

The State of Early Childhood Education in Texas

Lower Rio Grande
Valley/McAllen

April 2025 Texas Tour

**children
at Risk**



Our Mission



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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HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

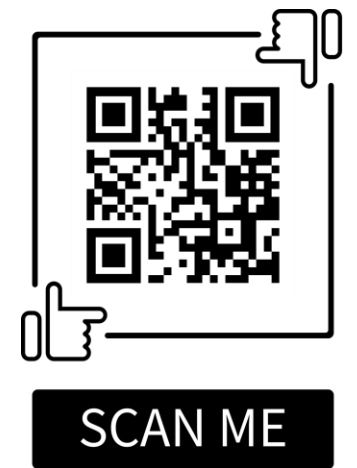
EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

SUPPORTED FAMILIES

children atRisk

TexProtects

TEXANS CARE for CHILDREN



Sign up for the Texas PN-3 Newsletter

Child Care Deserts Data

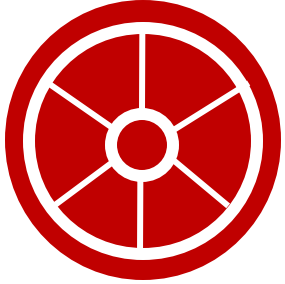
1 in 10 children in
America live in Texas

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

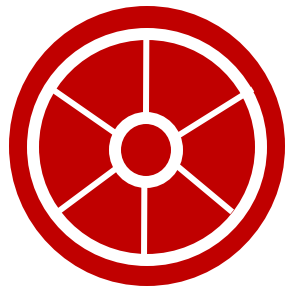
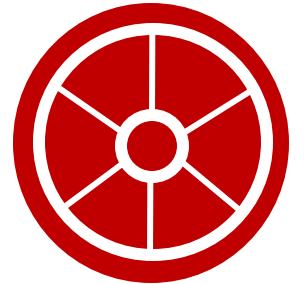


