City Seats providers included a survey and semi-structured focus groups. Thirty-nine City Seats providers[h] were invited to participate in the survey, which covered topics related to their experiences as a City Seats provider, their ability to complete the program requirements, and their experiences with the professional development supports and workforce initiatives. The survey also asked providers for their feedback about where City Seats was performing well and where the program could improve. Child Trends analyzed 26 survey responses from providers. Key themes that emerged from the survey and semi-structured focus groups are noted below.

Strengths

- **ECE access.** In open-ended survey responses and during focus groups, City Seats providers noted they are grateful for the opportunity the program provides them to expand access to free, high-quality child care in their communities.
- **Wraparound services.** During focus groups, City Seats providers frequently reported that they appreciate the wraparound services available to families and staff.
- **Consistent enrollment.** Providers who participated in the focus groups noted their appreciation for the steady, consistent enrollment offered through participation in the City Seats program, as well as the reliable, on-time payments at the start of each month.
- **Professional development supports.** Nearly all (95%) providers who responded to the survey reported having a "very positive" experience with the coaching provided through City Seats. Similarly, most

[h] Please note that one site closed mid-year, reducing the total number of City Seats Providers from 40 to 39 at the time of our data collection period.

providers who responded to the survey reported having a "very positive" experience with targeted training (87%), Brain Training (78%), the Joyful Journey workshop (75%), and Ethics Training (83%) offered through City Seats. During focus groups, providers echoed the value of City Seats' professional development supports, including coaching and trainings for directors and staff.

- **Connections to other ECE providers.** On the survey, most (88%) providers said that they have had opportunities to connect with other City Seats providers; of those, most (84%) reported they would like to have more opportunities to do so. During focus groups, providers reported that these opportunities to meet and network with other City Seats providers help them feel more supported and less isolated in their work.
- **Monitoring visits.** All providers (100%) who responded to the survey reported positive experiences with the City Seats monitoring visits. During focus groups and in open-ended survey responses, providers noted that these visits are informative and helpful in preparing their centers for licensing visits. Providers also reported that staff conducting the monitoring visits are friendly and supportive, and that they communicate transparently about areas for improvement.
- **ECHO Fund grants.** During focus groups, many providers shared positive experiences with the Early Childhood Opportunity (ECHO) Fund grants. These funds have helped providers make improvements to their centers, including updating their outdoor spaces, purchasing new materials and equipment, providing professional development for staff, providing staff bonuses, and offering transportation supports for families.
- **Benefits of City Seats participation for early learning centers and staff.** Most (81%) providers who responded to the survey reported that City Seats had a positive impact on their centers' staff. Comments made in open-ended responses and in focus groups included mention of increased wages and improved overall staff well-being; that City Seats created opportunities for their staff to get feedback and support, which directly impacted their teaching practices and classroom environments; and that City Seats had improved the overall quality of their center.
- **Benefits of City Seats participation for early learning centers' enrollment, attendance, and financial health.** Most providers who responded to the survey said City Seats had a positive impact on their center's enrollment (92%), attendance (96%), and overall financial health (85%). In focus groups, some providers shared that the increased and/or steady enrollment and consistent, on-time, monthly City Seats payments helped prevent their center from going out of business.

Challenges

- **Challenging behaviors.** Many focus group participants noted that their staff were struggling to address what they described as an increase in especially challenging behaviors among children. They said that their staff needed more intensive support to address these challenges.
- **Reimbursement rate.** On the survey, when asked whether participating in City Seats is financially feasible without additional funding, 39 percent said "yes," 39 percent said "no," and 22 percent said, "I am not sure." Focus group participants most frequently noted that the $1,000 per month per child reimbursement rate was not enough to cover the costs of providing high-quality child care. They also noted that they want to continue having small class sizes and low child-teacher ratios and offer their staff competitive wages, but the current rate does not cover the costs of doing so.
- **Substitute pool.** On the survey, of the 12 providers who noted they had used the substitute pool, five (42%) reported having a positive experience and four (33%) reported a negative experience. Providers who participated in focus groups reported challenges with the substitutes not having ECE experience or training.
- **Job board.** On the survey, of the 12 providers who reported having used the City Seats job board, half (50%) mentioned having a positive experience and the other half (50%) reported their experience as

"neither positive nor negative." However, when we asked about the job board during focus groups, some providers mentioned that the job board was not helpful because many or most of the candidates were not qualified.

- **More time to conduct Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) assessment.** While only a small percentage (13%), some providers reported difficulty conducting the ASQ assessment with each child in their program within 45 days in survey results. Just under half (41%) of providers noted it would be helpful to have more time to conduct these assessments.
- **More coaching.** Nearly all (95%) providers who responded to the survey reported having a "very positive" experience with the coaching provided through City Seats. Both survey respondents and focus group participants reported wanting more time with and frequent visits from their coach.
- **More access to wraparound services.** While focus group participants frequently noted their appreciation for access to wraparound services through City Seats, some also noted challenges. These included long waitlists, scheduling challenges, and a lack of communication and follow-up from some wraparound service providers. Survey respondents and focus group participants noted wanting improved access to wraparound supports.

