# **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

Lubbock

November 3, 2026

children at Risk



# Today's Agenda

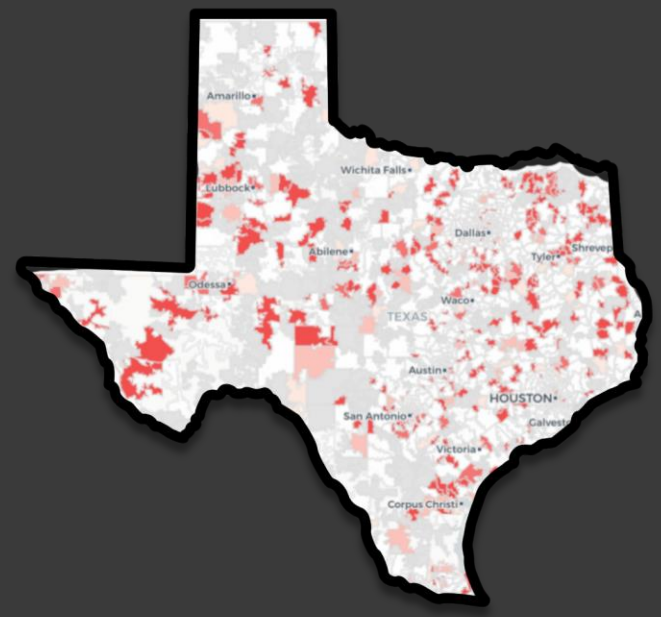
| | |
|---|---|
| Welcome | What's on Your Mind |
| Data | Child Care Deserts<br>Paving the Way to Quality |
| Legislative Updates | ECE Funding<br>Governor's Task Force<br>Sunset Commission |
| 90th Legislative Session | Policy Recommendations |
| Using Your Voice | Community Changemaker Toolkits<br>Early 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.

# **Statewide** | Child Care Deserts (2025)

## Overall Child Care Deserts

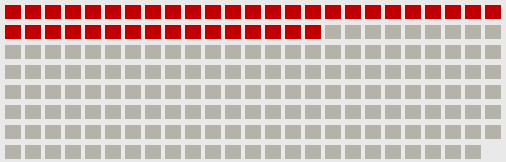
**1.2**

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

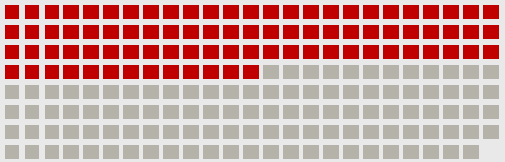
**3.9**

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

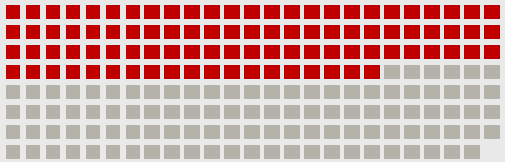
**4.4**

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.

