WELCOME | What's On Your Mind?

Here's how

1. **Write it down**

   On a Post-it Note, tell us what is on your mind. **Be SPECIFIC!** Use as many notes as you like.

2. **Put it on the wall**

   When done, place your Post-it Note(s) on the wall.

Possible topics

- Child Care Minimum Standards
- Texas Rising Star
- TX3C – Payment System
- Pre-K Partnerships
- Head Start
- ECE Workforce
- ECE Funding
- Upcoming Legislative Session
- Other: really anything!

Texas Tour
Early Childhood Education

Gulf Coast Workforce Board

October 13, 2026

children at Risk



Today's Agenda

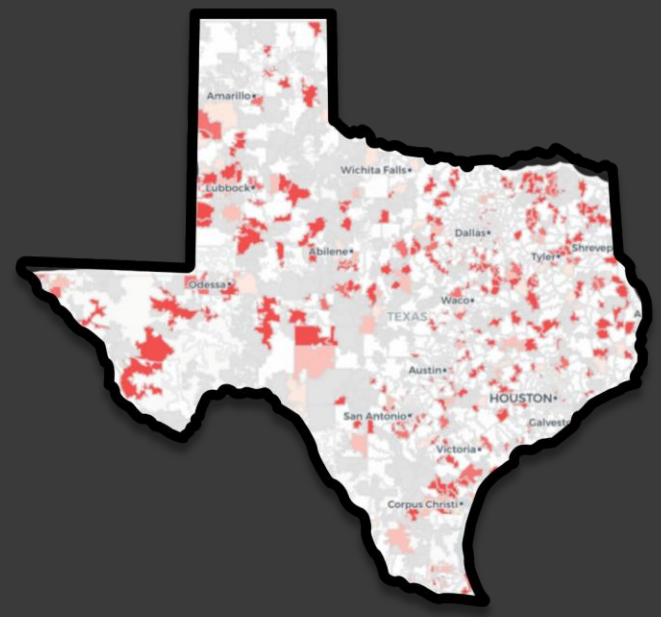
Welcome	What's on Your Mind
Data	Child Care Deserts Paving the Way to Quality
Legislative Updates	ECE Funding Governor's Task Force Sunset Commission
90th Legislative Session	Policy Recommendations
Using Your Voice	Community Changemaker Toolkits Early Childhood Day at the Capitol

children at Risk

2.3 million

Children under the age of
6 lives in Texas.

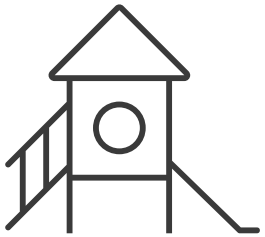
children at Risk



1 in 10

children younger than 6 with
low-income, working parents live
in a Child Care Desert.

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.



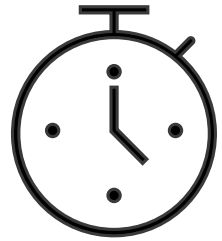
Subsidized Child Care Deserts

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.



TRS 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.



Chronic 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 care for that category for **three consecutive years**.

Statewide | Child Care Deserts (2025)

Overall Child Care Deserts

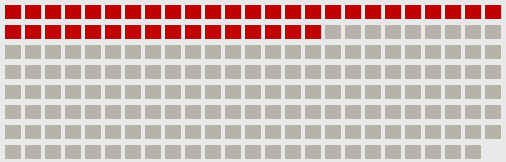
1.2

children per seat

across all Texas zip codes

1,156,515 children of working parents

994,949 licensed seats



413 of 1,989 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat
Each dot ≈ 10 zip codes

Subsidy Child Care Deserts

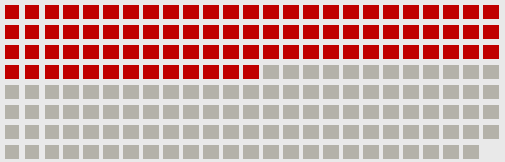
3.9

children per seat

across all Texas zip codes

579,385 low-income children

148,675 subsidy seats



884 of 1,989 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat
Each dot ≈ 10 zip codes

TRS Child Care Deserts

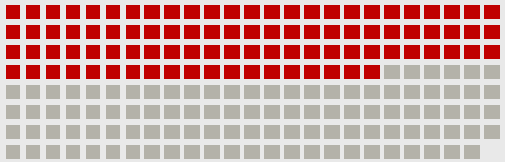
4.4

children per seat

across all Texas zip codes

579,385 low-income children

132,064 TRS seats



938 of 1,989 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat
Each dot ≈ 10 zip codes

Bars compare total children and total seats across Texas; each column uses its own scale. Seats are total supply, not seats inside deserts.

Gulf Coast | Child Care Deserts (2025)

Overall Child Care Deserts

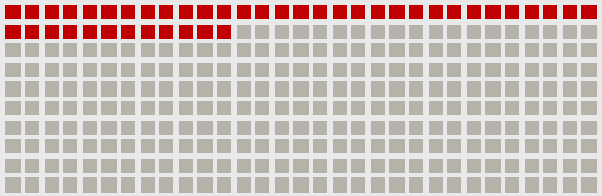
1.0

children per seat

across all Gulf Coast zip codes

318,215 children of working parents

304,284 licensed seats



43 of 310 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat

Subsidy Child Care Deserts

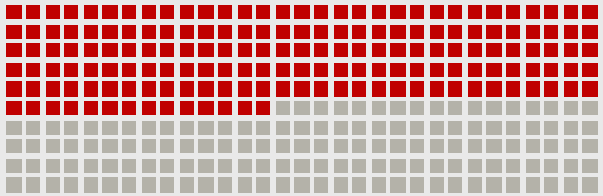
4.4

children per seat

across all Gulf Coast zip codes

155,498 low-income children

35,743 subsidy seats



169 of 310 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat

TRS Child Care Deserts

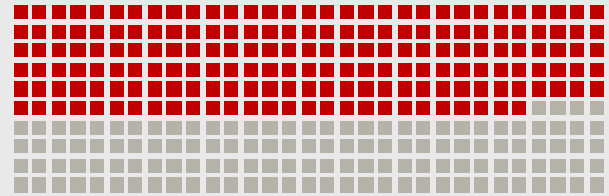
5.0

children per seat

across all Gulf Coast zip codes

155,498 low-income children

31,130 TRS seats



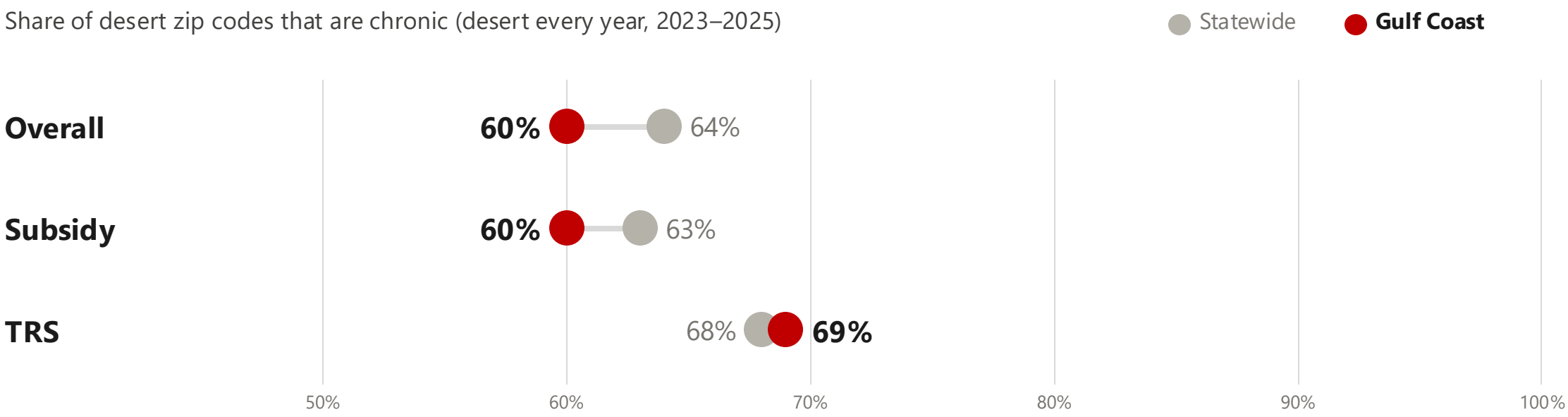
182 of 310 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat

Bars compare total children and total seats across all Gulf Coast zip codes; each column uses its own scale. Seats are total supply, not seats inside deserts.

Chronic Child Care Deserts | Gulf Coast

Share of desert zip codes that are chronic (desert every year, 2023–2025)



26
of 43 overall desert zip codes are chronic

102
of 169 subsidy desert zip codes are chronic

126
of 182 TRS desert zip codes are chronic

263
of 413 overall desert zip codes are chronic

558
of 884 subsidy desert zip codes are chronic

635
of 938 TRS desert zip codes are chronic

Statewide | Child Care Deserts (2025)

Overall Child Care Deserts

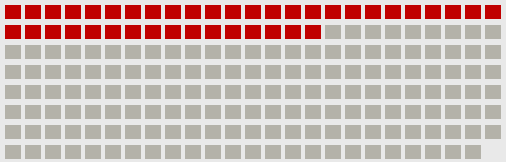
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across all Texas zip codes

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Subsidy Child Care Deserts

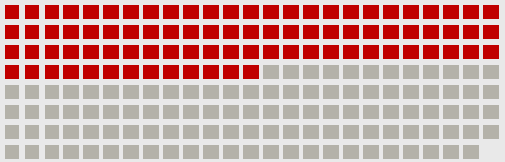
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TRS Child Care Deserts

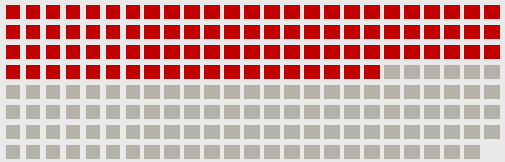
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children per seat

across all Texas zip codes

579,385 low-income children

132,064 TRS seats

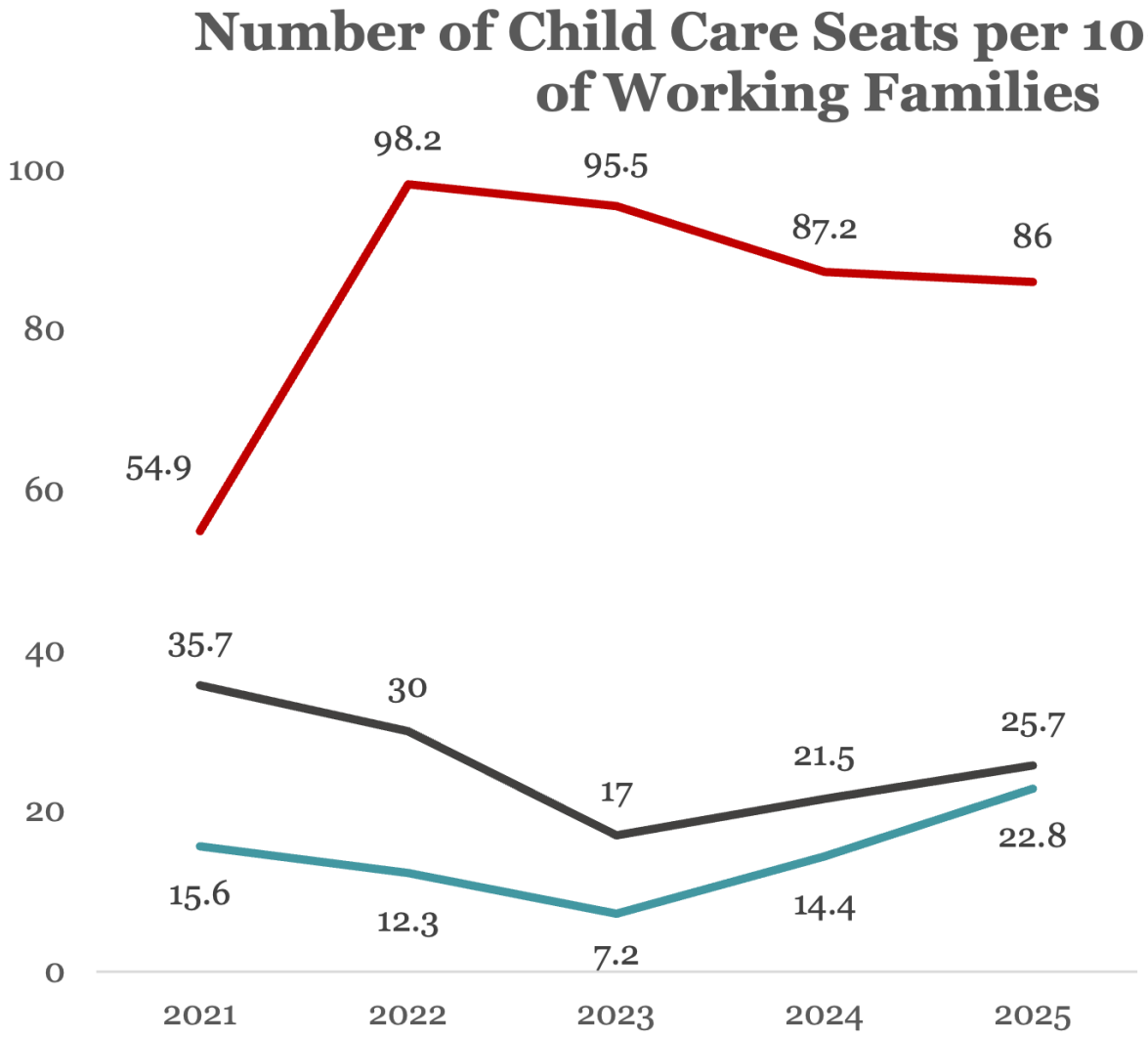


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Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat
Each dot ≈ 10 zip codes

Bars compare total children and total seats across Texas; each column uses its own scale. Seats are total supply, not seats inside deserts.

