

# The State of Early Childhood Education in Texas

Greater Dallas

October 2025 Texas Tour

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children  
at Risk



# Our Mission

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**CHILDREN AT RISK** serves as a catalyst for change to improve the quality of life for children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration, and advocacy.

# CHILDREN AT RISK - ECE Team



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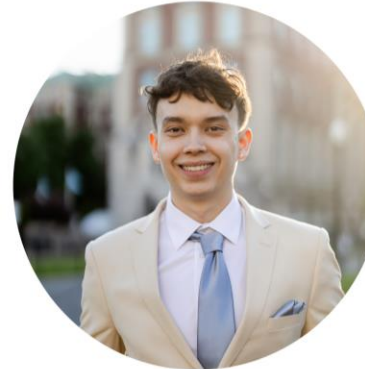
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# Prenatal-to-Three Collaborative



HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

SUPPORTED FAMILIES

children atRisk

TexProtects

TEXANS CARE for CHILDREN



Sign up for the [Texas PN-3 Newsletter](#)

# Child Care Deserts Data

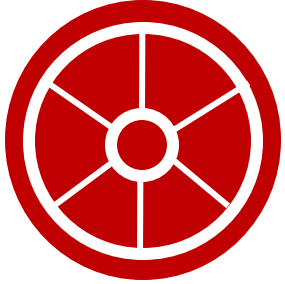
**1 in 10** children in  
America live in Texas

**2.3M** children under the  
age of 6 live in Texas

**1 in 10** children under  
6 with low-income,  
working parents live  
in a child care desert

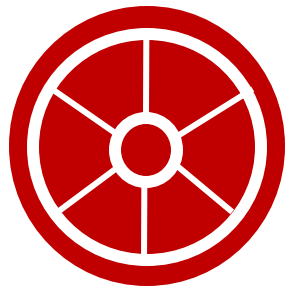


# The Texas Early Childhood Ecosystem



**ACCESS** | 40% of all zip codes in Texas qualify as child care deserts for low-income children, meaning that 3x more children live in the zip code than the number of available child care slots. Children deserve equitable access to safe care that supports their health, learning, and development.

**FAMILIES** | In Texas, caring for an infant and toddler can cost 10-50% of many working families' annual earnings. According to federal recommendations, child care should cost no more than 7% of a family's income. Families need affordable care in their communities to be able to participate in the workforce.



**EDUCATORS** | According to the US Department of Treasury, more than half qualify for at least one form of public assistance. Early Childhood Educators deserve a living wage.

# What is a Desert?



**Child Care Deserts** – Zip codes (US Census ZCTAs) with at least 30 children, ages 0-5, where the demand for child care is three times greater or more than the supply of child care.

**Subsidized Child Care Deserts** – Zip codes with at least 30 low-income children, ages 0-5, where the demand for subsidized child care is three times greater or more than the supply of subsidized child care.



**children**  
**atRisk**

**Texas Rising Star Deserts** – Zip codes with at least 30 low-income children(ages 0-5) where the demand for subsidized child care is three times greater or more than the supply of Texas Rising Star-certified child care.

