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# City of El Paso Takes Key Steps Toward Supporting Children's Rights with Child Friendly City Initiative

**EL PASO, Texas**—The El Paso City Council has approved the initial steps to join the ranks of UNICEF-recognized Child Friendly Cities, a global initiative focused on empowering children's rights in urban and community settings. Launched in 1996 by UNICEF and UN-Habitat, this initiative aims to build environments where children's voices, needs, and rights are prioritized and integrated into public policies and governance structures.

The City of El Paso is now working toward UNICEF's Child Friendly City designation, which would officially recognize the community's commitment to fostering environments that promote the safety, well-being, and participation of children in every aspect of public life. The resolution to pursue this designation will lead to the formation of key initiatives, including a Youth Advisory Board and a 40-member steering committee, "Para Niños," which will guide the City through the application process.

**A key milestone in this initiative will take place from 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday, May 1, 2025, at La Nube, located at 301 E. Main Dr., when the City will officially launch the Youth Advisory Board.**

Supported in part by the El Paso Community Foundation, the Youth Advisory Board will serve as a platform for young people in El Paso to provide input, share their perspectives, and actively engage in shaping policies that impact their lives. This board will play an essential role in ensuring that children's voices are heard throughout the process of becoming a Child Friendly City.

"Becoming a Child Friendly City is a testament to our commitment to future generations," said Mayor Renard U. Johnson. "El Paso has always been a city that values its youth, and this effort will ensure that every child in our community can reach their full potential. We are proud to partner with UNICEF to create a community where our children's rights are not just protected but celebrated."

"This is a monumental step for the City of El Paso in prioritizing the voices and needs of our youngest residents," said City Rep. Dr. Josh Acevedo, who played a leading role in advancing the initiative at the local level. "Achieving UNICEF's Child Friendly City designation will not only create safer and more inclusive spaces for children but will also ensure that their rights are deeply embedded in the fabric of our community. I'm proud to stand behind this effort, and I look forward to seeing our City's youth thrive."

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative is structured around five key outcome goals: ensuring every child is valued and respected, providing children with a platform to be heard in public decisions, guaranteeing access to quality services, fostering safe environments, and encouraging family life, play, and leisure. These goals align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As part of the process, the City will submit a comprehensive readiness assessment to UNICEF and establish a synthesis action plan to outline priorities and actions for improving the lives of children in El Paso. The City is also dedicated to eliminating discrimination and ensuring equity in all policies and actions.

The designation of a Child Friendly City offers a unique opportunity for El Paso, providing access to a global network, technical support, and formal recognition of the City's commitment to children's rights. The application is anticipated to be accepted into the program in the next few weeks and the recognition is expected to take three to five years.

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