Child Care Seats | The Last Five Years in Texas



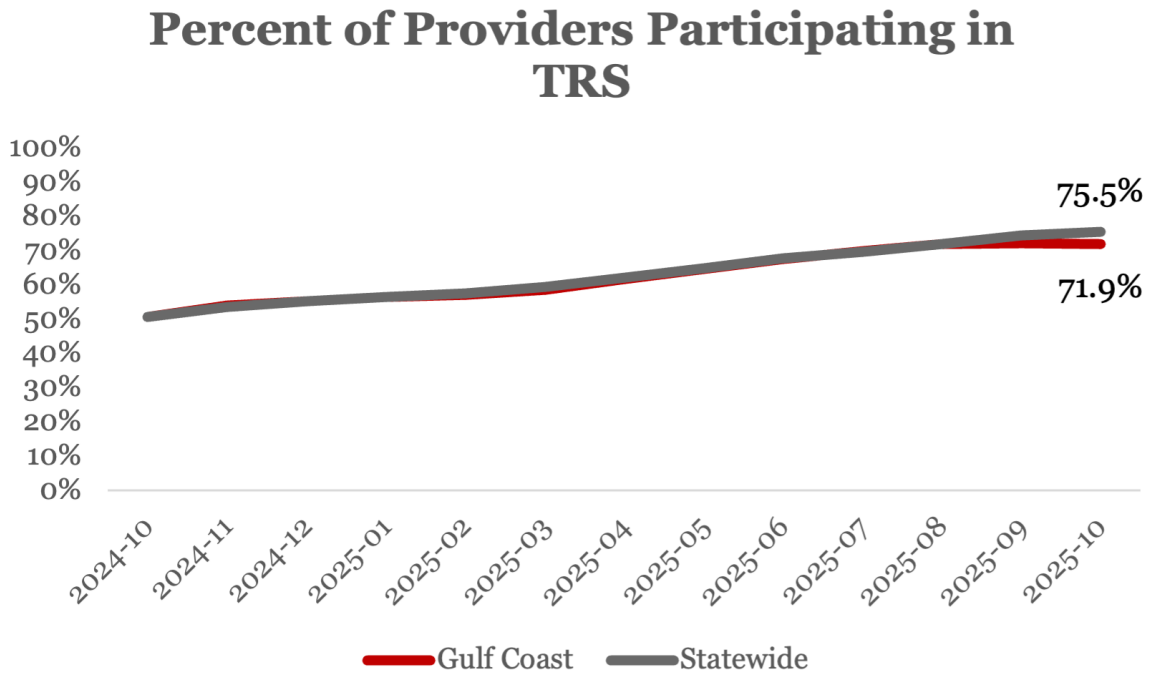
All child care
(all family income level)

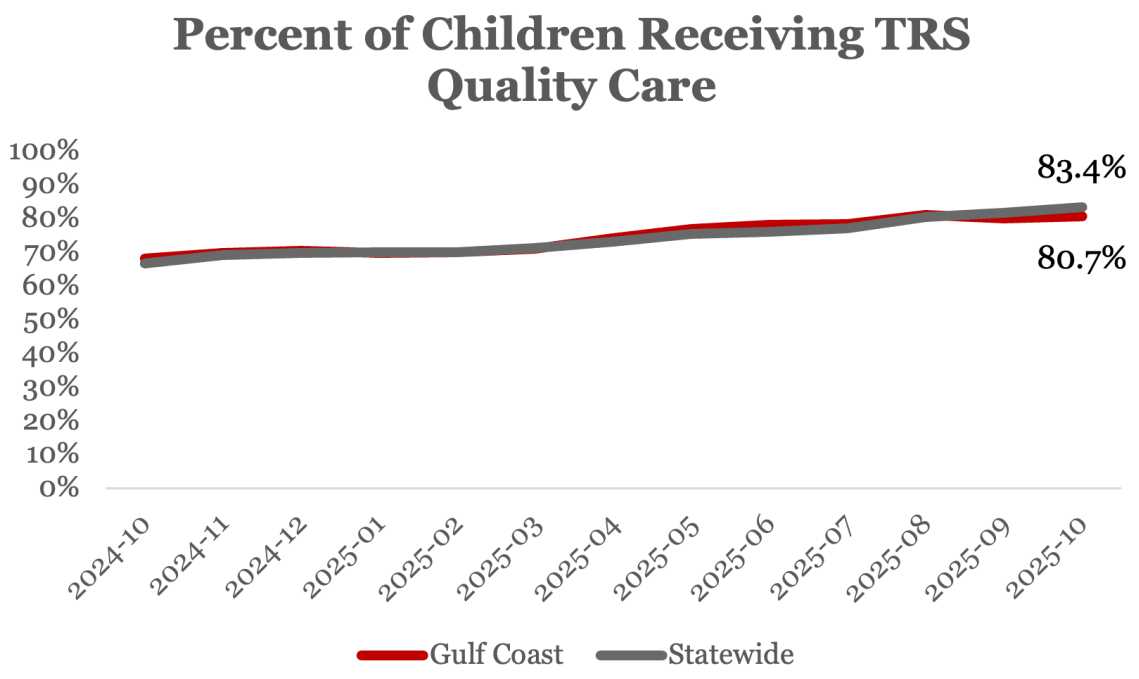
Subsidized child care
(family income <200% FPL)

TRS 2, 3, & 4 star care
(family income <200% FPL)

***2026**, CHILDREN AT RISK*
Child Care Desert Map

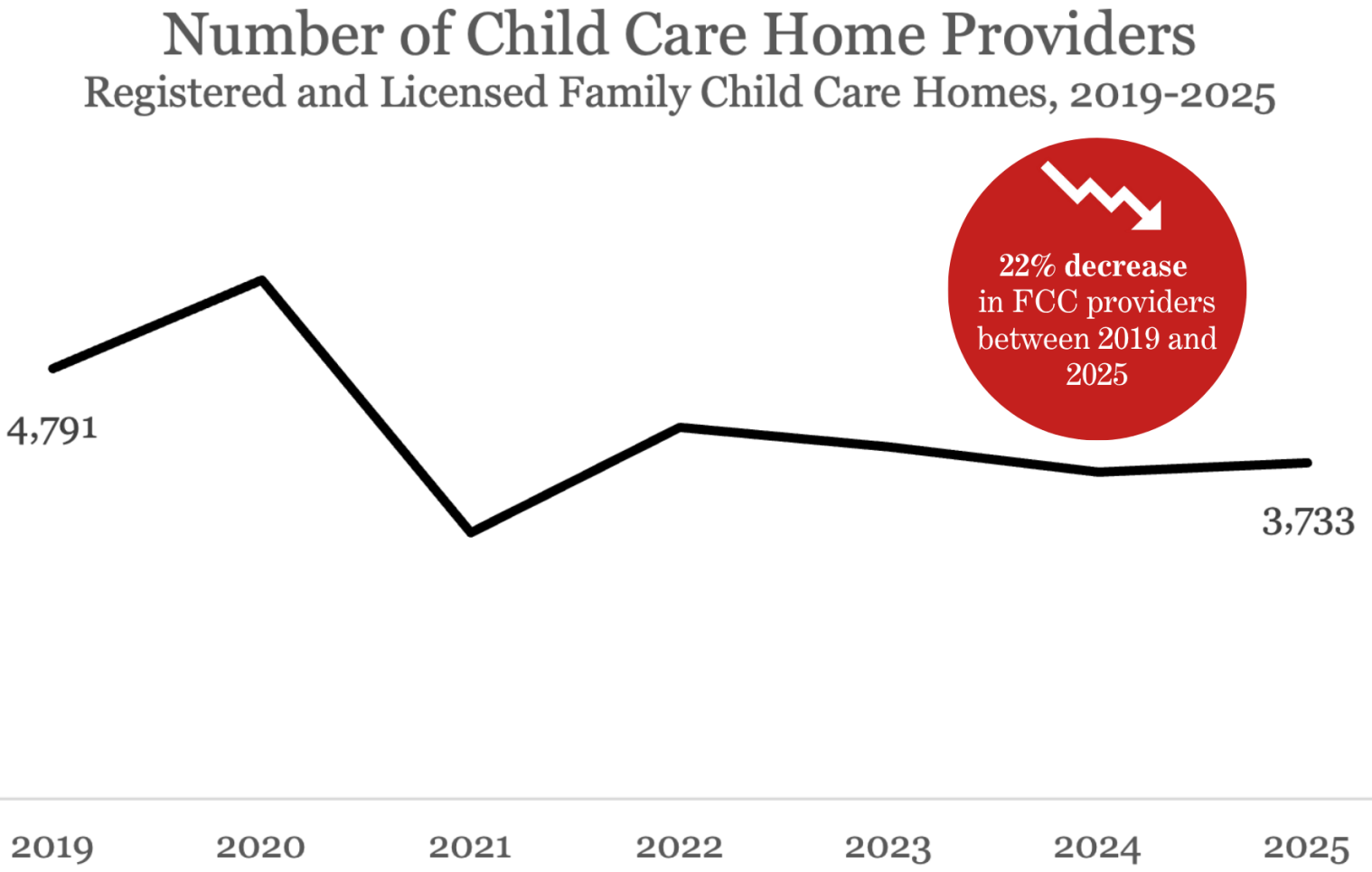
Texas Rising Star | Gulf Coast Availability





