



TEXAS
EARLY LEARNING
COUNCIL



EARLY LEARNING
Needs Assessment
2019



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was made possible by Grant Number 90TP0003 from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents of this report are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Child Care, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Additional support for this publication was provided by The Miles Foundation. The Texas Early Learning Council appreciates the support provided by The Miles Foundation that made this publication possible.

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Acronyms	v
Executive Summary	vi
Introduction	1
The Texas Vision for Early Learning	2
Advancement in Education in Texas	3
The Texas Early Learning System	5
Methodology	8
Access & Availability	11
Availability and Reach of Early Childhood Programs and Services	12
Children Served through Publicly Funded Programs	17
Access Challenges	18
Data Limitations	20
Opportunities to Expand Access and Availability	21
Program Quality	22
Landscape of Early Learning Program Quality in Texas	23
Defining Early Learning Program Quality	23
Early Learning Program and Service Facilities	27
Data Limitations	27
Opportunities to Increase Early Learning Program Quality	27
Early Learning Workforce	28
Workforce Qualifications	29
Professional Development	30
Retention and Recruitment	32
Data Limitations	32
Opportunities to Support the Early Learning Workforce	33
Transitions	34
Transition Supports	35
Data Limitations	38

Opportunities to Improve Transitions	38
Resources to Support Early Learning Programs	40
Supports and Resources to Increase Quality.....	41
Current Funding Streams.....	46
Early Learning Business Operations.....	48
Utilizing Partnerships to Increase Access and Availability	49
Data Limitations	52
Opportunities for More Efficient Use of Resources	53
Summary of Opportunities	54
Opportunities for Early Learning Programs.....	55
Opportunities for Communities.....	55
Opportunities for the State	56
References	58
Appendix A: Methodology & Analytics	A-1
Appendix B: State Agency Data Technical Detail.....	B-1
Appendix C: Stakeholder Survey Analysis Technical Details	C-1
Appendix D: Eligibility Criteria.....	D-1

Dear Fellow Texans,

Texas has made great strides in improving early childhood education across the state during the past several years. This progress was possible because of the collective efforts of Governor Greg Abbott, the Texas Legislature, state agencies, and committed Texans like yourselves. We are excited about the current state of early childhood education in Texas and optimistic about the future for our youngest citizens.

To help Texas maintain its forward momentum, Governor Greg Abbott reinstated the Texas Early Learning Council earlier this year. The Council serves the vital role of bringing together state agency and stakeholder representatives to formulate recommendations for strengthening Texas' early learning system.

The first task of the newly appointed Council was to guide the 2019 Texas Early Learning Needs Assessment. This report was made possible by funding through the Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education. The goal of this grant is to increase access to and quality of early learning programs and services through maximizing coordination and collaboration at the state and local level.

The 2019 Texas Early Learning Needs Assessment is the most comprehensive research report on Texas' early learning system to date. It addresses research questions essential to understanding the needs, strengths, and gaps of early learning programs and services, children, and families. The Council will utilize the information from this report to drive the development of the Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Council and state agency staff for their leadership and support on the development of the 2019 Texas Early Learning Needs Assessment. We also would like to give a Texas-sized thank you to the nearly 9,000 early childhood professionals, families, and community members who participated in the stakeholder survey and focus groups that were conducted for this needs assessment. It is crucial that your voices and experiences are captured and understood as we move our state forward to better serve children and families.

Our hope is that you find the information and implications highlighted in this report enlightening and actionable. You are encouraged to use the data at the regional and local levels to help drive innovative solutions to better meet the needs of early learning programs and services, children, and families.

Thank you for your commitment to early childhood education in Texas!

Sincerely,

Cecilia Abbott, Honorary Chair
First Lady
State of Texas

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Statewide Director of Early Childhood
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Texas Early Learning Council

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Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
ADA	American Disability Act
CCDBG	Child Care Development Block Grant
CCDF	Child Care and Development Fund
CDA	Child Development Associate
CLI	Children's Learning Institute
COA	Council of Accreditation
DFPS	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
DSHS	Texas Department of State Health Services
ECI	Early Childhood Intervention
ECSE	Early Childhood Special Education Services
ECSIG	Early Childhood System Integration Group
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
HHSC	Texas Health and Human Services Commission
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDEA Part C	Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
IHE	Institution of Higher Education
KRS	Kindergarten Readiness System
LEA	Local Education Agency
LWDB	Local Workforce Development Board
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAC	National Accreditation Commission for Early Child Care and Education
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NAFCC	National Association of Family Child Care
NECPA	National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
PDG B-5	Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
PEI	
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System
QELS	AdvancED Quality Early Learning Standards
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TDA	Texas Department of Agriculture
T.E.A.C.H.	Teacher Education and Compensation Helps
TEA	Texas Education Agency
THECB	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
THSSCO	Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office
TKIDS	Texas Kids Intervention Data System
TRS	Texas Rising Star
TWC	Texas Workforce Commission

Executive Summary

The awareness of investing in early learning has grown in Texas. Texas recognizes that every child deserves an excellent education throughout their critical development years. Supporting children through their educational attainment not only increases student success, but also aids in preparing a highly skilled workforce. The advancements Texas has achieved in recent years include, but are not limited to, the passing of House Bill (HB) 4 (84th Legislative Session), and most recently the passing of HB 3 (86th Legislative Session).

ESSA provides a unique opportunity for states to identify and/or reengage decision making related to accountability, school improvement, teacher quality, and funding. Texas has embraced this opportunity, as evidenced by maximizing on the policy flexibility, aligning key decision points in developing systems to support ESSA implementation, and the development of a new Texas Education Agency (TEA) Strategic Plan. In doing so, Texas has engaged all new opportunities provided by ESSA to create a singular focus on key state priority areas, supporting a vision of an excellent education for every child.

HB 4 aimed to increase the quality of prekindergarten in Texas by establishing the high-quality prekindergarten grant program. This grant program provided \$118 million to 573 LEAs to implement high-quality prekindergarten components during the 2015-2017 biennium. Texas continued education momentum through the 86th Legislative Session by passing HB 3, which reforms school finance and significantly enhances early childhood education efforts. This legislation continues to build a strong foundation of high-quality early childhood education by increasing prekindergarten to full day programming for eligible students, establishes an early education allotment,

and requires an increased focus on early literacy and math.

Children in Texas

There are more than two million children birth to age five in Texas, representing a very diverse subset of the Texas population and 10% of the birth-five population for the entire United States. Through this needs assessment it is determined an estimated 50% of the birth to age five population is Hispanic, 31% White, 12% Black, 4% Asian, and 4% identifying as other. Of those, 15,426 live in a completely rural community, 150,096 in a mostly rural community, and 1.8 million residing in an urban community. It is estimated that the Texas population will continue to diversify and grow. The number of children living in low-income families is expected to exceed three million by 2040 (Schexnayder, Juniper, Schroeder, et al., 2012).

Access and Availability

The availability of supports for children entering school ready to learn is important for all children and families. Texas provides supports through seven main types of early childhood programs and services, including public prekindergarten, child care (center-based and home-based), Early Childhood Intervention services, Early Childhood Special Education services, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Texas Home Visiting. Each of these programs have varying availability across the Texas counties, except for Early Childhood Intervention services and Early Childhood Special Education services, which are available in every county. Families in Texas may face a range of challenges in accessing early learning programs and services. These challenges include lack of programs, programs not operating outside of traditional

hours, cost, eligibility requirements, and insufficient capacity to meet demand.

Public Prekindergarten

LEAs with 15 or more eligible 4-year-olds are required to offer free prekindergarten. Additionally, any LEAs may choose to, but are not required to, serve eligible 3-year-olds and receive funding for doing so. Children are eligible to attend public prekindergarten in Texas if they meet at least one of the following conditions: qualify for the National School Lunch Program (185% of the Federal Poverty Level), are experiencing homelessness, are in foster care, have a parent on active military duty or who was injured or killed on active duty, are unable to speak or comprehend English, and/or have a parent eligible for the Star of Texas Award. Public prekindergarten is provided by 1,058 of the 1,200 LEAs in Texas within 251 counties.

Child Care

Child care is provided in multiple settings across the state including center-based care and family home child care providers and is regulated by HHSC. Currently there are 13,513 licensed child care centers, licensed child care homes, and registered child care homes that are approved to serve infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children throughout 240 counties. Through oversight provided by TWC, child care subsidies provide financial assistance to help pay for child care for families that meet work and income requirements. The child care subsidy program has experienced major shifts in the number of children served between 2016 and 2018. This is due to the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in 2014 and the associated rule changes in 2016, which changed the length of eligibility for services to one year. Congress increased funding for CCDBG in 2018 which increased the number of children served through child care subsidy in that same year.

Head Start and Early Head Start

The Early Head Start program offers services beginning prenatally, and continuing to age three, to nurture child development and parenting skills, while the Head Start program offers a comprehensive program for children ages three to five. There are four program delivery options provided by Head Start: center-based, locally designed program option variations, home-based, and family child care. Head Start programs are in 214 counties in Texas and Early Head Start programs are in 20 counties.

Early Childhood Intervention

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services, overseen by the HHSC, are offered through contracted providers in “natural environments” for families and their children. Children qualified to receive ECI services are under three years of age and identified with developmental delays or with certain diagnosed physical or mental disabilities, conditions, or disorders. As required by IDEA, the ECI provider service areas cover all counties in Texas.

Early Childhood Special Education

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services are available to children identified with developmental delays or other disabilities and who are experiencing challenges in their learning and development from age three to kindergarten transition. ECSE provides children special education services in their least restrictive environment. As required by IDEA, ECSE services are provided through local education agencies in all counties in Texas.

Texas Home Visiting

Texas Home Visiting is for expectant parents and parents with young children. The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division at DFPS coordinates Texas Home Visiting programs. For PEI to achieve prevention service delivery, the division is required to “procure” services, thus allowing PEI to serve children, youth, and families within communities of identified need. Due

to the limited available funding, Texas Home Visiting programs are available in only 68 counties.

Program Quality

Texas has made many strides over the past few years to increase the quality of early learning programs and services in the state with the past few legislative sessions dramatically increasing the quality requirements for public prekindergarten. Beginning with a grant program under HB 4 (2015), followed by the passage of HB 3 (2019), which solidified quality requirements for all public prekindergarten programs.

Texas has also seen incredible increases in the quality of child care providers under the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program, the state's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). Participation in Texas Rising Star is limited to subsidized child care providers who voluntarily participate. Since 2016 there has been a 72% increase in the number of 4-star providers.

The early learning programs in Texas are subject to different quality standards: Head Start and Early Head Start programs must comply with the Head Start Performance Standards set by the Office of Head Start within the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; public prekindergarten must comply with the High-Quality Prekindergarten Components in the Texas Education Code and Texas Administrative Code; child care providers must follow the Minimum Standards for Child Care Licensing established by the HHSC; and child care providers who accept child care subsidies may voluntarily participate in TRS, for which associated standards are established by the TWC.

This report reviews these quality components, along with stakeholder surveys, to identify common themes to improving program quality. Through this opportunity, common themes emerged, such as implementing an appropriate high-quality curriculum through qualified staff,

providing access to all children and families, conducting early screenings, supporting children's home language, and engaging families.

Early Learning Workforce

There are more than 95,000 professionals in the early learning workforce in Texas, including those working in childcare centers, licensed family childcare providers, public preschool/prekindergarten, Early Childhood Special Education services, and program administrators. The findings of this needs assessment re-emphasize that the workforce needs professional development in specific topics, help navigating barriers to higher education, and access to opportunities to sustain a career in this critical field.

The needs assessment identifies opportunities to expand on professional development to continue supporting early learning professionals in helping children enter school ready to learn. Inclusive of topics such as addressing challenging behaviors, supporting children with special needs, and child/brain development.

Transitions

Transitions reviewed through this needs assessment include into an early learning setting/service, within services, between classrooms, exiting services, and transition into kindergarten. All transitions involve changes for children and families and present opportunities and challenges, impacting the whole family. The report revealed that families in Texas generally feel comfortable with transitions but are still facing challenges such as unclear point of contact, required paperwork and enrollment, and financial issues. Although Head Start programs are required to have a kindergarten transition plan, Texas does not have a statewide transition requirement for other early learning programs, public and private. Therefore, transition efforts rely on

the leadership of local education agencies and early learning programs to create effective processes, communication, and opportunities around transitions. As a result, transition supports vary greatly across communities.

Texas is working to overcome data limitations in this area as evidenced by recent legislative actions. Establishing and fostering partnerships among early learning programs is supported within HB 3. Recognizing an important aspect of transitions is understanding children's readiness to learn as they enter kindergarten, through decisions of the legislative session, the Texas Education Agency is working to identify a singular kindergarten entry diagnostic. This will allow all prekindergarten and child care programs to work with LEAs to support transition practices with a thorough understanding of children's abilities and needs.

Efficient Use of Resources

Effectively utilizing resources is key to effective early learning programs. Significant Texas resources, public and private, are dedicated to supporting children birth to age five across the state. Additionally, Texas fosters a local control support process in education, allowing for innovation and customization based on local needs and community-specific culture. Resources are invested in early learning with the ultimate goal of achieving improvements in children's readiness to learn.

Understanding the varying resources and providing support to effectively utilize them will have a profound impact on early learning in the state of Texas by reinforcing adequate and sustainable funding of the state's youngest population and in providing accountability to the existing funds and programs.

There are a myriad of public and private organizations providing resources to support early learning across Texas,

including state agencies, early childhood organizations, and community organizations. This report provides insight on the resources provided and utilized by early learning stakeholders. While professional development, mentoring/coaching, and classroom materials/supplies were established as top resources by early learning organizations and staff, training opportunities, materials, and human capital were identified by community partners.

Texas supports program quality through resources provided across the communities and has utilized this needs assessment to identify opportunities to expand this support. In addition to identifying resources provided, early learning staff were asked to identify areas in which additional support would be useful in improving program quality and child outcomes. Professional development, lowering student-teacher ratios, and resources to encourage family engagement were identified as additional support areas.