The Texas Early Childhood Ecosystem



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*

Lower RGV LWDB Overall Child Care Deserts

29,846 ↓

Total Number of Seats

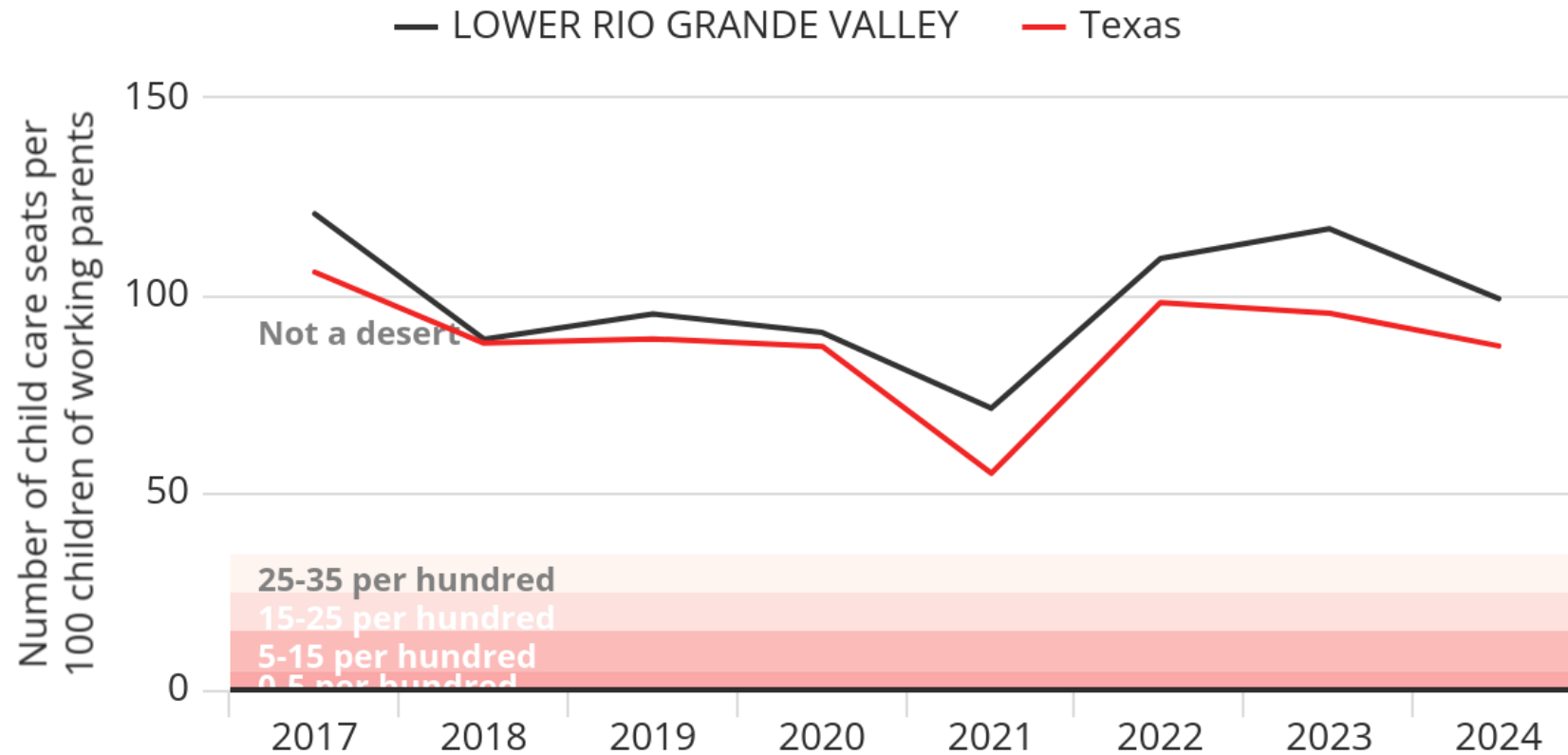
13 ↑

Overall Desert Zip Codes

Overall Child Care Seats

All child care

Number of child care seats per 100 children of working parents



Source: CHILDREN AT RISK Child Care Desert Map

Subsidy Child Care Deserts

Texas Subsidy Child Care Deserts

125,548 ↑

Total Number of Subsidy Seats

778 ↓

Subsidy Desert Zip Codes*

Lower RGV LWDB Subsidy Child Care Deserts

11,224 ↑

Total Number of Subsidy Seats

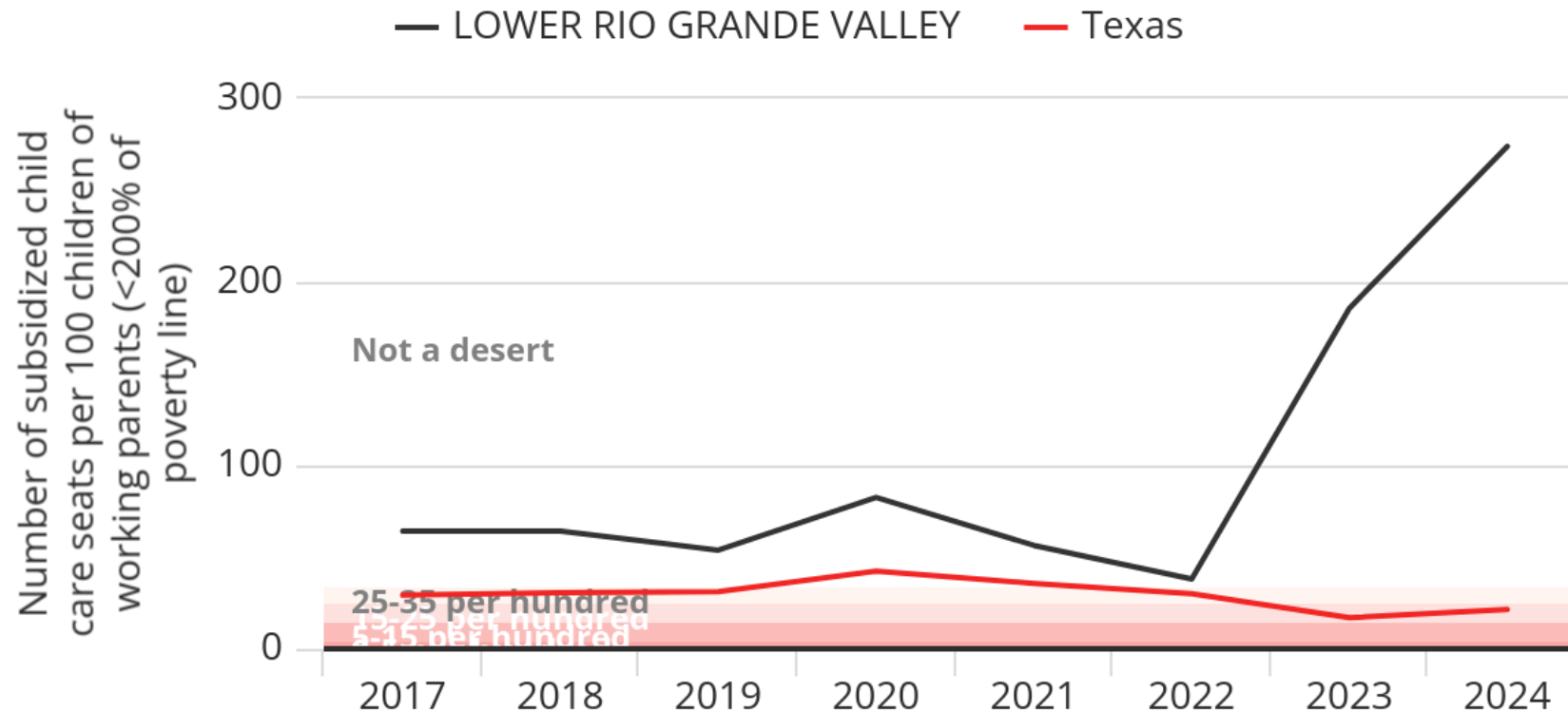
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Subsidy Desert Zip Codes