***2026**, Texas Workforce Commission*
Child Care by the Numbers

Statewide | Family Child Care Homes



***2026**, Texas Workforce Commission Child Care Data*

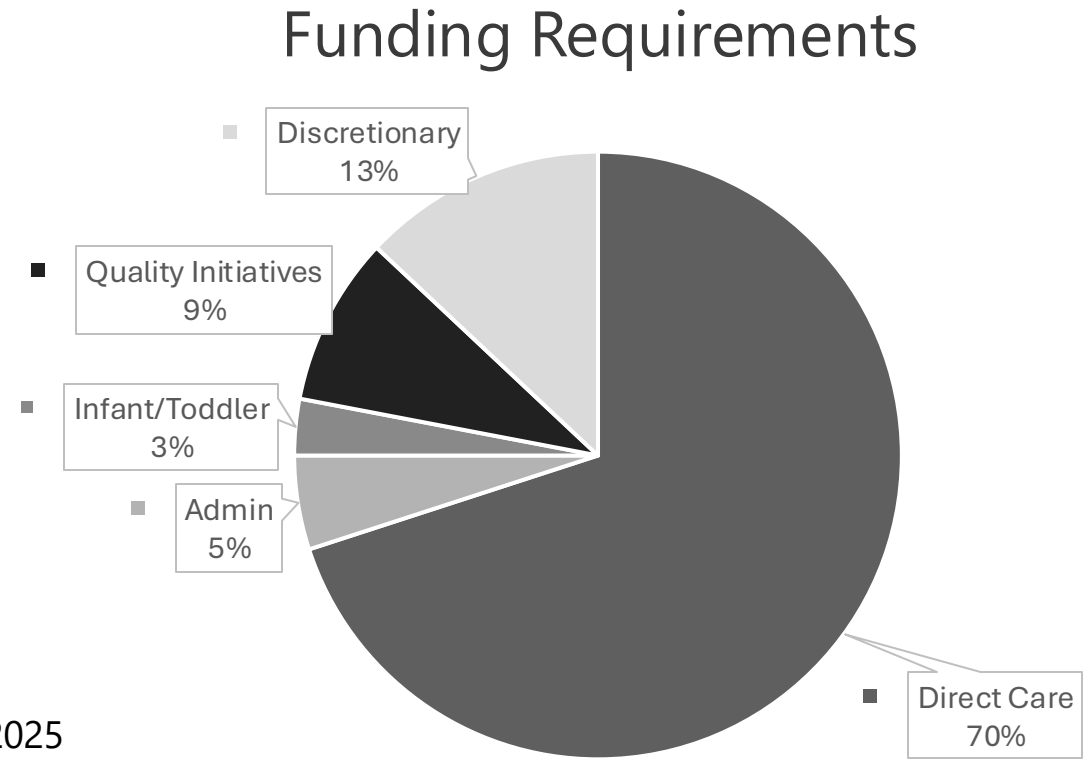
Texas | Federal Funding Streams

Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

$1.14B of CCDBG to Texas Workforce Commission's Child Care Services:

- **28** Local Workforce Development Boards
- **149,000** scholarships to children across Texas
- **50% (6,600)** of eligible child care programs participate in Child Care Services
- **74.4%** of those child care providers participate in Texas Rising Star.

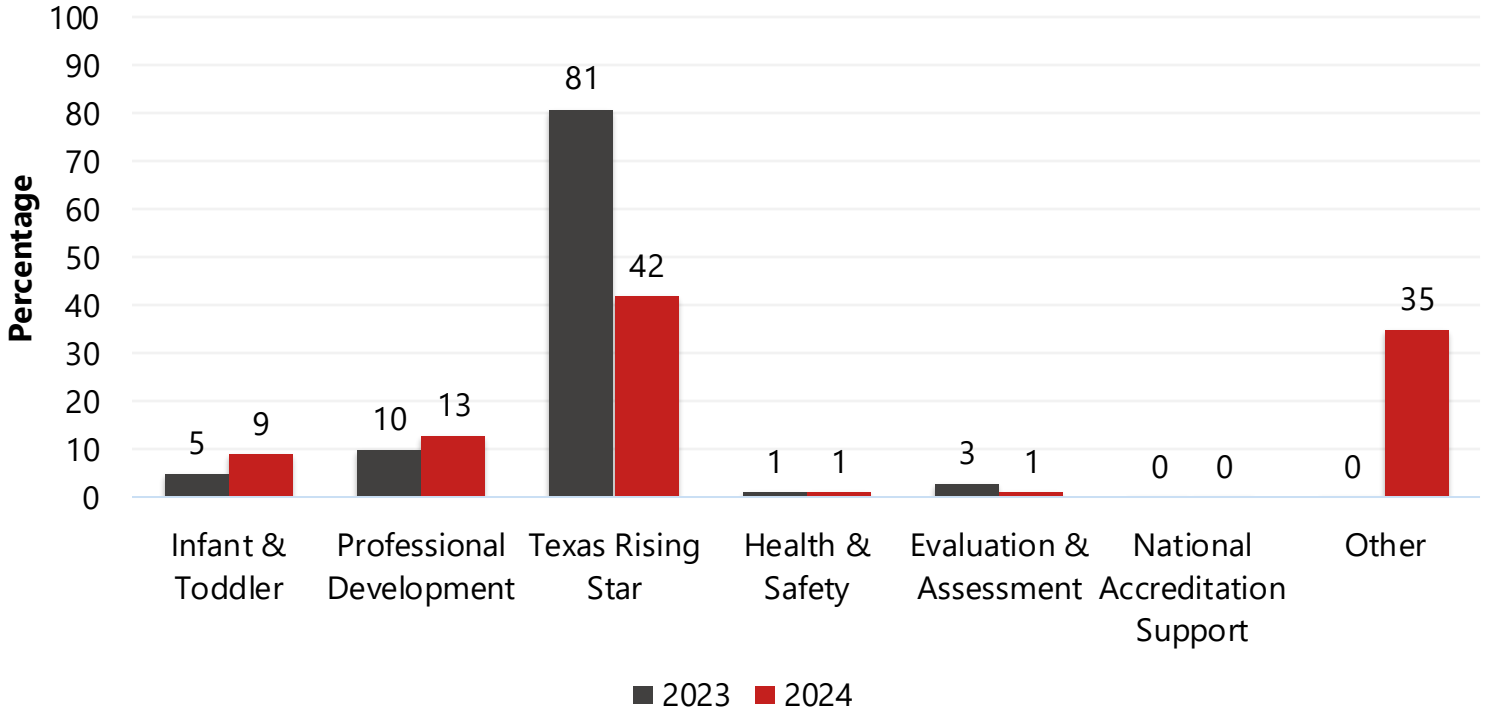
*As of September 2025



Quality Expenditures | Local Workforce Development Boards

Investments in Child Care Quality Funds-Statewide

YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISON: TEXAS



**In FY24, LWDBs were required to allocate 4% of CCDBG funds following guidance within the Quality Activity and Expenditure Requirements Outlined by TWC. This data details LWDB's FY24 allocations.*

Paving the Way to Quality Report

From 2023 to 2024, a shift from investing in things to people.

