

Texas Early Learning Council Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2021 from 11:00am – 1:00pm

Teleconference via Zoom

Attendance

- Katherine Abba, Ph.D. (Faculty and Program Coordinator, Child Development Program for Houston Community College)
- Sarah Abrahams (Deputy Associate Commissioner for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services)
- Travis Armstrong, Ed.D. (Director of Early Learning for Wichita Falls Independent School District)
- Weldon Beard (Director of Head Start and Early Head Start for the Greater East Texas Community Action Program)
- April Crawford Ph.D. (Dir. of Strategic Initiatives and Program Implementation for The UT Health Science Center at Houston CLI)
- Alferma Giles, Ph.D. (Dir. of the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office at The UT Health Science Center at Houston CLI)
- Melissa Hoisington (Franchise owner with Primrose Schools and President of the Texas Licensed Child Care Association)
- Becky Huss-Keeler Ph.D. (Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake)
- Kim Kofron (Executive Director for the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children)
- 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 the non-profit organization Texans Care for Children)
- Amber Scanlan (Senior Vice President and Director of Client and Community Relations for PNC)
- Kiersten Schwab (Executive Director of the Texas Public Broadcasting Association)
- June Yeatman (Lead teacher for the Austin Community College Children's Lab School)

- Audrey Young (Child and Adolescent Health Branch Manager 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. Welcome Remarks

3. January 2021 Minutes Approval

Alferma Giles moved to approve March 2021 meeting minutes and Katherine Abba seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken and minutes were approved. A quorum was met during roll call.

4. Public Comment

No requests for public comment were submitted.

5. COVID-19 Updates

Sarah Abrahams (Department of Family and Protective Services), Monica Martinez (Texas Education Agency), Travis Duke (Health and Human Service Commission, Early Childhood Intervention), Rachelle Daniel (Health and Human Service Commission, Child Care Regulation), and Reagan Miller (Texas Workforce Commission) shared COVID-related trend data and federal stimulus funding details. Data points included:

- DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention providers pivoted to virtual services during the pandemic; family success and engagement with virtual services was varied. They were able to use savings resulting from the transition to virtual to increase their support of families' basic needs.
- Pre-K enrollment fell about 21% from the 2019-2020 school year to the 2020-2021 school year. TEA is awaiting the results of the state legislative session to determine how federal stimulus funding will be spent.
- At the height of the pandemic, referrals to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) were down 43% in April 2020 and remained on a downward trend of 16% overall in 2020. They showed a 42% increase in March 2021 compared to March 2020. Texas ECI is currently set to receive about \$20.3 million in American Rescue Plan funds for IDEA Part C.
- The number of permitted child care operations decreased from January 2020 to March 2021 (approximately 5.5%).
- The percentage of children in Texas Rising Star child care providers has been steadily increasing from 2019 to 2020. There was a drop in the number of child care providers serving subsidized children from May to June 2020 but has been trending upward since then. Through CRRSA, TWC received \$1.1 billion in discretionary CCDF (Child Care Development Fund) dollars. Through the American Rescue Plan, TWC is set to receive \$1.7 billion in discretionary CCDF dollars and \$2.7 billion in stabilization grant funds.

6. Legislative Updates

Sarah Abrahams (DFPS), Monica Martinez (TEA), Travis Duke (HHSC-ECI), Rachele Daniel (HHSC-CCR), and Reagan Miller (TWC) shared an overview of bills under consideration by the state legislature related to early childhood.

7. Upcoming Early Childhood Events

Kim Kofron (Children at Risk) shared information about the upcoming NAEYC [Developmentally Appropriate Practice Summit](#) on June 9-10.

Sarah Abrahams (DFPS) shared information about the [Texas Fatherhood Summit](#) on June 17-18.

Allison Wilson (TWC) shared information about the Texas Rising Star Virtual Early Learning Symposium, July 6-22 (every Tuesday and Thursday).

8. Updates from TELC members

Shay Everitt provided an update on the child care availability portal: <https://find.childcare.texas.gov/>. The URL no longer contains the word “frontline”.

Allison Wilson provided an update and requested feedback from the Council on the Child Care Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response Plan. A draft was attached to the meeting notice.

Stephanie Rubin provided an update on the Early Childhood Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives.

9. Adjourn

Reagan Miller adjourned the meeting at 1:00 PM.