# Overall Child Care Deserts

## Texas Overall Child Care Deserts

**991,039** ↓

Total Number of Seats

**420** ↑

Overall Desert Zip Codes\*

## Greater Dallas Overall Child Care Deserts

**112,244** ↑

Total Number of Seats

**16** ↑

Overall Desert Zip Codes

# Subsidy Child Care Deserts

## Texas Subsidy Child Care Deserts

**125,548** ↑

Total Number of Subsidy Seats

**778** ↓

Subsidy Desert Zip Codes\*

## Greater Dallas Subsidy Child Care Deserts

**15,201** ↑

Total Number of Subsidy Seats

**56** ↑

Subsidy Desert Zip Codes

# TRS Child Care Deserts

## Texas TRS Child Care Deserts

**84,132** ↑

Total Number of TRS Seats

**850** ↓

TRS Desert Zip Codes\*

## Greater Dallas TRS Child Care Deserts

**10,316** ↑

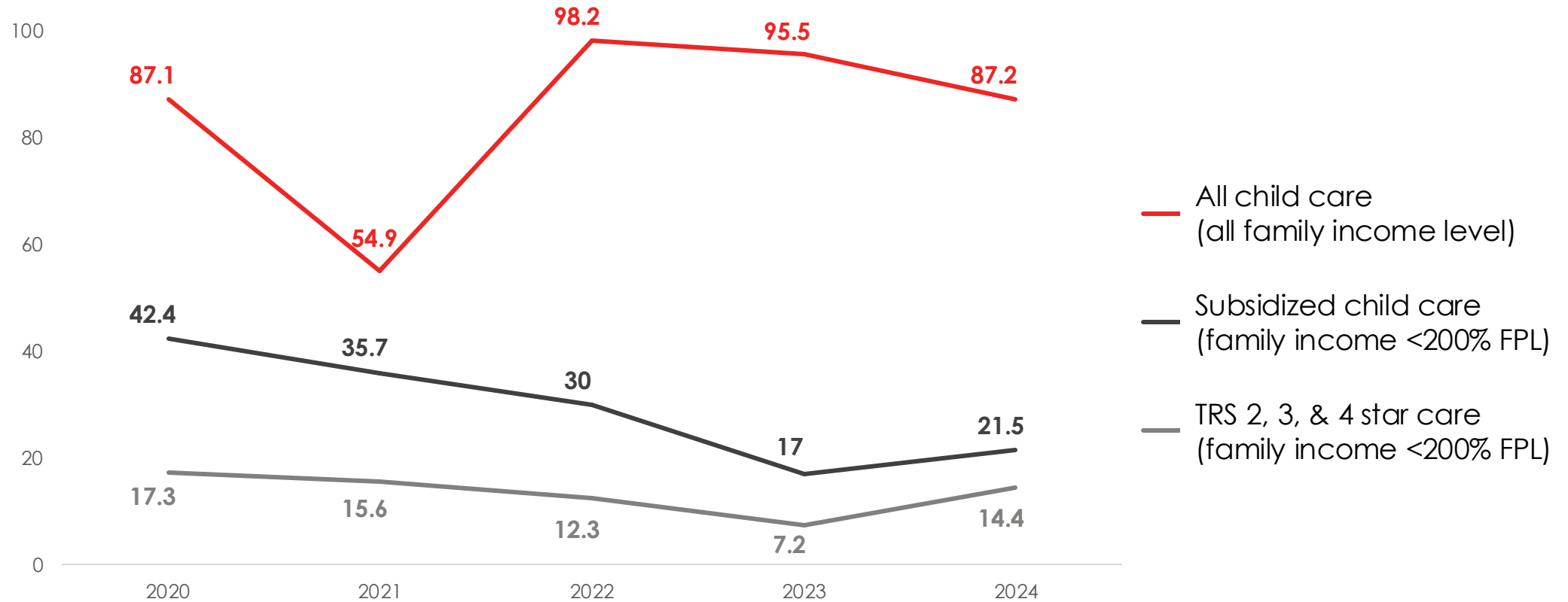
Total Number of TRS Seats

**60** ↓

TRS Desert Zip Codes

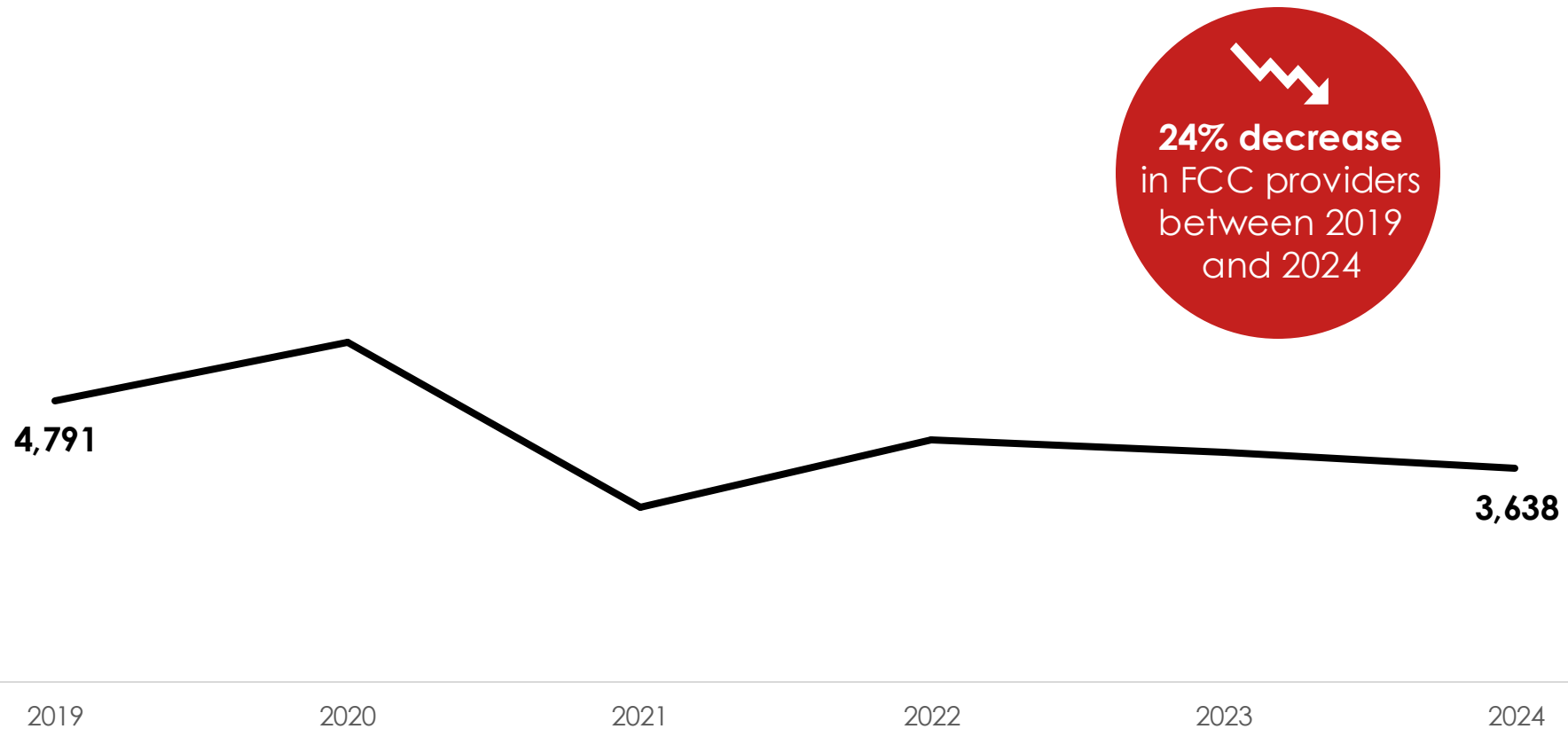
# The Last 5 Years of Child Care Seats in Texas