- Increase in wage supplements and retention bonuses.
- Increase in professional development opportunities.

From 2023 to 2024, a shift to support Infant and Toddlers.

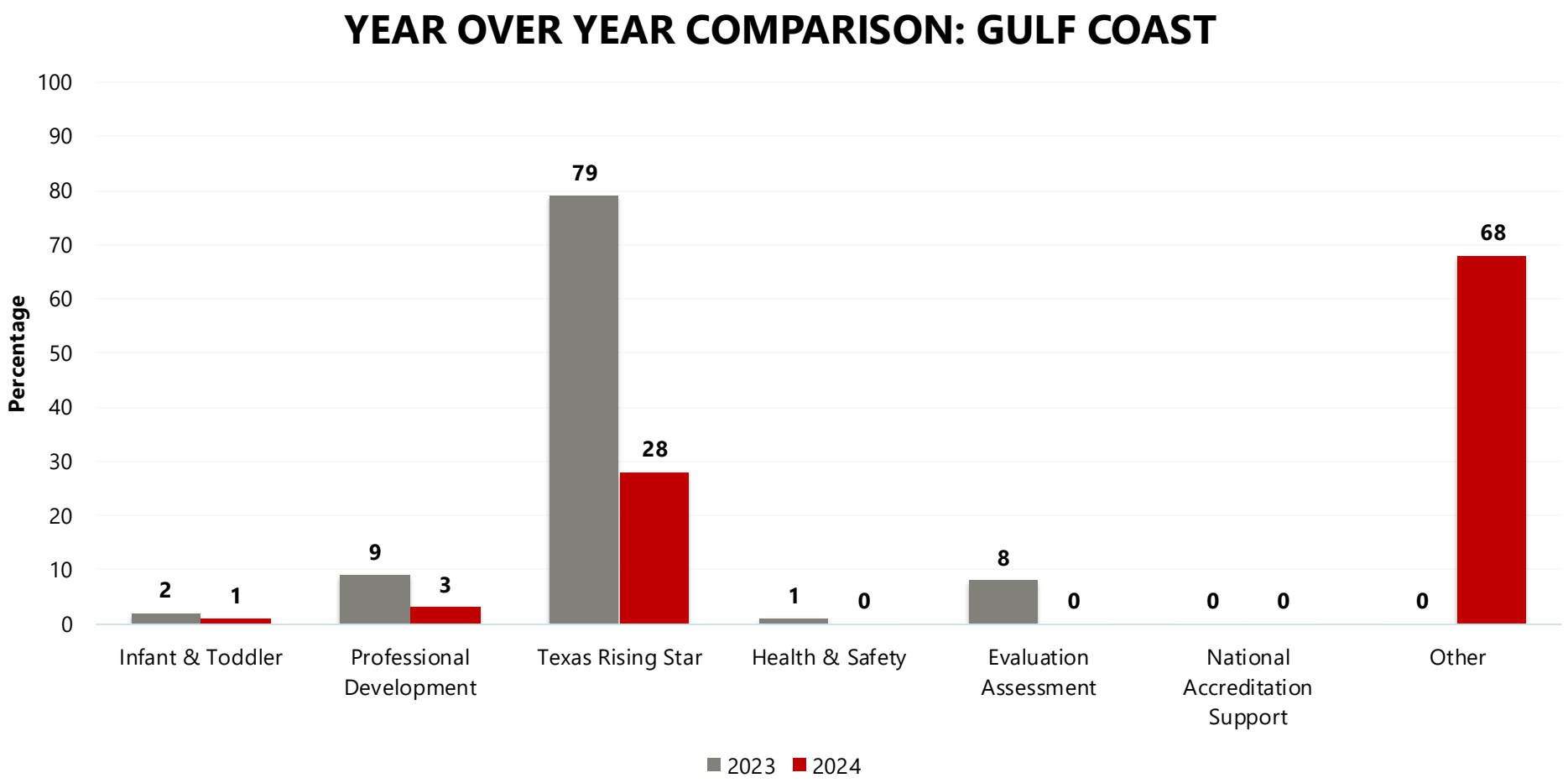
- 100% of LWDB invest in Infant and Toddlers compared to 79% the year prior.

Explore more findings in C@R's fiscal analysis.