# South Plains | Child Care Deserts (2025)

## Overall Child Care Deserts

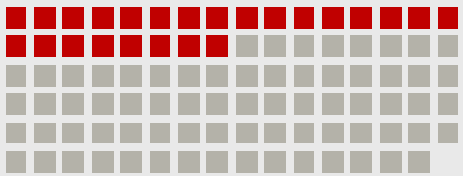
**1.9**

children per seat

across all South Plains zip codes

**18,075** children of working parents

**9,731** licensed seats



**24** of 95 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat

## Subsidy Child Care Deserts

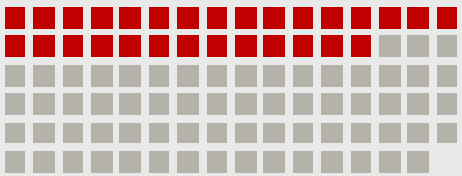
**3.9**

children per seat

across all South Plains zip codes

**10,811** low-income children

**2,799** subsidy seats



**29** of 95 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat

## TRS Child Care Deserts

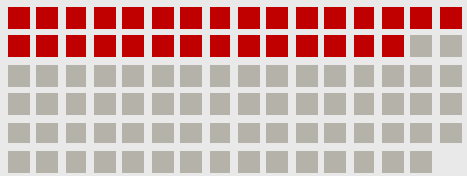
**4.3**

children per seat

across all South Plains zip codes

**10,811** low-income children

**2,509** TRS seats



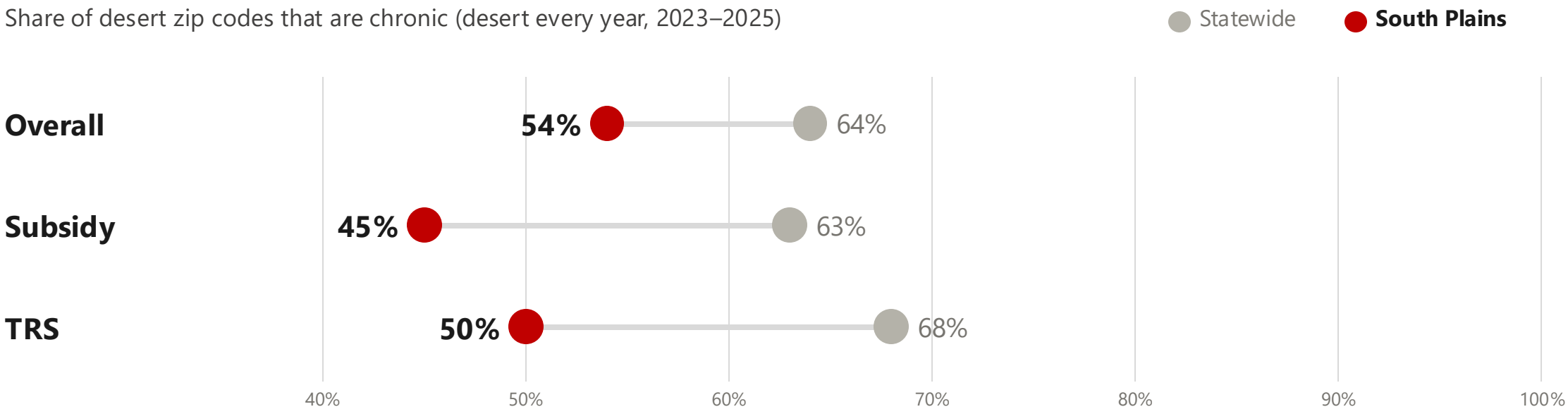
**30** of 95 zip codes are deserts

Desert = zip code with 3+ children per seat

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

# Chronic Child Care Deserts | South Plains

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




**13**
of 24 overall desert zip codes are chronic

**13**
of 29 subsidy desert zip codes are chronic

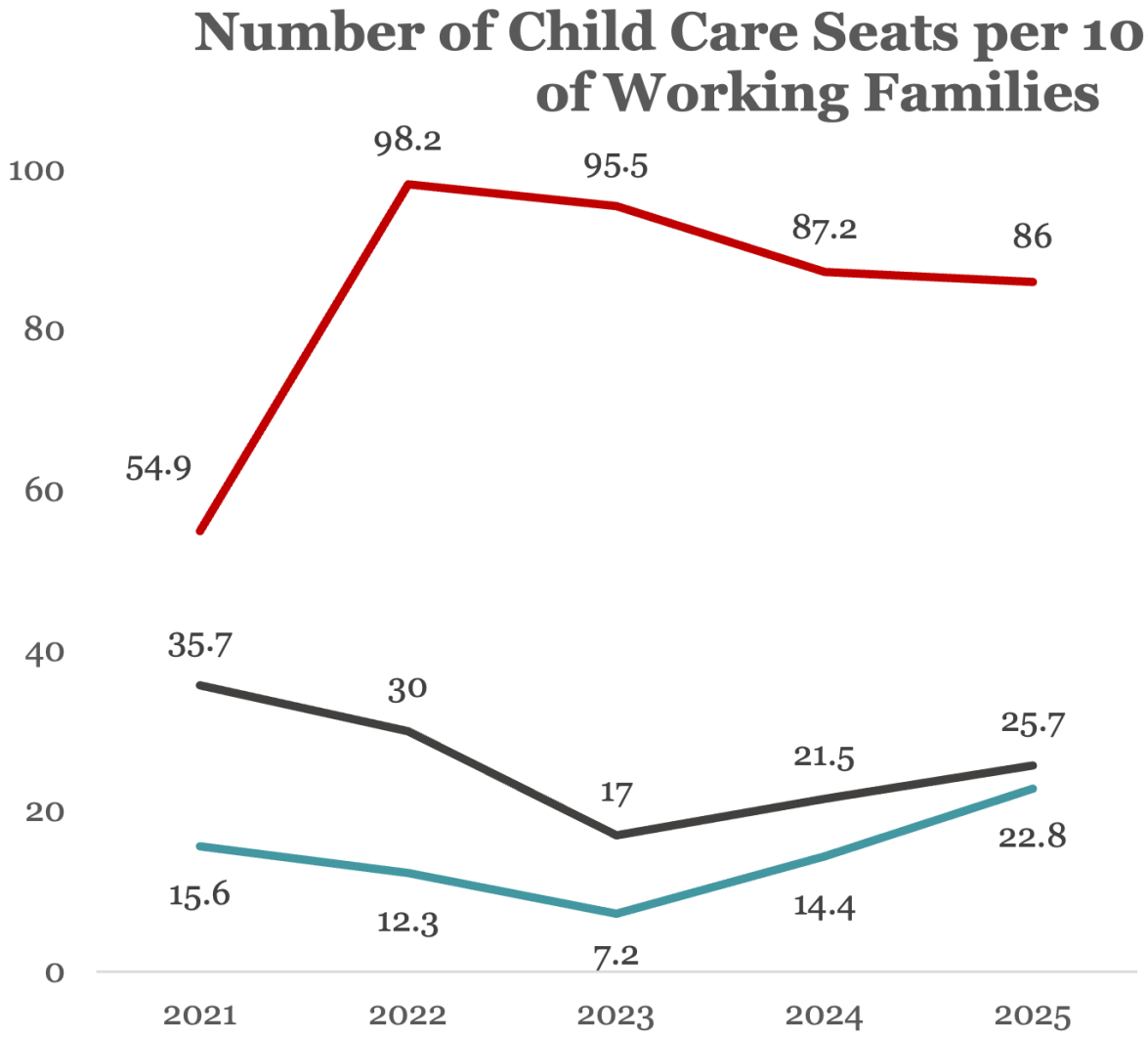
**15**
of 30 TRS desert zip codes are chronic