Utilizing early learning partnerships to increase access and availability appears as a common theme in this report. Early learning partnerships allow all programs across the early learning system to leverage resources, funding, and expertise. To achieve desired program impacts with finite funding and resources, it becomes critical for early childhood programs and their partners to align, consolidate, and coordinate services. This also helps to maximize reach to children and families and enhances their choice in program, comprehensive services, and ability to efficiently access the services they need.

Data Limitations

Through examination of the availability and access of early learning programs and services in Texas, several data limitations were noted. Foremost, achieving an

unduplicated count of children was not possible with the data sets utilized. Limitations in the collection and reporting of data related to program capacity and enrollment, do not allow the state to examine the capacity of high-quality early learning programs and services. This limits the state's understanding of the need for additional or expanded high-quality programs in relation to the population of children birth to age five.

The Texas Workforce Registry voluntarily collects employment information (compensation and years of experience), education and/or professional development records, and participation in state workforce initiatives. It does not, however, include demographics (race/ethnicity, age, language, gender) or background checks. Texas does not link its workforce data across programs including Early Childhood Intervention Services (IDEA Part C), early childhood special education (IDEA Part B, Section 619), prekindergarten, Head Start, subsidized child care, Texas Home Visiting, and licensed child care. Therefore descriptions and accurate comparisons cannot be made regarding the make-up of the workforce in these various programs.

Texas prides itself on maintaining local control within its communities, allowing each to determine the most effective ways to utilize resources and meet the unique needs of its members. At the same time, there is limited centralized authority in collecting evidence and data on partnerships across the state.

Opportunities for Action

Accompanying the identified needs of this report, are opportunities for actionable improvement. Many of these opportunities do not require new resources, but rather, more efficient or effective use of existing resources. These opportunities are highlighted within each chapter of this report and organized by opportunities for the state, community, and program.

Introduction

In 2018, Texas was awarded the Preschool Development Grant Birth-Five (PDG B-5) through a joint effort by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of PDG B-5 is to strengthen coordination and collaboration across early learning programs and services and achieve the goal to better serve children and families by strengthening the current mixed-delivery system. The PDG B-5 program also aims to improve transitions from early learning programs to elementary schools and the overall quality of early learning programs. Texas will be able to utilize the PDG B-5 to build on major progress it has made in the past few years in increasing the availability of high-quality early learning programs and services.

The needs assessment addresses the following overall objectives:

- understand the demographics and geographic locations of children from birth through age five in Texas (especially vulnerable and underserved populations), including the number of children from birth through age five being served in existing early learning programs and children awaiting services
- understand the current quality and availability of existing early learning programs and facilities in Texas
- identify and analyze needs and gaps in providing and accessing early learning programs and supports, including barriers to funding and availability of early learning programs, opportunities for resource integration and agency collaboration, and other elements
- understand needs and gaps in supports for transitioning children between early learning programs and into kindergarten

The Texas Early Learning Council, composed of representatives from state agencies, early learning programs and

services, early learning organizations, and community organizations, adopted recommendations for the scope of the needs assessment. Appendix A includes the complete list of research questions that were used to guide this needs assessment. Texas will leverage the insights provided in this document to inform the development of a Statewide Early Learning Strategic Plan under the direction of the Texas Early Learning Council.

In addition to presenting findings responsive to the research questions, each section of the report highlights relevant data limitations that inhibited further analysis. The lack of child-level data and the availability of state agency data aggregated only to the county level combined with the short time frame for completing this report contributed to analysis limitations. Other data limitations were based on what and how state agency data were collected.

Each section of the report ends with opportunities for action based on the data presented. Improving early learning programs and services across the state requires dedicated efforts by programs, communities, and the state. Therefore, opportunities for action are presented for each. Leveraging action at all levels will ensure that the needs of children and families are successfully addressed.

The Texas Vision for Early Learning

Texas recognizes that every child deserves an excellent education throughout their critical development years. Supporting children through their educational attainment not only increases student success, but also aids in preparing a highly skilled workforce. Furthermore, Texas realizes this success begins in the early learning years. Children with access to quality early learning opportunities are better prepared for kindergarten. They have increased vocabulary, better language, math and social skills, and more positive relationships with classmates (Grimm,

2008). Supporting this vision is vital to our state’s economic prosperity, quality of life, and civic health.

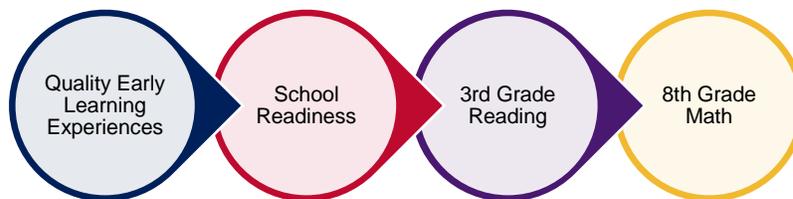
Reading is the foundational skill for all future learning, with third grade reading achievement serving as a crucial milestone in a child’s future academic success. Research shows that a child’s third grade reading level is a strong predictor of performance in eighth grade, high school graduation, and workforce contribution. Reading well in the early grades sets the stage for success in many other content areas—social studies, science, and even mathematics (Gaddy 2003). Children who attend high-quality early childhood education programs develop behavioral, academic, and social skills that enable them to achieve success in elementary school and beyond (Barnett, 1995, 1998; McPherson, 2008; Pianta, 2007). Attending an early learning experience were equipped with early learning skills which contribute to future academic success. In essence, children’s performance in early years of schooling has been associated with later achievement because children who enter formal schooling with a strong foundation of emergent literacy skills learn to read at an earlier age and develop reading skills that

enable future academic success (Downer & Pianta, 2006).

The recognition of literacy skills is important to the Texas vision since research supports children reading well in the early grades are more successful in later years. Reading leads to improvements in other areas of achievement such that “reading opens the door to learning about math, history, science, literature, geography and much more. Thus, young capable readers can succeed in these subjects, take advantage of other opportunities, and develop confidence in their own abilities” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

As stated, mathematics and reading achievement have been shown to be positively related. Reading and mathematics skills are related over time, and children who have difficulties in one area have a high likelihood of having difficulties in the other area (Barberisi, Katusic, Colligan, Weaver, & Jacobsen, 2005). Recently the link between language skills and mathematics has found a place in early developmental theory, where language (prereading vocabulary skills) is thought to shape the development of number concepts and is seen as having a causal influence on at least some aspects of numeracy (Carey, 2004).

Figure 1. Connection across early learning



Advancement in Education in Texas

The awareness of investing in early learning has grown in Texas. With such came an increased focus on state and public support.

Each initiative and advancement have emphasized the importance of the early learning system to a child’s education experience, entering school ready to learn, third grade reading achievement, and eighth grade math success. Additionally, each

advancement has underscored the importance of high-quality early learning opportunities in improving the lives of Texas children.

ESSA provides a unique opportunity for states to identify and/or reengage decision making related to accountability, school improvement, teacher quality, and funding. Texas has embraced this opportunity, as evidenced by maximizing on the policy flexibility, aligning key decision points in developing systems to support ESSA implementation, and the development of a new Texas Education Agency (TEA) Strategic Plan. In doing so, Texas has engaged all new opportunities provided by ESSA to create a singular focus on key state priority areas, supporting a vision of excellent education for every child.

HB 4 aimed to increase the quality of prekindergarten in Texas by establishing the high-quality prekindergarten grant program. This grant program provided \$118 million to 573 LEAs to implement high-quality prekindergarten components during the 2016-2017 biennium. The high-quality prekindergarten components included

- curriculum aligned to the 2015 prekindergarten guidelines
- implementation of a progress monitoring tool
- additional teacher education/training requirements
- implementation of a family engagement plan to encourage and maintain family involvement
- emphasis on a teacher-to-student ratio of 1-to-11.

HB 4 also required all districts to collect and report additional data, such as class sizes and ratios, to TEA.

Texas continued the momentum of ESSA and HB 4 through the 86th Legislative Session by passing HB 3, which reforms school finance and significantly enhances early childhood education efforts. This

legislation continues to build a strong foundation of high-quality early childhood education by requiring all local education agencies (LEAs) to implement the components established in the high-quality prekindergarten grant program under HB 4.

Furthermore, HB 3 increases prekindergarten to full day programming for eligible students, establishes an early education allotment, and requires an increased focus on early literacy and math. This focus includes the following requirements:

- no later than the 2021-2022 school year, each classroom teacher in kindergarten-third grade and each principal at a campus with kindergarten-third grade has attended a teacher literacy achievement academy
- provide for the use of a phonics curriculum that uses systematic direct instruction in kindergarten through third grade to ensure all students obtain necessary early literacy skills
- for use in diagnosing the reading development and comprehension of kindergarten students, the education agency shall adopt a multidimensional diagnostic tool that includes a reading instrument and tests at least three developmental skills, including literacy
- each school district shall administer, at the first and second grade levels, a reading instrument on the list adopted by the education agency or by a district-level committee
- prioritizes placement of highly effective teachers in kindergarten through second grade

Additional highlights of HB 3 include increasing average daily attendance funding weight for low-income students; providing

supports to teachers and rewards for teacher excellence; increasing funding and equity; focusing on improved student outcomes; and reducing and reforming property taxes.

The Texas Early Learning System

The Texas Early Learning System is composed of a mixed-delivery system that uses multiple program models and service settings to best meet the needs of young children and their families. Table 1 provides a list of the programs in the Texas Early Learning System along with the administering agency with the larger child-and-family serving programs highlighted in bold.

Texas recognizes the strength in coordination and collaboration across programs and services. To facilitate this, the

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) jointly fund an Inter-Agency Deputy Director of Early Childhood. This individual is responsible for increasing alignment and coordination across the early learning programs and services administered by each of these agencies. DFPS leads the Early Childhood Systems Integration Group (ECSIG), another coalition focused on increasing collaboration. Made up of cross agency leadership, ECSIG utilizes a results-based accountability model to track essential indicators of progress related to outcomes for children ages 0-5. These indicators are related to children’s readiness for school, safety, and health.

Table 1. Programs in the Texas Early Learning System

State Agency	Programs
Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)	Child and Adult Care Food Program National School Lunch Program School Breakfast Program
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	Prevention and Early Intervention Texas Home Visiting
Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)	Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant
Texas Education Agency (TEA)	Early Childhood Special Education services Public Prekindergarten
Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office (THSSCO)	Head Start Early Head Start
Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)	Child Care Licensing Early Childhood Intervention services
Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)	Child Care and Development Block Grant Child Care Subsidy Program

Children in Texas

There are more than two million children birth to age five in Texas, representing a very diverse subset of the Texas population and 10% of the birth-five population for the entire United States. Figures 2 and 3 depict the number of children by race and ethnicity, and by completely rural, mostly rural and urban areas. To classify counties by the level of rurality and urbanicity, each county was placed into one of three categories based on the percentage of the population that is rural as identified by the U.S. Census Bureau. In *rural counties*, 100% of the population lives in a rural area. In *mostly rural counties*, 50% to 99.9% of the population lives in a rural area. In *urban counties*, less than 50% of the population lives in a rural area. It is important to note,

Texas is experiencing a rapid growth in the population of low-income families with young children. It is expected by 2040 that the population of children living in low-income families will exceed three million (Schexnayder, Juniper, Schroeder, et al., 2012).

Figure 2. Children Birth to Age Five by Race and Ethnicity

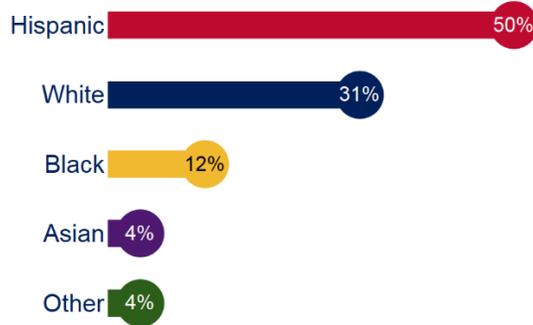
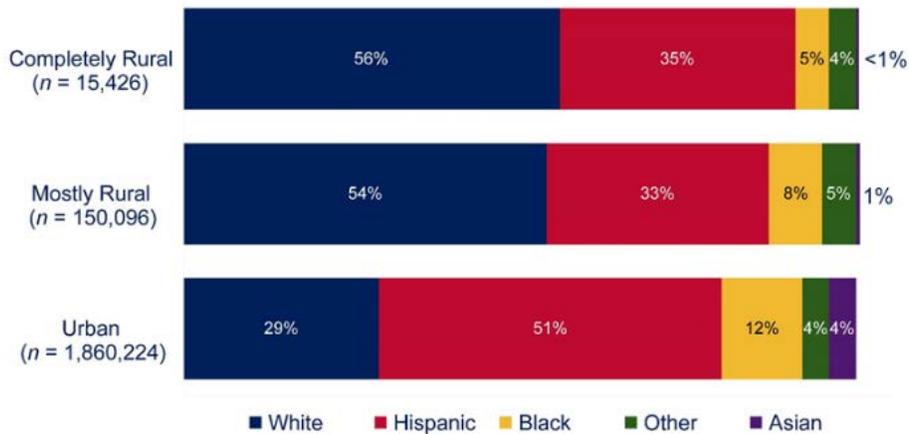


Figure 3. Children Birth to Age Five by Rurality and Urbanicity



Entering School Ready to Learn

A large number of studies have investigated the effects a prekindergarten education has on young children entering school ready to learn (Friedman-Krauss, Barnett, & Nores, 2016; Yoshikawa, Weiland, & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). Additionally, a comprehensive review concluded that public preschool programs have produced positive short-term effects, particularly in the academic areas of literacy and numeracy (Phillips et al., 2017). As the research indicates, enrollment in high-quality early learning programs, prepares

children to be ready to learn, in return providing the foundation for strong third grade reading and eighth grade mathematics skills. High-quality early learning experiences yield great opportunities for further success, with kindergarten readiness as the indicator. The following figure details the Texas data reinforcing the powerful impact a prekindergarten program has on children's readiness to learn in kindergarten, particularly the impact it has on the population eligible to attend public prekindergarten.

