



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Texas Early Learning Council to Conduct First Statewide Early Childhood Education Needs Assessment in 40 Years

HOUSTON – June 6, 2011

The Texas Early Learning Council is pleased to announce the award of a new contract to the Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources at the University of Texas at Austin, in partnership with the Hobby Center for the Study of Texas at Rice University, to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment study of the early care and education system in Texas. The one-year contract began on June 1, 2011.

The Ray Marshall Center for the Study of Human Resources is a highly-respected research institute at the University of Texas at Austin, specializing in creative solutions to education, workforce, and social problems. Experienced in early care and education in Texas, the Ray Marshall Center publishes an annual, statewide survey of child care subsidy rates in childcare centers and homes.

The needs assessment is a required deliverable for all State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care throughout the United States, as authorized in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. However, the Texas Early Learning Council envisions going above and beyond typical needs assessments with this project. This assessment will provide: a 40-year state population projection of Texas children; analyses of current supply of and projected demand for early childhood services; and, a survey of the quality of the early childhood services available to families.

“We have not looked comprehensively at our state’s early childhood needs in 40 years. Our early childhood population is huge and growing—we have more young children in Texas than every New England state combined,” says John Gasko, Ph.D., council chair and director of Statewide Initiatives for the Children’s Learning Institute at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). “The needs assessment will allow us to effectively plan for the future of early childhood in Texas.”

For demographic estimates and projections, the Ray Marshall Center will partner with the Hobby Center, led by nationally-renowned demographer Steve Murdock, Ph.D., former director of the U.S. Census Bureau and Texas State Demographer.

The Texas Early Learning Council is a 19-member, governor-appointed advisory council on early childhood education and care. In 2010, the Council began an ambitious three-year federal grant to improve school readiness in Texas. Over the next three years, the Texas Early Learning Council will embark on dozens of key strategic improvements to the Texas early care and education system. For more information, please visit www.earlylearningtexas.org.

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