Subsidy Child Care Seats

Subsidized child care only

Number of subsidized child care seats per 100 children of working parents (<200% of poverty line)



Source: CHILDREN AT RISK Child Care Desert Map

TRS Child Care Deserts

Texas TRS Child Care Deserts

84,132 ↑

Total Number of TRS Seats

850 ↓

TRS Desert Zip Codes*

Lower RGV LWDB TRS Child Care Deserts

6,014 ↑

Total Number of TRS Seats

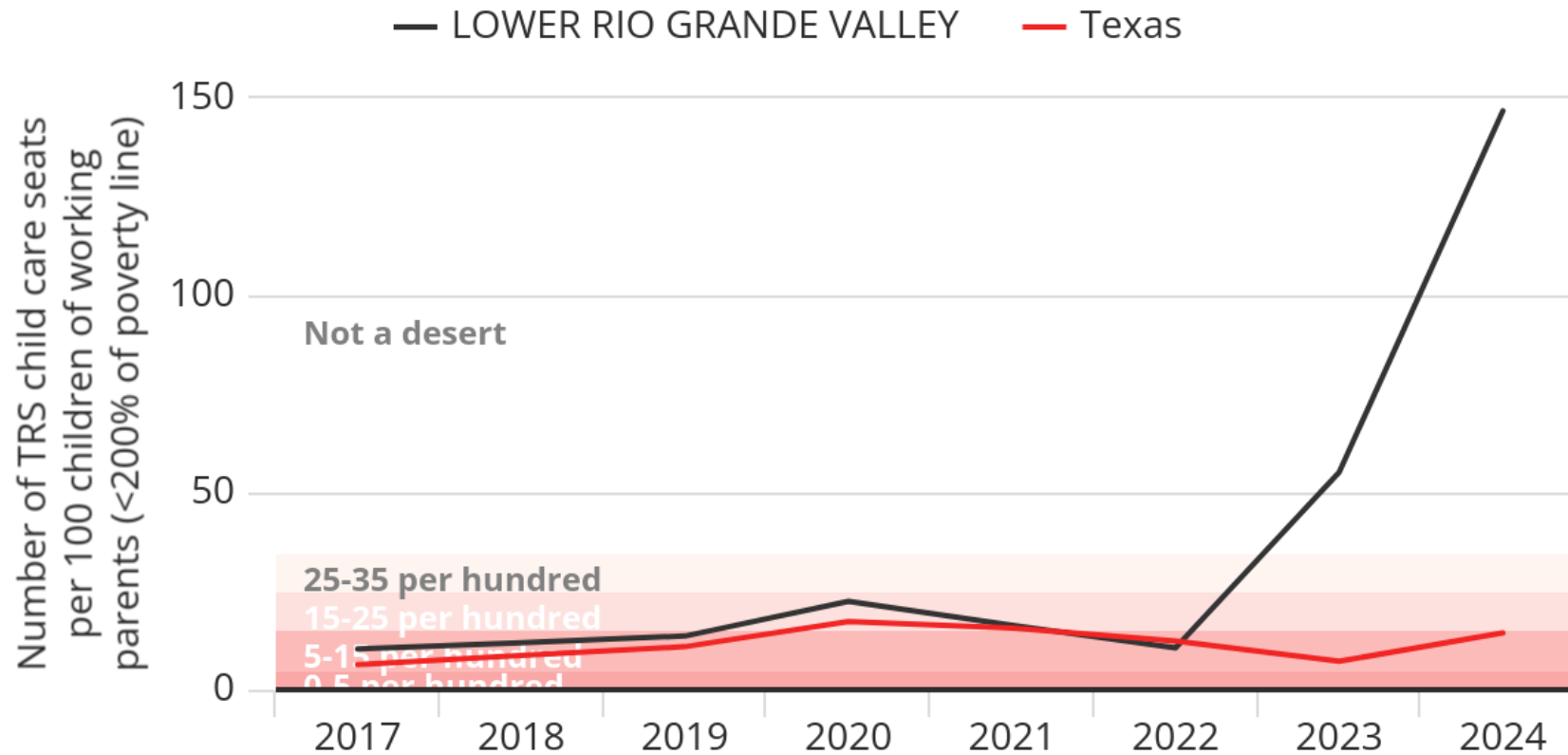
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TRS Desert Zip Codes