Figure 4. Percentage of children ready for kindergarten



Vulnerable Children

The availability of support for healthy development and entering school ready to learn are important for all children in Texas, especially those in which personal, family, or community characteristics put them at a higher risk. Further evidence is available supporting the positive effects quality early learning programs have, not only on young children, but also on their families and society as a whole. Understanding the vulnerable population is critical to continuing the momentum of the state and supporting a system that can serve all Texas children.

The three major education-focused and publicly funded early learning programs in Texas (public prekindergarten, child care subsidies, and Early Head Start/Head Start) all aim to serve children who face vulnerability factors (reflected in the eligibility criteria for each of each of these programs) (Table D-1, Appendix D). Common eligibility criteria include low-income (income threshold varying by program), foster care, and homelessness.

Low-Income

Poverty can have profound and enduring effects across all domains of a child's well-being, including early language and cognitive development, academic achievement, and educational attainment. The stressors associated with living in impoverished conditions can affect children's emotional, mental, behavioral, and physical health through chronic physiological stress responses. Additionally, the effects of poverty on parental mental health and stress also are associated with negative impacts on children (Reardon, 2011; Vaiserman, 2015; Yoshikawa, Aber & Beardslee, 2012).

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has established the following 2019 federal poverty guidelines: \$16,910 for a household of two, \$21,330 for a household of three and \$25,750 for a household of four.

These guidelines yield a result in which roughly one in four children (birth to age five) in Texas are living in poverty. Of those:

- 11% are Asian children
- 34% are Black children
- 33% are Hispanic children
- 11% are White children, and
- 27% identified as another race or ethnicity

The income eligibility criteria across the public resources and programs for early learning in Texas vary significantly, Early Head Start/Head Start holding the lowest minimum threshold and public prekindergarten holding the highest. These variations contribute to the number of children served by each program.

Table 2. Number of income eligible Texas children served by program in 2017-2018

Program	Income Eligibility Level	Children Served
Child Care Subsidies	85% State Median Income	197,522
Early Head Start	100% Federal Poverty Level	12,329
Head Start	100% Federal Poverty Level	53,238
Public Prekindergarten	185% Federal Poverty Level	198,505

Foster Care

National research from the U.S. Department of Education shows that children in foster care are at higher risk of dropping out of school and are unlikely to attend or graduate from college. Of the children in foster care in the U.S. in 2017, 42% are under age six. A coordinated effort by education agencies and child welfare agencies is necessary to improve the educational outcomes for students in foster care (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). According to data from DFPS, there was a 9% increase in the number of children (birth – age 17) in foster care from 2015 to 2018.

Table 3. Number of Texas children in foster care served by program in 2017-2018

Program	Children Served
Child Care Subsidies	35,869*
Early Head Start	430
Head Start	1,253
Public Prekindergarten	2,213

* Includes children who are in general protective care, children who are in foster care, and children who have been placed by DFPS with a relative or other guardian.

Homelessness

A lack of stable housing can interrupt student learning and reduce academic achievement (Brennan, Reed, & Sturtevant, 2014). Children experiencing homelessness are more than twice as likely as other children to repeat a school grade, be expelled or suspended, or drop out of high school (National Center on Family Homelessness, 2011). Additionally, research shows factors such as hunger and poverty, may affect children before, during, and after they experience homelessness (Bassuk et al., 2014).

In Texas, fewer than one percent of all children in schools were reported as homeless by their school’s education liaison in School Year 2016-2017 per the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Data is not available to examine how homelessness varies by race and ethnicity.

Table 4. Number of Texas children experiencing homelessness served by program in 2017-2018

Program	Children Served
Child Care Subsidies	2,540
Early Head Start	1,147
Head Start	2,824
Public Prekindergarten	7,646

Methodology

A comprehensive statewide needs assessment was conducted between April and June of 2019, which involved the following activities: reviewing existing needs assessments; analyzing a variety of state agency and national data sets; and analyzing newly collected data from a statewide stakeholder survey and a series of focus groups across Texas with early learning stakeholders. A high-level overview

of the needs assessment methodology is presented here. Additional details regarding these varied data sources and how the data sources were used to document needs and gaps in Texas are presented in Appendix A.

Meta-Analysis of Existing Needs

Assessments. As a preliminary step to assess documented early learning needs in Texas, more than 20 existing needs assessments and reports were analyzed and findings were used to contextualize findings from other data sources throughout this report.

State Agency and National Data. County-level state agency and national data sets were collected and analyzed to describe the early learning landscape in Texas. Data were not provided at the child level.

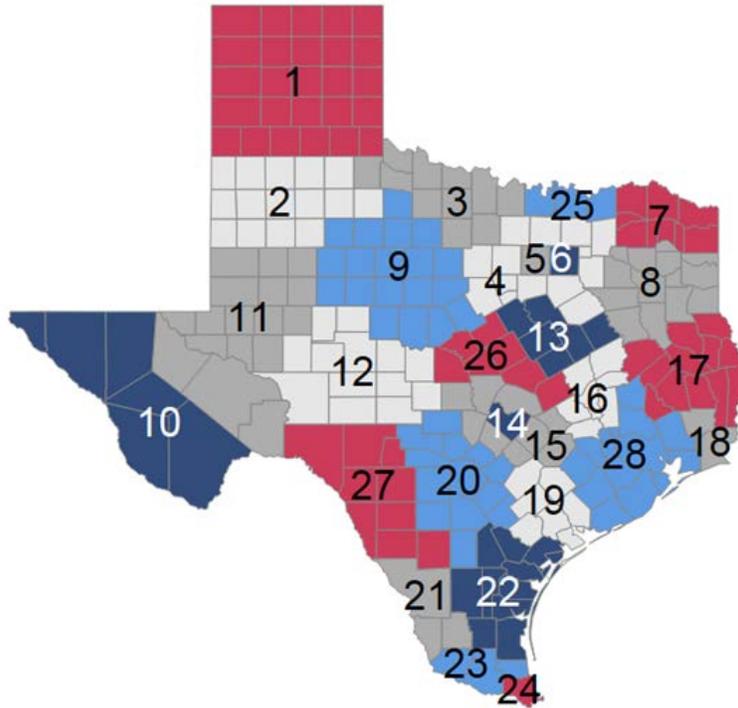
Statewide Stakeholder Survey. A stakeholder survey was designed and administered that included the perspectives of early learning programs and services (direct providers), early childhood organizations (non-providers), community organizations, and family members. A total of 8,848 responses were received. Survey results were often aggregated by counties within each of the 28 Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) areas for

analysis (represented in Figure 5). Survey responses from early childhood programs and services early childhood organizations, and community partners covered all 254 counties in Texas and all 28 LWDB areas. Survey responses from family members were received from 68% of counties and all 28 LWDB areas.

Stakeholder Focus Groups. Eight stakeholder focus groups were conducted with intentional inclusion of the following: urban and rural early learning teachers, early childhood administrators, administrators and faculty from institutions of higher education, early childhood programs and partners, and families (urban, rural, and Spanish-speaking families). Of these eight, three were conducted in-person (Brownsville, San Antonio, and San Angelo) and five were conducted virtually to accommodate participants' schedules and widespread locations. This allowed the focus groups to collect as many perspectives as possible.

In total, 76 individuals participated across the eight focus group sessions. Focus group notes and transcriptions were thematically coded according to the topical areas stipulated in the research questions as well as emergent topics raised by participants.

Figure 5. Regional Breakdown of Texas Counties Used in Survey Analysis



Local Workforce Board Area		Local Workforce Board Area	
1	Workforce Solutions Panhandle	15	Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area
2	Workforce Solutions South Plains	16	Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley
3	Workforce Solutions North Texas	17	Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas
4	Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas	18	Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas
5	Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County	19	Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent
6	Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas	20	Workforce Solutions Alamo
7	Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	21	Workforce Solutions for South Texas
8	Workforce Solutions East Texas	22	Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend
9	Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas	23	Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley
10	Workforce Solutions Borderplex	24	Workforce Solutions Cameron
11	Workforce Solutions Permian Basin	25	Workforce Solutions Texoma
12	Workforce Solutions Concho Valley	26	Workforce Solutions of Central Texas
13	Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas	27	Workforce Solutions Middle Rio Grande
14	Workforce Solutions Capital Area	28	Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast

Access & Availability

As detailed in the introduction, enrollment in high-quality early learning programs, prepares children to be ready for kindergarten, in return providing the foundation for strong third grade reading and eighth grade mathematics skills. Further evidence is available supporting the positive effects quality early learning programs have, not only on young children, but also on their families and society as a whole. Therefore, this needs assessment will examine the access and availability to early learning programs in the state.

For this needs assessment, availability is defined as presence of programs within a county. While programs may be present in a county, families may have challenges accessing these programs for a variety of reasons. This report examines several of these challenges such as hours of operation, cost, and waitlists.

Defining and exploring availability is key in establishing a successful early learning system. Understanding that children and families may not have access to such programs due to one or more barriers. For instance, the cost of fee-based early care and education is prohibitive for many families, with average yearly child care expenses exceeding median rent in every state. Many families that lack the resources to afford high-quality fee-based centers rely on public programs like Head Start to receive comprehensive early education and care, but these programs primarily target children and families who live below the poverty line and reach fewer than half of eligible families. Other families utilize childcare subsidies to pay for care. However, state subsidy programs do not

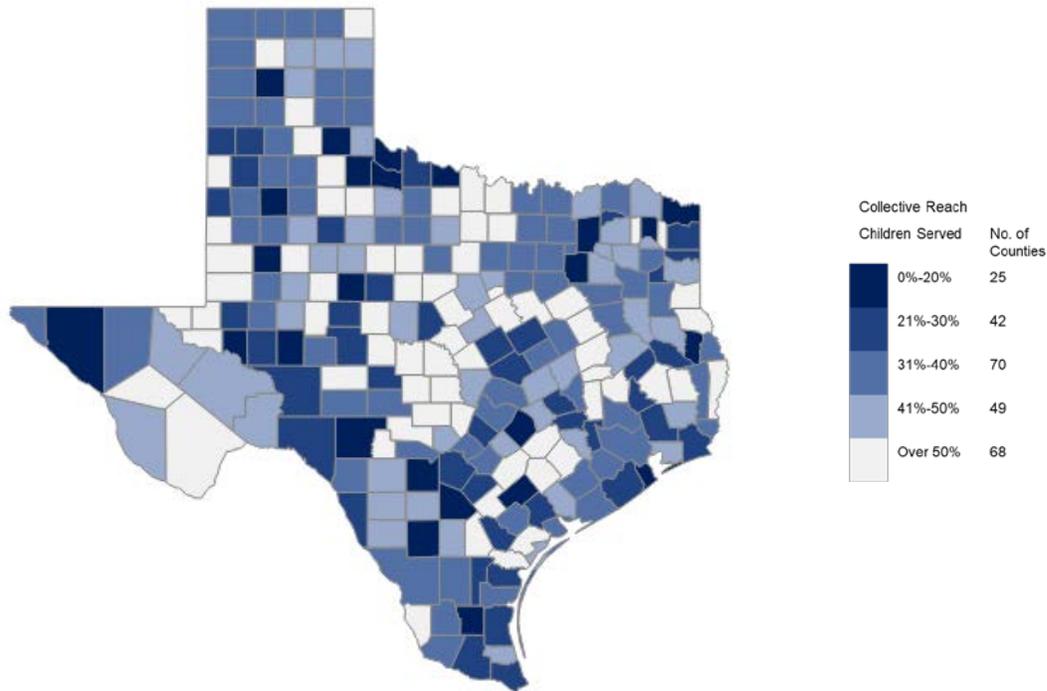
reach all eligible families, and subsidies do not necessarily cover the full cost of tuition—especially at high-quality, center-based programs (Friedman-Krauss, Barnett, & Nores, 2016). As a result, expanding access to quality preschool has been a focus of recent policies at both the state and national levels. As discussed in the previous section, Texas places heavy focus on quality early learning experiences through the state’s ESSA plan and legislative action.

Availability and Reach of Early Childhood Programs and Services

Throughout Texas, there are seven main types of early childhood programs and services, including public prekindergarten, child care (center-based and home-based), Early Childhood Intervention services, Early Childhood Special Education services, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Texas Home Visiting. Each of these programs have varying availability across the Texas counties, except for Early Childhood Intervention services and Early Childhood Special Education services, which are available in every county.

Since many programs have an overlap in those eligible for services, it is important to examine the collective reach of programs, or percentage of children served. Figure 6 shows the percentage of children age birth to five living at or below 185% the federal poverty level collectively served by public prekindergarten, childcare subsidy, Head Start and Early Head Start, and Texas Home Visiting within each county.

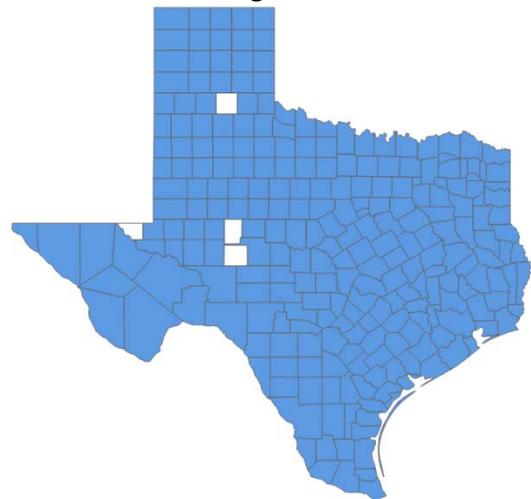
Figure 6. Collective reach of early learning programs serving children at or below 185% FPL



Public Prekindergarten

LEAs with 15 or more eligible 4-year-olds are required to offer free prekindergarten. LEAs with fewer than 15 eligible 4-year-olds can also offer free prekindergarten but are not required to do so. Any LEAs may choose to, but are not required to, serve eligible 3-year-olds and receive funding for doing so. Children are eligible to attend public prekindergarten in Texas if they meet at least one of the following criteria: qualify for free or reduced-price lunch (185% of the Federal Poverty Level), are experiencing homelessness, are in foster care, have a parent on active military duty or who was injured or killed on active duty, are unable to speak or comprehend English, and/or have a parent eligible for the Star of Texas Award. Public prekindergarten is provided by 1,058 of the 1,200 LEAs in Texas within 251 counties.