childrenatrisk.org/paving-the-way-to-quality-2026/

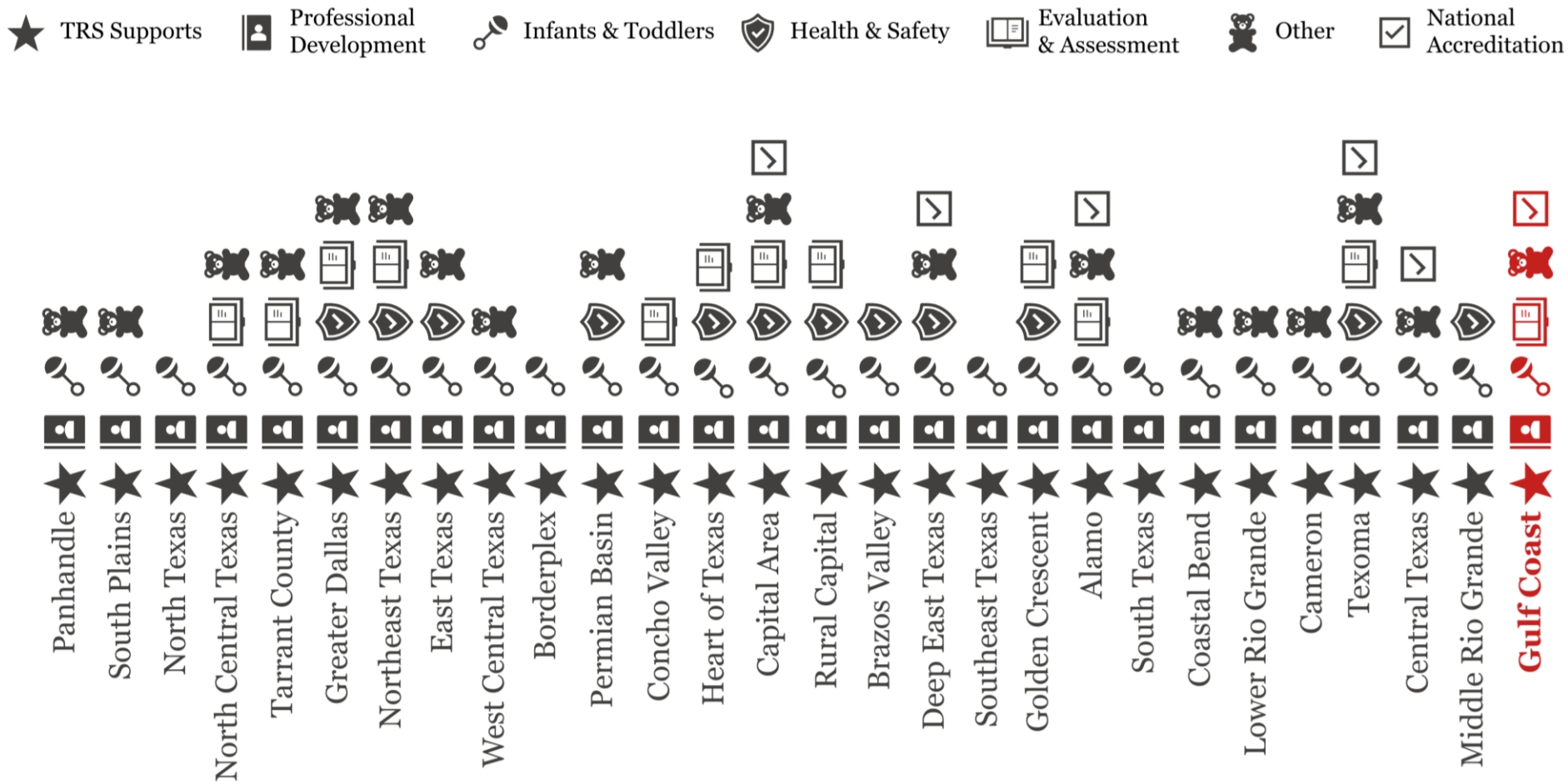
children at Risk

Gulf Coast | Investments in Child Care Quality Funds



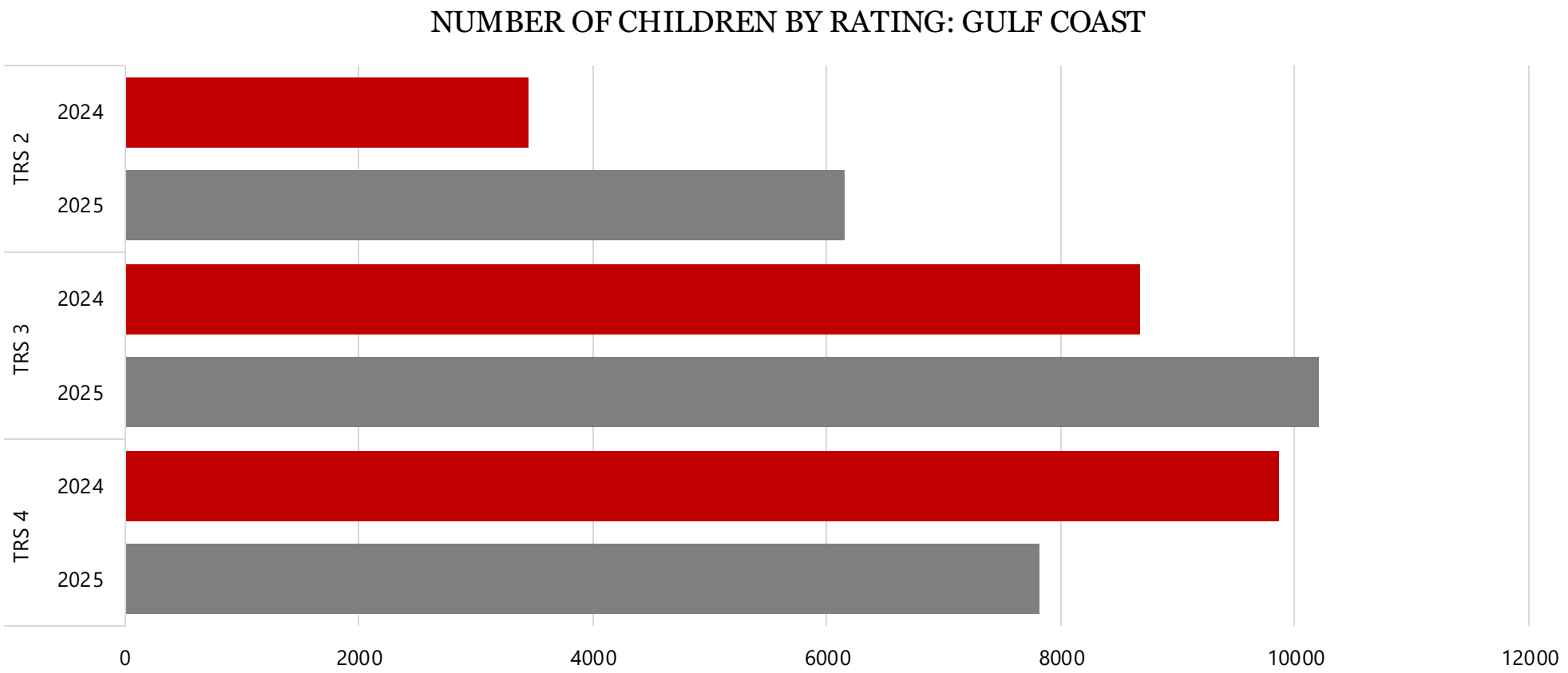
*In FY24, LWDBs were required to allocate 4% of CCDBG funds following guidance within the Quality Activity and Expenditure Requirements Outlined by TWC. This data details LWDB's FY24 allocations.