TRS Child Care Seats

Texas Rising Star 2,3,4 child care only

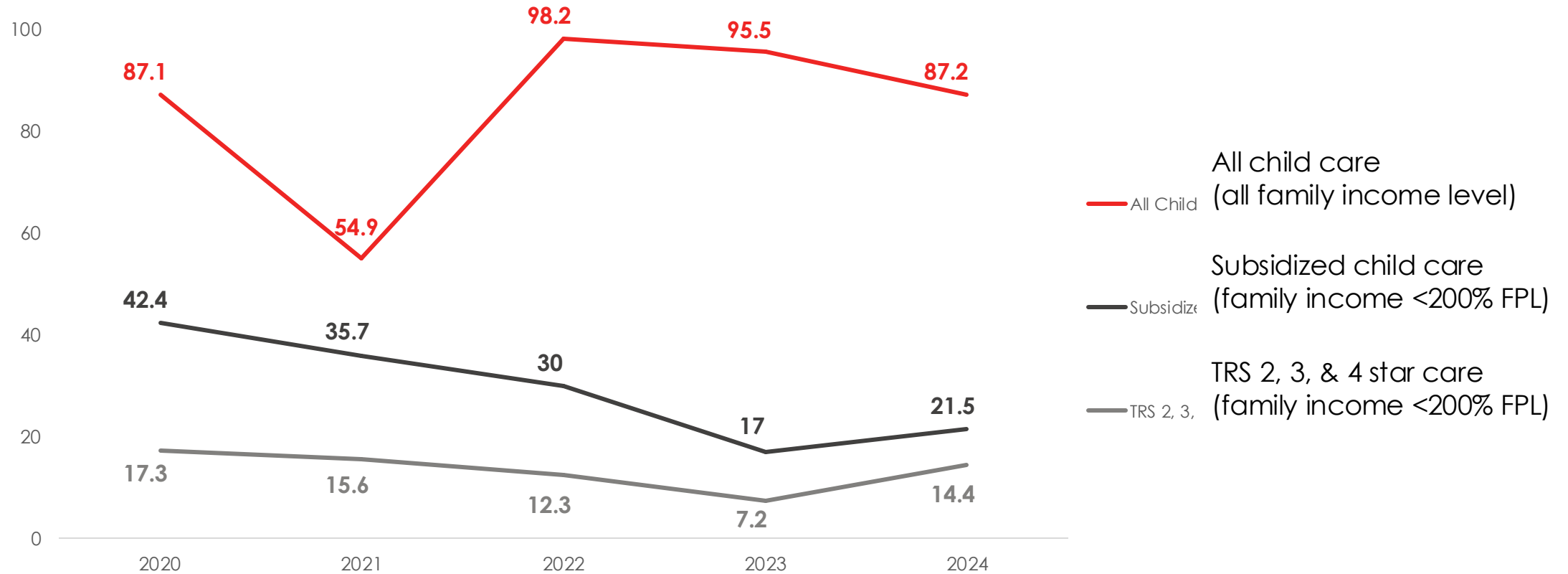
Number of TRS child care seats per 100 children of working parents (<200% of poverty line)



Source: CHILDREN AT RISK Child Care Desert Map

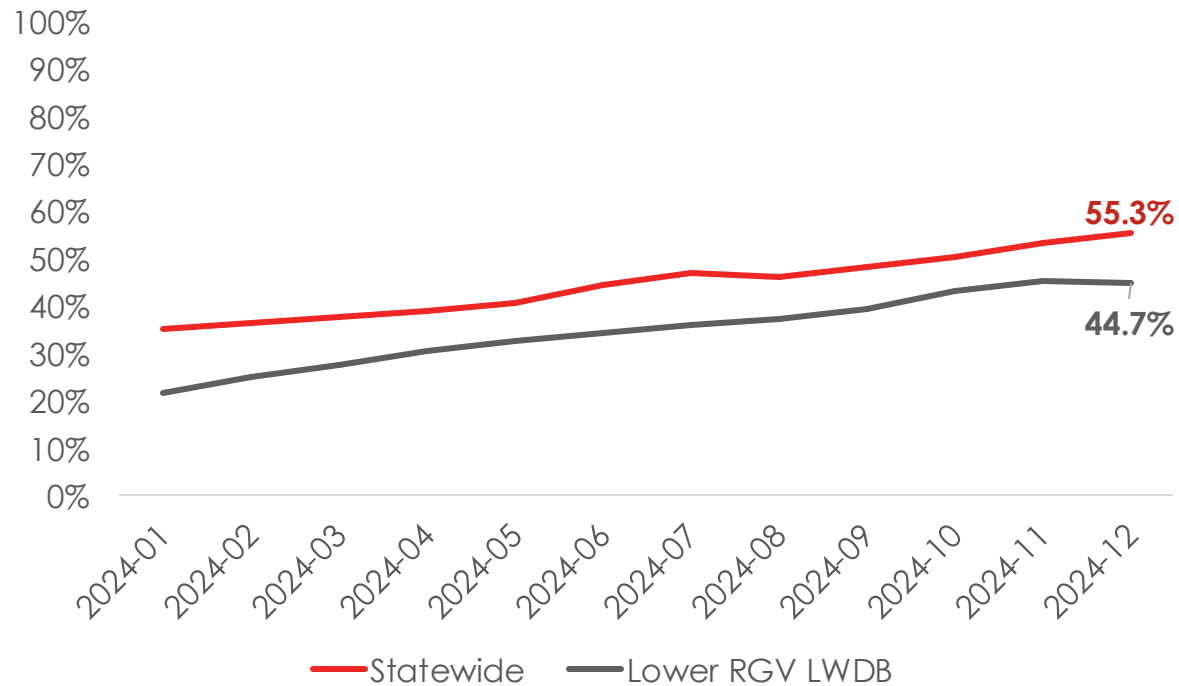
The Last 5 Years of Child Care Seats in Texas