Figure 7. Counties with Public Prekindergarten Programs



Since making public prekindergarten a priority in 2015, Governor Abbott's efforts have had a significant impact on the number of children served in public prekindergarten, resulting in an increase of over 11,000 children served in public prekindergarten during his first term alone. Additionally, the state passed HB 3, requiring LEAs to offer prekindergarten as a full-day program. Moving to full-day prekindergarten will likely

contribute to a further increase in the number of children served in public prekindergarten.

Figure 8. Number of Children Enrolled in Public Prekindergarten



Child Care

Child care is provided in multiple settings across the state including center-based care and family home child care providers and is regulated by HHSC. Center-based care may be offered by for-profit, non-profit, or faith-based organizations, and/or through the military. Currently there are 13,513 licensed child care centers, licensed child care homes, and registered child care homes that are approved to serve infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children. Child care providers serving children birth-five are located in 240 counties.

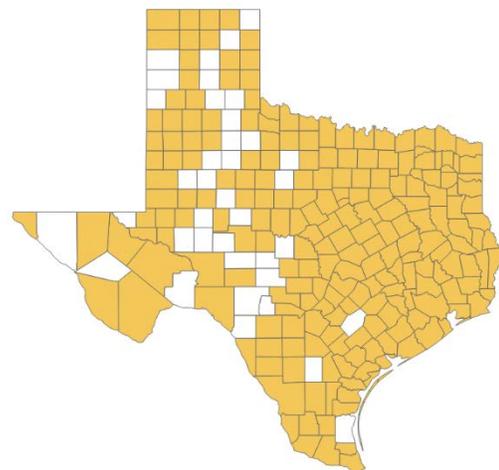
Figure 9. Counties with Child Care Providers



Subsidized Child Care

The child care subsidy services program is overseen by the TWC and administered through LWDBs and provides financial assistance to help pay for child care for families that meet work and income requirements. Subsidies provided by the program help parents attain and retain employment and education. When used to pay for care that is in safe, stimulating, and developmentally appropriate home and/or center-based programs, subsidies also contribute to healthy child development. In Texas, local workforce development boards set the income eligibility limits, and most follow the federal maximum, allowing families to receive assistance if they are earning up to 85% of the State's Median Income (SMI). Families must also meet certain work requirements. In 2018, there were 6,838 child care providers that accepted child care subsidies across 217 counties.

Figure 10. Counties with Subsidized Child Care Providers



The child care subsidy program has experienced major shifts in the number of children served between 2016 and 2018. This is due to the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) in 2014 and the associated rule changes in 2016, which changed the length of eligibility for services to one year. The decrease in the number of children served in 2017, clearly visible in Figure 11, is due

to this change. However, Congress increased funding for CCDBG in 2018 which increased the number of children served through child care subsidy in that same year.

Figure 11. Children Receiving Child Care Subsidies



Head Start and Early Head Start

Early Head Start and Head Start are comprehensive child development, health, and social service programs for children and families with incomes at or below the poverty level, children with special needs, or children with negative family circumstances such as homelessness. The Early Head Start program offers services beginning prenatally, and continuing to age three, to nurture child development and parenting skills, while the Head Start program offers a comprehensive program for children ages three to five. There are four program delivery options provided by Head Start: center-based, locally designed program option variations, home-based, and family child care. Head Start programs are in 214 counties in Texas and Early Head Start programs are in 20 counties.

Figure 12. Counties with Head Start programs

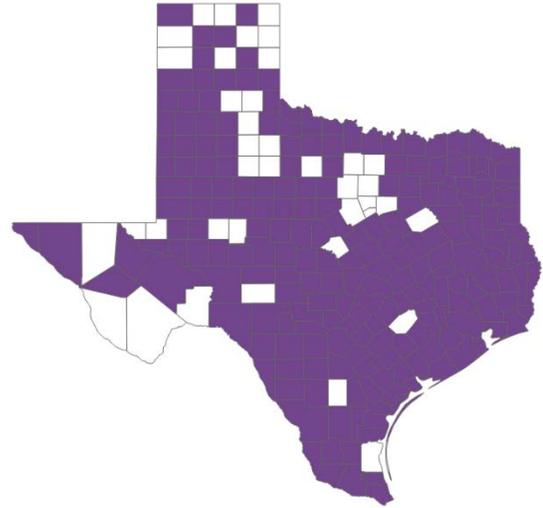
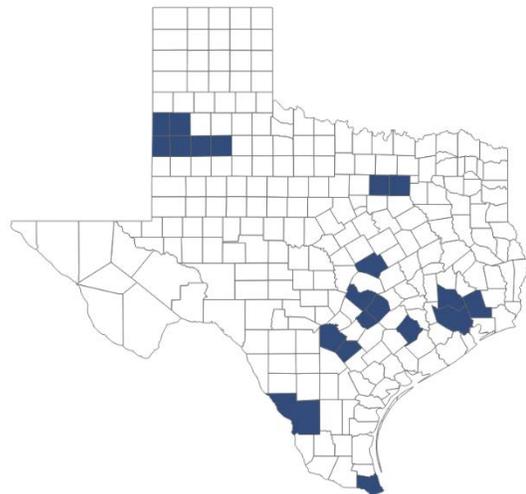
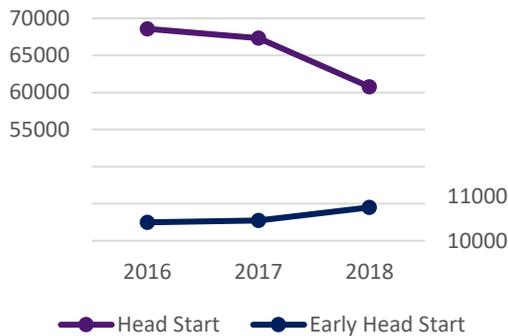


Figure 13. Counties with Early Head Start Programs



Head Start and Early Head Start have had varying enrollment trends. Head Start has experienced a decline in the number of children enrolled since 2016 with just under 8,000 fewer children being served. However, Early Head Start has seen a slight increase in enrollment with an additional 300 children served since 2016.

Figure 14. Number of Children Enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start



Early Childhood Intervention

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is a national law ensuring that early intervention, special education, and related services are provided to children with disabilities. With provision for infants and toddlers in Part C, Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services, overseen by the HHSC, are offered through contracted providers in “natural environments” for families and their children. Children qualified to receive ECI services are under three years of age and identified with developmental delays or with certain diagnosed physical or mental disabilities, conditions, or disorders. These include children with extremely low birth weight and children with hearing or vision impairment. As required by IDEA, the ECI provider service areas cover all counties in Texas.

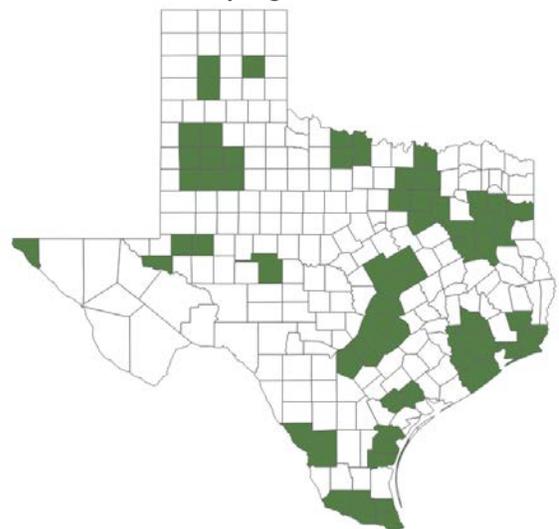
Early Childhood Special Education

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services are available to children identified with developmental delays or other disabilities and who are experiencing challenges in their learning and development from age three to kindergarten transition. ECSE provides children special education services in their least restrictive environment (home, child care setting, or school). As required by IDEA, ECSE services are provided through local education agencies in all counties in Texas.

Texas Home Visiting

Texas Home Visiting is for expectant parents and parents with young children. It is comprised of three different program models: Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parents as Teachers. Each program addresses different challenges and has its own eligibility requirements. The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division at DFPS coordinates Texas Home Visiting programs. For PEI to achieve prevention service delivery, the division is required to “procure” services, thus allowing PEI to serve children, youth, and families within communities of identified need. Due to the limited available funding, Texas Home Visiting programs are available in only 68 counties. Additionally, a recent study found that in nearly all counties, the service capacity of home visiting programs is far lower than the need, with the capacity to serve only 11% of the estimated overall statewide population of families at the highest need (Booker et al., 2017).

Figure 15. Counties with Texas Home Visiting programs



Children Served through Publicly Funded Programs

Children Currently Served

In 2018, Texas served over 529,000 children in early learning programs across the state. Table 5 provides a detailed breakdown based on the type of early childhood program.

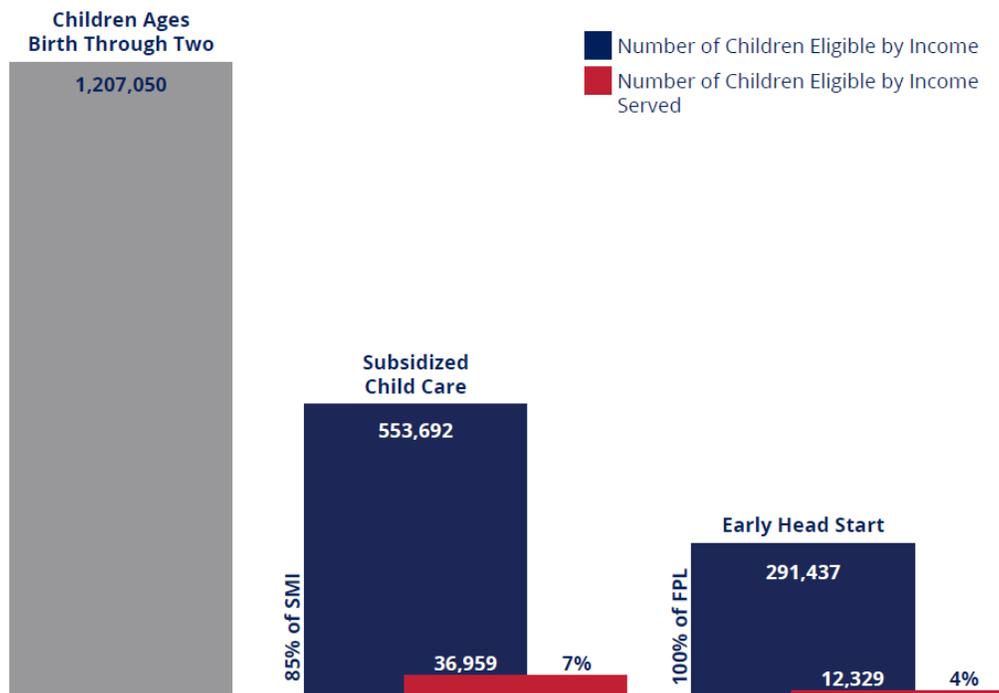
Table 5. Number of Children in Texas Served by Early Childhood Programs and Services (2018)

Program	Number of Children Served
Head Start/Early Head Start	71,487
Public prekindergarten	231,485
Subsidized Child Care (Birth to Age Five)	109,496
Texas Home Visiting	9,582
Early Childhood Intervention Services (Birth to Age 3)	57,485
ECSE Services (Ages 3 & 4)	49,681
Total=	529,216

Children Under Age Three

Texas serves a small percentage of children under age three due to a smaller number of publicly-funded programs available to serve this age group. Texas serves 9% of income eligible children under the age of three between Early Head Start and child care subsidies.

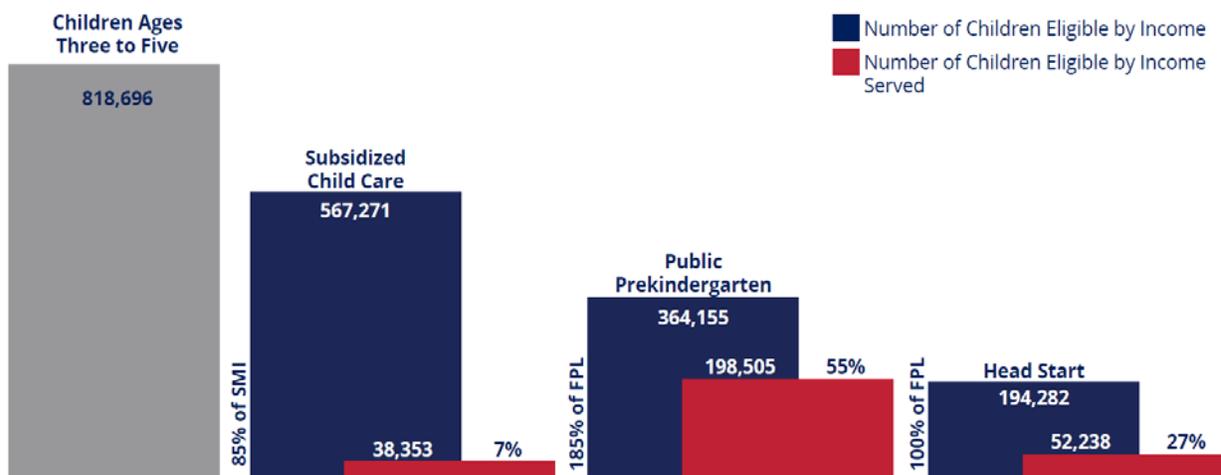
Figure 16. Number of Income-Eligible Children in Texas Under Age Three Served (2018)



Children Ages Three to Five

Texas serves a significant number of income-eligible children ages three-five through public prekindergarten, child care subsidy, and Head Start programs. Combined, these programs serve approximately 50% of children who are income-eligible.

Figure 17. Number of Income-Eligible Children in Texas Ages Three and Four Served (2018)



Access Challenges

Families in Texas may face a range of challenges in accessing early learning programs and services. These challenges include lack of programs, programs not operating outside of traditional hours, cost, eligibility requirements, and insufficient capacity to meet demand.

Child Care Capacity Deserts

The gap between the need for child care and the available supply results in numerous child care “deserts” of regulated care, subsidized care, and/or quality care across the state. According to previous research, the estimated need for care for children in working families is more than three times the number of available slots in formal care (Children at Risk, 2018). Although Texas has achieved great progress in helping to establish child care providers in 240 counties, the need for more “slots” or access persists. Additionally, the supply of formal or regulated care also has shortages in part-day care and non-traditional hour care.