**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

# **Child Care Seats** | The Last Five Years in Texas



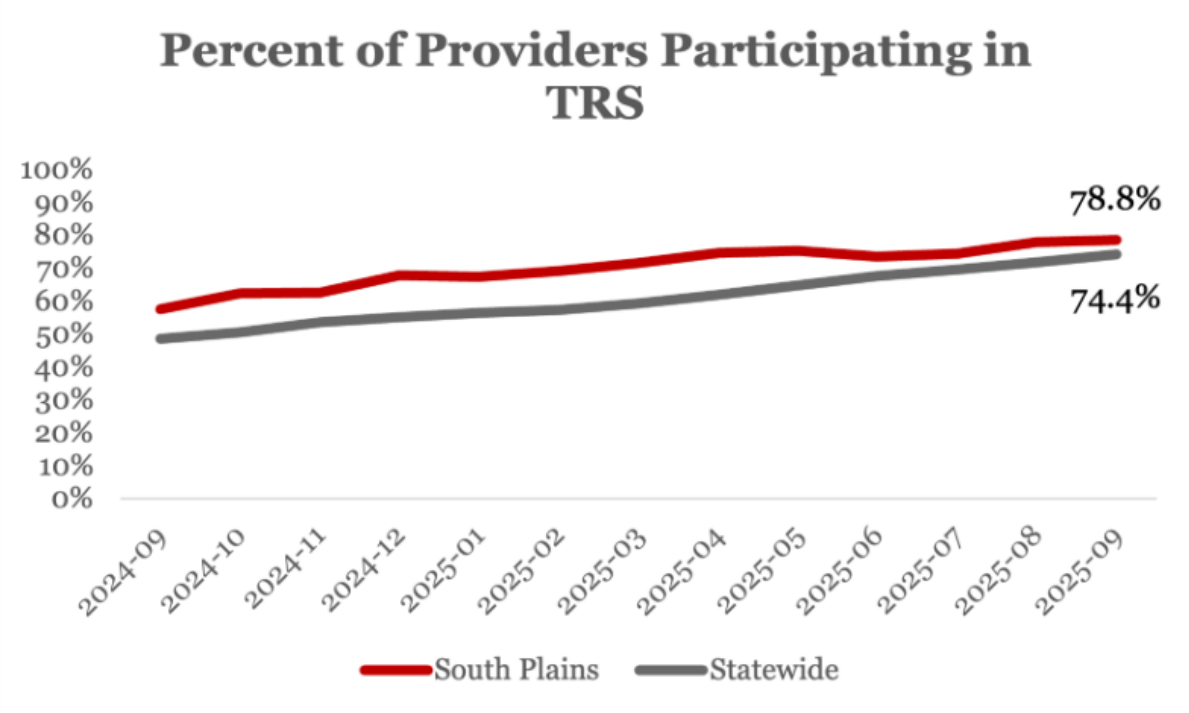

**All child care**
(all family income level)

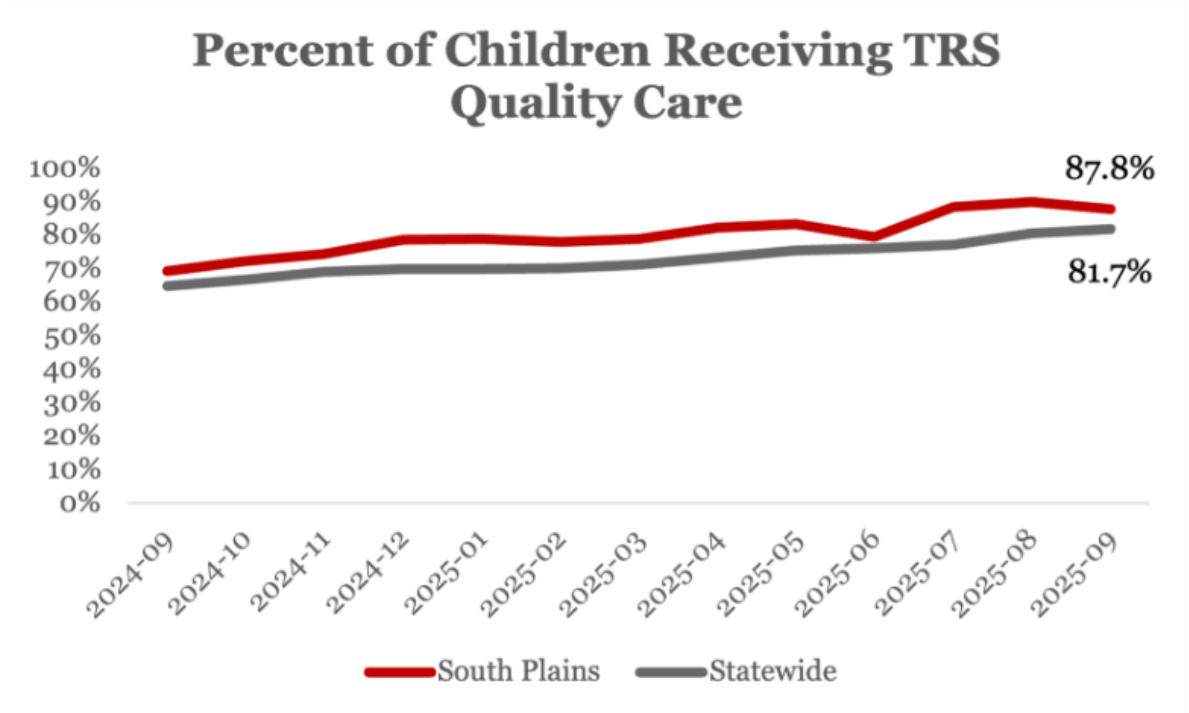
**Subsidized child care**
(family income <200% FPL)