Number of Child Care Seats per 100 Children of Working Families

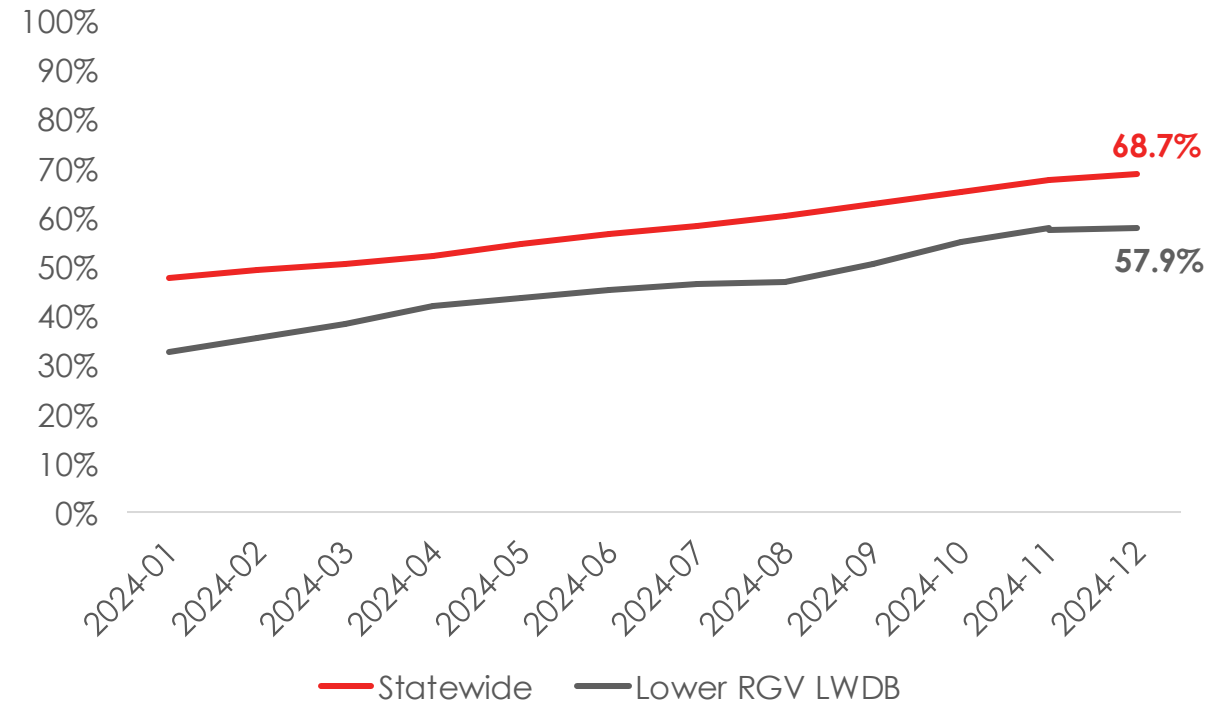


Lower RGV LWDB Texas Rising Star

Percent of Providers Participating in TRS