Need for Child Care During Non-Traditional Hours

Families working low-wage jobs often work during non-traditional hours, thus presenting a need for child care during evening, overnight, weekend, or irregular hours. Low-income, erratic work schedules and lack of stable child care options create negative impacts on low-income parents and children (Schulman, Tucker & Vogtman, 2017). According to the 2018 Texas Child Care Market Rate survey, 7% of licensed child care centers, 10% of licensed child care homes, 9% of registered child care homes, and 8% of all facility types offered child care during non-traditional hours (TWC, 2018).

Child Care Affordability

In addition to facing gaps in access to care, parents, especially single parents, may face significant challenges in affording their desired child care option. The state average for the cost of child care annually is \$7,348 for infants, \$6,994 for toddlers, and \$6,344 for preschoolers (TWC, 2018). Represented as a percentage of income for a household

of four living at the federal poverty level, child care for an infant is 29% of the household income, child care for a toddler is 28% of the household income, and child care for a preschooler is 25% of the household income. When compared the state median income, child care for an infant is 9% of the household income, child care for a toddler is 8% of the household income, and child care for a preschooler is 7% of the household income.

These percentages account for only a single child in care, and do not demonstrate the

cost of care when two or more children are enrolled in care. Table C.9, in Appendix C, details the cost of child care for each LWDB area by percentage of median income and the poverty level.

The state and federal programs that facilitate access to child care options cover only families with the lowest incomes and may not cover all families who face affordability challenges. For those families that do qualify for assistance, they face varying eligibility criteria that may serve as barriers to enrolling in programs or services.

Varying Eligibility Criteria for Early Learning Programs and Services

The early learning programs and services that are provided in Texas have different eligibility criteria. The variations in eligibility criteria may serve as a barrier to access for families and barrier to collaboration and more efficient use of resources. Table 6 provides the income and categorical eligibility criteria for each.

Table 6. Eligibility Criteria for Texas Early Learning Programs and Services

Program	Ages Served	Income Requirements	Categorical Requirements ¹
Head Start/ Early Head Start	Birth to Age 5	100% of Federal Poverty Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless • Foster Care • Migrant • Tribal • Eligible for public assistance
Public prekindergarten	Ages 3 and 4	185% of Federal Poverty Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless • Child of an active military service member • Currently or previously in foster care in Texas • Limited English proficiency • Star of Texas Award
Subsidized Child Care	Birth to Age 5	85% of State Median Income	Priority for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child of family with very low income (families participating in TANF or SNAP employment and training programs) • Homeless • Child of an active military service member • Child receiving protective services • Child of a teen parent / foster youth • Child with a disability

¹Categorical eligibility requirements are explained in more detail in Appendix D.

Program Waitlists

Program waitlists suggest a gap in services and therefore create access challenges. Sixty-three percent of early learning programs and services staff reported in the stakeholder survey that their program

maintains a waitlist, thereby suggesting an area that needs further examination—the factors contributing to the waitlists and barriers to addressing waitlists (Table C.7, Appendix C).

While public prekindergarten must serve all eligible 4-year-old children, LEAs may have

a waitlist for 3-year-old children who are eligible for prekindergarten. Furthermore, Head Start programs and child care services programs may also have a waitlist if demand of eligible children is greater than the capacity/funding available. Waitlists are maintained by individual programs and are not centrally reported or tracked, making it difficult to overcome access challenges by coordinating waitlist data.

Sources that Inform Families about Early Learning Programs in Their Community

Access to programs is also contingent upon a family's knowledge of existing programs. Focusing on how the most disadvantaged families learn about early learning programs and services in their community, the survey analysis examined families whose household incomes were close to the federal poverty level (less than \$30,000). These families reported learning about programs and services available in the community mainly through their public schools (38%), family (34%), and co-workers/friends (33%) (Table C.1, Appendix C). Relatively lower percentages reported learning about opportunities from their primary health care provider/family doctor (20%), public spaces (20%), and social services agencies (19%).

Families with a household income of less than \$30,000 identified barriers faced in accessing early learning programs and services in their community. More than half of these families (51%) identified financial barriers. The next two highest percentages of families reported lack of awareness (31%) and time (29%) (Table C.2, Appendix C).

Additionally, through focus groups, urban teachers reported that lack of time and the absence of a centralized source for learning about and accessing needed services were preventing families from taking advantage of what was available to them.

Data Limitations

Through examination of the availability and access of early learning programs and services in Texas, several data limitations were noted. First, achieving an unduplicated count of children was not possible with the data sets utilized. To achieve an unduplicated count with current data sets, state agencies would need to use a common unique identifier or provide detailed child-level data files that could be matched probabilistically through a combination of name, address, birth date, and social security number. Under HB 680 passed during the 86th Legislative Session in 2019, TEA will assign a PEIMS number to children receiving child care subsidies through TWC. This will establish a common unique identifier utilized by these two agencies.

The second limitation is that child care enrollment data is not collected. This prevents Texas from understanding the number of children served by child care providers and determining the vacant capacity of child care programs. Similarly, the capacity of child care providers is not broken out by individual child ages. This creates difficulty in determining the total number of infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children the current child care providers can serve. Capacity data for Head Start and Early Head Start programs is also not available.

Another limitation is the availability of waitlist data. Waitlists for individual child care providers, Head Start, and Early Head Start are kept at the program level and not centrally tracked by the state. Additionally, waitlist procedures for the child care subsidy program prevent waitlist data from being utilized to evaluate the number of children who qualify for services. These limitations with waitlist data do not allow for a true analysis of the number awaiting services.

Lastly, population level data broken out by age that aligns with categorical eligibility criteria are not available. This limits the

ability to estimate the number of children who may be eligible for services and the percentage of eligible children being served.

Opportunities to Expand Access and Availability

Through a review of the data regarding access and availability of early learning programs across the state, the following opportunities have been identified to further support the momentum Texas has made in providing an excellent education for all children and meeting the needs of children and families.

Opportunities for Programs and Services

- provide families with information about other programs and services when waitlisting a family
- adjust program hours to align with family work schedules

Opportunities for Communities

- coordinate waitlists across programs and services to maximize the number of children served

Opportunities for the State

- leverage the authority in HB 680 for TEA to assign a unique identifier to children receiving child care subsidies to help achieve an unduplicated count of children being served across programs and services
- explore innovative solutions to increasing the number of eligible infants and toddlers served in programs and services
- support rural communities in creating innovative program models to help serve children in rural areas in which programs do not exist

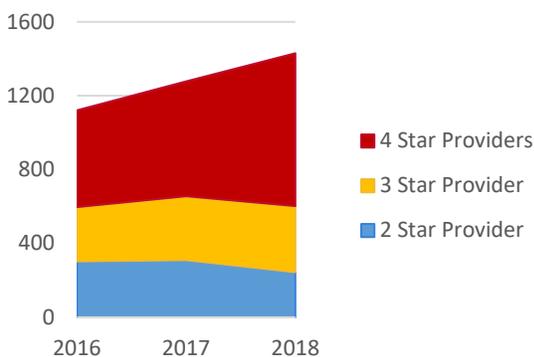
Program Quality

Landscape of Early Learning Program Quality in Texas

Texas has made many strides over the past few years to increase the quality of early learning programs and services in the state. Prior to 2015 there were no quality requirements for public prekindergarten. As described in the introduction of this report, the past few legislative sessions have dramatically increased the quality requirements for public prekindergarten. Beginning with a grant program under HB 4 (2015), followed by the passage of HB 3 (2019), which solidified quality requirements for all public prekindergarten programs, Governor Abbott and the legislature have placed priority on the quality of public prekindergarten.

Texas' gains in quality have not only been limited to public prekindergarten. Texas has also seen incredible increases in the quality of child care providers under the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program. TRS is the state's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS). Participation in Texas Rising Star is limited to subsidized child care providers who voluntarily participate. As shown in Figure 18, since 2016 there has been a 72% increase in the number of 4-star providers.

Figure 18. Number of TRS Providers



High-quality programs are associated with the development of physical, social, language, cognitive, and emotional skills in

children and with preparing them for success in school and life. Although views in the field are not uniform, there is substantial consensus regarding key elements of quality. High-quality early learning programs generally employ teachers who have strong educational backgrounds in child development and utilize research-based curricula that address the needs of the whole child. In the classroom, teachers engage children in intentional, well-planned interactions that are warm, engaging, and intellectually stimulating. Moreover, class sizes are typically small, and children have access to a variety of developmentally appropriate materials and learning activities (Friedman-Krauss, Barnett, & Nores, 2016).

While early learning programs and services in Texas include many of these high-quality components, the quality components vary across each program and service type. Therefore, a comparison of quality requirements and an understanding of stakeholder conceptions of quality is explored in this section along with the capacity of quality child care programs, and the conditions of early learning facilities.

Defining Early Learning Program Quality

As mentioned above, quality requirements vary across programs in Texas due to their administration and regulation by different state or federal agencies. This report compares the quality components required for each program type and examines stakeholder perspectives of quality.

Comparison of Structural Quality Elements

The early learning programs in Texas are subject to different quality standards: Head Start and Early Head Start programs must comply with the Head Start Performance Standards set by the Office of Head Start within the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; public

prekindergarten must comply with the High-Quality Prekindergarten Components in the Texas Education Code and Texas Administrative Code; child care providers must follow the Minimum Standards for Child Care Licensing established by the HHSC; and child care providers who accept child care subsidies may voluntarily

participate in TRS, for which associated standards are established by the TWC.

Table 7 compares the structural quality components for the early learning programs in Texas. As shown through the comparison, there is minimal consistency across each program type.

Table 7. Comparison of Structural Quality Components for Early Learning Programs in Texas

Structural Quality Components	Head Start	Early Head Start	Public Prekindergarten	Child Care (Licensing)	Texas Rising Star
Maximum Class Size					
0–11 months		8		10*	8
12–17 months		8		13*	12
18–23 months		8		18*	15
Two years		8		22*	18
Three years	17		None	30*	24
Four years	20		None	35*	27
Teacher-to-Student Ratio					
0–11 months		2:8		1:4	1:4
12–17 months		2:8		1:5	1:4
18–23 months		2:8		1:9	1:5
Two years		2:8		1:11	1:6
Three years	2:17		None	1:15	1:8
Four years	2:20		Attempt to maintain 1:11	1:18	1:9
Bachelor's Degree Required for Teacher	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Teacher Observation/Evaluation Process	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes ¹
Teacher Planning/Prep Time Required	No	No	Yes	No	No
Admin/Director Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Master's degree + principal certification	Education and experience requirements vary	Education and experience requirements vary
Aide/Assistant Qualification	Child Development Associate (CDA)	CDA	No	No	No
Curriculum	Evidenced-Based Curriculum	Evidenced-Based Curriculum	State Board of Education Adopted Curriculum	Activity Plans	Activity Plans
Annual Professional development	15 hours annually	15 hours annually	150 hours every five years	24 hours annually	30 hours annually
Universal Vision, Hearing & Health Screening & Referral	Yes	Yes	Vision and Hearing only	Vision and Hearing only	No
Student Diagnostic Tool	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Program Quality/Improvement Process	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Structural Quality Components	Head Start	Early Head Start	Public Prekindergarten	Child Care (Licensing)	Texas Rising Star
Learning Environment Standards	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes ²
Daily Schedule Requirements	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes ³
Family Engagement Requirements	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

*Maximum class size with two or more teachers

¹TRS Teacher Observation/ Evaluation Process are points-based measures and are not required. They determine star levels above 2-star and are scored using a scale of 0-3 points.

²TRS Learning Environment Standards are points-based measures and are not required. They determine star levels above 2-star and are scored using a scale of 0-3 points.

Stakeholder Perceptions of Quality

Early learning program and service providers, early learning organizations (professional associations and advocacy organizations), community organizations/partners, and family members were asked to rate 16 quality component items on a four-point rating scale (1 = not important and 4 = very important). The top five highly rated items for respondent are in Figure 19 below. The highest rated item is at the top of each respondent. (Table C.8, Appendix C).

Figure 19. Highest rated quality components by stakeholder type



The quality component that had the lowest rating by early learning programs and services, early learning organizations, and community organizations/partners was teacher experience (Table C.8, Appendix D). Family members gave the lowest rating to the “additional services and resources offered to families” quality component (e.g., English language classes, job resources).

Focus groups were assembled to develop a further detail the needs of Texas. The focus group members represented various early learning stakeholders sharing their views on characteristics of quality early learning programs and services. Through this opportunity, common themes emerged:

- implementing an appropriate high-quality curriculum through qualified staff
- having low staff turnover
- providing access to all children and families
- fostering fun and learning
- making children feel cared for and safe

- conducting early screening, assessing and monitoring needs of both child and family (holistic approach) on an ongoing basis
- helping children achieve their developmental goals
- supporting child’s home language
- engaging families
- connecting families to needed services in the community
- providing professional development opportunities for program staff.

