

children atRisk

Establish a unified governance structure for Texas' early childhood system

BACKGROUND

Texas' early childhood system is currently administered across multiple state agencies, resulting in fragmented oversight, inconsistent expectations, and duplicative requirements for providers. The analyzed data from 1,300 respondents to a child care survey in Fall 2025 indicate these as consistent barriers to efficiency and quality. Establishing purposeful, unified governance with stronger coordination across agencies would help align programs serving the same children and families, creating greater accountability and consistency across Child Care Minimum Standards, Child Care Subsidy, and Texas Rising Star. This approach supports the broader goal of a more coherent and efficient early childhood system that better serves children, families, providers, and taxpayers.

Providers would benefit from clearer expectations and fewer conflicting requirements, while families would experience a more seamless and consistent system of care and support. Greater coordination would also improve the state's ability to implement policies effectively, streamline operations, and advance shared goals for quality and access across the early childhood system.

PROPOSED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CHILDREN AT RISK proposes specific policy reforms for the 90th Texas Legislature: Establish a unified governance structure for Texas' early childhood system by:

- **Establish a position or agency within the Child Care System that has the authority to make cross-program and cross agency decisions.**
- **Strengthen cross-agency coordination.**
 - Establish formal mechanisms among TWC, HHSC, DFPS, and TEA to align standards, guidance, and communication across Child Care Minimum Standards, Child Care Subsidy, Texas Rising Star, and Pre-K Guidelines.
 - Designate clear roles and responsibilities for each program within the unified governance structure to reduce duplication, improve coordination, give policymakers visibility into the full system, and make it easier for families and providers to access services.
- **Improve consistency and accountability.**
 - Set shared goals across agencies using existing structures and agreements.
 - Bring key programs under aligned leadership, streamline administration, improve access for families and providers, and create a clearer view of system performance, costs, and outcomes.

FOR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Mandi Sheridan Kimball, Chief Government Relations Officer, 512.785.7132 or mkimball@childrenatrisk.org
Kim Kofron, Executive Director Early Childhood Education, 512.656.3797 or kkofron@childrenatrisk.org