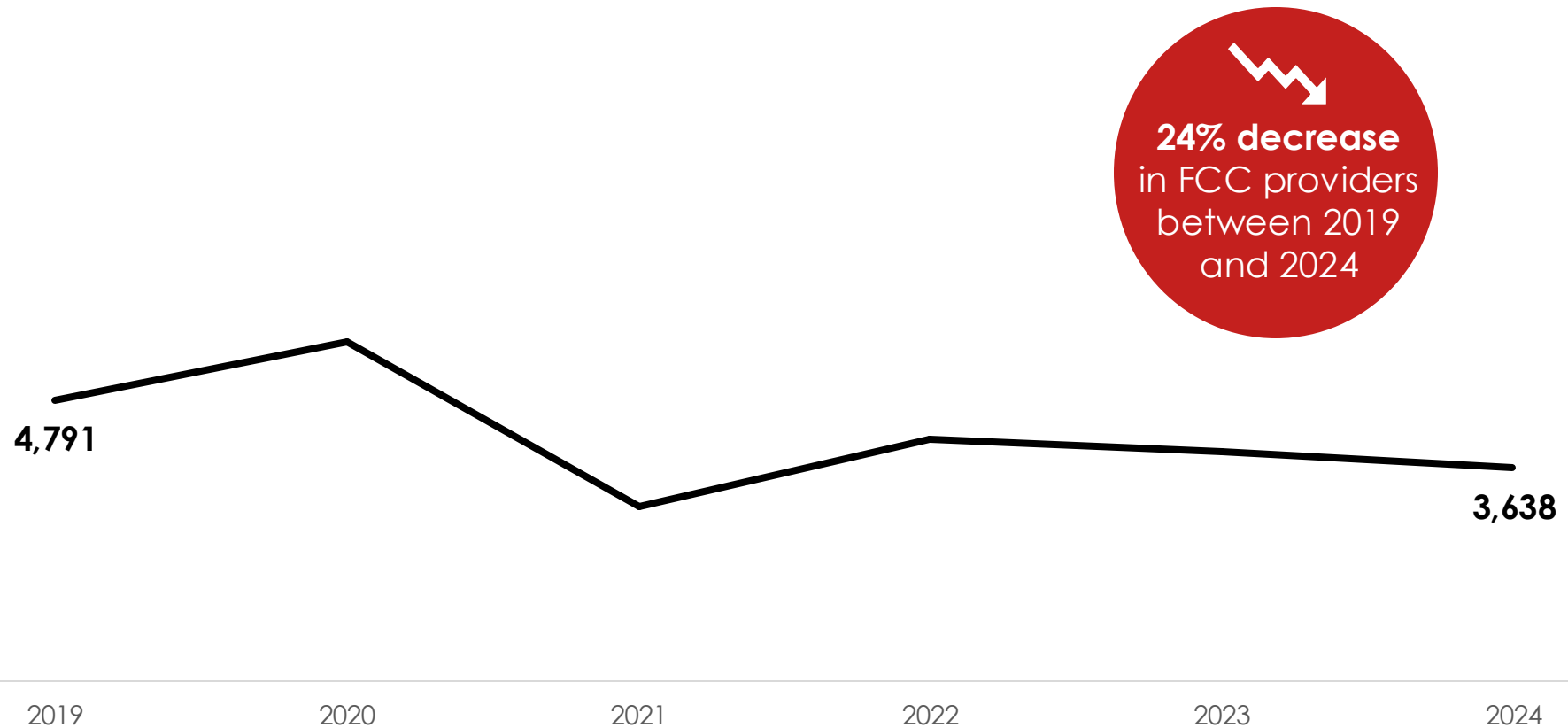


Percent of Children Receiving TRS Quality Care

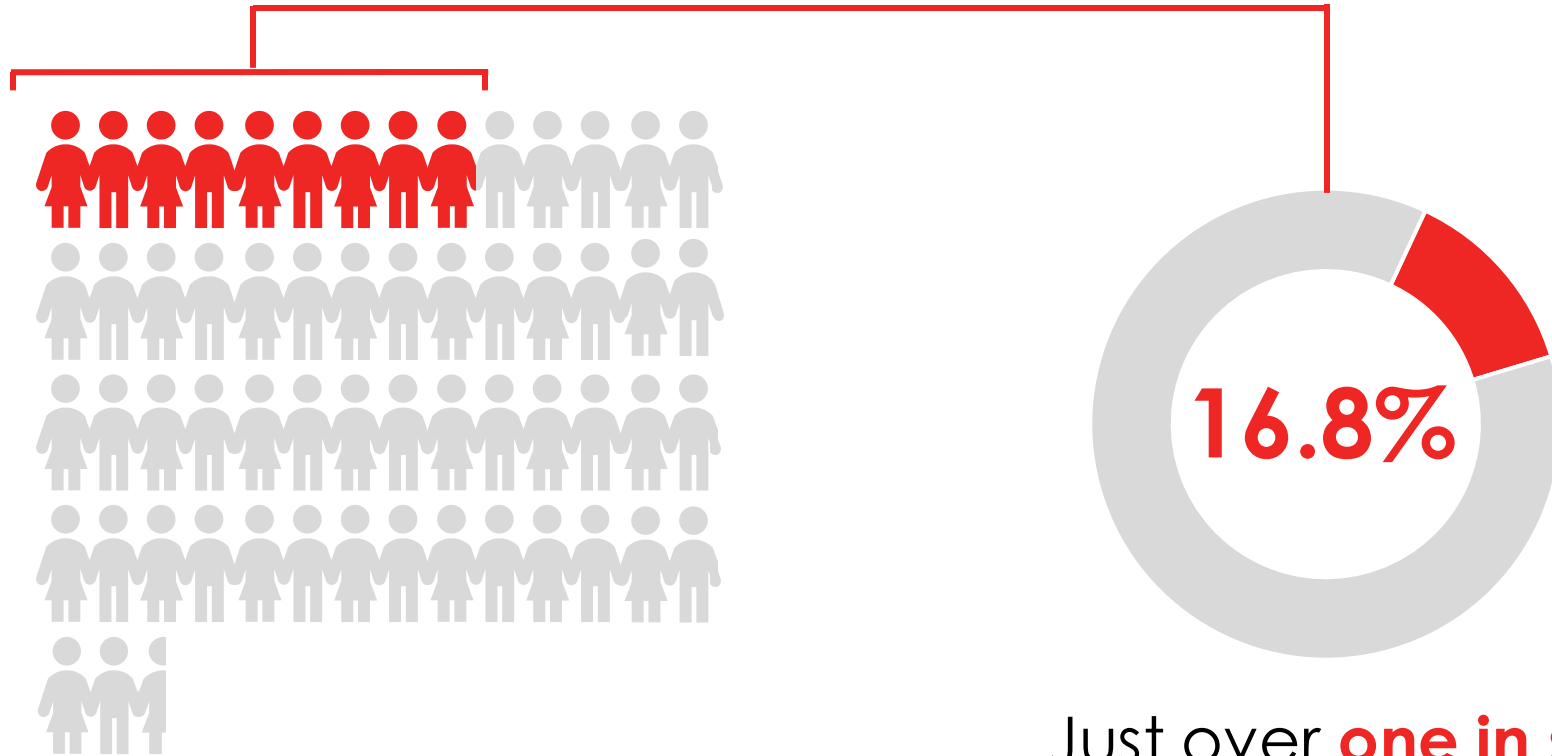



Family Child Care Homes


Registered and Licensed Family