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

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

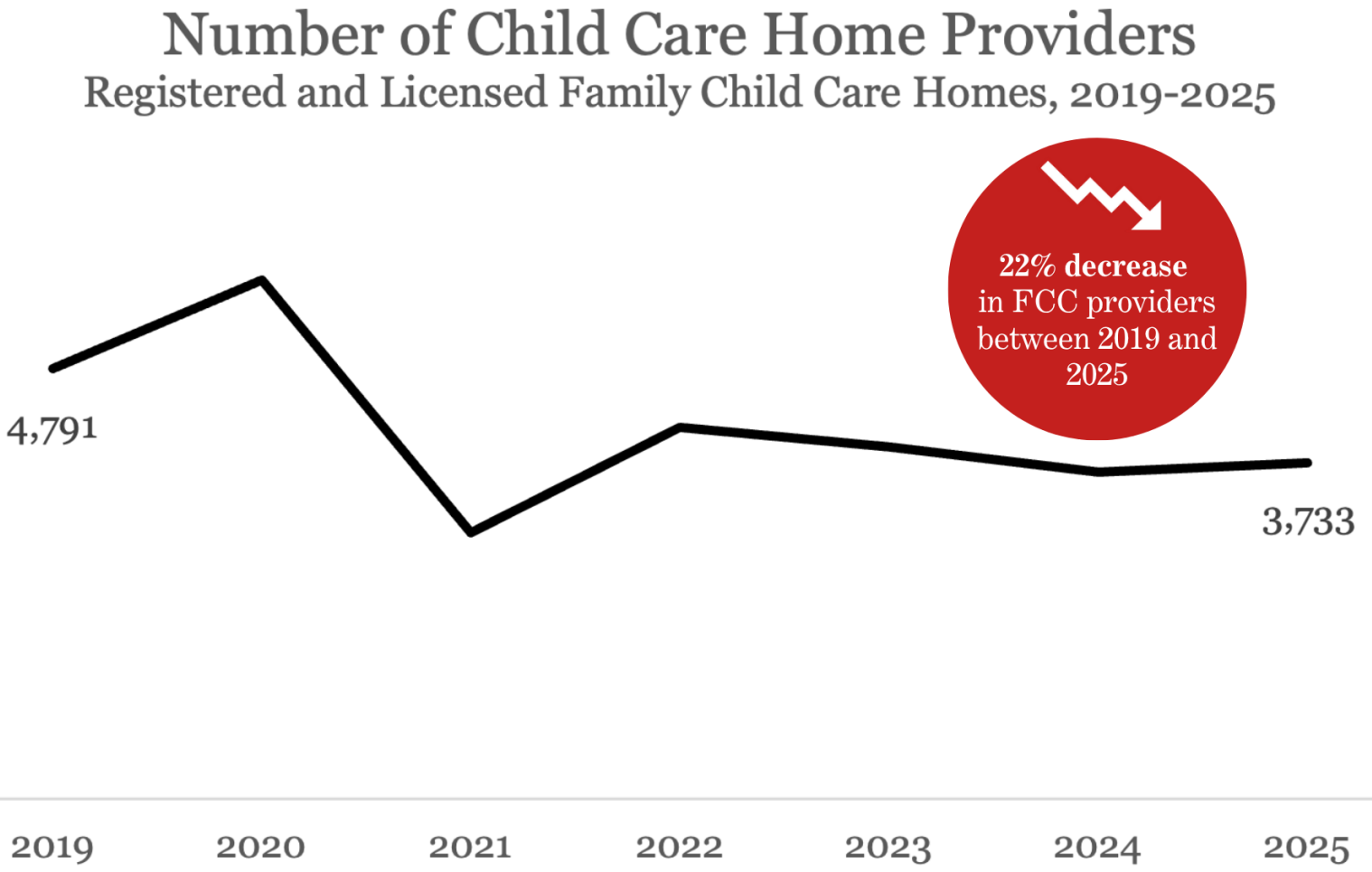
# Texas Rising Star | South Plains Availability