The following table details comments from the focus groups in which the common themes are discussed through first-hand accounts. The perspectives are inclusive of rural teachers, urban teachers, and families, helping to develop a holistic view on the needs of Texas. By incorporating first-hand perspectives and narratives, along with the survey data, themes are reinforced and better understood by all.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Program Quality	
<i>Programs need to have a family focus because the child comes from a home and we always have to look at that home and what that family needs. At the same time, we have to look at the child as an individual. assessing and monitoring needs of both child and family (holistic approach) on an ongoing basis.</i>	<i>–Rural Teacher</i>
<i>These programs need to be tailored and individualized to each child’s needs. Programs should identify disabilities as early as possible. The earlier providers can intervene and provide services for the children (e.g. occupational therapy, speech therapy), the better it will be for them and prepare them to move to the next level. – age appropriate testing and screenings, health and wellness</i>	<i>–Rural Teacher</i>
<i>I look for a program that has small groups, provides lots of attention to the child, teachers are consistent, and they use a good curriculum. Also, the program is close to my work. Small class size</i>	<i>–Urban Family</i>
<i>I also liked that the program assessed the (developmental) level of the children and what they have learned at home. There are children who have already been in kindergarten or other schools and the teachers know who is going faster, who is going slower, and they separate them into groups to level them at the end of the school year. Age appropriate testing and screenings</i>	<i>–Spanish-speaking Family</i>

Stakeholder Perspectives on Program Quality

I think that the most important thing is to have strong communication, being able to be confidently tell your teacher, "I see this and this going on. What can I do? What do you think needs to be done for my son to learn?" Also, the teacher needs to be comfortable to say, "You know what, mom? This is going on. Communication and partnerships with families/family engagement

–Spanish-speaking Family

Early Learning Program and Service Facilities

An important consideration in program quality is the condition of facilities, specifically in state's experiencing natural disasters. Safe facilities that are in good condition are needed to provide high-quality early learning opportunities for young children. The stakeholder survey asked program administrators about the condition of facilities. Overall, facilities were reported to be good condition. (Table C.19, Appendix C). Facilities in Brazos Valley, Cameron County, and North Central Texas are reported to be in slightly better condition than the state average.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey severely impacted the Texas coast. However, 82% percent of the early learning programs and services in the survey who were impacted by Hurricane Harvey reported that their facility had been fully repaired since the hurricane (Table C.18, Appendix D).

Data Limitations

As described in the *Access and Availability* section of this report, limitations in the collection and reporting of data related to program capacity and enrollment, do not allow the state to examine the capacity of high-quality early learning programs and services. This limits the state's understanding of the need for additional or expanded high-quality programs in relation to the population of children birth to age five.

Opportunities to Increase Early Learning Program Quality

Texas can continue to build on the gains made in increasing program quality by taking action at the state and local level.

Opportunities for Programs and Services

- child care providers with a child care subsidy agreement should participate in Texas Rising Star

Opportunities for Communities

- encourage and support child care providers with a child care subsidy agreement to participate in Texas Rising Star

Opportunities for the State

- support prekindergarten programs with the implementation of required quality components in HB 3
- continue to support efforts to increase the number of subsidized child care providers participating in Texas Rising Star

Early Learning Workforce

In addition to program quality, the quality of the workforce impacts the success of children’s early learning experiences (Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2018). There are more than 95,000 professionals in the early learning workforce in Texas, including those working in childcare centers, licensed family childcare providers, public prekindergarten, ECSE services, and program administrators. The findings of this needs assessment re-emphasize that the workforce needs professional development in specific topics, help navigating barriers to higher education, and access to opportunities to sustain a career in this critical field. The *Transforming the Workforce* report notes that the focus on transforming early educators has to not only include workforce education, training, and professional development but also a focus on the root issue which is transforming early childhood jobs and financing the early childhood system (Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2015; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018). Texas has accomplished great work in supporting early childhood professionals, including the passing of HB 3 and continued support in research and

higher education. The passing of HB 3 makes strides in addressing the concerns in teacher compensation and qualifications for public school teachers through the provision of an increase in ADA funding and the emphasis on minimum teacher qualifications. The following section details additional opportunities the state can take advantage of to further guide and drive advancement in the early learning system.

Workforce Qualifications

Each early learning program requires a unique set of teacher qualifications, resulting in a wide array of education and training requirements for early learning program staff in Texas. Table 8 presents an overview of the teacher education and training requirements for major program types. As evident in the table, education requirements range from a high school diploma to a bachelor’s degree, and annual professional development requirements range from 15 hours to 30 hours. The variance in education requirements results in lower wages for a vast majority of early childhood professionals compared to similar professions.

Table 8. Teacher Education and Training Requirements for Early Learning Programs in Texas

Requirements for Teachers	Head Start	Early Head Start	Public Prekindergarten	Child Care	Texas Rising Star
Education	Associate’s or bachelor’s degree in child development or early childhood education	CDA or equivalent	Bachelor’s degree, plus an additional qualification	High school diploma or equivalent	CDA or higher ¹
Orientation Training	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Preservice Training ²	No	No	Completion of an approved educator preparation program	24 hours	No
Annual Training	15 hours/year	15 hours/year	150 hours/5 years	24 hours/year	30 hours/year
Certification Requirements	No	No	Yes	No	No

¹TRS Education Requirements are points based. Higher scores are awarded for higher education and experiences levels. Caregivers with a high school diploma may only contribute towards a center’s points if they are also pursuing a Child Development Associate (CDA) or higher level of certification, or if they have 10+ years as a caregiver in a TRS qualified center.

²Refers to training required prior to independent supervision of children

Barriers to Obtaining Additional Education

A postsecondary education confers numerous benefits both to the individual and to society, lower rates of unemployment and government dependency, an increased tax base, and greater civic engagement. Early childhood professionals reported having the following supports in their pursuit of higher education:

- access to technology/internet (66%)
- support of employer (56%) to obtain additional education

However, access to higher education remains a challenge for many early learning professionals. Barriers to postsecondary education obtainment for the workforce include:

- lack of paid time off
- transportation
- financial aid
- challenges navigating the higher education processes
- reading and writing skill development
- child care for their own children

A lack of higher wages upon degree completion, disincentivizes the pursuit of postsecondary education, particularly in the face of the aforementioned barriers (Table D 20 in Appendix D).

In addition to identifying the barriers, early learning professionals expressed opportunities for support to encourage higher education obtainment. The most frequently requested supports include (Table D.20, Appendix D):

- financial aid (70%),
- paid time off (37%)
- support in navigating the higher education processes (31%)

Through focus groups, early childhood faculty from Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) were asked to identify barriers they

observe facing students seeking higher education. Such barriers identified include:

- economic need to obtain a job over the ability to attend higher education
- cost of higher education
- academic preparation, including the lack of confidence to return and succeed, fear towards remedial and core classes
- lack of understanding of the process for enrollment
- lack of time to pursue higher education

Additionally, the lack of a clear articulation from two-year (CDA or Associate's degree) to four-year (Bachelor's) programs presents a challenge for students. Part of the articulation challenge includes the admission process; many two-year colleges have open access with no required enrollment process. However, the requirements change drastically when transferring to a four-year program, thus presenting a very intimidating and frustrating experience.

Professional Development

The National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) details the importance of professional development, "Professional development is a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early childhood professionals" (2019). Through efforts established in legislative action, state agencies, and community programs, Texas is making great strides in offering a robust professional development system for the early learning workforce. Examples of such include: the Early Childhood Learning Summit, CLI Engage, AgriLife Extension Courses, TEA monthly webinars, ECI online

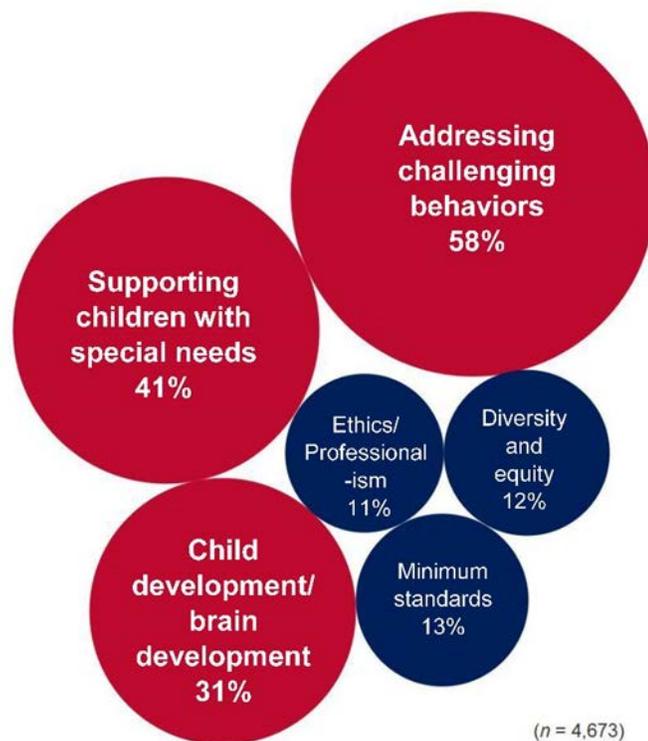
professional development modules, Home Visiting online professional development modules, etc. As the state continues to grow, the population served by the field of education changes, as do the behaviors and needs of children and families. The

following section identifies opportunities to expand on professional development to continue supporting early learning professionals in helping children enter school ready to learn.

Areas of Professional Development Needed

The top three topics of professional development support needed by the early learning workforce were identified as: addressing challenging behaviors (58%), supporting children with special needs (41%), and child development/brain development (31%) (Figure 20) (Table D.23, Appendix D).

Figure 20. Topics of Professional Development Most Needed by Early Learning Programs and Service



Providers

As evidenced in Figure 20, 41% of the early learning professionals surveyed expressed a need for additional professional development on supporting children with special needs. When asked about which specific disabilities they felt less comfortable supporting, the top three answers were emotional disturbance, autism, and traumatic brain injury. As can be seen in Table 9, administrators feel less comfortable than teachers.

Table 9. Level of Comfort of Teachers and Administrators in Addressing Types of Disabilities

Disability	Teachers Who Reported Feeling Comfortable	Administrators Who Reported Feeling Comfortable
Emotional Disturbance	49.9%	55.2%
Autism	45.39%	54.77%
Traumatic Brain Injury	36.5%	40.5%

Barriers to Accessing Professional Development

Professional development is important to the field of early learning to support professionals in career development and children’s learning and success. However, similar to the concerns in obtaining a higher education, early learning professionals also report barriers to accessing professional development, including (Figure 21):

- time at which training is conducted is not convenient (48%)
- location of trainings (39%)
- cost associated with trainings (18%)

It is important to note, there were some variations in the barriers identified by Spanish-speaking staff in the early learning programs and services. The barriers identified by Spanish-speaking staff included:

- cost associated with trainings (58%)
- trainings not available in primary language (31%)
- availability of trainers (20%)
- availability of technology resources (12%)

Figure 21. Barriers Faced by Early Learning Professionals in Accessing Professional Development



(n = 4,803)

Retention and Recruitment

Although established as the foundation to children entering school ready to learn and succeed in 3rd grade reading and 8th grade math, the field of early childhood experiences extremely low retention rates. Factors identified to contribute to low workforce retention include low wages, lack of time off, challenging or irregular scheduling, and lack of career development supports (professional development and higher education obtainment). For instance, home providers, generally do not have the means to provide sick or vacation days, resulting in a closure of the program during such times. In general, although child care program staff receive formal benefits such as paid sick days and vacation, wages and career development supports are still low. Even still, only about half of child care professionals reported having health insurance (Child and Family Research Institute, 2013).

In response to this concern, many programs recruit and retain staff by offering benefits such as paid leave time, retirement benefits, and health insurance. Additional information on the challenges and strategies to recruiting and retaining qualified early childhood program staff in Texas is presented below.

Challenges

Regarding the recruitment of new staff, early childhood administrators reported their communities experiencing a smaller pool of qualified applicants, along with fewer new residents moving in to add to the pool. As a result, programs in these communities struggle with the education workforce, consistently experience staff shortages, have difficulty in finding highly qualified staff, and have difficulty building a qualified substitute pool. Programs often have no choice but to place parents in the role of substitute teacher, and/or part-time staff, even though these parents often do not have the educational qualification or training of professional teachers.

A larger pool of qualified staff including substitute staff is needed. There is a deficit of qualified staff to serve the children. It is difficult to retain staff because of limited pay and benefits. Some programs cannot provide insurance for the staff. The salary is low and administrators cannot keep up with the pay offered by the school districts. In addition, some staff leave because they want summers off; however, a year around program is what many of these families need. It is becoming more difficult to keep good child care providers.

—Early Childhood Administrator

The administrators in the focus group also expressed a concern with new entrants to the field of early childhood lacking professional skills such as interview follow-up, general communication skills, and overall preparedness for the job. Focus group participants also noted that recent reorganization of human resources and child care licensing in the state has shifted hiring control from the program administrators to a regional level. This prevents center directors from having the ability to interact with candidates and conduct the follow up/next steps of the hiring process. This significantly impacts the onboarding timeframe, causing some programs to lose candidates in the process.

Data Limitations

According to the meta-analysis, workforce data collected by states typically includes information about education level, professional development, demographics, participation in state workforce initiatives, background checks and employment. The Texas Workforce Registry voluntarily collects employment information (compensation and years of experience), education and/or professional development records, and participation in state workforce

initiatives (i.e. scholarships, wage supplements, professional development). It does not, however, include demographics (race/ethnicity, age, language, gender) or background checks. Texas does not link its workforce data across programs including Early Childhood Intervention Services (IDEA Part C), early childhood special education (IDEA Part B, Section 619), prekindergarten, Head Start, subsidized child care, Texas Home Visiting, and licensed child care (King, Perkins, Nugent, & Jordan, 2018). Descriptions and accurate comparisons cannot be made regarding the make-up of the workforce in these various programs.

Opportunities to Support the Early Learning Workforce

The quality of the early learning workforce is directly tied to the success of Texas' children. Texas has accomplished great work in supporting early childhood professionals, including the passing of HB 3. The sections below detail additional opportunities in which the state can continue this momentum.

Opportunities for Programs and Services

- assist teachers in creating and maintaining a workforce account through the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System

- use the Texas Trainer Registry through the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System to identify highly qualified trainers who can provide trainings related to the topics identified as areas of need
- administrators of subsidized child care providers should partner with TEACH to increase the level of education of their staff

Opportunities for Communities

- host combined professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals working in a variety of program settings
- community colleges and universities should work together to establish articulation pathways for students

Opportunities for the State

- increase outreach and awareness of the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System
- increase outreach and awareness about state-funded professional development supports
- increase outreach and awareness about state-funded education supports
- provide coaching opportunities to ESC and local school districts
- create a robust online professional development system

Transitions

Each child and family are unique and will experience transitions through an early learning program in their own way. Transitions considered in this needs assessment include:

- into an early learning setting/service
- within services
- between classrooms
- exiting services
- transition into kindergarten

All transitions involve changes for children and families and present opportunities and challenges, impacting the whole family. For both children and families, transitions between settings can lead to great excitement and joy (Office of Head Start). Texas recognizes this discussion should not only include the transition into kindergarten, but also the transition between programs for children with special needs. As such, this section will include considerations for both.