Child Care Homes, 2019-2024



Number of Children Served with Funding versus Need



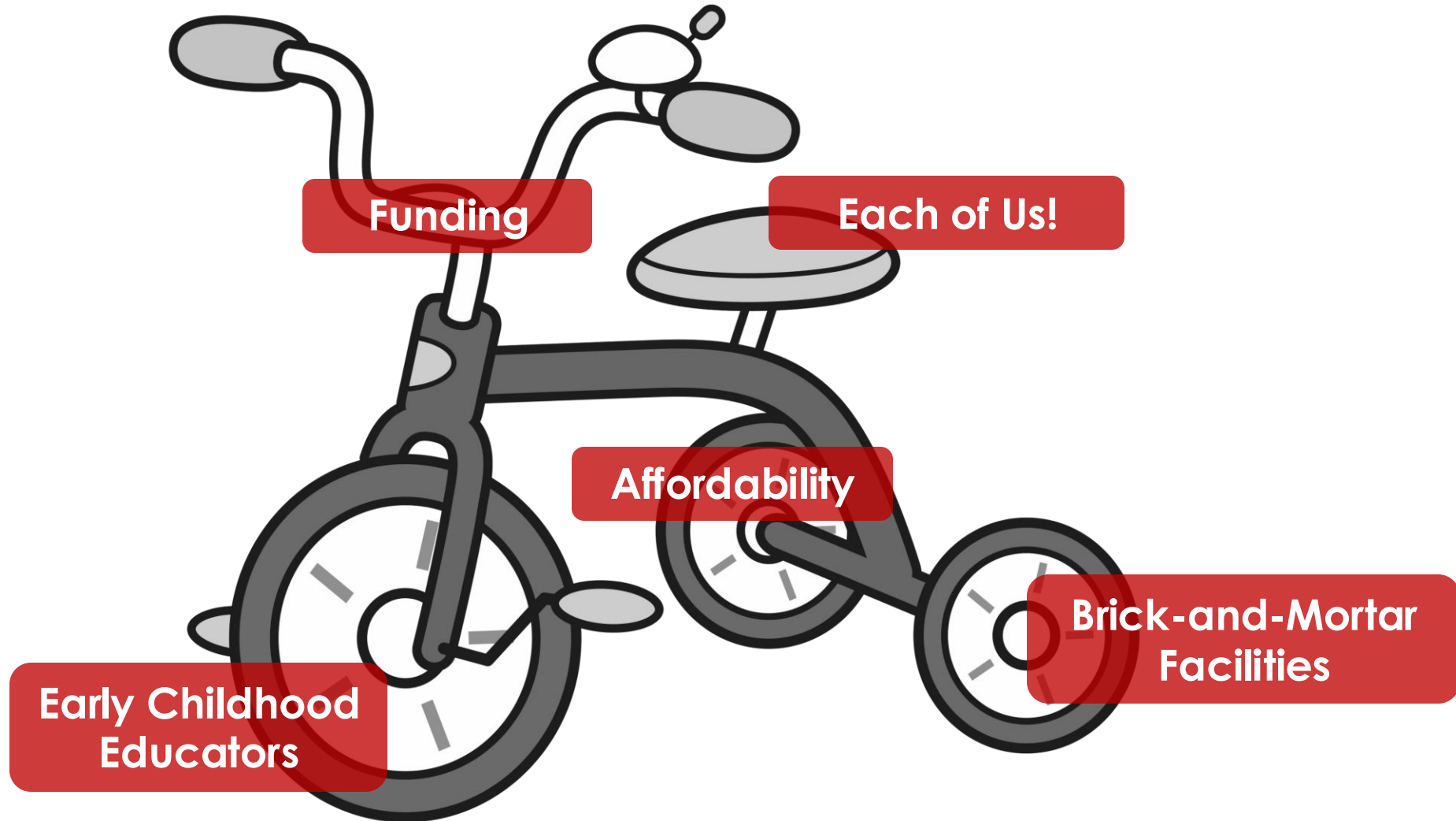
 = 10,000 low-income children ages 0-5 with working parents