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

# **Statewide** | Family Child Care Homes




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

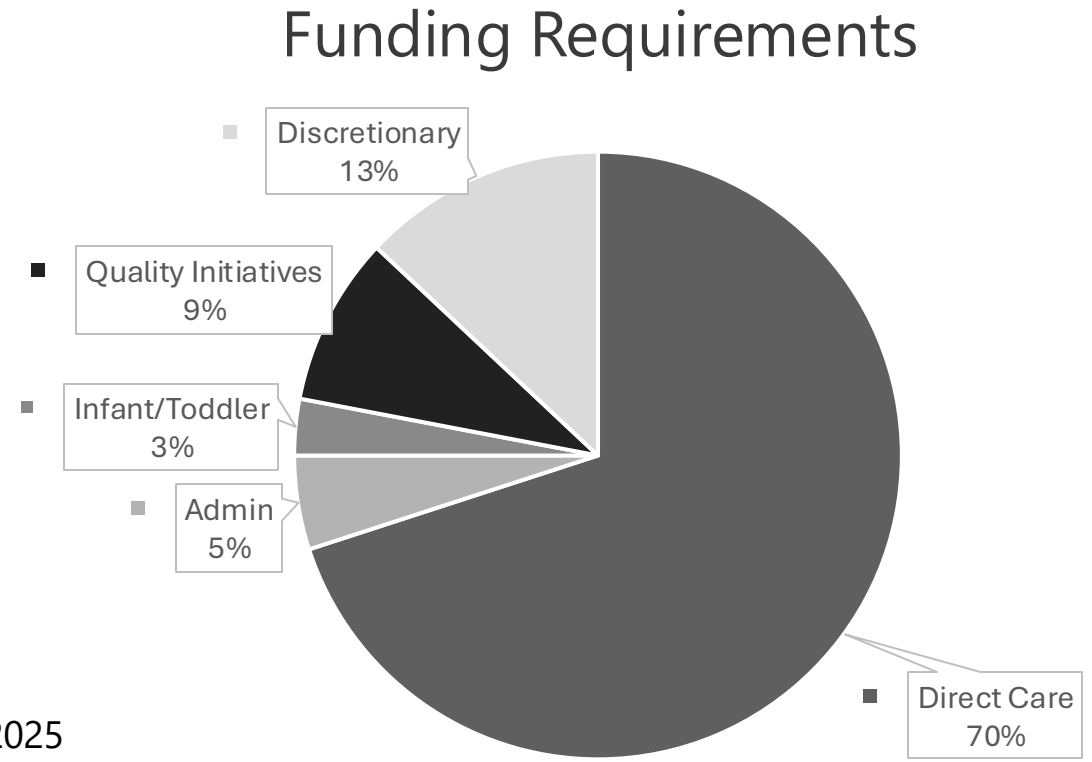
# **Texas** | Federal Funding Streams

## 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.

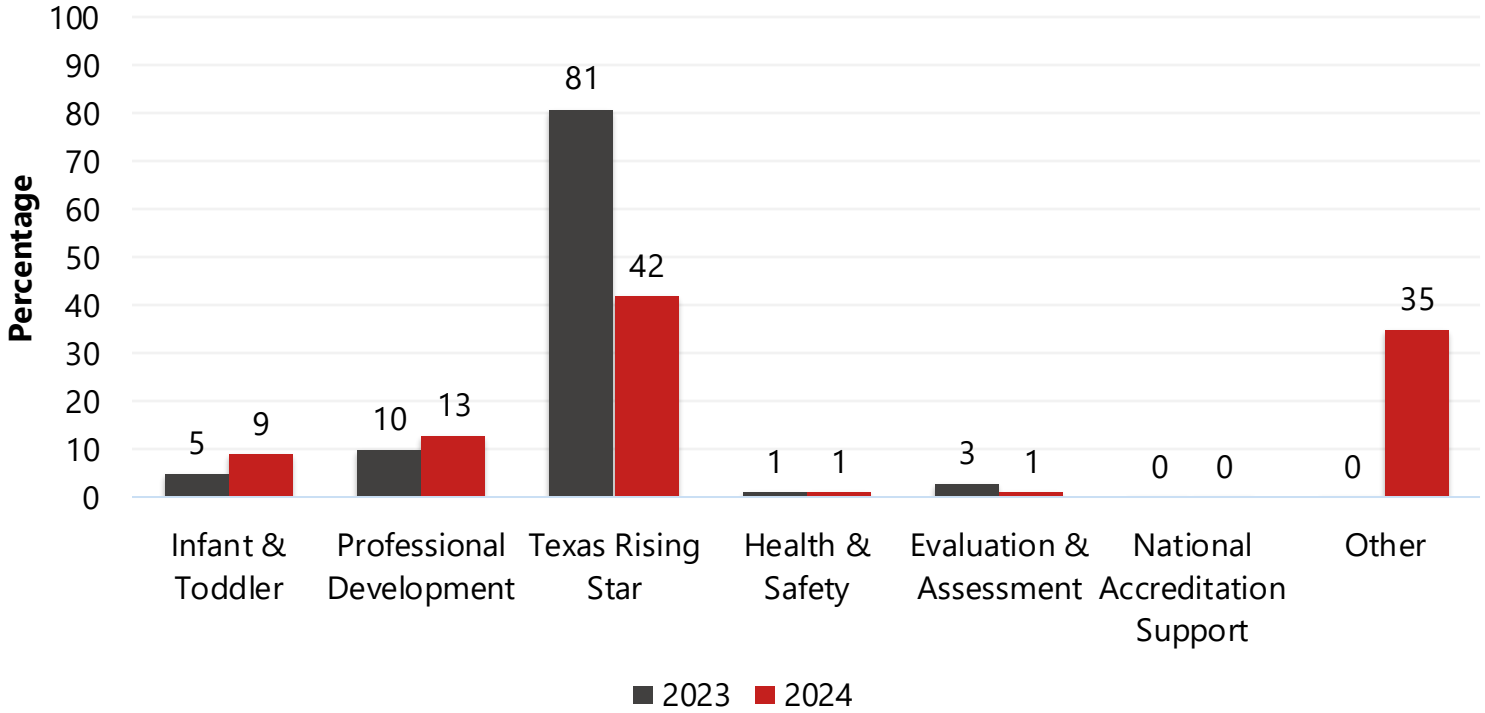
*As of September 2025



# **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.

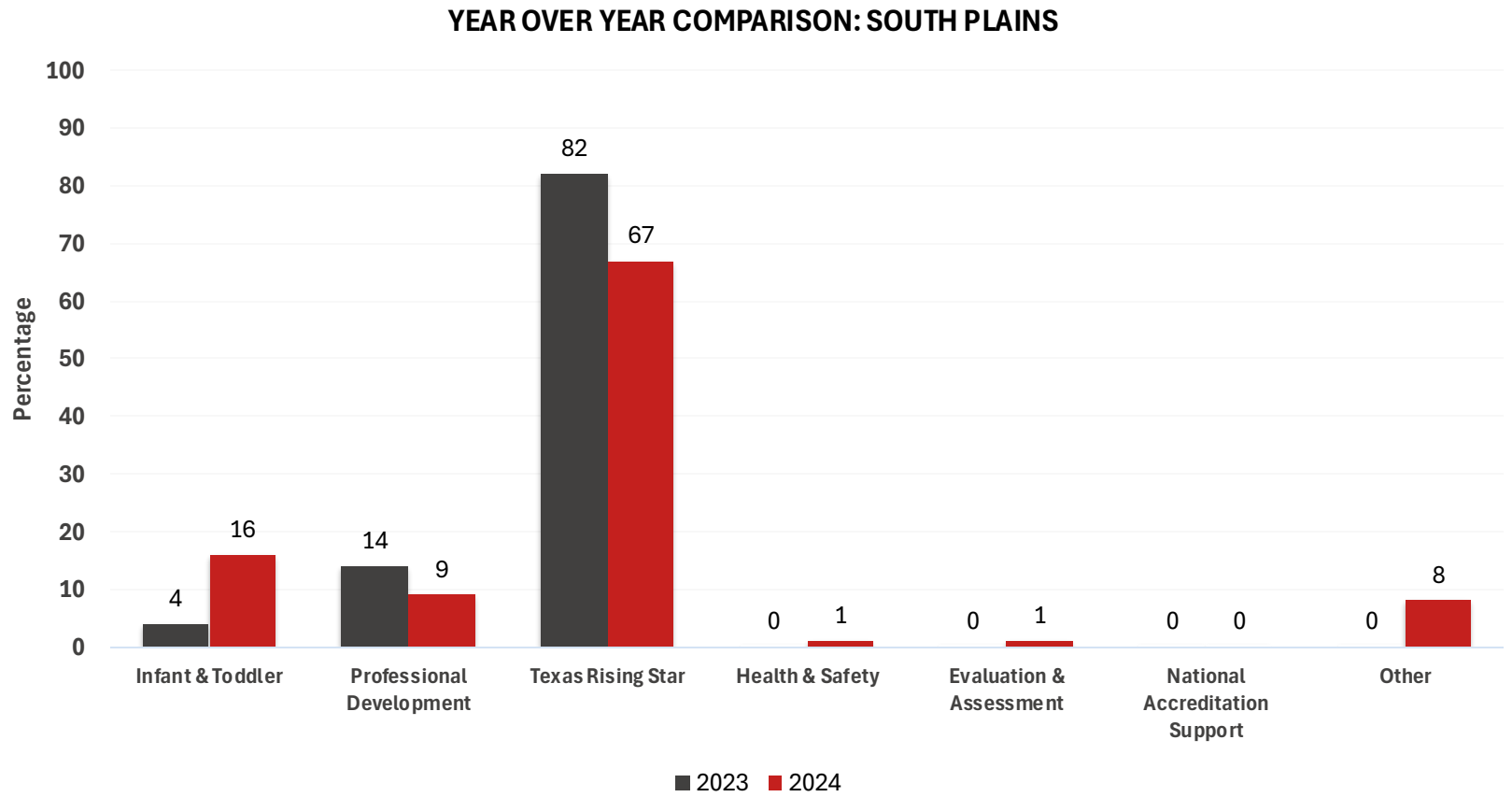
- 100% of LWDB invest in Infant and Toddlers compared to 79% the year prior.