Statewide Spending of Quality Improvement Dollars

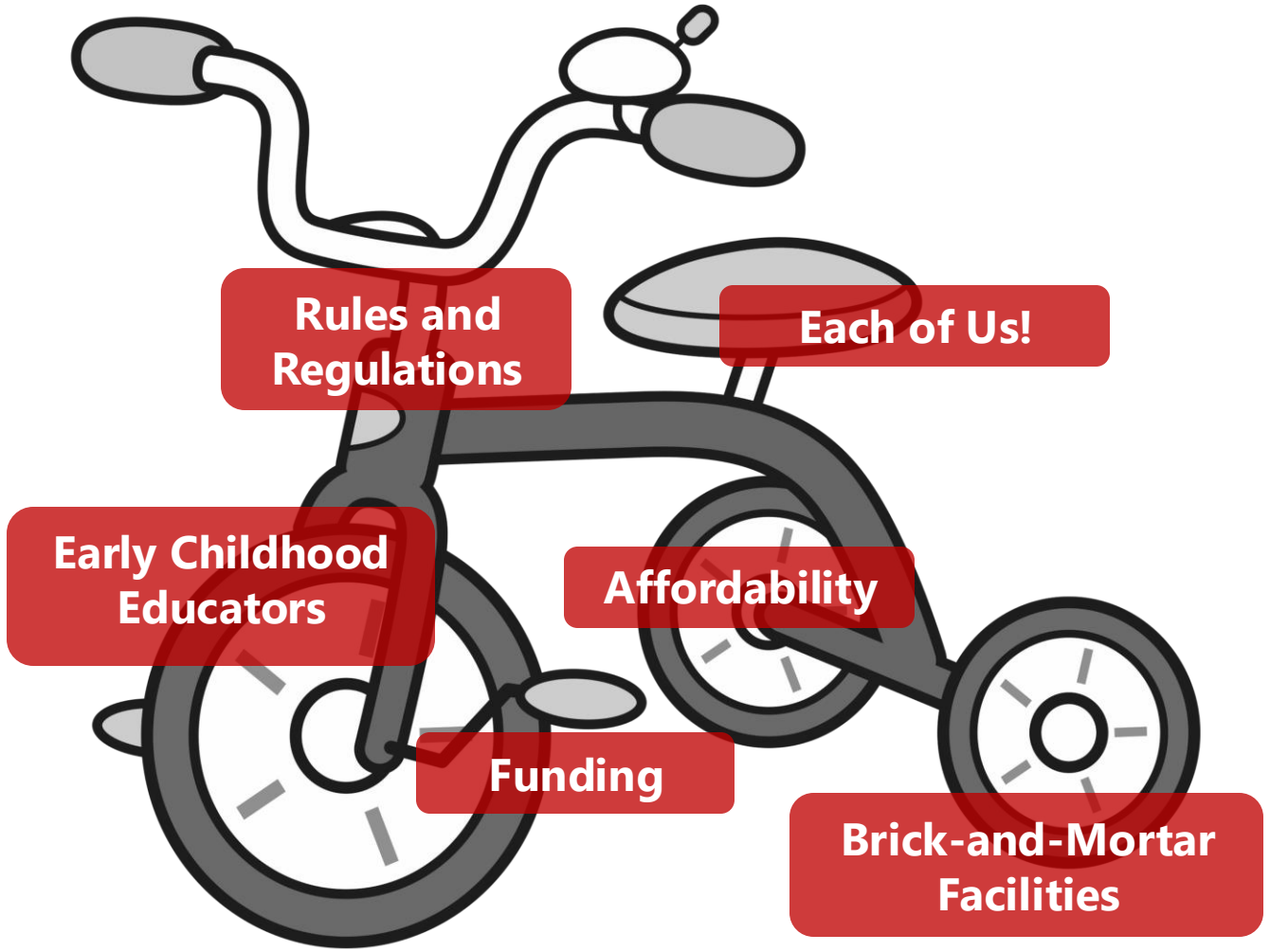


children at Risk

Gulf Coast | Access to Quality Care



The Tricycle for Success



children at Risk

Kim Kofron, M.Ed.
Executive Director of Early Childhood Education, kkofron@childrenatrisk.org 512-656-3797

Rising Costs | Average Monthly Cost per Child

FIGURE TWC–11
AVERAGE COST PER CHILD PER MONTH FOR ALL PROVIDER TYPES OF STATE-FUNDED CHILDCARE
FISCAL YEARS 2022 TO 2027



NOTE: Amounts for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 are estimated.
SOURCE: Texas Workforce Commission.

"This cost has increased steadily from $581 per child per month during fiscal year 2022 to an estimated $904 for fiscal year 2027, ***an increase of 55.5 percent.*** *" - LBB Strategic Fiscal Review (2026)*

ECE Funding | Cost and Capacity

Rising Costs

79% due to inflation, liability insurance and rising rent

21% due to increase of TRS participation

(according the LBB Strategic Fiscal Review)

$100M

In FY26-27, **9800** children remained in child care

CCDBG Funding

Flat Funding

2026 $1,277,501,283
2025 $1,226,160,870

4% increase

9.5% decrease in scholarships

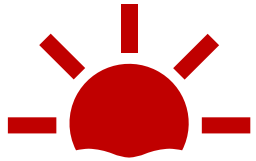
14,000 children less in FY27

ECE Governance | 89th Texas Legislative Session



H.B. 117

(Schoolcraft/Campbell)
Establishes a Governor's Task Force on the Governance of Early Childhood Education and Care, a step toward improving coordination, accountability, and outcomes for Texas children.



Sunset Review Commission

DFPS, HHSC, DSHS, & TWC
are all scheduled for the 2026-2027 Review Cycle, with recommendations reported in the 90th Legislative Session.



H.B. 4903

(Harris Davila/Birdwell)
Establishes a Quad Agency Child Care Initiative focused on collaboration, coordinating policies, and reviewing and streamlining regulations among the participating agencies, which would include TWC, HHSC, DFPS, and TEA.

Update | Quad Agency Child Care Initiative

New Reporting Process to Identify Inconsistencies Between TRS Child Care Services and Texas Minimum Standards.

- If you identify a potential conflict, send your feedback to both agencies:
  - **CCR**: CCRDCMS@hhs.texas.gov
  - **TWC**: CCEL@twc.texas.gov

Expecting external review of Child Care Regulations in October

Website: https://www.twc.texas.gov/programs/child-care/quad-agency-cld-cahire-initiative

Next Meeting: October 26, 2026, 3:00-5:00pm

Update | Recommendations to Governor's Task Force on ECE Governance

To address the fragmentation and improve the experience of children, families, and providers, Texas should establish:

One accountable ECEC entity and leader

Determine a single accountable entity, led by an empowered leader with authority across programs to align the system and answer for the results.

A Unified North Star Vision

Establish a shared statewide vision for birth-5 with clear goals and measurable outcomes for children, families and workforce.

A core quality framework

Determine a single accountable entity, led by an empowered leader with authority across programs to align the system and answer for the results.

An effective state-local partnership

Build a state-local partnership where the state sets the vision and the locals lead translates it into plans that fit their communities.

Meaningful information to drive decisions

Build the data infrastructure needed to understand what's working and give stakeholders transparent, meaningful information.

Statewide reporting on results

Publish a statewide report on access, quality, workforce and outcomes, with clear ownership for results.

Update | Sunset Commission

Texas Workforce Commission



- Sunset Staff Report—June 2026
- Sunset Hearing—August 12, 2026
- Overall findings:
  - Technology issues with TX3C
  - IT modernization plan needed
  - Anti-fraud measures
  - Workforce Board Accountability
  - Improve coordination with DFPS
  - Improve internal process to administer CCS including the Market Rate Survey
- Final Report will be approved in November
- Will turn into Legislation

Update | Sunset Commission

Sunset Staff Reports expected any day for:

Health and Human Services Commission

- Child Care Regulations
- Family Support Services
- 211
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Texas Thriving Families
- Medicaid & CHIP
- SNAP

Department of Family and Protective Services

- Child Abuse and Neglect Foster Care
- Kinship Care
- Statewide Intake

Department of State Health Services

- Maternal & Child Health
- Help Me Grow
- ImmTrac2 (Immunization Registry)

Public Hearing scheduled for December 2-3, 2026

Recommendations | Early Childhood Education

Funding for Early Childhood Education

Build on current investments to funding high-quality ECE for children

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.

Governance and Systemwide Coordination

Establish a unified governance structure for Texas' early childhood system

- Strengthen cross-agency coordination, led by an empowered leader
- Improve consistency and accountability, develop a vision and goals for birth – 5

Recommendations | Early Childhood Education

Contracting Accountability and Performance Management

Improve oversight and accountability of contracted child care services

- Establish clear performance standards
- Create shared accountability measures

Application and Access Streamlining

Improve Efficiency of Application and Enrollment Process.

