

The State of Early Childhood Education in Texas

Statewide
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



Mandi Kimball
Chief Government
Affairs Officer



Kim Kofron
Senior Director
of Education



Lyn Lucas
Assoc. Director of Early
Childhood Education



Martha Gonzales
Assoc. Director of Early
Learning Quality Network



Becky Quintanilla
Senior Project Coordinator



Erika Alcala
Project Coordinator



Miranda Johnson
Project Coordinator

Prenatal-to-Three Collaborative



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

Child Care Deserts Data

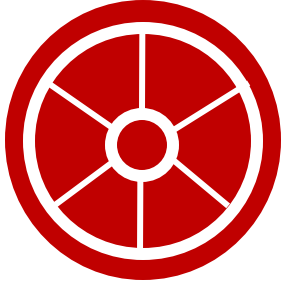
1 in 10 children in
America live in Texas

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

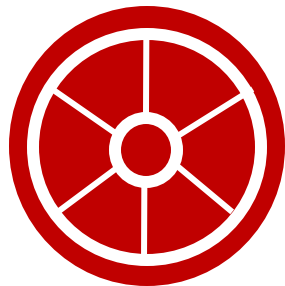


The Texas Early Childhood Ecosystem



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.

Texas Overall Child Care Deserts

September 2023

1,065,952

Total Number of Seats

365

Overall Desert Zip Codes*

September 2024

991,039 ↓

Total Number of Seats

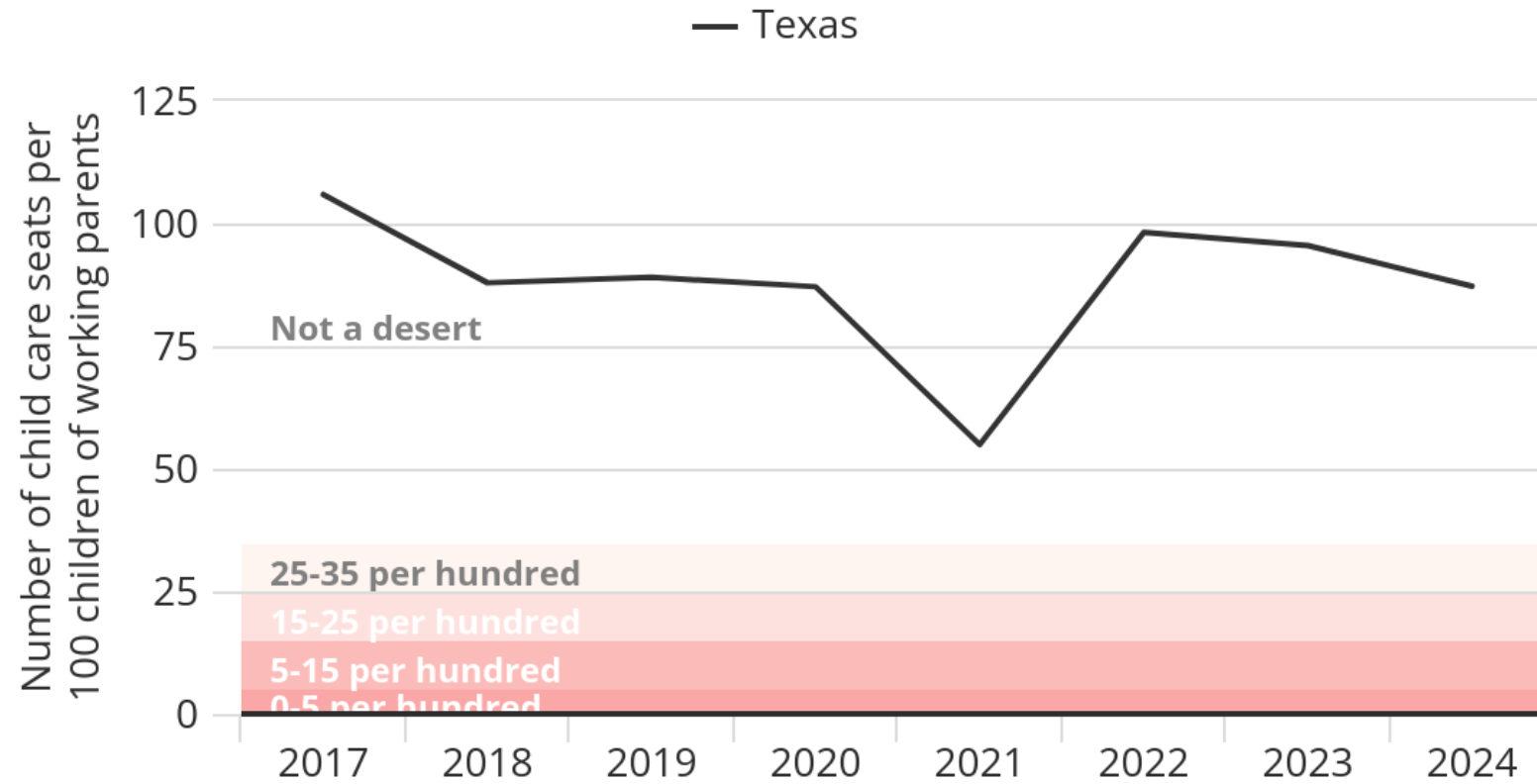
420 ↑

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 Childcare Desert Map

Subsidy Child Care Deserts

September 2023

114,372

Total Number of Subsidy Seats

859

Subsidy Desert Zip Codes*