Number of Child Care Seats per 100 Children of Working Families



# Family Child Care Homes

Registered and Licensed Family Child Care Homes, 2019-2024



# Chronic Child Care Deserts

## Greater Dallas Overall Child Care Deserts

16

Overall Desert Zip  
Codes

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17%

Of Eligible Zip Codes\*

## Greater Dallas Overall Chronic Child Care Deserts

10

Overall **Chronic** Desert  
Zip Codes

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11%

Of Eligible Zip Codes\*

# Chronic Child Care Deserts: Subsidy

## Greater Dallas Subsidy Child Care Deserts

56

Subsidy Desert Zip  
Codes

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60%

Of Eligible Zip Codes\*

## Greater Dallas Subsidy Chronic Child Care Deserts

31

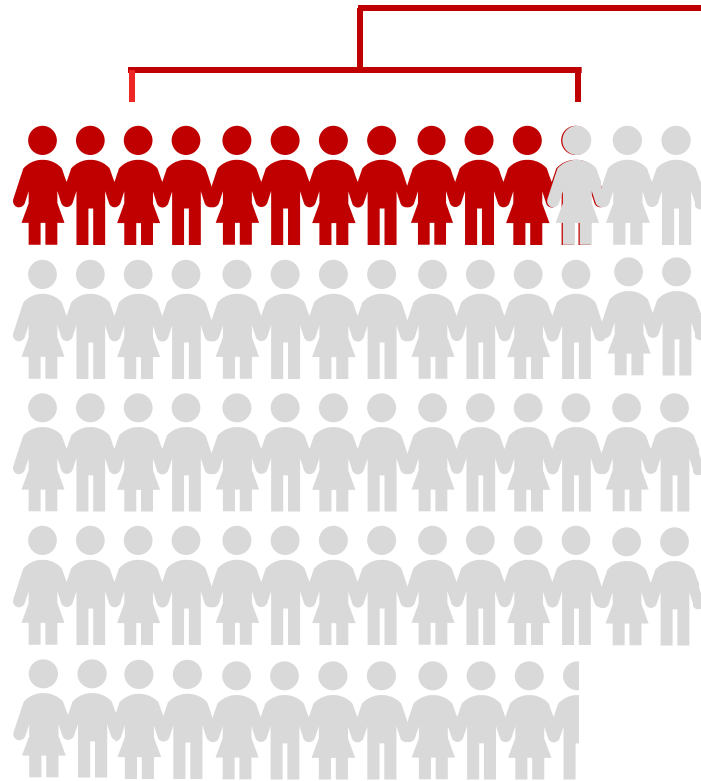
Subsidy **Chronic**  
Desert Zip Codes

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33%

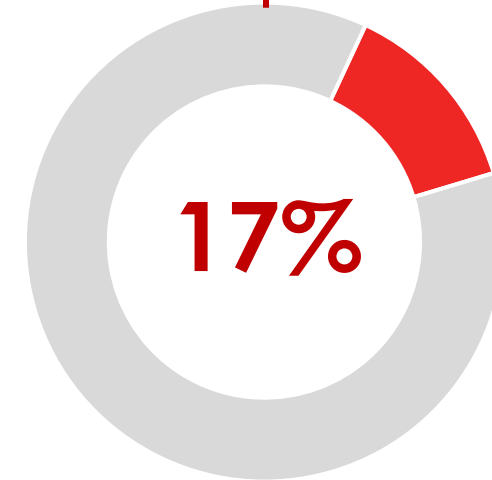
Of Eligible Zip Codes\*

# Number of Children Served with Funding Versus Need



 = 10,000 low-income children  
ages 0-5 with working parents

 = children ages 0-5 served by TWC



Just over **one in six**  
low-income children ages 0-5 with  
working parents **receive subsidies**  
**for child care.**

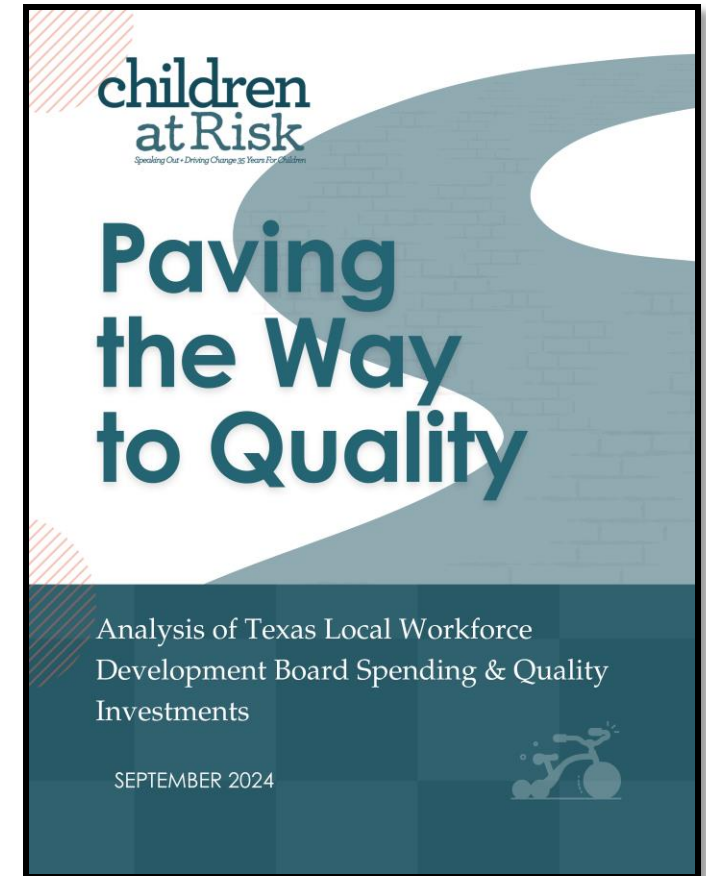
# Paving the Way to Quality

CHILDREN AT RISK IS excited to tell you about the **upcoming 2025 report**, *Paving the Way to Quality*. This updated research highlights trends in child care funding across Texas, including updated data on Child Care Deserts and fiscal strategies by Local Workforce Development Boards.

