

A State Investment Made a BIG Difference for Workers and Employers.

Texas has a child care system that serves more than 100,000 children of working parents every day. While we can always make the system more effective, it is important to recognize what is working: child care providers in Texas are delivering safe, high-quality care that supports children's development and enables parents to work.

In 2025, the Texas Legislature made a critical investment of \$100 million in TANF dollars for Child Care Services. **That funding helped over 9,800 children stay in child care at a time when providers and families were facing growing financial pressures.** Without that investment, local communities would have been forced to make even deeper cuts. With federal funding remaining essentially flat and the cost of providing child care outpacing inflation, Texas will experience an estimated 9.5% reduction in child care slots over the next year. Without the Legislature's \$100 million investment, these reductions would have been much worse.

The Need for Child Care Is Growing.

Texas has nearly one million licensed child care seats, and overall capacity increased by more than 3,900 seats in 2025. Texas also has more than 132,000 higher quality Texas Rising Star seats, nearly 48,000 more than the previous year.

Even with these gains, Child Care Deserts persist throughout Texas

- **413** Overall Child Care Desert ZIP codes
- **884** Subsidy Child Care Desert ZIP codes
- **938** Texas Rising Star Child Care Desert ZIP codes

While Texas is making impressive improvements in program quality, access to quality child care remains a challenge. Families in many communities still cannot find affordable care where and when they need it. Two-thirds of Texas's overall child care deserts are chronic, meaning they have been deserts for three consecutive years. The challenge is not simply adding seats, it is ensuring that affordable, quality care is available in communities where Texas families need it.

Why Continued Investment Matters

Child care is essential infrastructure for Texas. It gives children a safe, high-quality place to learn and grow, gives parents the ability to work, and gives employers access to the workforce. When child care seats disappear, families are often forced to work fewer hours, leave jobs, or make difficult choices about who provides care. Texas needs to strengthen what we have—protecting what works, eliminating inefficiencies, and directing resources where they can have the greatest impact.

The Opportunity: Build on the Legislature's Investment.

- Continue investing Texas dollars in child care for low-income working families.
- Strengthen coordination across state agencies and streamline access for families and providers.
- Require adequate training to Local Workforce Development Board members on the Child Care Services programs.
- Improve transparency and accountability to better measure impact on children, workers, and the economy.
- Support the providers and early childhood educators who make high-quality care possible.

TEXAS HAS SHOWN THAT STATE INVESTMENT CAN PROTECT CHILD CARE.

Now is the time to build on that commitment—investing in Texas children, supporting Texas families, and strengthening the workforce and economy that make Texas strong.