September 2024

125,548 ↑

Total Number of Subsidy Seats

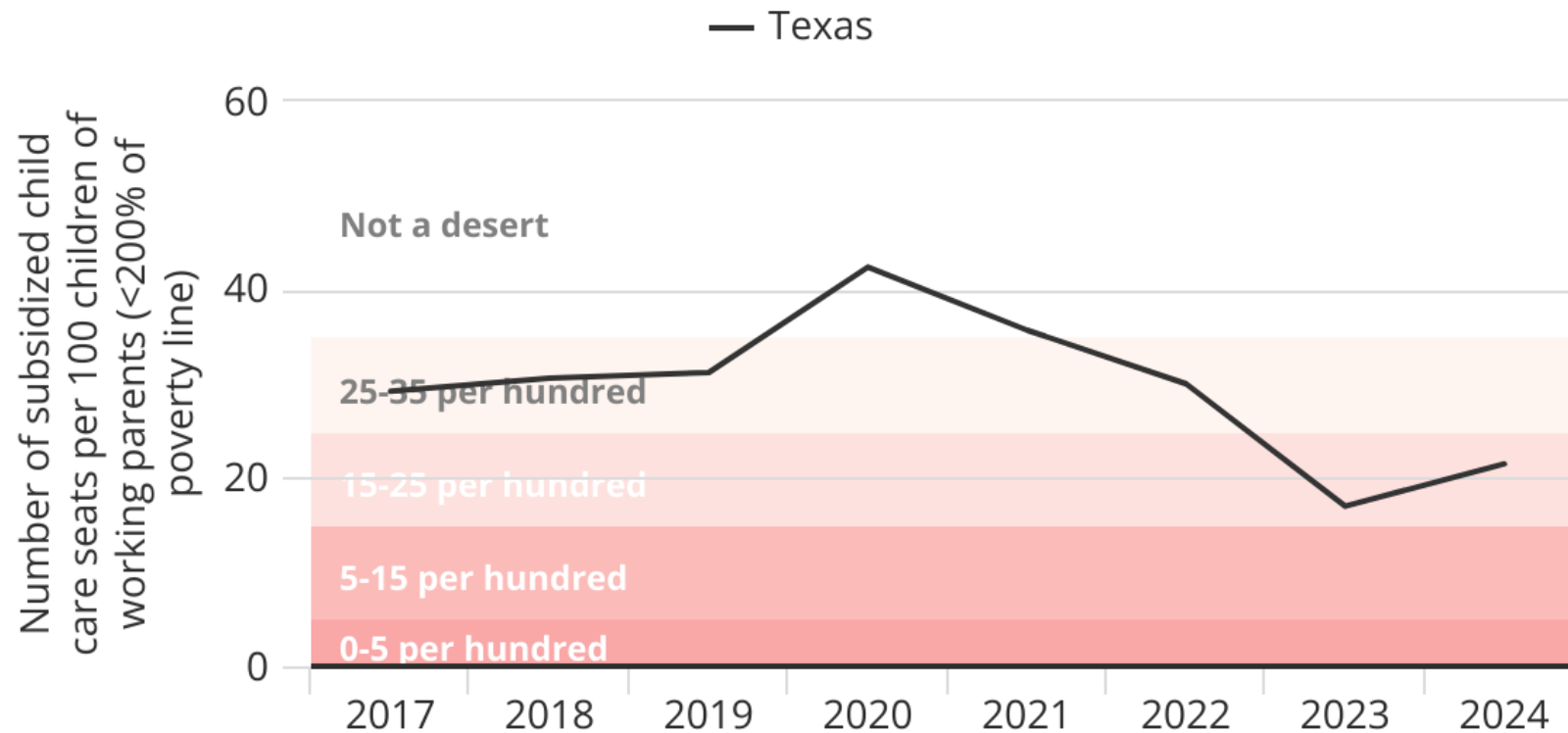
778 ↓

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 Childcare Desert Map

Texas TRS Child Care Deserts

September 2023

48,491

Total Number of TRS Seats

981

TRS Desert Zip Codes*

September 2024

84,132 ↑

Total Number of TRS Seats

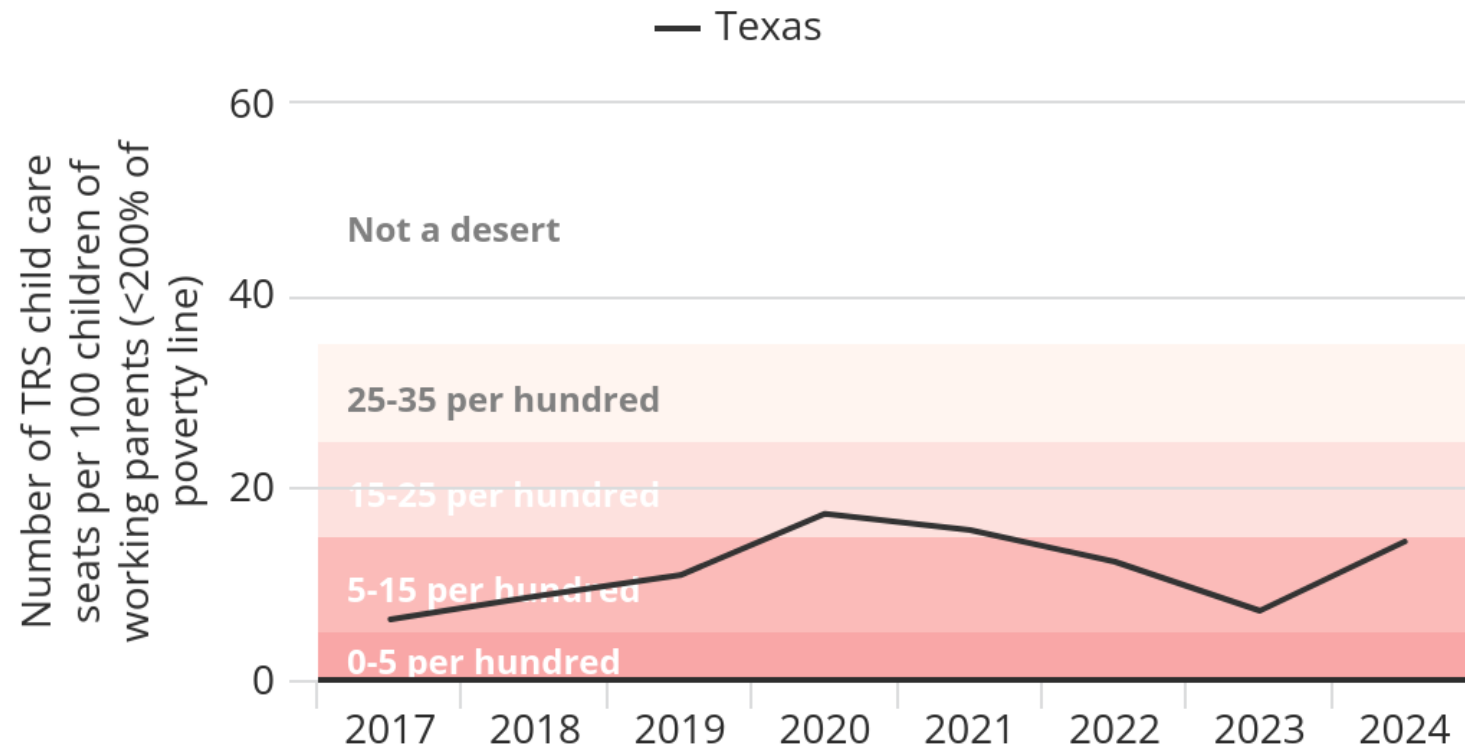
850 ↓

TRS Desert Zip Codes

TRS Child Care Seats

Texas Rising Star 2,3,4 child care only

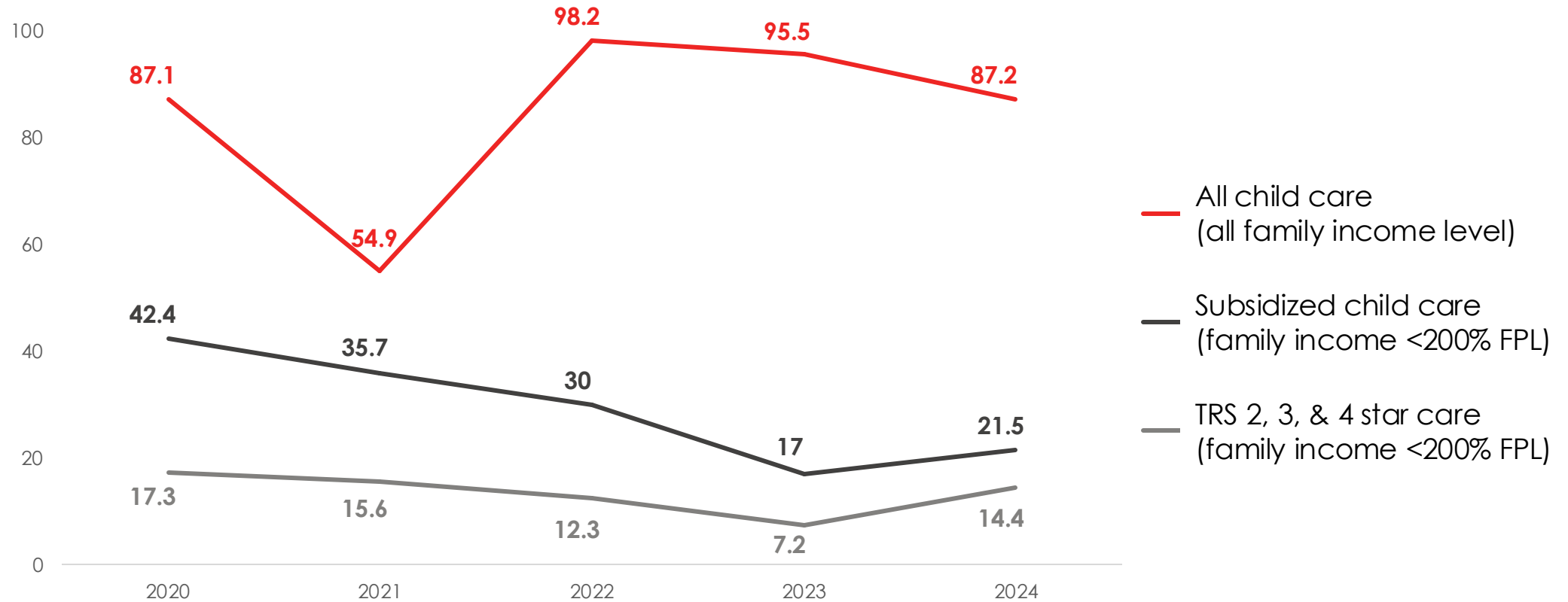
Number of TRS child care seats per 100 children of working parents (<200% of poverty line)