**Explore last year's data**

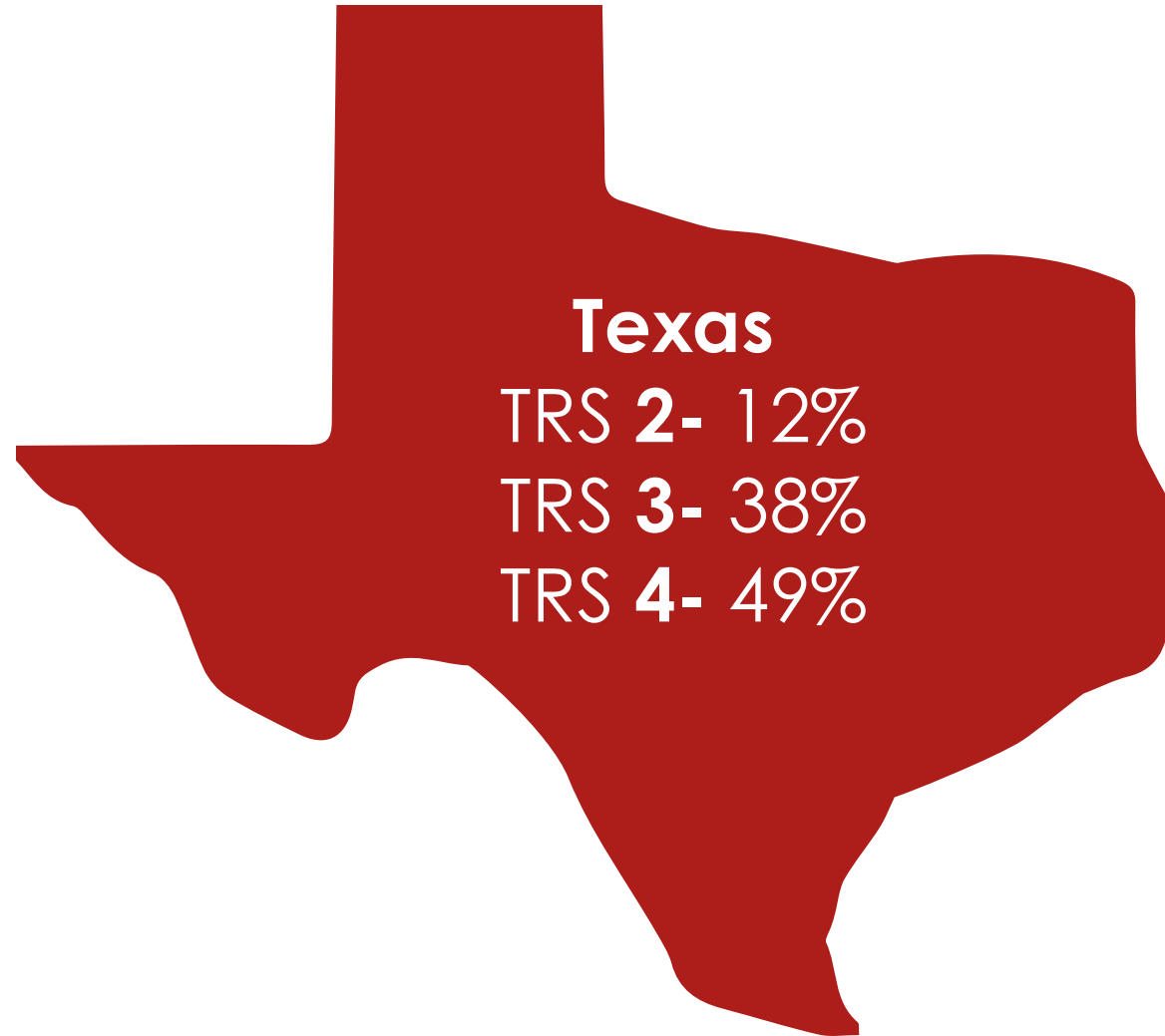
**[childrenatrisk.org/pavingthewaytoquality](https://childrenatrisk.org/pavingthewaytoquality)**

