

Priorities for the 87th Texas Legislative Session

children at Risk



CHILDREN AT RISK is a non-partisan, research and advocacy nonprofit focused on speaking out and driving change for Texas children. Recognizing the needs of the whole-child, CHILDREN AT RISK advocates on behalf of public policies that put children first across issues and child-serving sectors.

1. Prioritize legislation that impacts low-income families in Texas and COVID-19 recovery



2. Invest in quality early education, public education, and out of school time to ensure all children are ready for school, college, and careers



CHILD CARE

- Require subsidy providers to participate in Texas Rising Star with a phase-in of the requirements and support systems needed
- Require the Texas Workforce Commission to conduct a cost-of-quality study
- Require the Texas Education Agency to collect child care providers' Operational ID numbers during Pre-K Partnership agreement
- Develop a statewide plan and goals for helping educators achieve credentials and degrees, earn living wages, and utilize the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System and Workforce Registry
- Allow local flexibility for contracted slots to increase utilization and maximize seats
- Reimburse at higher rates than providers' published prices and increase reimbursement rates for infants and toddlers



PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Ensure ALL schools have adequate funding to offer high-quality education and provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for a safe and healthy environment
- Protect HB 3 funding and support reforms
- Target funds toward students with the most significant learning gaps
- Define chronic absenteeism, include chronic absenteeism in the "at-risk" category, and require TEA to measure this indicator and report findings
- Expand access to broadband internet and technology to all students
- Continue to invest in Pre-K Partnerships and alleviate barriers that prevent public-private partnerships



OUT OF SCHOOL TIME (OST)

- Protect and increase resources for out of school providers to meet basic needs among families such as nutrition, safety, and mental health

CHILDREN AT RISK

Speaking Out + Driving Change for Children
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3. Invest in programs and strategies that improve children's physical, mental, and social development



HEALTH

- Strengthen and improve the ImmTrac2, the Texas Immunization Registry
- Require an opt-out instead of opt-in option into ImmTrac2, the Texas Immunization Registry
- Provide 12-month continuous Medicaid coverage for children
- Expand Medicaid coverage to increase the number of Texans with access to health care
- Protect and increase funding for evidence-based primary prevention



NUTRITION AND ACCESS TO FOOD

- Protect the Texas Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services budget



PHYSICAL FITNESS AND RECESS

- Require school districts to adopt and implement a local school recess policy

4. Prevent human trafficking and protect survivors



PREVENTION & PROTECTION

- Prevent the trafficking of foster care children by increasing protections around the residential facilities that serve them
- Require hotel employees to receive training to prevent and identify human trafficking



ENDING OF DEMAND

- Increase buyer penalties
- Allow legitimate businesses to void their leases if the owner/leasing entity also leases to an unlicensed Illicit Massage Businesses within their commercial vicinity
- Allow local government attorneys to collect fees against Illicit Massage Businesses under the Deceptive Trade Practices Act
- Mandate registration of all privately owned, "white label" ATMs

5. Promote policies that increase equity and eliminate systemic racism in Texas



STATE AGENCIES

- Require the Sunset Advisory Commission to assess the agency's efforts to reduce racial disparities when under review



STATE LAWS

- Require Childhood Racial Disparity Impact Statements on pending legislation at the request of the Lieutenant Governor or Speaker of the House Of Representatives