Source: Children at Risk Childcare Desert Map

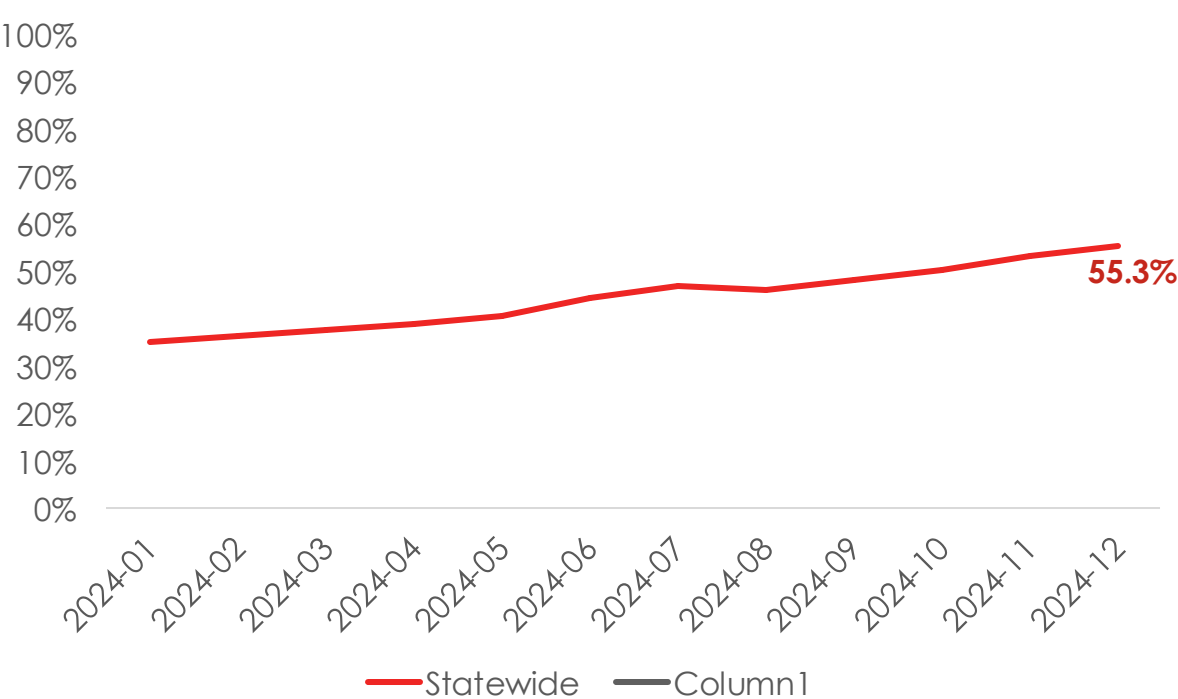
The Last 5 Years of Child Care Seats in Texas