 = 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.**

Using Results in Advocacy Work

The Tricycle for Success



89th Texas Legislature Fiscal Needs

95,000 eligible children remain on a **waitlist**, with some families waiting **up to two years** for assistance. Child care costs in Texas average **\$9,672–\$10,608 per year per child**, making it unaffordable for many families. Investing **\$89M in FY 2026** and **\$92M in FY 2027** could serve **10,000 more children** and strengthen Texas' workforce.



Invest in child care through:

- Direct Care of Children
- Reimbursement Rates
- Child Care Supply Funding



Consider business tax incentives for businesses supporting child care for employees

\$100M in House Supplemental Budget

S.B. 1739 (West)

The creation of a child care protection and enhancement fund for the purpose of the expansion of childcare capacity and enhancement of subsidized child care rates.

S.B. 211 (West)

Relating to a franchise tax credit for taxable entities that operate an on-site child-care center for use by the entity's employees.

89th Texas Legislature Revenue Neutral Bills



Invest in child care through:

- Direct Care of Children
- Reimbursement Rates
- Child Care Supply Funding

S.B. 972 (Zaffirini)/H.B. 2294 (Thompson)

Allow LWDBs to reimburse providers at the established rate, regardless of their published rates.

Both bills have been heard in Committee.



Remove patchwork of local regulatory barriers that burden Texans who want to open family child care homes

S.B. 599 (West)/H.B. 4127 (Davis.A)

Reduce obstacles for the creation of new licensed and registered child care homes.

**S.B.599 was voted out of Senate;
H.B. 4127 has been heard in Committee.**

89th Texas Legislature Revenue Neutral Bills



Prioritize income-eligible child care employees for child care scholarships for their own children

S.B. 462 (Kolkhorst)/H.B. 3807 (Harris Davila)

Prioritize eligible child care workers for child care scholarships.

**S.B. 462 voted favorably out of Committee;
H.B. 3807 was heard in Committee**



Reduce administrative obstacles to develop public-private Pre-K partnerships

S.B. 1755 (Birdwell)

Under **current law**, high quality child care providers, school districts, charter schools who want to partner must have the **same Certificates of Occupancy**, Schools districts and charter schools have Certificate of Occupancy License E for Education. Child care providers have a Certificate of Occupancy License I for Industry.

Allow child care providers to use their current Certificate of Occupancy.

89th Texas Legislature Revenue Neutral Bills

H.B. 460 (Lopez):

Relating to a study regarding the cost of child care in this state in comparison to family income.

H.B. 460 was heard in Committee on April 9

H.B. 117 (Schoolcraft)

Establishment of governor's task force on the governance of early childhood education and care.

H.B. 117 Voted favorably out of committee, scheduled for full House vote April 16

H.B. 2271 (Walle):

Relating to collecting and sharing capacity and enrollment information for certain day-care centers

H.B. 2271 was heard in Committee on April 9

H.B. 3191 (Button):

Relating to strategies to increase the availability of and access to child care, including the creation of an employer child-care contribution partnership program, a child-care innovation pilot program.

H.B. 3191 was heard in Committee on April 9

H.B. 175 (González)

Establishing optional certifications who provide inclusion for children with disabilities for child-care providers participating in the TRS Program.

H.B. 175 was heard in Committee on April 9

Community Conversations

Resources at childrenatrisk.org

UPDATED CHILD CARE DESERTS MAP



Learn more at:

childrenatrisk.org/pavingthewaytoquality

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT ONE-PAGERS



Learn more at:

childrenatrisk.org/legislative-district-ece

SIGN UP FOR ACTION ALERTS



Learn more at:

childrenatrisk.org

Thank You!

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