**Subscribe to our newsletters to be one of the first to access the latest data upon publication!**

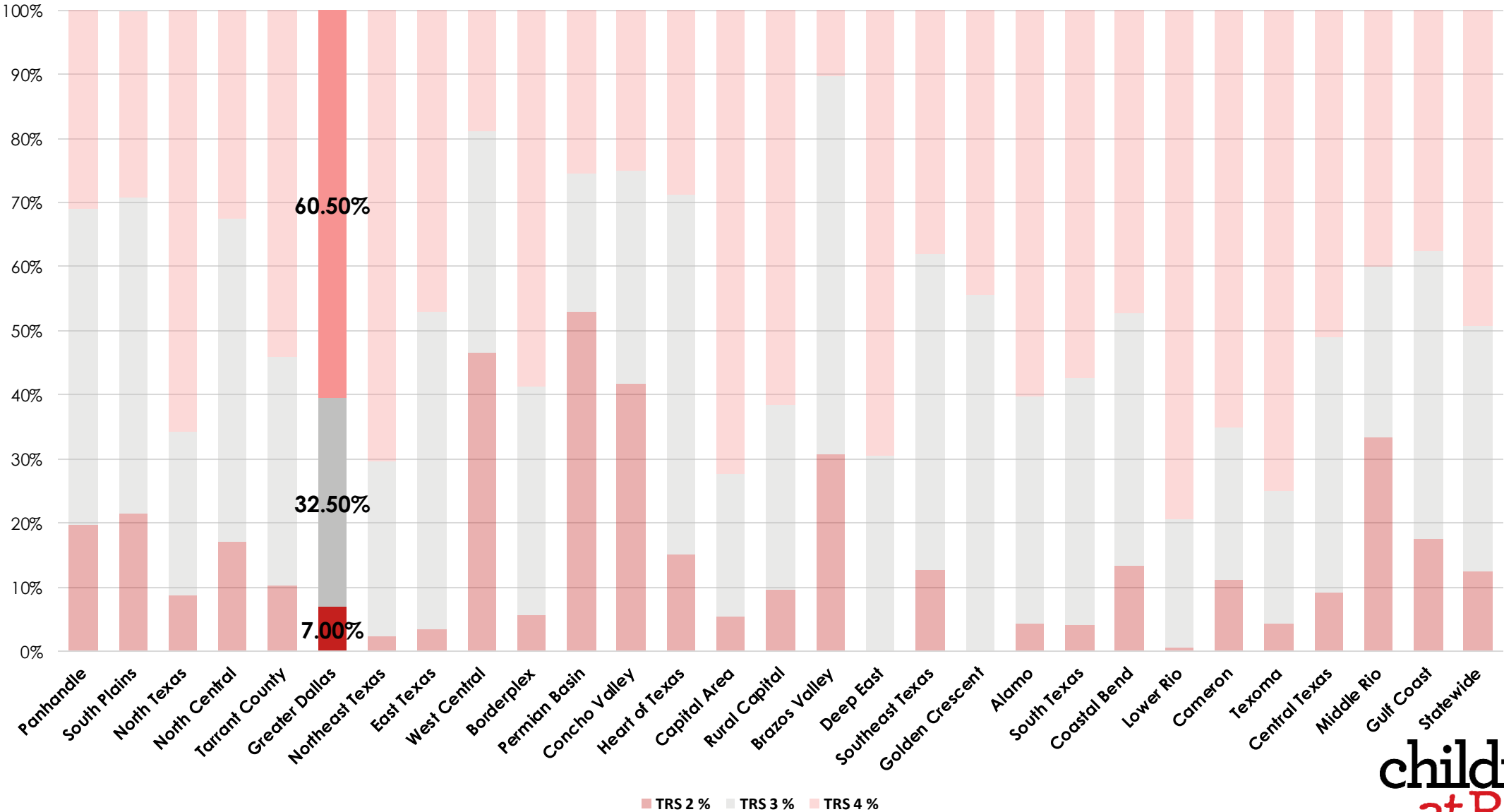


# Percent of TRS Subsidy Providers by Star Level

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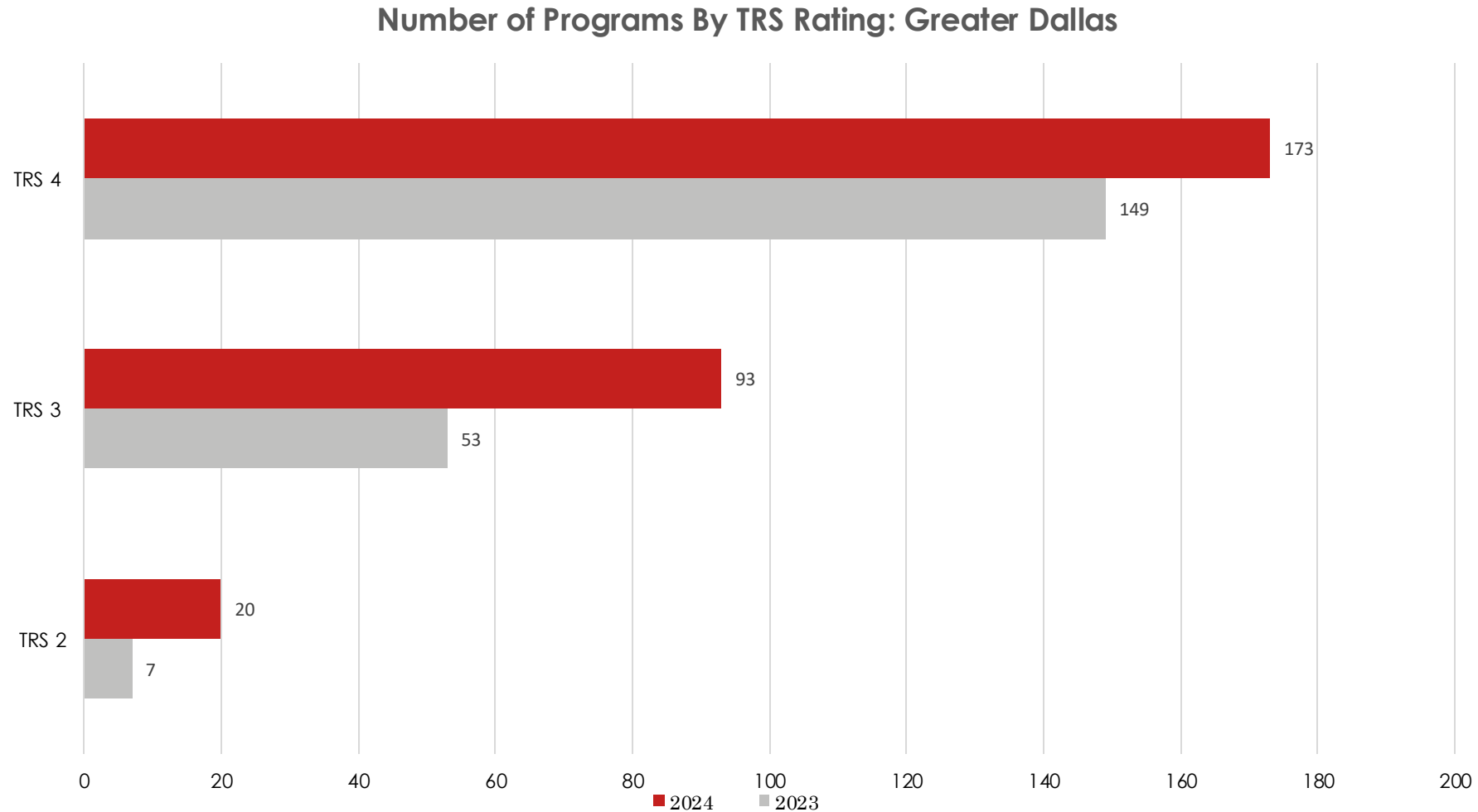