Number of Child Care Seats per 100 Children of Working Families

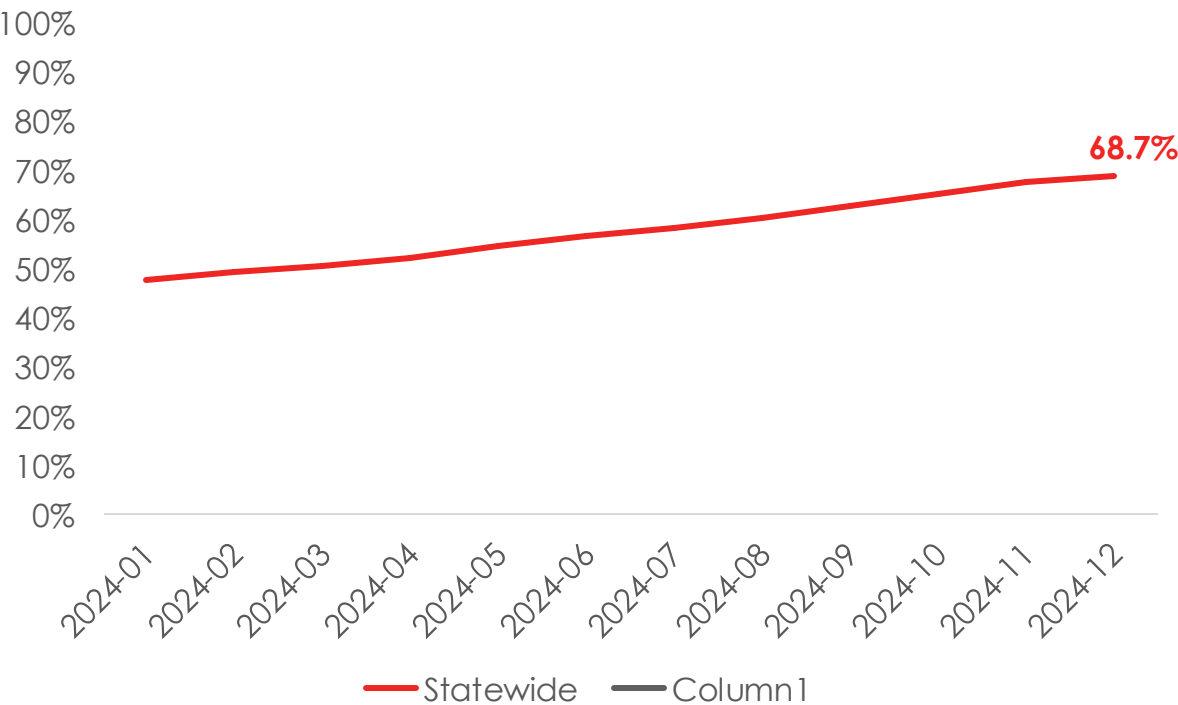


Statewide LWDB Texas Rising Star

Percent of Providers Participating in TRS

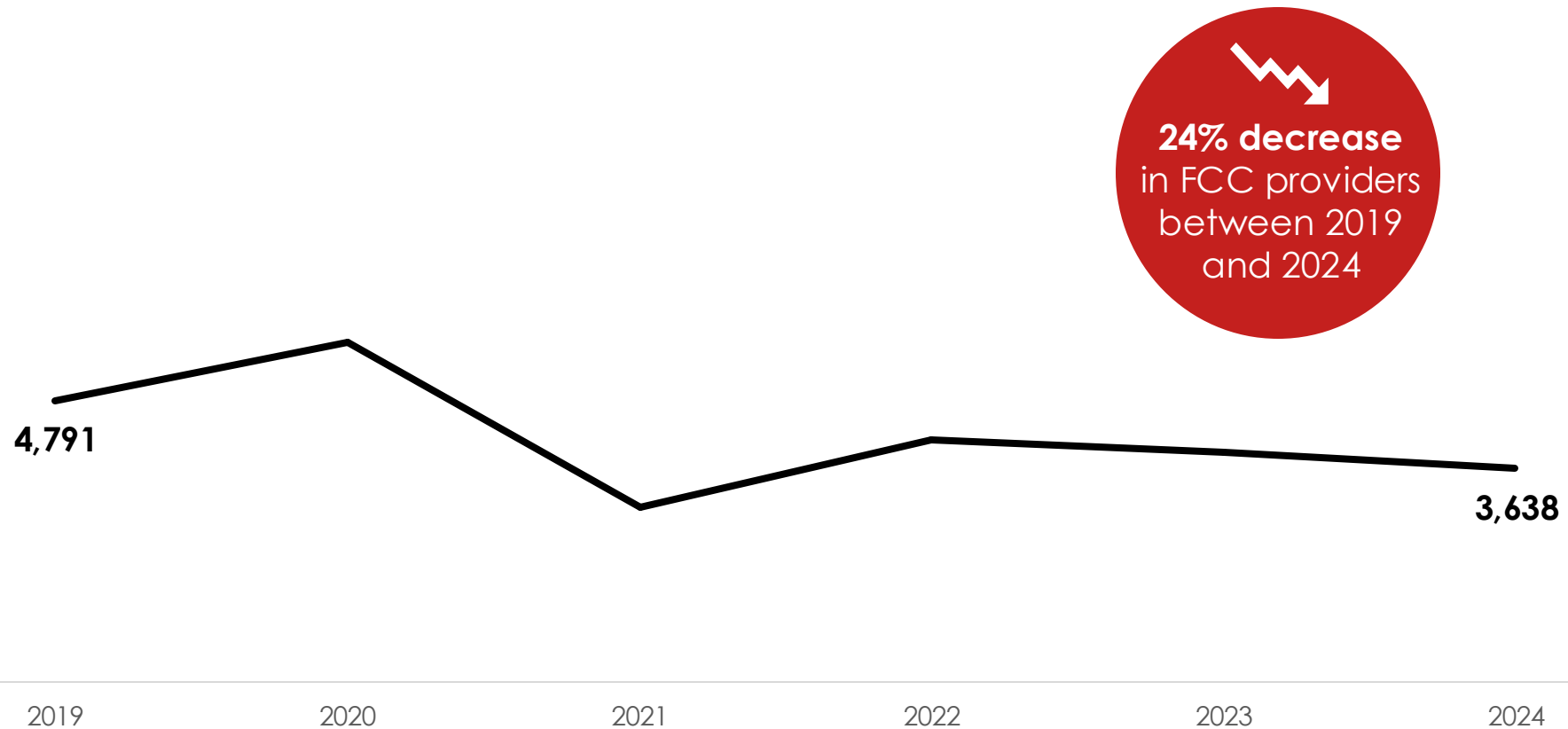


Percent of Children Receiving TRS Quality Care

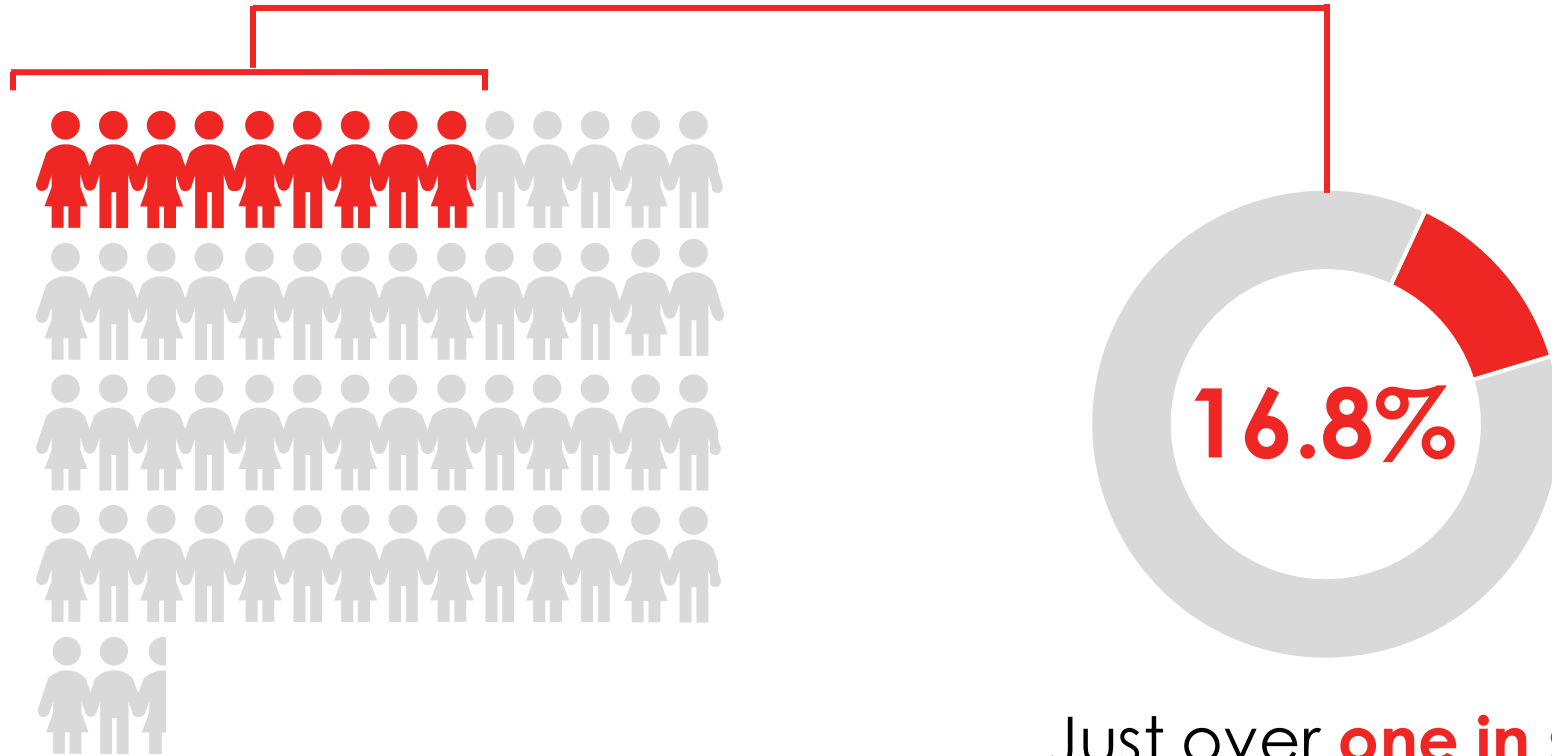



Family Child Care Homes

Registered and Licensed Family Child Care Homes, 2019-2024



Number of Children Served with Funding versus Need



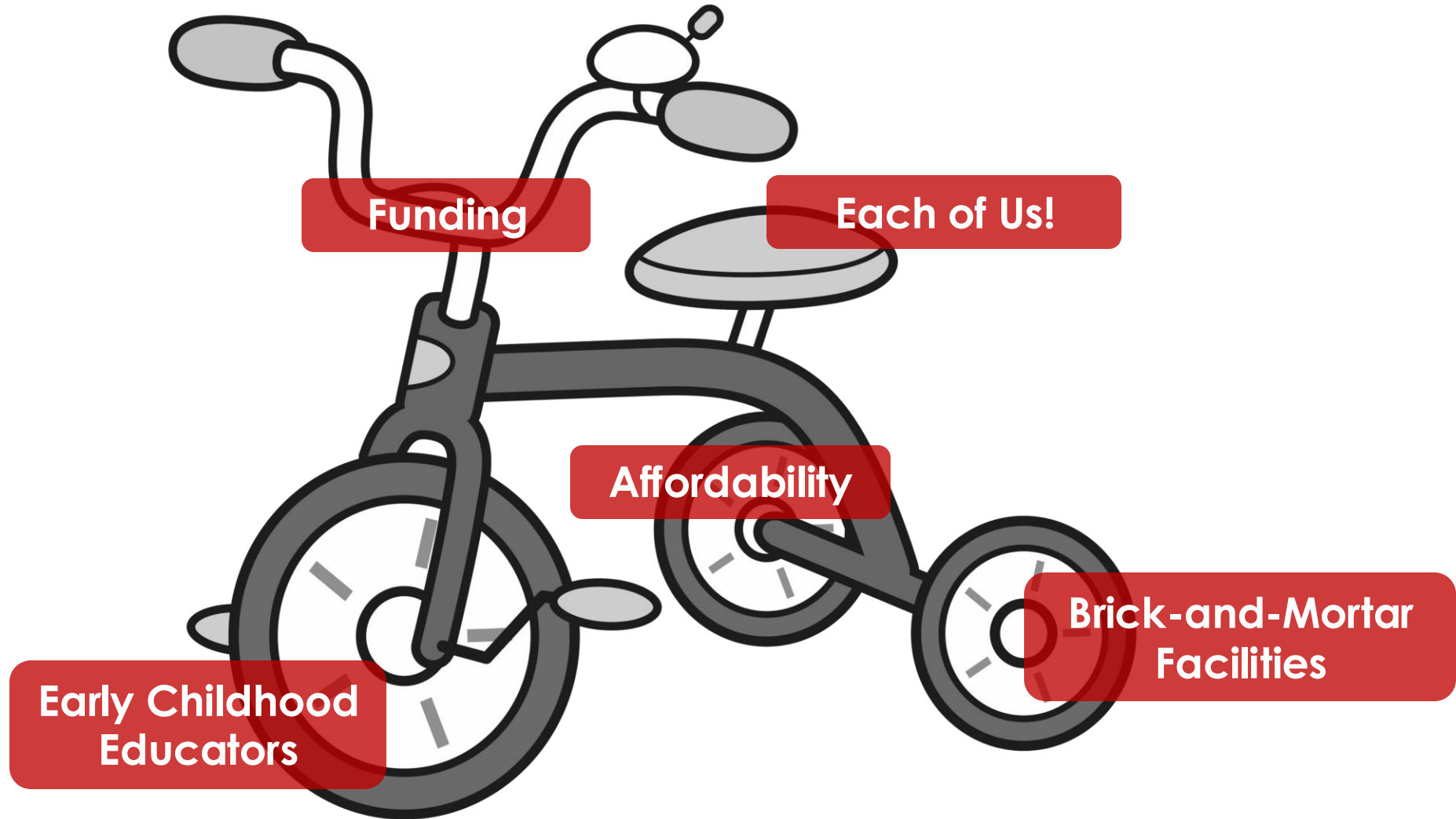
 = 10,000 low-income children ages 0-5 with working parents

 = 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

SB 211(West)
HB 3191(Button)
HB 3011 (Button)

**\$100M in House
Supplemental Budget**