Wraparound service providers

As key implementing partners of the City Seats program, each of the wraparound service providers were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. The purpose of these interviews was to understand wraparound service providers' sense of their role as a City Seats partner and their experiences working with children, families, providers, Agenda for Children, and other wraparound service providers. Participants were also asked for their recommendations to support future improvements to City Seats implementation. All five wraparound service teams participated in individual interviews. Key themes that emerged from semi-structured focus groups are noted in the next section.

Strengths

- **Dedication of and communication with the City Seats team at Agenda for Children**. All five wraparound service providers indicated they had a strong rapport and consistent communication with Agenda for Children staff. One specifically said the staff at Agenda for Children are "amazing."
- **Program quality improvement**. Two wraparound service providers commented that they have seen a tremendous amount of growth among the early learning center directors who participate in City Seats due to participating in the City Seats training and receiving the supports the program offers.

Challenges

- **Challenging behaviors**. All five wraparound service providers, in different ways, noted the high level of challenging behaviors observed in City Seats classrooms. One participant noted that their team gets called in to support an alarming number of emergency situations and has observed an increase in the incidence of children showing severe behavior issues. Another participant noted the higher-than-average failure rate among City Seats children on the hearing and vision screening assessments, and how hearing and speech delays in children often contribute to behavioral issues, increasing the need for enhanced support and interventions.
- **Coordination among service providers.** Four of the five providers noted the need for better coordination across wraparound service providers. As wraparound partners have changed, there has been some confusion about which providers are responsible for which specific services.

- **Staff turnover**. Instructional staff turnover was a significant challenge noted by two of the wraparound service providers. For example, when a teacher leaves the classroom, the team needs to start all over with new teachers, which complicates the sustainability of the support they provide. One participant also noted that the break in the continuity of care also presents a significant challenge for children and increases the likelihood of challenging behaviors to increase as they navigate those transitions.

Future Implementation Considerations

Several future implementation considerations emerged across these findings. A few of the most prevalent cross-cutting recommendations are noted below.

Continue to explore families' needs, preferences, and experiences with City Seats. Survey and interview participants represented about 30 percent of all families in the City Seats program. Among those who participated, the majority reported overall satisfaction with their experience and the degree to which their care arrangements met their needs and preferences across the Access Framework dimensions. However, approximately 15 percent of respondents indicated either a neutral experience or identified areas needing improvement in relation to reasonable effort to participate in the program, or the ability for the program to meet child or family needs. Given the relatively small sample size, additional data are necessary to better understand these experiences and the prevalence of similar experiences among all City Seats participants. For future data collection efforts, consider informing parents and providers early in the program year that they may be asked to provide feedback through a survey. Future surveys could also be shortened and streamlined to focus on how well the centers are meeting families' needs and supporting their child's development, as these were the dimensions that generated the most varied feedback from participants.

Implement additional strategies to increase communication, coordination, and collaboration. During this implementation year, the unique influx of funds provided an unprecedented opportunity to enroll more families and engage more providers. Child care providers and wraparound service providers acknowledged the uniqueness of this year when discussing challenges related to communicating about, accessing, and coordinating wraparound care services. Some of these challenges were related to the large increase in providers, children, and families who participated in the 2023-2024 program year. Using a monthly newsletter and monthly calls to increase communication, coordination, and collaboration among wraparound service providers were suggested as potential strategies to address this challenge. Note that, by the time this study was completed, several of these recommendations had been implemented. For example, the 2024-2025 programmatic year began with a large meeting for all wraparound service providers at the Agenda for Children's office. Each service provider was able to connect and establish a monthly cadence for collaboration amongst the teams. All wraparound service providers were also reintroduced to the City Seats centers through a program orientation and newsletter.

Explore additional strategies to support families, providers, and City Seats staff in addressing challenging behaviors. All children demonstrate challenging behaviors at some point in their development. Children need responsive, supportive relationships and safe, predictable environments to develop and demonstrate behavioral regulation. Even under the best of circumstances, the influence of trauma, developmental delays in speech or hearing, and other factors can be expressed in the form of challenging behavior. Addressing this reality is arguably one of the most challenging aspects of being an ECE provider. To work toward a long-term, sustainable method to alleviate stressors, it is important to continue integrating proactive, prevention-focused approaches with responsive supports that can help address immediate concerns in the classroom. The goal is to create an environment where crises are rare because the factors that can lead to behavioral concerns are addressed through preventative strategies.