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

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

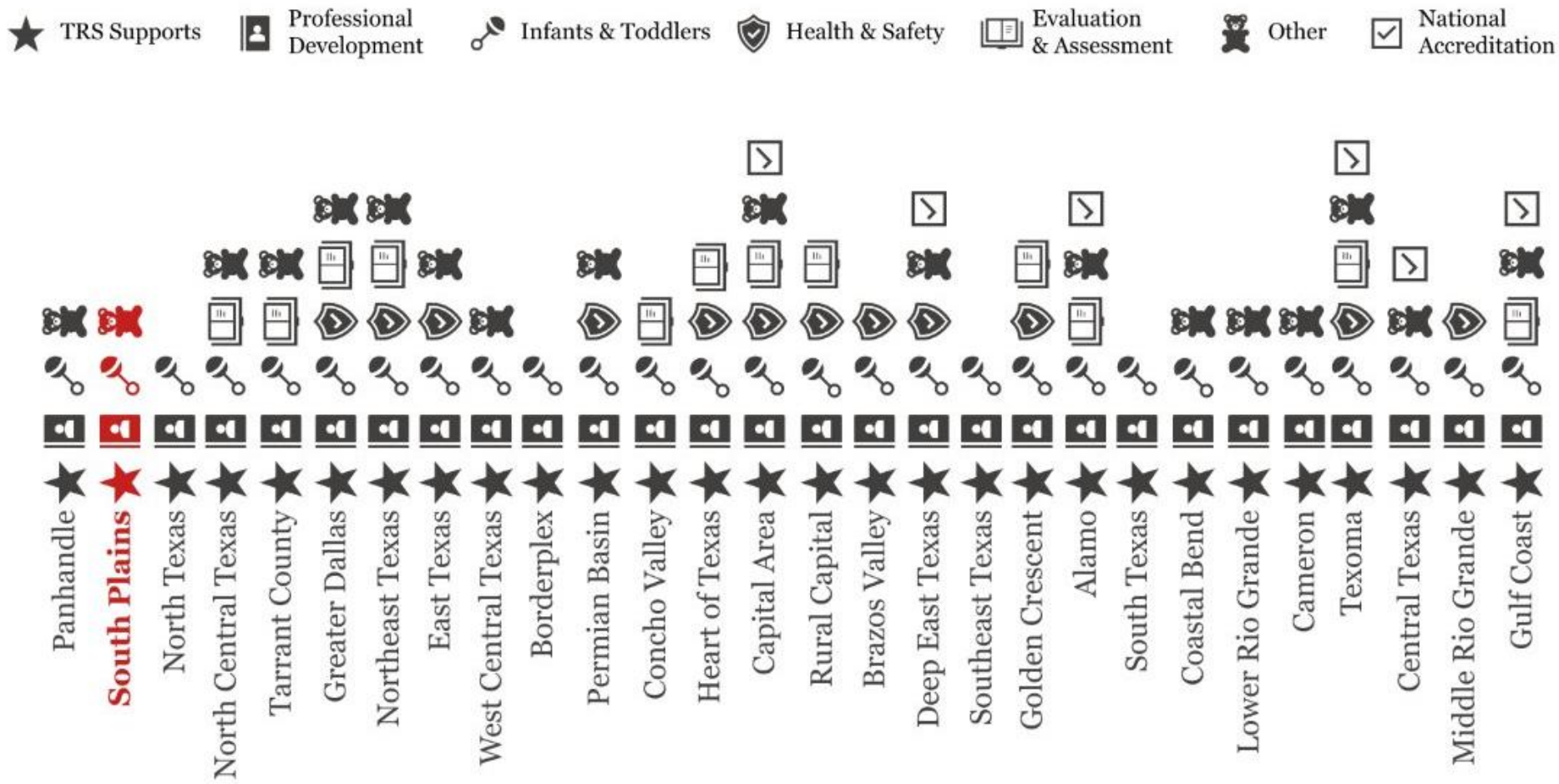
children at Risk

# South Plains | 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.

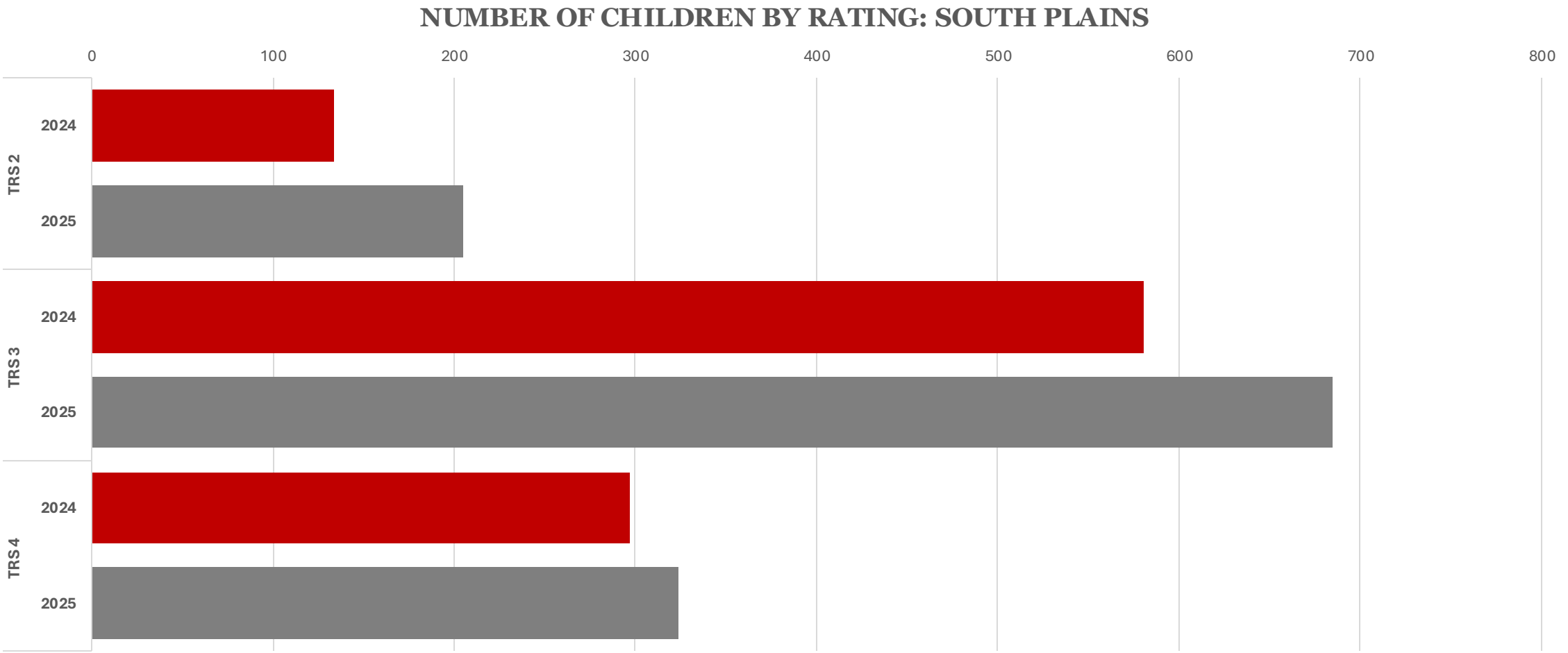
