

Infant, Toddler, and 3-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines

The Texas Early Learning Council, in partnership with a 25-person stakeholder group, has created new, voluntary infant, toddler, and 3-year-old early learning guidelines for the state of Texas. Marketed as “Little Texans. Big Futures.” the guidelines are based on responsive caregiving techniques and are designed to inform all types of caregivers about the importance of early childhood development, as well as how adults can support the healthy development of young children. The guidelines are comprehensive and accessible to all types of audiences. In addition, the Council is sponsoring the development of related resources:

- A mobile app, for quick and easy access to the guidelines
- Simplified parent guides and posters based on the guidelines
- Useful activity materials inspired by the guidelines
- A new website where Texans can access the guidelines and all of the great supporting materials in development

Little Texans. Big Futures.

The Council specifically wanted to ensure that this document helped all caregivers, not just early care and education providers. Thus, the Council used a portion of the resources for this project to work with a marketing firm to uncover the preferences of lower income parents, so that we might reach out to them effectively. The marketing firm also designed, market-tested, and refined the logo and theme, “Little Texans. Big Futures.”

Some of the key findings from the market research were:

- Parents look to family and friends, pediatricians, WIC offices, and the internet for information related to parenting and children
- Most first-time moms in this category are not typically seeking out information related to child development and responsive caregiving, but when focus groups were asked if they would like to have a guide that will help their infant do well now and later in life, the mothers were highly interested
- 89% of the target audience has regular Internet access, and 82% access the Internet on their cell phones.
- 25% of the target audience was open to receiving weekly emails containing parenting tips and information about the development of their child



Your early learning guide for
infants, toddlers, & 3-year-olds

Sustainability

- As part of the Council’s public outreach campaign, the Council will fund the development of a mobile app, commercials, and other efforts to engage parents and providers and direct them towards these new guidelines
- The Council will make all of the materials developed for this campaign available to stakeholders who wish to fund public awareness efforts in their communities
- Media is very expensive—as part of a sustainability vision the Council recommends that the Legislature create a private/public fund, in which foundations, corporations, and others could invest in ongoing public awareness efforts
- The Council will fund the development and distribution of the guidelines and supporting materials; however, resources will limit the reach of the materials, Any state investment in printing and distribution will support parents and providers in receiving this critical information
- The Council will fund an online training module for the guidelines—this aspect of the project will need on-going administrative and tech support

*The Guidelines and
materials will be
available in Spanish too!*





Texas Early Childhood Path to School Readiness

The Texas Early Learning Council is working towards the goal of improving school readiness in Texas by identifying needs and priority areas in the early care and education system, developing strategies for improvement, and facilitating high-quality outcomes.

Needs

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Data Sharing Across Agencies and Sectors
Unified, Cross-Sector Measures of Program Quality

Improved ECE Cross-Sector Guidelines and Standards
Enhanced Local Collaborations on School Readiness

Long-Term and Short-Term Data on the Needs of Young Children and the Capacity of Texas ECE Programs
Parent and Child-Focused ECE System
Increased Access to High Quality Programs Among Underrepresented Families

Cross-Sector ECE Professional Development System
Improved Recruitment and Retention of Highly Effective ECE Professionals
Professional Development and Education Pathways for all ECE Professionals

Priority Areas

Data and Quality Rating & Improvement (QRIS) Systems

Collaborations and Standards

Parental Outreach and Communications

Workforce and Professional Development

Strategies

Develop Recommendations for an Integrated ECE Information Exchange System

Develop Recommendations for a Statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Research and Implement a Web-Based, Cross-Sector Standards Comparison Tool for All Stakeholders

Develop and Implement Voluntary Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines

Create a Professional Mentoring and Coaching Strategies Toolkit

Pilot a Program for Quality Improvement in Home-Based Child Care in English and Spanish

Conduct a Comprehensive, Statewide ECE Needs Assessment

Texas Community Campaign for School Readiness (Local ECE Needs Assessments and Planning)

Implement a Statewide Community Outreach and Public Relations Campaign for School Readiness

Develop an ECE Professional Development System and an ECE Workforce Registry System

New Core Competencies with Trainings for All ECE Professionals
Career Ladder for All ECE Professionals
Compensation Study of All ECE Professionals

Evaluate the Capacity and the Effectiveness of Higher Education to Meet the Needs of the ECE Workforce

Support Scholarship and Financial Aid Opportunities for Texas ECE Professionals through T.E.A.C.H.® Texas

Assess and Develop Model Higher Education Articulation Agreements

Outcomes

Data-Driven Decisions for Policymakers, Providers, and Parents

Improved Cross-Sector Quality, Standards, and Collaborations

Identify Critical State and Local Needs and Engage in Targeted Outreach

Highly Qualified and Prepared Workforce

Goal

Improved School Readiness