Proactive approaches include:

- **Continued supports for providers' well-being**: Providers play an important co-regulatory role with young children; to support children's ability to self-regulate, they must be regulated themselves. Strategies to help alleviate provider stress could include things like mental health and well-being supports for providers, increased pay and benefits, more staff available to support providers as needed, and more time for breaks.
- **Enhance provider self-efficacy pertaining to child behaviors**: One provider may interpret a behavior as challenging while another interprets the same behavior as typical. Often, the difference is the providers' perception of the extent to which they believe that they are capable of effectively responding to the behavior. While training on responding to challenging behavior is helpful, adults learn best when learning is ongoing and takes place within the context of a relationship. Continue to build upon and expand the evidence-based model that is currently being implemented to enhance teacher self-efficacy (Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation [IECMHC]). Importantly, teachers with high behavioral needs in their classrooms should have ongoing access to a consultant: Consultation takes time and requires a strong relationship. While consultants can help with crises, this support is designed as a longer-term support for classroom functioning overall rather than a one-off response to child behaviors.
- **Training and support on social-emotional learning curricula:** All classrooms should proactively teach children about social skills, emotions and emotion regulation, and problem-solving.
- **Improve center policies:** Program directors should engage with the mental health consultant to review center policies, particularly those related to discipline and responding to behavioral challenges, to explore whether there are opportunities to make policies more promotive of positive relationships and supportive interactions. Consider examining commitments to which providers agree in their memoranda of understanding (MOU) around challenging behaviors and engaging in prevention and response strategies.
- **Use data:** To track progress over time, consider gathering data with additional measurement tools that focus specifically on social-emotional development, classroom climate, and culturally responsive practices. Examples of classroom-level observation tools that examine these features of quality (beyond quality features measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS]) include the Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development (CHILD), Assessing Classroom Sociocultural Equity Scale (ACSES), and the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT). In addition to monitoring trends, these data can be a useful reflection tool for programs.
- **Regular communication channels:** Consider encouraging and supporting regular structured conversations for providers and families to discuss children's developmental needs and behaviors. This can include regular meetings, progress reports, and communication logs. The structure of these meetings and materials could be initially facilitated by wraparound service providers.
- **Emergency response training:** Ensure there are clear protocols for handling emergency situations involving severe behavior issues. Clearly identify an existing or potentially new wraparound service provider or individual who can be contacted when a parent/provider needs to resolve disagreements about specific situations.

Responsive approaches include:

- **Additional staff.** In classrooms with higher behavioral needs, providers need additional "hands." Interacting supportively and appropriately with a child with challenging behavior often involves one-on-one attention, which can be challenging to provide without compromising teacher-child ratios in classrooms. Consider hiring paraprofessional classroom aides who can be dedicated to classrooms with higher behavioral concerns and/or "float" between classrooms as needed.
- **Tiered response system.** To tailor the level of support to the need and thereby maximize resources, consider a tiered approach to responding to challenging behavior. For example, in Arkansas' statewide

BehaviorHelp program, providers who would like assistance with challenging behaviors can call a central help line. There, they are triaged to different levels of support, including virtual assistance from a technical assistance specialist and in-person infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC).

Pace growth with support for high-quality programming. The study's findings highlight the importance of balancing the expansion of access with the commitment to high-quality programs and services within the City Seats initiative. Future research could examine infrastructure supports that are needed to sustain long-term growth without compromising quality. For example, it could be beneficial to develop models to estimate how many children can be served based on the availability of providers, administrative staff, and resources. These models can help determine the number of children and families who can be served with an adequate level of resources. Allocating additional resources could be used to address specific provider concerns, including (1) increasing reimbursement rates; (2) enhancing staff resources and wraparound support services for managing challenging behaviors; (3) improving the quality and reliability of the substitute pool and/or exploring options to support paraprofessionals in the classroom; and (4) providing more coaches or increasing time with existing coaches. Similarly, these resources could be directed toward meeting parents' requests for extended hours of care and transportation support.

Consider re-examining the branding of City Seats. City Seats is not just a funding stream; it is a comprehensive program designed to provide holistic supports to children and families akin to programs like Early Head Start. Rebranding the program—or, at minimum, creating enhanced messaging materials (e.g., an informational video, flyers, program handbook, centralized webpage) that explain the comprehensive services and unique benefits of the program—may help emphasize the mutual privilege, responsibility, and commitments of both participating families and providers. Branding and messaging could emphasize the benefits not only for children, but also the support offered to providers and parents. For example, emphasizing professional development supports and resources for participating teachers and programs and supports, such as those offered by the Parent Café and the mental health support services for parents. The benefits and services available through City Seats can also be included in a detailed program handbook that outlines the program's policies, procedures, and expectations for both providers and parents. Positioning City Seats as the comprehensive, supportive, and highly valued program through messaging, branding, and documentation can ultimately help foster an elevated sense of identity among families and providers within the City Seats program.

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