# Percent of TRS Subsidy Providers by LWDB

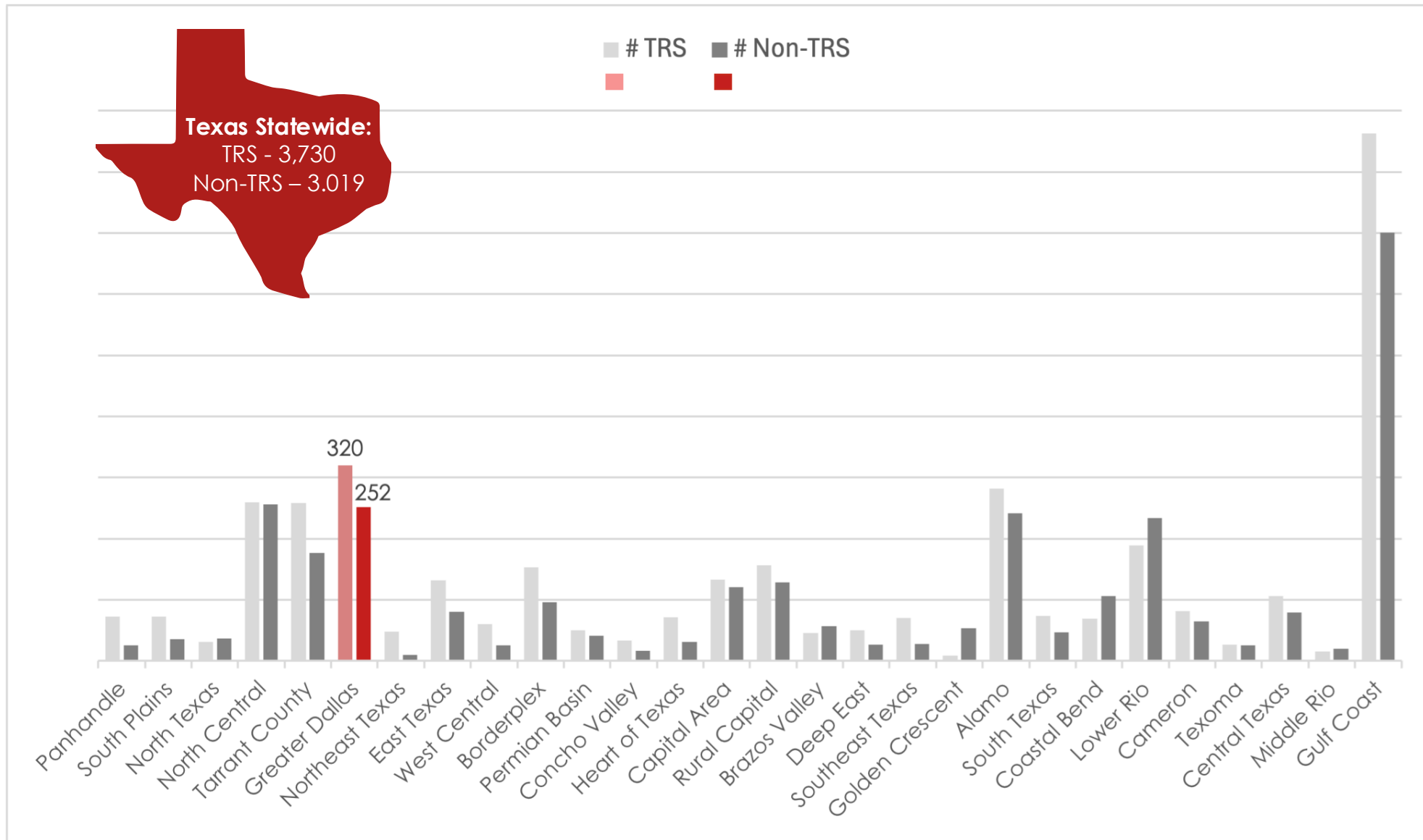


**Texas**  
TRS 2- 12%  
TRS 3- 38%  
TRS 4- 49%

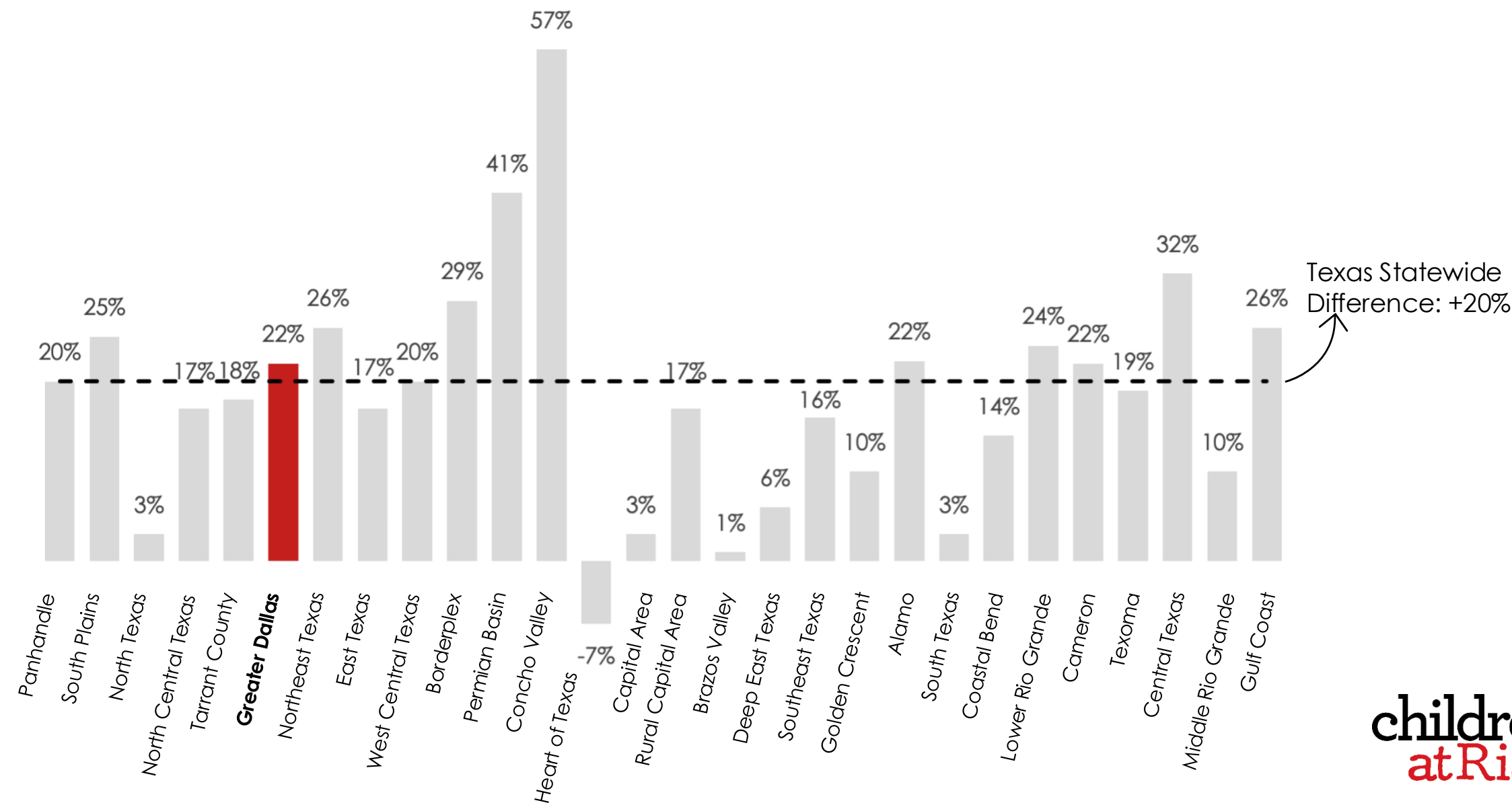
# TRS RATINGS GREATER DALLAS



# TRS versus Non-TRS Subsidy Providers by LWDB

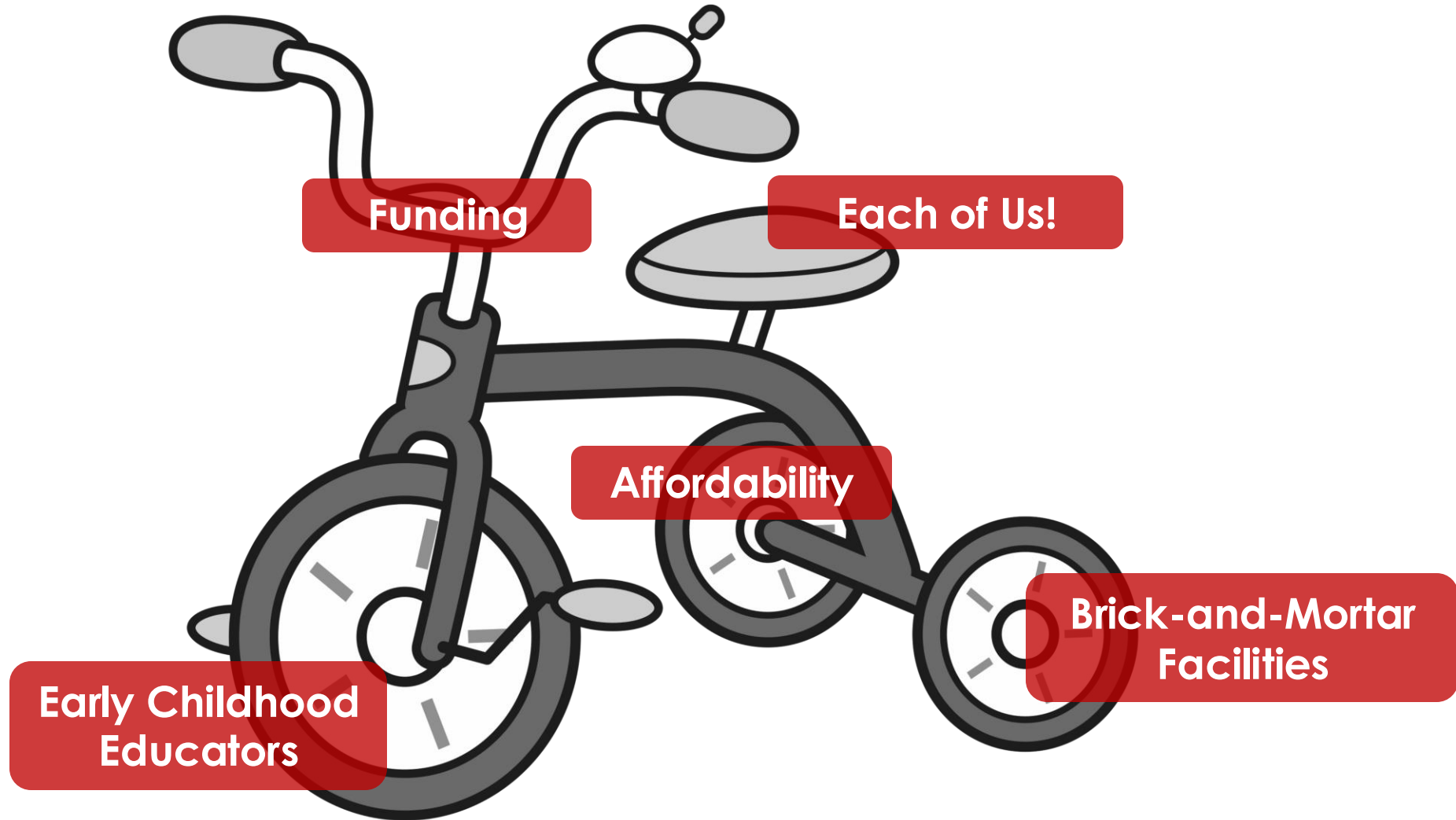


# Percent Point Difference in TRS Participation from 2023 to 2024



# Using Results in Advocacy Work

# The Tricycle for Success



# FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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## **SB 1: Child Care**

**\$100M for Child Care Services**  
at the Texas Workforce  
Commission



## **HB 2: Pre-K**

An additional \$8.5 billion to  
public education with increases  
the **Early Education Allotment by  
\$90M**, prioritizing Pre-K  
attendance

# CHILD CARE DESERTS

## Child Care Deserts

Texas lost nearly 75,000 child care seats from 2023 to 2024. And a 24% drop in family child care providers from 2019 to 2024.