The statewide stakeholder survey revealed that families in Texas generally feel comfortable with transitions. Specifically, when asked to rate their level of comfort (1 = not comfortable and 5 = very comfortable) in supporting their child as (s)he started a new program/service or entered kindergarten, families surveyed appeared to be relatively comfortable with supporting their child (mean = 4.05) (Table C.25, Appendix D). In addition, families expressed a high comfort level in supporting their child through the transition into kindergarten (mean 4.83). Although comfortable with transition services, families experienced the following challenges (Table 31, Appendix D):

- unclear detail on where to go and who to contact to complete the transition and enrollment (14%)
- required paperwork and enrollment process is confusing (13%)

- financial issues (13%)

This section provides an overview of current transition supports the Texas early learning system is providing to children and families as well as opportunities for further advancement.

Transition Supports

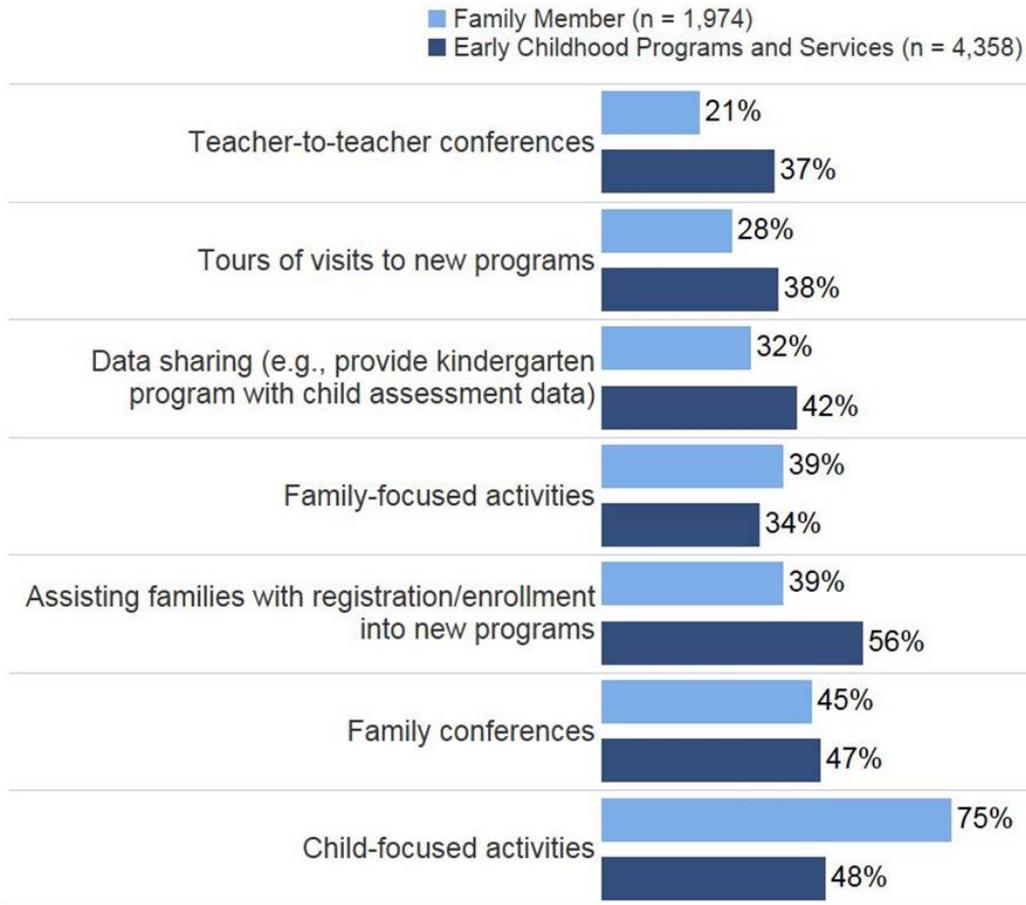
Every state is required to have a plan that addresses the provision of a quality plan for educating all students under ESSA, including incoming kindergarteners. Although Texas does not include a detailed kindergarten transition plan in the state's ESSA plan, kindergarten transitions are encouraged through the state's four strategic priorities identified in the ESSA plan. Transitions for children with special needs are supported by this ESSA plan and the IDEA, helping to ensure children's success. Transition supports are also strong in many Head Start programs, as school divisions are required by federal law to work with Head Start to support transitions into kindergarten (Office of Head Start).

In regard to all other early learning programs, both public and private, Texas does not have a statewide transition requirement. Therefore, transition efforts rely on the leadership of local education agencies and early learning programs to create effective processes, communication, and opportunities. As a result, transition supports vary greatly across communities.

Transition Supports Currently Utilized

Local early learning programs were asked what supports they provide and families were asked what supports their child's program provides. Figure 22 depicts the percentage of both families and early learning programs who identified the transition support.

Figure 22. Transition supports currently identified and received by children and families



Resources to Support Transitions from Early Childhood Intervention to Early Childhood Special Education

Early Childhood Intervention to Early Childhood Special Education transition services help a toddler identified with a disability and his or her family to experience a smooth and effective transition from the ECI services program (Part C) to ECSE (Part B, 619) or other services. The 2004 Amendments to the IDEA strengthened the longstanding requirement that children participating in early intervention service programs under Part C experience a smooth and effective transition to preschool programs under Part B of the IDEA when the children are eligible for Part B, 619 services. The IDEA requires a series of

steps and activities for the smooth transition from Part C to Part B services to ensure that eligible children receive a free appropriate public education by their third birthday (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2011).

It is clear, there is a need to ensure seamless transitions for children and their families as they leave Part C, so they have timely access to other appropriate services. State and local structures, policies, interagency agreements, personnel development processes, and other mechanisms must be in place to support the transition process (Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2019). In monitoring for transition compliance from

Part C to Part B, the following indicators are considered:

- Part C Indicator 8A: Developed an Individual Family Service Plan with transition steps and services at least 90 days, and at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months prior to the child’s third birthday
- Part C Indicator 8B: Notified the State Educational Agency and the LEA where the child resides at least 90 days prior to the child’s third birthday for those potentially eligible for Part B preschool services
- Part C Indicator 8C: Conducted the transition conference held with the approval of the family at least 90 days, and at the discretion of all parties, not more than nine months prior to the child’s third birthday for those potentially eligible for Part B preschool services
- Part B Indicator 12: Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthday

Table 10 shows the percentage of children for which indicators 8 and 12 were met since 2014 in Texas.

Table 10. Percentage of Children for which Indicators were Met in Texas Since 2014

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017
8A	97.18%	97.39%	95.24%	96.37%
8B	95.07%	92.94%	91.25%	94.32%
8C	95.80%	90.96%	91.65%	92.30%
12	99.48%	99.82%	99.50%	99.92%

Resources to Support Kindergarten Transition

Continuity between early childhood programs and kindergarten contributes to effective transitions in a child’s educational life. Common transition activities include planned visits by preschoolers and their families to the kindergarten classroom, kindergarten teachers visiting prekindergarten classrooms, informational sessions, parent/teacher meetings, preschool staff sharing data on children with the elementary school, and coordination around curricula and teaching strategies between the preschool and school system. Research shows that transition activities are associated with academic gains in kindergarten, increased parent involvement in the child’s education throughout the school year, better social skills in children, and higher academic performance beyond the kindergarten classroom (Horowitz, 2017).

To support student success and ease transitions, the Texas Education Agency provides a list of *Commissioner Approved Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Instruments*. The tools assist educators in monitoring student progress in the following domains: emergent literacy-writing, emergent literacy-reading, language and communication, health and wellness, and mathematics. By doing so, educators understand a child’s development and readiness to transition, prepare to accomplish such transition, ultimately support children entering kindergarten ready to learn.

Transition Supports Needed

After review of the existing needs assessments and reports included in the meta-analysis, survey results, and stakeholder feedback, it was concluded that Head Start and special education are the only Texas early learning programs to report detailed information on transitions. While most Head Start programs coordinate with LEAs to support children’s transition to kindergarten, Head Start directors reported

several transition-related needs for families of children with disabilities and other special needs. Specifically, families of children with special needs experienced challenges in exercising their rights and responsibilities concerning the education of their children in the elementary school setting and Head Start directors reported that more support is needed for teachers and staff related to coordinating with LEAs regarding these transitions (Giles, 2019).

The stakeholder survey also provided additional insights regarding gaps in transition supports. Fewer than a third of early childhood programs and services reported needing supports/resources to assist with transition collaboration with other programs (26%), activity ideas and resources for families (22%), and creating transition plans (20%), as shown in Figure 23 (Table C.27, Appendix D).

Figure 23. Top Supports Needed to Improve Child Transitions to Other Programs



Data Limitations

As stated earlier, although both early childhood special education (inclusive of IDEA Part C and Part B) and Head Start have federal requirements to support transitions for children and families, Texas does not have a statewide transition requirement to provide the same support to other early learning programs, public or private, across the state. As a result, data regarding a child’s participation in early

Opportunities for Programs and Services

childhood programs and transition services prior to kindergarten entry is limited and dependent on provision from local programs and families.

Opportunities to Improve Transitions

Texas is working to overcome data limitations in this area as evidenced in recent legislative action. Establishing and fostering partnerships among early learning programs is supported within HB 3. Texas also recognizes an important aspect of transitions is understanding children’s readiness to learn as they enter kindergarten, and thus through decisions of the legislative session, the Texas Education Agency is working to identify a singular kindergarten entry diagnostic. This will allow all prekindergarten and child care programs to work with local education agencies to support transition practices with a thorough understanding of children’s abilities and needs. Additionally, to obtain a more precise data collection of programs and services, efforts need to be made to have various state agency data systems coordinate (i.e. through the use a unique child identifier for each child served). Again, Texas has taken this into account through the recent legislative session, in passing HB 680. This work is providing an opportunity for the Texas Education Agency to provide the Texas Workforce Commission a unique identifier for all children in subsidized childcare. Through this, Texas is beginning to address this data limitation by helping to establish the process for state agencies to share data. Further opportunity for the state may lie in expanding this process across all early learning programs, thus helping to establish a process in which the state can better develop an understanding of early learning programs and practices such as transitions.

- create a transition plan and communicate across program and community

- establish transition meetings/coalitions across partnering programs
- optimize MOU opportunities between LEA's, Head Start programs, and child serving programs

Opportunities for Communities

- support relationship building across early learning programs
- determine resources needed by programs to establish and maintain transition activities

Opportunities for the State

- leverage authority provided in HB 680 to assign unique identifiers to children receiving child care subsidy through TWC that align with TEA PEIMS numbers to build foundation for an integrated early childhood data system
- support the development of a data governance body inclusive of all state agencies

Resources to Support Early Learning Programs

By creating and implementing effective early learning programs and policies, Texas can ensure that children have a solid foundation to enter school ready to learn, and continue that achievement through third grade reading, eighth grade math, and beyond. Utilizing resources is key to effective early learning programs. Significant Texas resources, public and private, are dedicated to supporting children birth to age five across the state. Additionally, Texas fosters a local control support process in education, allowing for innovation and customization based on local needs and community-specific culture. Resources are invested in early learning with the ultimate goal of achieving improvements in children's readiness to learn.

Understanding the varying resources and providing support to effectively utilize them will have a profound impact on early learning in the state of Texas by reinforcing adequate and sustainable funding of the state's youngest population and in providing accountability to the existing funds and programs. The following section provides an overview of the current early learning resources in Texas, along with opportunities for the state to continue the momentum gained through recent leadership and legislative sessions, including HB 3 and the intentional opportunity to build partnerships among early learning programs.

Supports and Resources to Increase Quality

Available Resources

There are myriad public and private organizations providing resources to support early learning across Texas, including state agencies, early childhood organizations, and community organizations. One of the most significant areas resources are utilized in is improving program quality.

Texas stakeholders providing resources supporting program quality (i.e. Education Service Centers, Local Workforce

Development Boards, professional membership organizations, and professional development/consulting providers) were asked in a survey to provide insight on the resources made available across the state supporting quality. To promote a broad and inclusive view on available resources, community partners (including local government entities, non-profit organizations, religious organizations, and similar) were also asked to complete the survey. Lastly, early learning program staff were asked to complete the survey, providing insight on the resources received within the programs. The following are the results of each survey.

The top resources provided by early learning organizations are (Table C.9, Appendix C):

1. professional development (71%)
2. mentoring/coaching (57%)
3. classroom materials/supplies (50%)

Community partners identified the following resources allocated to early learning programs within their community (Table C.9, Appendix C):

1. training opportunities (61%)
2. materials (45%)
3. human capital (27%)

Through this work, early learning program staff identify having access to the following resources (Table C.9, Appendix C):

1. professional development (71%)
2. classroom materials/supplies (63%)
3. mentoring/coaching (48%)

The variance in these results prompted a further review of the supports and resources available to early learning programs and services by program type, program accreditation, and urbanicity. The highest percentage of staff from all program types in the survey reported the following:

- professional development as a widely available resource (ranging from 45% to 79% response rate)
- classroom materials and supplies resources made available to their work (ranging from 34% to 69% response rate)
- mentoring/coaching is a readily available resource (42% to 65% response rate)(with the exception of staff from family/home/military child care programs who reported technical assistance (27.4%)) (Table C.10, Appendix C).

Survey data demonstrate that greater percentages of accredited early learning programs and services reported receiving resources to support program quality than non-accredited early childhood programs and services for each of the following resources:

- funding (41% versus 35%),
- professional development (74% versus 63%),
- mentoring/coaching (54% versus 38%),
- technical assistance (44% versus 38%)
- classroom materials and supplies (64% versus 60%) (Table C.11, Appendix C).

The survey data also show that greater percentages of rural early learning programs and services reported receiving resources to support program quality than urban early learning programs and services for the following:

- funding (42% versus 37%),
- technical assistance (43% versus 40%)
- other resources/supports (9% versus 7%) for program quality (Table C.12, Appendix C).

It is important to note the percentage of early learning programs and services from urban areas that reported receiving professional development was higher than early childhood programs and services from rural areas (72% versus 68%) (Table C.12, Appendix C).

