



Sunset Advisory Commission Texas Workforce Commission

August 12, 2026

Sunset Advisory Commission: Early Childhood Education & Childcare comments for Texas Workforce Commission

Chairwoman Kolkhorst, Vice Chair Hull and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Kim Kofron, Executive Director of Early Childhood Education at Children at Risk. For nearly a decade, Children at Risk has worked to bridge what the data tells us about early childhood education with what families, providers, and educators experience every day. Last fall, we surveyed more than 1,300 respondents across all 28 Local Workforce Development Boards, with 90% of respondents being child care providers. While providers remain deeply committed to children's safety and high-quality care, they consistently described systems that are fragmented, duplicative, and difficult to navigate.

The message from providers was clear with a focus on five priorities:

- create purposeful unified governance with stronger system coordination;
- align regulations across agencies;
- improve oversight and accountability of contracted services;
- modernize technology and data systems; and
- streamline application and onboarding processes for both providers and families.

First, our early childhood governance structure is too fragmented. Providers often receive conflicting guidance from different agencies and even different representatives within the same agency. They are asking for greater coordination, consistent standards, and clear communication across agencies. The Sunset Report talks about better transparency between DFPS and TWC, and while that is true, we would encourage HHSC-Child Care Regulations to be part of that alignment. Having Minimum Standards housed at HHSC and the Child Care Services housed at TWC is challenging for providers and makes it difficult to build an effective and efficient system for Texas.

Second, administrative burden has become overwhelming. Providers described duplicative documentation, inconsistent inspections, and delays in background checks that make it harder to hire staff and operate stable programs. They are asking for oversight that is consistent, supportive, and modernized rather than punitive.

Third, providers want greater accountability throughout the system—not just for themselves. They described reimbursement delays, inconsistent contracting requirements with Local Workforce Boards, and unclear expectations. If providers are expected to meet performance standards, state and local systems, i.e. Local Workforce Boards, should also be accountable for timely payments, clear communication, and reliable processes.

Providers consistently called for better technology and simpler processes. The Sunset Report clearly details the issues related to TX3C roll out. They want integrated systems where families and providers can access information, complete applications, and determine eligibility without navigating multiple disconnected platforms.

The Sunset Report also discusses the need to improve the methodology used in the Market Rate Survey. While we support this work, we also want to acknowledge that there is an alternative way to set the reimbursement rates, which is done through true cost of care. This methodology calculates reimbursement rates based on what care actually costs vs what parents can afford. Using the true cost of care model, would help to drive down costs for families.

Our survey demonstrates that providers are not asking for less accountability. They are asking for a system that is coordinated, transparent, and consistent—one that allows them to spend less time navigating bureaucracy and more time doing what they do best: providing high-quality early learning experiences that help children thrive and allow parents to work.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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