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### **SB 599**

#### **(West & Davis)**

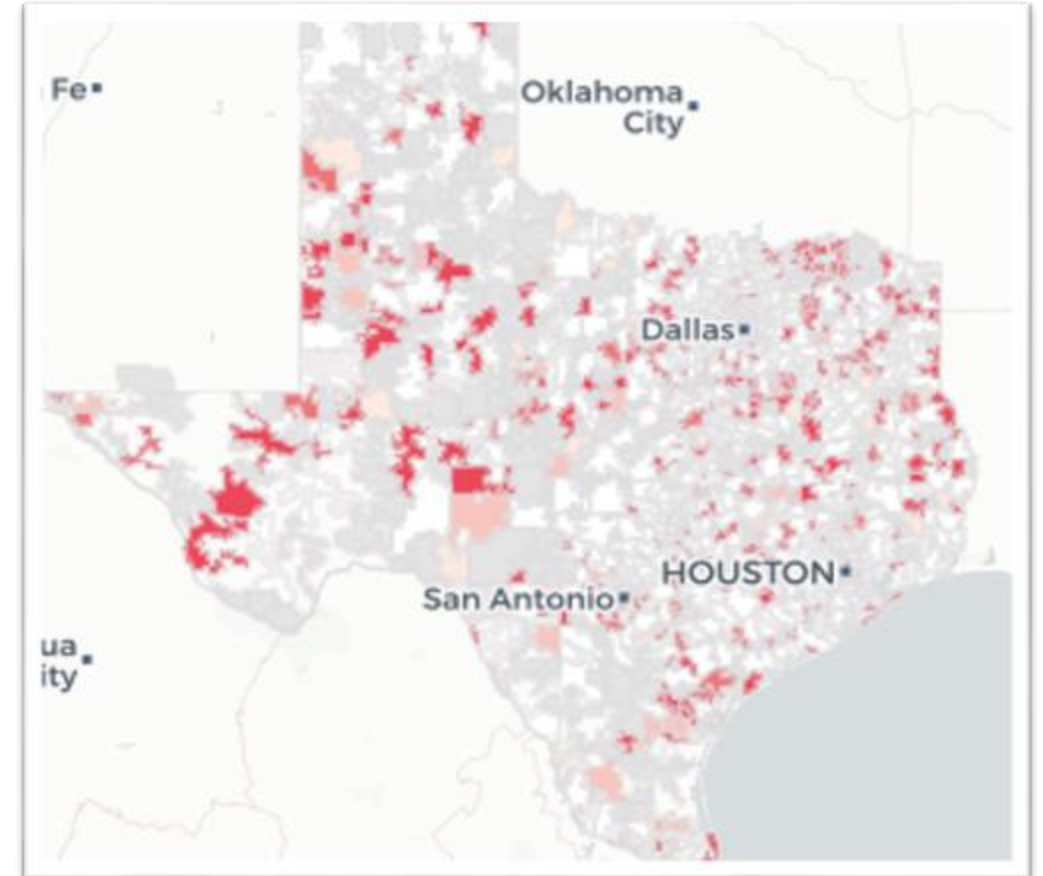
Decreases local hurdles for Texans wanting to create more home-based child care and increase access to care for working parents.

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### **HB 2294**

#### **(Thompson, K. Bell, & Zaffirini)**

Allows Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to pay the full reimbursement rates for child care providers in the Texas Rising Star Program regardless of the fees they charge parents. This supports access to high-quality, affordable early learning for Texas families.



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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## **ECE Workforce**

### **S.B. 462 (Kolkhorst & Harris Davila)**

Prioritizes subsidized child care to income-eligible child care workers for their own children.

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## **Access**

### **S.B. 1265 (Alvarado & Harris Davila)**

Helps employers connect parents to child care options through centralized resources.

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## **Data**

### **H.B. 3963 (Capriglione & Paxton)**

Advances the Early Childhood Integrated Data System to enhance collaboration among state agencies, improves early childhood programs, and informs policy decisions, with the Texas Education Agency serving as the lead agency.

# GOVERNANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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## **H.B. 117**

### **(Schoolcraft)**

Establishes a Governor's Task Force on **the Governance of Early Childhood Education and Care**, a step toward improving coordination, accountability, and outcomes for Texas children.

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## **HB 4903**

### **(Harris Davila & Birdwell)**

Establishes a **Quad Agency Child Care Initiative** focused on collaboration, coordinating policies, and reviewing and streamlining regulations among the participating agencies, which would include TWC, HHSC, DFPS, and TEA.

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## **Sunset Review Commission**

### **DFPS, HHSC, DSHS and TWC**

are all scheduled for the 2026-2027 Review Cycle, with recommendations reported in the 90th Legislative Session.



# State Of Texas Current Governance Structure



## Health & Human Services Commission

- Child Care Regulations
- Family Support Services
- 211
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Texas Thriving Families
- Medicaid & CHIP
- SNAP



## Texas Workforce Commission

- Child Care Services
- Child Care Subsidies
- Texas Rising Star (QRIS)



## Texas Education Agency

- Pre-K
- Special Education Services



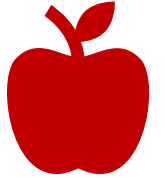
## Department of Family & Protective Services

- Child Abuse and Neglect Statewide Intake
- Foster Care
- Kinship Care



## Department of State Health Services

- Maternal & Child Health
- Help Me Grow



## Department of Agriculture

- CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)

# Interim Engagement Opportunities

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## Sunset Review Advisory Commission

TWC      HHSC      DFPS      DSHS

## Quad-Agency Child Care Initiative Commission

TWC      HHSC      TEA      DFPS

## Governor's Taskforce on Governance of Early Childhood Education and Care

TWC      HHSC      TEA      DSHS

## Regular Interim Charges

TWC      HHSC      TEA      DFPS      DSHS      Dept of Ag



# Community Conversations

# STATE OF TEXAS CURRENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

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Out of these, identify 2 or 3 you're most familiar with (i.e. if child care provider TWC, HHSC) and then talk about what those agencies do well to serve children and families individually and together and what they need to improve on.

- What they do well individually?
- What they need to improve on individually?
- In what ways can they improve their work together?
- In what ways do they do their work well together?



Health and  
Human Services  
Commission



Texas  
Workforce  
Commission



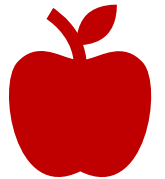
Texas  
Education  
Agency



Department of  
Family &  
Protective  
Services



Department of  
State Health  
Services



Department of  
Agriculture

# Resources at childrenatrisk.org

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## UPDATED CHILD CARE DESERTS MAP



**Learn more at:**

[childrenatrisk.org/pavingthewaytoquality](https://childrenatrisk.org/pavingthewaytoquality)

## JOIN OUR ECE/ IMMIGRATION CROSS COLLABORATIVE



**Learn more at:**

<https://forms.office.com/r/7kduUT9MLE>

## SIGN UP FOR OUR ECE NEWSLETTER



**Learn more at:**

[childrenatrisk.org](https://childrenatrisk.org)

# Thank You!

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