# Statewide Spending of Quality Improvement Dollars



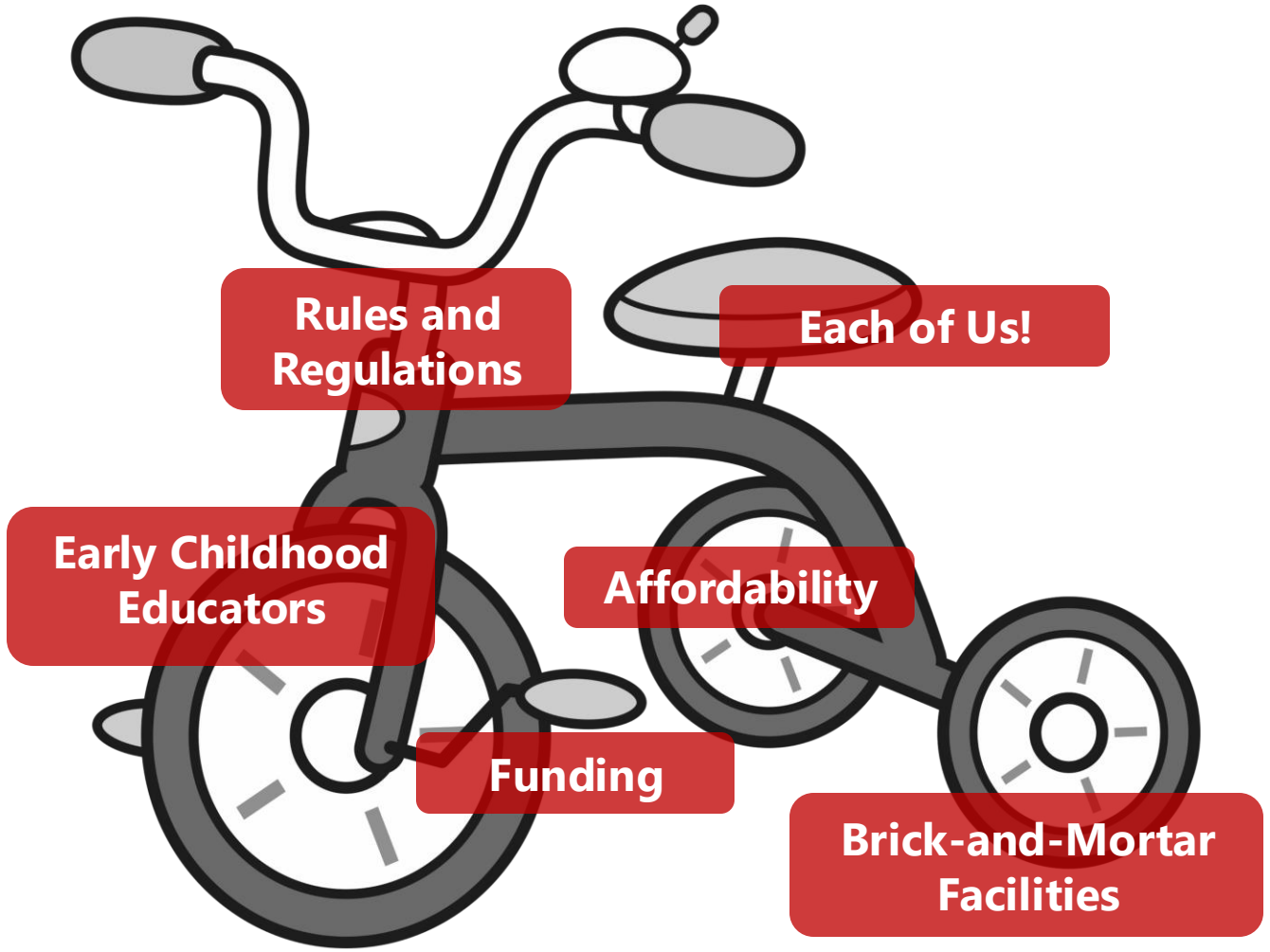



children at Risk

# South Plains | 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

# **Federal Update |** What to expect next?

**Head Start Proposed New Rules—what is next?**

- Final rules anticipated in 2027
- It should include an implementation date.

