

Texas Early Learning Council

Operating Procedures
Amended on October 18, 2024

1. PURPOSE

The Texas Early Learning Council acts as the state’s advisory council on early childhood education and care for children from birth to school entry as required by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. The council is responsible for conducting a periodic statewide birth-five needs assessment, developing and monitoring implementation of a statewide birth-five strategic plan, developing recommendations to strengthen Texas’ early childhood system, and other responsibilities as assigned by the Governor of the State of Texas and/or the legislature of the State of Texas.

2. COUNCIL ORGANIZATION

2.1. Membership

- (a) The council is composed of members appointed by the Governor of the State of Texas.
- (b) Members of the council shall include:
 - i. a representative of the State agency responsible for child care;
 - ii. a representative of the State educational agency;
 - iii. a representative of local educational agencies;
 - iv. a representative of institutions of higher education in the State;
 - v. a representative of local providers of early childhood education and development services;
 - vi. a representative from Head Start agencies located in the State, including migrant and seasonal Head Start programs and Indian Head Start programs;
 - vii. the State Director of Head Start Collaboration;
 - viii. a representative of the State agency responsible for programs under section 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.);
 - ix. a representative of the State agency responsible for health or mental health care; and

- x. individuals or representatives of other entities determined to be relevant by the Governor of the State of Texas.

2.2. Officers

- (a) The Governor of the State of Texas shall appoint a chair or co-chairs of the council.
- (b) The Governor of the State of Texas may appoint an honorary chair at his/her discretion.
- (c) The Council will elect a vice chair.

2.3. Workgroups

- (a) The chair of the Council may, at his or her discretion, appoint members to serve on one or more workgroups. Members of workgroups do not have to be members of the Council.
- (b) The chair of the Council shall appoint a chair for each workgroup appointed. Chairs of workgroups must be members of the Council.

3. MEETINGS

3.1. Regular Meetings of the Council

Four regular meetings of the Council shall be held each year.

3.2. Special Meetings of the Council

Special meetings of the Council may be called by the chair to be held at a time and place the chair shall designate.

3.3. Open Meetings

Regular and special meetings shall be open to the public; however, the Council may meet in executive session in accordance with Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Open Meetings.

3.4. Agendas

- (a) The chair, or the chair's designee, shall prepare and submit to each member of the Council, prior to each meeting, a draft agenda, listing item titles with short summaries for each item.
- (b) Chairs of workgroups shall coordinate with the chair of the Council regarding items to be placed on workgroup agendas.

3.5. Quorum

A majority of the Council constitutes a quorum. A quorum is necessary only for action items requiring adoption.

3.6. Adopting Recommendations

- (a) The Council shall adopt recommendations for the Governor of the state of Texas and agencies of the state of Texas.
- (b) A majority vote by the council members in attendance and voting is required to adopt a recommendation.

3.7 Procedures

Meetings of the Council will be conducted informally and with proper decorum. Robert's Rules of Order (Revised) will be utilized only for the purpose of adopting recommendations.

3.8. Minutes and Records

- (a) The chair of the Council and chairs of workgroups shall ensure that accurate minutes are kept of each meeting. The minutes shall include each decision or other action taken.
- (b) Official minutes and records of the Council and workgroups shall be kept by the TEA Division of Early Childhood Education and shall be available to any citizen desiring to examine them. Official minutes are those which the council has approved, and which carry the original signature of the chair.
- (b) All Council and workgroup records are subject to the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code.
- (c) Communications with the entire Council will be managed by the TEA Division of Early Childhood Education.

3.9. Oral Public Comment in Connection with Regular Council Meetings

- (a) General provisions.
 - i. The Council shall provide opportunity for oral public comment at regular and special meetings of the council at the beginning of each meeting.
 - ii. The presiding chair shall assure that members of the public with differing viewpoints have reasonable access to address the Council and take steps to ensure that individuals will be given priority over registered lobbyists.
 - iii. The presiding chair shall determine which speakers will be heard and the order in which they will be heard if the number exceeds that number which may reasonably be expected to testify in the allotted time for presentations. The presiding chair shall also determine whether speakers who did not register or who

registered late will be heard and whether persons asking to testify as a substitute for a registered speaker may do so.

(b) Registration procedures.

i. Individuals may register in-person for oral comment beginning one hour prior to the meeting of the Council. Registration closes ten minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

ii. The speaker shall provide his or her name and organizational affiliation, if any, contact telephone number, mailing address, email address, and indicate which item or topic the speaker will address, if it is listed on the agenda, and viewpoint on the topic; and the speaker will disclose if he or she is a lobbyist registered with the Texas Ethics Commission.

iii. A person may register himself or herself. Organizations may not register more than two persons per item.

iv. Speakers will be informed if it appears that time constraints will not permit all speakers to make their presentation within the allotted time.

v. Speakers shall provide thirty (30) copies of their testimony. Registered speakers who are unable to make their presentations due to time constraints are encouraged to provide thirty (30) copies of their testimony for distribution to Council members. Written testimony will not be attached to Council minutes.

3.10. Written Comment in Connection with Regular Council Meetings

(a) Persons may file written testimony. Any written testimony or comments shall identify the date of the meeting; the subject of the comments; the name of the author; the name of the author's organizational affiliation, if any; and indicate whether the author is a lobbyist registered with the Texas Ethics Commission.

(b) If the written testimony is submitted at the regular Council meeting, thirty (30) copies shall be provided by the individual submitting written testimony for distribution to Council members. Written testimony will not be attached to the Council minutes.

(c) Persons who were unable to attend or to testify at a Council meeting due to time constraints may provide thirty (30) copies of their testimony to staff in the TEA Division for Early Childhood Education for distribution to Council members.

4. COMPENSATION AND TRAVEL EXPENSES

Council members receive no compensation for services on the Council. As funds permit, Council members will be reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing Council duties, as allowable by law.

6. ETHICS

Council members shall adhere to Chapter 36 and Chapter 39 of the Texas Penal Code.

5. OPERATING PROCEDURES

5.1 Effective Date of Operating Procedures

These operating procedures and any amendments to them shall become effective only upon approval of the Council.

5.2. Amendments to Operating Procedures

Any of these procedures may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new policies and procedures may be adopted by an affirmative vote of the majority of the Council.

5.3. Guidelines

These operating procedures create no substantive or procedural rights. They are guidelines for the Council's internal governance only.

5.4. Review of Operating Procedures

The Council Operating Procedures shall be reviewed annually.