



Early Childhood Education Legislative Agenda



IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Texas Rising Star is Texas' Quality Rating and Improvement System for early childhood programs at the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) that is open to child care providers who accept children of working parents who receive child care subsidy assistance. Unfortunately, only 46% of the roughly 17,000 providers in 2019 participated in the subsidy program. The current voluntary program does little to ensure low-income children in government-funded programs receive quality care.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Require subsidy providers to participate in Texas Rising Star at a basic entry level with supports provided and an appropriate phase-in period.



INCREASE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO PROVIDE QUALITY PRE-KINDERGARTEN (PRE-K)

Pre-K Partnerships are collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors. A privately funded child care center contracts with a public institution to provide additional seats for Pre-K children. Currently, there is little to no information about providers and school districts that have formed Pre-K Partnerships. This lack of reporting makes it difficult to assess how best to expand partnership strategies that work.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Require TEA to report the provider ID as part of Pre-K Partnership agreements to enable TEA and TWC to identify and evaluate effective partnership strategies.



SUPPORT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Early childhood educators play a critical role in shaping the developmental outcomes of children. However, early childhood educators find it challenging to recruit and retain high-quality teachers in the child care industry. Salaries for child care educators, especially those in programs that accept subsidy payments, do not reflect the job's complexity.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Require TWC to develop a statewide plan with goals for helping early educators achieve greater education and credentials, earn higher wages, and better utilize the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System and Workforce Registry.

Early Childhood Education & the 87th Session

children at Risk



STUDY THE REAL COST OF PROVIDING QUALITY CHILD CARE

A better understanding of the cost of operating high-quality child care will allow the State of Texas to better utilize its limited child care funds. Parents who receive subsidized child care cannot pay more than the provider's published price, even though these prices do not cover the true cost of providing quality child care. A cost-of-quality study will determine the cost for providers to meet high-quality standards.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Require the TWC to conduct a cost-of-quality study that will show the true cost of providing high-quality care for children and allow Texas to reimburse providers accordingly.



INCREASE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR SUBSIDY PROVIDERS

In Texas, child care providers participating in the child care subsidy program receive reimbursements for their care of children of low-income working parents. Reimbursement rates vary by the Local Workforce Development Board area, based on the local market rates and other factors. Current reimbursement rates represent only a fraction of what it costs to provide quality care.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Reimburse subsidy providers at higher rates than "published prices" and increase reimbursement rates for infants and toddlers.



INCREASING THE SUPPLY AND STABILITY OF QUALITY CARE

Contract agreements are an effective and proven strategy to build the supply and stabilize high-quality care for children from low-income families. Establishing contracts with quality providers stabilize the supply and access to quality care. Currently there is no local flexibility for Local Workforce Development Boards to develop these agreements with providers limiting the access to care. Contracts build stable, quality supply by guaranteeing the availability of quality seats in areas of great need, such as child care deserts.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Allow local flexibility for contracted slots to increase utilization and maximize seats.

CHILDREN AT RISK

Speaking Out + Driving Change for Children
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