

# HOW CAN TRAINING HOURS FOR CHILD CARE STAFF PROVIDE A PATHWAY TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

*Providing professional development that meets multiple goals*

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## HIGHLIGHTS

*House Bill 680 encourages Local Workforce Development Boards to offer professional development that :*

- *meets Child Care Licensing requirements,*
- *meets Texas Rising Star requirements, and*
- *gives teachers a path to higher education.*

## HOW DOES HOUSE BILL 680 GUIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

The Texas legislature recently approved House Bill 680, which suggests that Local Workforce Development Boards (Local Boards) offer professional development for child care staff that:

- can be used toward requirements for a credential, certification, or degree program; and
- meets the professional development requirements of the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program.

Currently, all Local Boards invest heavily in professional development opportunities, but they are often one-time, standalone classes. Often these classes focus on content that helps providers meet TRS standards. Some Local Boards intentionally structure their professional development options to build upon previous sessions, but even these typically do not offer career building opportunities, such as the ability to stack professional development hours into a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or more advanced degree.

In addition to professional development, some Local Boards and TWC provide scholarships for child care teachers to obtain a CDA certification or child development degree. While these programs are greatly needed, participation across the state is inconsistent.

HB680 provides an opportunity for TWC and Local Boards to coordinate their current trainings and scholarship programs to better support the

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educational needs of child care teachers by offering training that meets TRS criteria while also counting toward a certificate or degree. Additionally, using these funds to serve multiple purposes would be a smart use of taxpayer dollars and could begin to professionalize the child care industry by strategically investing in teachers' careers.

## HOW CAN LOCAL BOARDS IMPLEMENT THIS CHANGE?

With the adoption of HB680, Local Boards can provide professional development that meets local needs, while also ensuring that training hours will count toward a credential or degree — something this workforce is severely lacking and often cannot afford to pursue on their own. One way to do this is to utilize trainers that meet Child Care Licensing requirements and capture the relevant CDA subject area on the training certificates. Additionally, ensuring that professional development meets TRS standards will support providers who want to achieve or maintain TRS certification.

If not already doing so, Local Boards can work with institutions of higher education in their area to enter into articulation agreements. This allows

for the CDA credential to count toward a 2-year degree, and then the 2-year degree to count toward a 4-year degree. TWC and some Local Boards fund training for the common standalone CDA credential, but it does not always count toward a 2-year degree. The state has released an Articulation Tool Kit to provide guidance in coordinating degree programs. Beginning to connect standalone trainings with credentials and degrees allows for more efficient use of taxpayer dollars while building careers in the child care field.

## CONCLUSION

There is a great opportunity here to professionalize the child care industry and invest in teachers' careers. However, we must not focus on this alone. The issue of low compensation for child care teachers is a critical challenge, which can be addressed through innovative strategies such as Shared Services and apprenticeship programs, in conjunction with training, credentials, and degrees.

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