- Align eligibility and onboarding requirements
- Coordinate technology and agency processes

Recommendations | Early Childhood Education

Strengthening Early Childhood Data & Technology

Modernize and integrate Texas' early childhood technology and data systems

- Expand the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)
- Create a more seamless experience for families and providers

Regulatory Improvement

Strengthen the Administrative Review process

- Increase transparency in the review process
- Standardize the review and decision process

Strengthening LWDB Governance

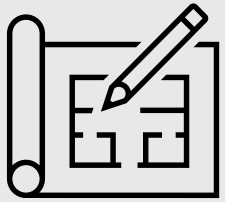
Require all Local Workforce Development Board Members Training on Child Care Oversight

- Require standardized orientation training
- Clarify governance and oversight responsibilities

Use Your Voice | Early Childhood Education

Tell Us What You Think???

Community Changemaker Toolkit



SAVE the DATE:

March 4, 2027

Early Childhood Day at the Capitol

Access a digital copy of the changemaker toolkit

children at Risk

CHANGEMAKER TOOLKIT | GULF COAST LWDB

Gulf Coast

318.2k children under the age of 6 with working parents lives in your region.

3 in 4 children under 6 with low-income working parents lives in a Child Care Desert.

Texas

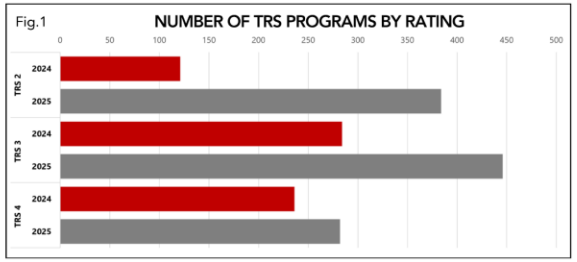
1.1m children under the age of 6 with working parents lives in our state.

1 in 10 children under 6 with low-income working parents lives in a Child Care Desert.

From 2024 to 2025, the number of Texas Rising Star programs in the Gulf Coast region grew 73%, from 641 to 1,112, and enrollment in those programs rose 10%, from 21,991 to 24,184 children. Most of the growth came from 2-Star programs, which tripled.

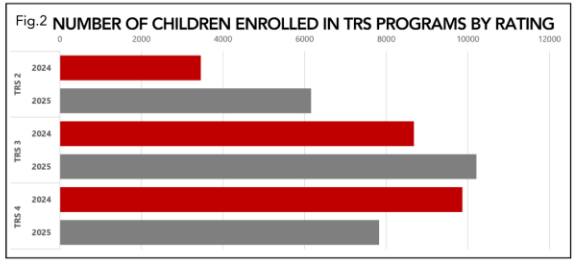
182 zip codes are still designated as quality Child Care Deserts, a 6% increase from 2024. There are 20 TRS quality child care seats per 100 low-income working families in the Gulf Coast LWDB region.

Fig.1 NUMBER OF TRS PROGRAMS BY RATING



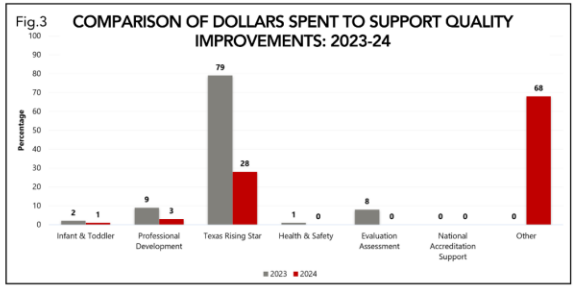
GULF COAST OVERALL DESERTS	GULF COAST CHRONIC OVERALL DESERTS
43 Overall Desert Zip Codes	**26** Overall Chronic Desert Zip Codes
304,284 Total number of seats available to families	**60%** of Overall Deserts are considered chronic

Fig.2 NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN TRS PROGRAMS BY RATING



GULF COAST TRS QUALITY DESERTS	GULF COAST CHRONIC TRS DESERTS
182 TRS Desert Zip Codes	**126** TRS Desert Zip Codes
31,130 TRS seats are available to families	**69%** of TRS Deserts are considered chronic

Fig.3 COMPARISON OF DOLLARS SPENT TO SUPPORT QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS: 2023-24



GULF COAST SUBSIDY DESERTS	GULF COAST CHRONIC SUBSIDY DESERTS
169 Subsidy Desert Zip Codes	**102** Chronic Subsidy Desert Zip Codes
35,743 Subsidy seats are available to families	**60%** of Subsidy Deserts are considered chronic

*** Child Care Deserts are zip codes that have 3x more children of working parents than the available supply of child care.*

*** Chronic Deserts are those that have been designated a Child Care Desert for 3+ years.*

Kim Kofron | Executive Director, Early Childhoood Education, C@R | kkofron@childrenatrisk.org
Lyn Lucas | Associate Director of Early Childhood Education, C@R | llucas@childrenatrisk.org

children at Risk

CHANGEMAKER TOOLKIT | GULF COAST LWDB

CHILD CARE IN THE GULF COAST

- The Gulf Coast region is home to **318,215** children under the age of six, and more than **155,400** of them qualify for child care assistance.
- In this region, TWC is only able to serve **23,513 children.**
- From 2024 to 2025, TRS-certified programs **increased 73%** in this region, expanding from 641 to **1,112 locations**.
- Out of all subsidy-eligible families in this region, **77% or 115,000 children** do not have access to the support they need.
- In 2024, Gulf Coast LWDB had **$9,550,831** to put towards child care quality improvements & supports.

THEY INVESTED IN:

See figure 3 for more information on investment trends.

- **TRS Supports |** Personnel, Training, Incentives, Family Engagement, Equipment & Materials
- **Infants & Toddlers |** Materials, Curriculum, Training, Family engagement
- **Professional Development |** Conferences, Training, Scholarships & Stipends
- **Other |** TRS incentive grants

SPREAD THE WORD - WHICH ONE OF THESE ACTIONS WILL YOU TAKE TO #SUPPORTCHILDCARE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

- ☐ Use this data to shape and spread awareness of the child care system and related policy issues throughout your community.
- ☐ Share this document with your community members, partners, neighbors, families you serve, etc.
- ☐ Present new, locally relavent information to influence, or ask questions of, decision makers in your area.
- ☐ Form community-wide support of system improvements by convening cross-sector stakeholders who also care about improving the access to, and quality of, local child care.

WAS THIS INFORMATION HELPFUL IN ANOTHER WAY? LET US KNOW, TELL US YOUR CHILD CARE ADVOCACY STORY!

Looking for something else? Let us know so we can add that data into future toolkits.

bit.ly/changemaker-ece
or scan the QR code

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Resources | Data & Policy Priorities

As the ECE system has evolved, so has the need for a stronger governance structure and a more stable, efficient early childhood system.

Child Care Deserts
childrenatrisk.org/childcaredeserts

Legislative District One-Pagers
https://childrenatrisk.org/legislative-district-ece/

Policy Priorities
childrenatrisk.org/advocacy-action-center/90th-tx-legislature

Join Us | Virtual Legislative Policy Summit

The Children's Agenda

Ahead of the 90th Texas Legislature, CHILDREN AT RISK will host a virtual summit to share key advocacy updates and opportunities shaping the next cycle of child focused policy.

Join us for a conversation on the priority issues before the Texas Sunset Commission, emerging legislative pathways, and what is at stake for children and families.

Cross-Sector experts will provide insight into the systems poised for change and the strategies that can advance a strong, data informed Children's Agenda in the year ahead.

Thursday, November 12
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Virtual via Zoom

Scan the QR code to register or visit
childrenatrisk.org/event/the-2026-childrens-agenda/

children at Risk

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Thank you!