

Texas Early Learning Council Meeting Minutes

April 1, 2022 from 11:00am – 1:00pm

Teleconference via Zoom

Attendance

- Katherine Abba, Ph.D. (Faculty, Child Development Program for Houston Community College)
- Terrie Breeden (Section 619 Lead Coordinator for the Texas Education Agency)
- April Crawford, Ph.D. (Co-Director of the Children's Learning Institute, UT Health Science Center at Houston)
- Alferma Giles (Director of the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office at the Children's Learning Institute, UT Health Science Center at Houston)
- Melissa Hoisington (Melissa Hoisington (Franchise owner with Primrose Schools and former President of the Texas Licensed Child Care Association)
- Becky Huss-Keeler Ph.D. (Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake)
- Kim Kofron (Director of Early Childhood Education for Children at Risk)
- Jerletha McDonald (Licensed home child care center provider and the owner and director of Kiddie Corner Learning Center)
- Reagan Miller (Director of the Child Care and Early Learning Division at the Texas Workforce Commission)
- Teresa Robledo (Early childhood teacher at San Antonio College Early Childhood Center)
- Stephanie Rubin (CEO of Texans Care for Children)
- Amber Scanlan (Senior Vice President and Director of Client and Community Relations for PNC)
- June Yeatman (Lead teacher at the Austin Community College Children's Lab School)
- Audrey Young (Maternal and Child Health Unit Director and the Title V Children with Special Health Care Needs Director in the Maternal and Child Unit at the Texas Department of State Health Services)

1. Call to Order

Reagan Miller called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

2. January 2022 Minutes Approval

Kim Kofron moved to approve the January 2022 meeting minutes and Alferma Giles seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken and minutes were approved. A quorum was met during roll call.

3. Public Comment

Bridget Tobin, a Master's in Social Work student at University of Texas at Austin, thanked members of the Council for their work to spend American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) stimulus dollars and the Child Care Relief Fund. She recommended: finding ways to increase child care provider pay while keeping child care affordable for parents, further increasing the enhancement amount for Texas Rising Star centers serving in child care deserts or areas with high social vulnerability index scores, and to support communities with staffing shortages. She spoke about child care worker wages, including a study from 2020 that found the poverty rate for early educators in Texas was 18.6%, compared to Kindergarten to 8th grade teachers at 2.5%.

4. Early Childhood Data Roadmap Work Group

Reagan Miller announced the members of the Early Childhood Data Roadmap Work Group, who are members of the Texas Early Learning Council or individuals from the organizations the Council members represent. The Early Childhood Data Roadmap Work Group will guide the Council's data coordination efforts, supporting one of the goals of the [Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan](#). The Work Group will meet in a public forum and public comment is welcome. The Work Group's meeting details are regularly updated on the [Texas Early Learning Council website](#).

5. Federal Stimulus Funding Update

Allison Wilson provided an update on the Child Care Development Block Grant federal stimulus funds being distributed by Texas Workforce Commission (TWC):

- The [fifth tranche of new initiatives](#), including funding for outreach and education campaigns, child care capacity expansion, and an additional \$1 billion added to the Child Care Relief Funds, bringing the total amount to \$3.45 billion;
- The [sixth tranche of new initiatives](#), including Child Care Regulation supports for system improvements and continued funding for child care business coaching; and
- The [seventh tranche of new initiatives](#), including additional funds for direct care.

Sharon Stone provided an update on the federal stimulus funds being received by Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) from TWC, recognizing that partnering with child care centers is critical to the success of the ECI program. The funding will support ECI contractors to provide training to child care centers, joint training conferences for early intervention personnel and child care staff, Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) Train the Trainer, and Infant Mental Health Endorsements through First3Years.

Dana Perez provided an update on the federal stimulus funds being received by Child Care Regulation from TWC to expand regulated child care by hiring five, temporary navigator positions to support prospective new child care providers.

6. Updates from TELC Members

April Crawford shared results of Children's Learning Institute's [State of the Texas Early Childhood Education Workforce Report](#), which leverages data from the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS).

Megan Schneider shared the new Early Childhood Texas website (<https://earlychildhood.texas.gov/>), a "one-stop shop" of state agency programs, services, and resources for families of young children.

Becky Huss-Keeler shared that the University of Houston-Clear Lake underwent National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation for its Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Stephanie Rubin shared a [blog post](#) by Texans Care for Children staff regarding the implications of the end of the public health emergency for Medicaid clients.

Kim Kofron shared that Children At Risk will be publishing its [Quest for Equity and Quality report](#) the week of April 4, 2022.

7. Upcoming Early Childhood Events

Alferma Giles shared about the National Head Start Association Conference, May 2-5 and the [Region VI Head Start Conference](#), September 27-30.

Megan Schneider shared about upcoming Hunt Institute webinars:

[Creating Robust Mixed Delivery Pre-K Systems](#) – April 5

[Neurodiversity and Early Childhood Development](#) – April 26

[Early Intervention's Role in Young Children's Development](#) – May 3

[Children Thrive in Equitable Communities](#) – June 7

Kim Kofron shared about the Children At Risk Spring 2022 Texas Tour in April and the Annual Early Childhood Education Summit, May 18.

Jerletha McDonald shared about a DFW Family Child Care Network Gala, May 21.

8. Adjourn

Reagan Miller adjourned the meeting at 12:59 PM.