**Child Care Development Block Grant**

- NPRM (Notice of Proposed Rulemaking) anticipated any day
- There will be a comment period once released

**Appropriation Bill for FY2027**

- Continued Resolution is approved through December 11, 2026

# **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

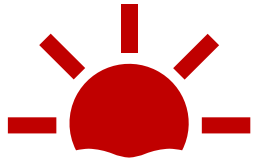
**14,000 children less in FY27**

# **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:** March 25, 2027, 9:00-11:00am

# **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 early December
- 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

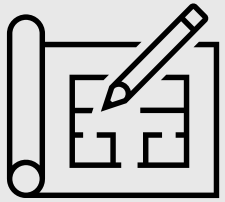
**Require all Local Workforce Development Board Members Training on Child Care Oversight**

- 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

# **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

**Access a digital copy of the changemaker toolkit**

# children at Risk

**CHANGEMAKER TOOLKIT** | SOUTH PLAINS LWDB

**South Plains**

**10.8k**
children under 6 with low-income working parents lives in your region.

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

**Texas**

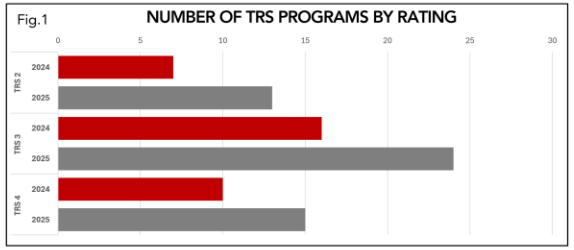
**1.1m**
children under 6 with low-income working parents lives in our state.

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

From 2024 to 2025, the proportion of TRS certified programs among all South Plains subsidy providers increased 58%. During this period, the region expanded its high-quality footprint from 33 to 52 certified locations.

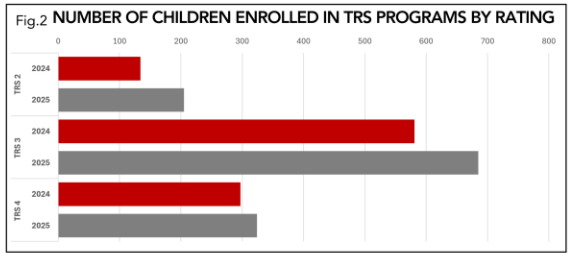
30 zip codes are still designated as quality Child Care Deserts, a 43% increase from 2024. There are 23.2 TRS quality child care seats per 100 low-income working families in the South Plains LWDB region.

Fig.1 NUMBER OF TRS PROGRAMS BY RATING



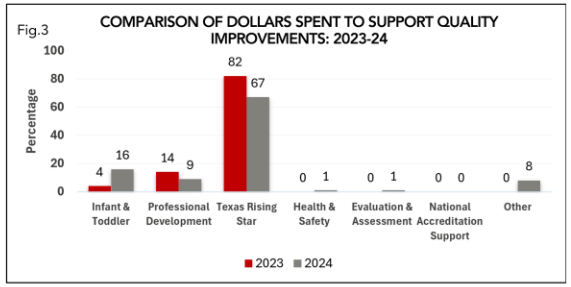

| SOUTH PLAINS **OVERALL** DESERTS | SOUTH PLAINS **CHRONIC OVERALL** DESERTS |
|---|---|
| **24** Overall Desert Zip Codes | **13** Overall Chronic Desert Zip Codes |
| **9,731** Total number of seats available to families | **54%** of Overall Deserts are considered chronic |

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




| SOUTH PLAINS **TRS QUALITY** DESERTS | SOUTH PLAINS **CHRONIC TRS** DESERTS |
|---|---|
| **30** TRS Desert Zip Codes | **15** TRS Desert Zip Codes |
| **2,509** TRS seats are available to families | **50%** of TRS Deserts are considered chronic |

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




| SOUTH PLAINS **SUBSIDY** DESERTS | SOUTH PLAINS **CHRONIC SUBSIDY** DESERTS |
|---|---|
| **29** Subsidy Desert Zip Codes | **13** Chronic Subsidy Desert Zip Codes |
| **2,799** Subsidy seats are available to families | **45%** 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.*


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**Lyn Lucas** | Associate Director of Early Childhood Education, C@R | llucas@childrenatrisk.org



# children at Risk

**CHANGEMAKER TOOLKIT** | SOUTH PLAINS LWDB


## CHILD CARE IN THE SOUTH PLAINS AREA

- The South Plains region is home to **18,075** children under the age of six, and more than **10,811** of them qualify for child care assistance.
- In this region, TWC is only able to serve **2,799 children.**
- From 2024 to 2025, TRS certified subsidy providers **increased 58%** in this region, expanding from from 33 to **52 certified locations**.
- Out of all eligible families in this region, **73%** do not have access to the support they need.
- In 2024, South Plains LWDB had **$890,306** to put towards child care quality improvements & supports.

### THEY INVESTED IN:

*See figure 3 for more information on investment trends.*

- **TRS Supports |** Curriculum, Materials & Equipment
- **Infants & Toddlers |** Curriculum, Prof Dev, Outdoor
- **Professional Development |** Training, CDA, College
- **Other |** Wage Supplements

## 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


**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

# **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

# **Join Us** | Virtual Education Summit

## Leading the Future: AI Policy, Practice, and Responsible Innovation in Education

This year's Education Summit is targeted to bring together school district leaders, legislative staff, higher education professionals, and community partners to explore the rapidly evolving role of artificial intelligence in education. Through policy insights, expert guidance, and cross-sector perspectives, participants will examine responsible AI adoption, effective implementation strategies, and opportunities to strengthen teaching, learning, workforce preparation, and institutional operations.

**Tuesday, November 10**
**12:00 – 1:30 PM CT**

Virtual via Zoom

**Scan the QR code to register or visit**
childrenatrisk.org/event/2026-education-summit/

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children at Risk

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# Thank you!