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.

S.B. 972 heard in Committee. H.B. 2294 voted out of Committee. Now in Calendars



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 passed both chambers on the Governor's desk, HB 4127 was laid on the table subject to call.

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 passed in Senate, and House reported favorably w/o amendments on 4/30; H.B. 3807 was heard in Committee, sent to calendars.



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

H.B. 2 (Buckley) & 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

S.B. 1265 (Alvarado)/ H.B. 5122 (Harris Davila):

Relating to certain duties of the Texas Workforce Commission with respect to child-care resources.

S.B. 1265 was passed in the Senate, now referred to House TWED Committee.

H.B. 5122 is being heard in Committee on April 23

H.B. 2271 (Walle):

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

H.B. 2271 was reported favorably as substituted by committee on April 23.

S.B. 2049 (Birdwell)/H.B. 4903 (Harris Davila):

Relating to the establishment of the Quad-Agency Child Care Initiative and the Quad-Agency Child Care Initiative Commission.

H.B. 4093 is being heard in Committee on April 23

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 sent to calendars on May 1.

89th Texas Legislature Child Care Bills



Advocates for early childhood education policy leadership to shift from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

H.B. 117 (Schoolcraft)

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

H.B. 117 passed the House on April 22



Supports public-private partnerships to make high-quality child care more available and sustainable across Texas.

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 passed out of Committee with Substitute language.

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!

Kim Kofron, M.Ed.

Senior Director of Education
CHILDREN AT RISK

kkofron@childrenatrisk.org

Lyn Lucas, M.Ed.

Associate Director of ECE
CHILDREN AT RISK

llucas@childrenatrisk.org

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