

Texas Early Learning Council Meeting Minutes

November 12, 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)
- 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)
- Rachelle Daniel (Director of Daycare Regional Operations for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission)
- Melissa Hoisington (Franchise owner with Primrose Schools and 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)
- Dana McGrath (Director of Early Childhood Intervention Program for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission)
- 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)
- Kierstan Schwab (Executive Director of the Texas Public Broadcasting Association)
- June Yeatman (Lead teacher at 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. September 2021 Minutes Approval

Kierstan Schwab moved to approve the September 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.

3. Public Comment

No requests for public comment were submitted.

4. Strategic Plan

Council members provided feedback on progress made toward the [Early Learning Strategic Plan](#) (developed by the TELC in 2019 with Preschool Development Grant funding support) Goal 3: “Families are equipped with knowledge and tools they need to be their child’s primary caregiver”.

The discussion included:

- New [NAEYC Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators](#), which further recognize and emphasize family strengths and the critical need to involve families in all six Professional Preparation Standards.
- Texas PBS resources, including Bright by Text (text messages to parents of young children with relevant information and resources, offered in partnership with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and United Ways of Texas) and PBS [Kids](#), [Parents](#) and [Teachers](#) websites.
- Early Childhood Texas inter-agency website (earlychildhood.texas.gov), launching in February 2022.
- Children’s Learning Institute’s (CLI) parent-facing programs, including [Reach Out and Read](#) and Supporting Sprouts, an Early Head Start intervention to improve the social-emotional, cognitive, and language development of babies and young children. Supporting Sprouts content is available on [CLI Engage](#) and includes Strategies for Early Education and Developmental Success (SEEDS) courses (professional development for teachers), Play and Learning Strategies (ePALS) courses (parent coaching), and parent workshops. Additional family engagement resources and a library of hands-on activities for families are also available on CLI Engage.

5. Federal Stimulus Funding Update

Sarah Abrahams provided an update on the federal stimulus funds received by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) and Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) programs, including establishing seven new family resource centers and studying the provision of COVID-related basic needs support.

Allison Wilson provided an update on the federal stimulus funds being distributed by Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) through the [third tranche of new initiatives](#), including the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Stabilization Subgrant methodology to be used for \$2.45 billion for awards to child care providers, and [fourth tranche of new initiatives](#), including child care assistance for more low-income families and a 20% increase in payments for providers in the child care assistance program.

6. Updates from TELC Members

Sarah Abrahams shared that DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention has released their new five-year strategic plan.

Dorothy Mandell (University of Texas at Tyler Health Science Center) shared updated [community-level maltreatment risk maps for Texas](#), including the concept of community-level maltreatment risk and the top risk factors for children under age ten.

Stephanie Rubin and Kim Kofron shared links for information about the provisions in the federal draft Build Back Better legislation: [Health policy overview](#) (Source: Georgetown University Health Policy Institute) and [Child Care and Prekindergarten in the Build Back Better Act](#) (Source: Hunt Institute).

Jerletha McDonald reported out on a listening session she facilitated with Texas family child care providers to share their needs, with guest attendance from the Office of Child Care and Texas Workforce Commission.

7. Upcoming Early Childhood Events

Megan Schneider shared about Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office and Texas Education Agency's Transition to Kindergarten Statewide Summit, December 8-9, 2021.

8. 2022 Meeting Schedule

Meetings are scheduled in 2022 for January 21, April 1, July 15, and October 21.

9. Adjourn

Reagan Miller adjourned the meeting at 1:12 PM.