Dosage of Support

In addition to understanding the resources available, it is important to examine if the level of support provided to early learning programs and services matched the level of need. In the survey, early learning programs and services reported whether the level of support they received was adequate in increasing and/or maintaining the quality of their program (measured through three rating options: more than enough, enough, or not enough).

Findings of note include:

- 56% of early learning programs and services reported receiving adequate support
- 33% reported not receiving enough support
- twelve regions reported not receiving adequate support (Table C.13, Appendix C).
- comparison by program type indicates that the percentages of staff from Early Childhood Intervention Services and family/home/military child care identified higher percentages (39% and 37% respectively) as not receiving enough support to increase or maintain program quality (Figure 24).
- higher percentage of non-accredited early learning programs reported not having enough support to increase or maintain program quality (38%) over their accredited peers (29%) (Figure 24).

Figure 24. Perception of Receiving Enough Support to Increase and/or Maintain Program Quality by Program Type

Program Type	More Than Enough	Enough	Not Enough
Early Childhood Intervention (n = 464)	12%	49%	39%
Family Home/Military Child Care (n = 273)	8%	54%	37%
Child Care Center (n = 1,434)	11%	55%	35%
School District/Open Enrollment Charter School (n = 1,478)	11%	57%	32%
Head Start/Early Head Start (n = 795)	15%	60%	26%
Other (n = 267)	18%	59%	23%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: Question asked for this respondent type was, “Do you feel like you receive enough support to increase and/or maintain the quality of your program?”

Figure 25. Perception of Receiving Enough Support to Increase and/or Maintain Program Quality by Accreditation Status of Early Childhood Programs and Services

Accreditation Status	More Than Enough	Enough	Not Enough
Non-TRS/Accredited Providers (n = 1,315)	9%	53%	38%
TRS/Accredited Providers (n = 2,239)	14%	57%	29%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: Question asked for this respondent type was, “Do you feel like you receive enough support to increase and/or maintain the quality of your program?”

Resources Needed

Through the previous sections, it is clear Texas supports program quality through resources provided across the communities. While positive, it is also important to identify opportunities to expand this support. In addition to identifying resources provided, early learning staff were also asked to identify areas in which additional support would be useful in improving program quality and child outcomes. The following were identified:

- professional development for staff (47%)
- support in lowering class size/student-to-teacher ratios (37%)

- resources to encourage family engagement and partnerships (32%) (Table C.14, Appendix C)

Similar to the data point of available resources, resources needed was also analyzed by program type, program accreditation, and urbanicity. While staff from child care centers, Early Childhood Intervention, and Head Start/Early Head Start centers reported needing the most support with professional development (43% to 61%) and resources to encourage family engagement and partnerships (35%), staff from family/home/military child care and local education agencies reported needing the most support with curriculum (45%) and support in lowering class size/student-to-teacher ratios (57%) (Figure 26).

Figure 26. Areas that Need the Most Support by Program Type

Areas in Need	Child Care Center (n = 1,356)	Early Childhood Intervention (n = 442)	Head Start/ Early Head Start (n = 706)	Family Home/ Military Child Care (n = 243)	Local Education Agency (n = 1,409)
Professional development for staff	61%	47%	43%	24%	38%
Curriculum	30%	15%	19%	45%	24%
Class size/student-to-teacher ratios	28%	40%	29%	8%	57%
Administration (operations, finances, human resources, etc.)	32%	27%	22%	32%	20%
Assessment and screening	32%	22%	17%	23%	20%
Family engagement/partnerships	35%	30%	32%	20%	32%
Teacher-child interactions	31%	12%	23%	15%	12%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding. Question asked for this respondent type was, "With which area(s) do you need the most support?"

Additionally, non-accredited early learning programs reported a higher need for resources than their accredited peers.

- professional development (55% compared to 46%)
- curriculum resources (31% compared to 22%)
- administration support (31% compared to 25%) and
- diagnostic and screening resources (28% compared to 24%) (Figure 27)

The differences in the percentages between urban and rural early childhood programs and services regarding the areas they need

the most support with was not statistically significant (Table C.15, Appendix C).

It is recognized that there is a discrepancy between the availability of professional development and the reported need for professional development. The availability of professional development is reported to be high by both organizations providing professional development and early learning programs seeking professional development. However, the need for professional development is still a highly-reported need by early learning programs. Further inquiry is needed to explain this discrepancy.

Figure 27. Areas that Need the Most Support by Accreditation Status of Child Care Providers

Areas in Need	Non-TRS/Accredited Providers (n = 1,228)	TRS/Accredited Providers (n = 2,104)
Professional development for staff	55%	46%
Curriculum	31%	22%
Administration (operations, finances, human resources, etc.)	31%	25%
Assessment and screening	28%	24%
Class size/student-to-teacher ratios	24%	38%
Family engagement/partnerships	31%	33%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding. Question asked for this respondent type was, "With which area(s) do you need the most support?"

To further support the survey findings above, focus groups were conducted discussing resources needed. Within these focus group discussions, early learning administrators and teachers indicated a need for additional resources concerning funding for early learning

programs and services, streamlining of funding streams, and program alignment. To improve quality, the administrators reported a need for resources assisting in higher staff wages and benefits, obtaining additional qualified staff, resources to train staff, and other specialized resources to address special needs in a timely manner. Additionally, rural teachers working in home-based programs expressed a concern in regard to enrolling subsidized children since child care centers are reimbursed at a higher rate than child care homes.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Needed Resources to Support Program Quality
<p><i>Some rural counties lack resources for child care and Head Start. They need more resources for the smaller communities. One county's Head Start center shut down because of low enrollment, so the community has been left without a center for several years. Now the community only has one child care center.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>–Early Childhood Administrator</i></p>
<p><i>Programs take Early Childhood Intervention Services referrals very seriously. However, there is not always the labor available to conduct evaluations in a timely manner or provide services within the center. It is important to identify the child's needs earlier to be able to make sure the child is prepared for the next level.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>–Early Childhood Administrator</i></p>
<p><i>Policymakers need to value early childhood education and early childhood programs and support better teacher-child ratios. They should also align the education components across birth and beyond so programs are not working in silos.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>–Early Childhood Administrator</i></p>
<p><i>It would be more funds for home visitation because I have found that home visitation with case management allows families to be that first teacher to their children but it takes a case manager to assist families with finding those individual resources.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>–Rural Teacher</i></p>
<p><i>I would like more opportunities to use your coworkers as a resource. More time set aside to collaborate with peers. There is not enough time dedicated to do that. I also would like more Texas-based webinars.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>–Urban Teacher</i></p>

Current Funding Streams

Delivery of early learning programs and supports are driven by funding streams from the state, federal, and local levels. As mentioned previously, understanding the need to increase funding for early learning programs, Texas has accomplished great advancements for the field with the passing of HB 3. Among the benefits to HB 3 includes the enactment of the Early Education Allotment, providing weighted funding for each student at the district in Kindergarten through third grade who also qualifies for the compensatory education or bilingual allotment. This increase in funding

is supporting a range of efforts in early learning, including full-day prekindergarten and high-quality prekindergarten efforts.

Additionally, in 2018 Congress passed the FY 2018 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, including a \$2.4 billion increase to the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). As a result, Texas was immediately able to increase child care payment rates, lower eligibility thresholds, and address child care waitlists.

Table 11 provides an overview of the complex funding streams supporting the early learning system in Texas.

Table 11: Funds for Early Learning by Texas Program Type

Program	Federal Funding	State Funding	Local Funding
Subsidized Child Care	Child Care and Development Block Grant	State General Revenue	Local matching funds
Head Start	Federal Head Start Grants National School Lunch Program National School Breakfast Program Child and Adult Care Food Program		Local matching funds
Public Prekindergarten	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Funds National School Lunch Program National School Breakfast Program	Foundation School Program State Compensatory Education Funds Early Education Allotment*	LEA General Fund Revenue (local property tax) Student tuition
ECSE	IDEA Part B		
Early Childhood Intervention	IDEA Part B and Part C Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Medicaid CHPI	Foundation School Program ECI Services Respite Medicaid (state match)	Private insurance TRICARE Family payments Medicaid THSteps-CCP United Way Easter Seals City funding County funding Foundation funds Fundraising and Donations LEA contracts Rental income
Home Visiting	Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program	Texas Home Visiting appropriations	

*New funding source beginning in the 2019-2020 school year

Barriers to Accessing Available Funding

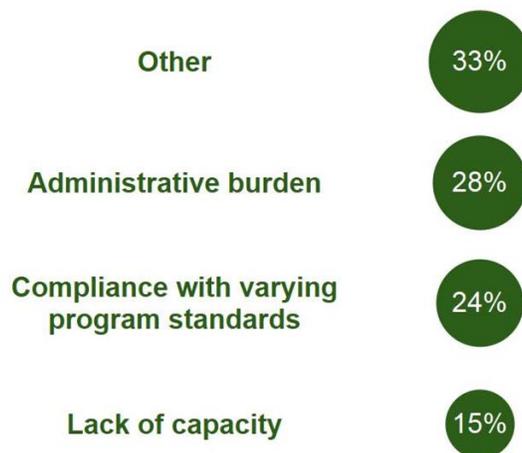
Texas is maintaining strong momentum in funding for early learning, due in large part to HB 3 and CCDBG increase. In the focus group, early learning administrators identified that programs have the opportunity to access various funding sources such as: federal funds (Title I), state funds, Early Head Start and Head Start, and local education agency funds. Braiding funds when possible helps with providing and streamlining services. However, it does require additional and intentional effort to adequately align the program requirements. The stakeholder survey and focus groups also identified that the multifaceted system of funding presents challenges to the programs and communities working to optimize resources, quality, and preparing children to enter school ready to learn. Figure 28 identifies barriers early learning program administrators face when navigating the complex funding landscape.

These multiple funding streams, although providing a positive momentum in early learning, also present a challenge in managing regulations and compliance. Each federal funding stream has its own specific regulations and reporting requirements. As a result, program administrators face challenges in understanding each set of requirements, and the ability to comply with each funding stream.

It can be a challenge trying to align the requirements and standards across the programs and funding received. It also makes it challenging for teachers because they have to do paperwork to access the funding which takes away from the time spent with children.

–Early Childhood Partner

Figure 28. Barriers Faced by Administrators with Accessing State Funds



(n = 692)

Early Learning Business Operations

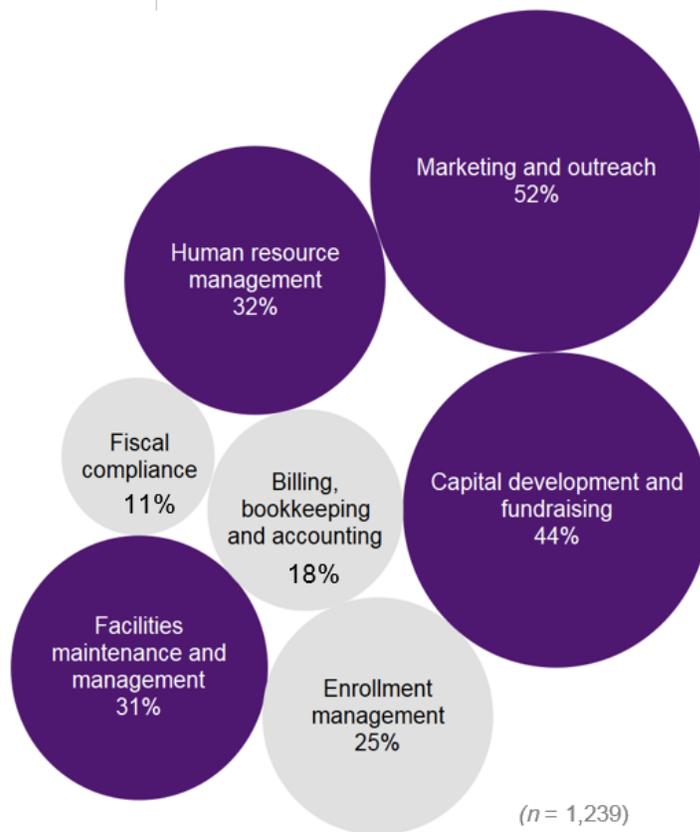
There are a multitude of program types and designs in the field of early learning. Each program needs to successfully navigate through the funding streams, regulations, operations, and produce positive outcomes for children. As such, support and resources on business operations are frequently requested, especially for child care programs (often lacking a business operations staff). As is true for all small business owners, prospective child care providers must take the right steps to ensure that their business is profitable and sustainable. Child care providers must abide by federal, state, and local regulations and standards, and they must ensure they have a healthy and safe environment for

children. Stakeholder surveys detailed the concern child care programs have regarding maintenance of successful and sustainable business operation (ACF Office of Child Care, 2015).

Through the stakeholder survey, the following resources were identified as the highest needs in supporting successful business operations (Figure 29):

- marketing and outreach (52%)
- capital development and fundraising (44%)
- human resource management (32%)
- facilities maintenance and management (31%)

Figure 29. Areas of Business Practices in Which Early Childhood Programs and Services Need Support



Early childhood administrators shared insights on program sustainability during a focus group. Children and families need consistent access to early learning programs to prepare to enter school ready to learn. As such, an additional consideration in the area of business operations is sustainability of the programs. When these early learning programs and services were asked to measure the sustainability of their program with current resources on a Likert scale (1= not sustainable to 5=very sustainable), the result was a mean rating of 3.04 (Table C.30, Appendix C). This data suggests that programs could benefit from additional resources in business operations to increase administration efficiency and program sustainability.

Utilizing Partnerships to Increase Access and Availability

Early learning partnerships are defined as collaborations between local education agencies and private early learning centers or Head Start programs (TEA, 2019). Early learning partnerships allow all programs across the early learning system to leverage resources, funding, and expertise. To achieve desired program impacts with finite funding and resources, it becomes critical for early childhood programs and their partners to align, consolidate, and coordinate services. This also helps to maximize reach to children and families and enhances their choice in program, comprehensive services, and ability to efficiently access the services they need.

As mentioned previously, the Texas Legislature recently passed HB 3, which

includes a provision for full-day prekindergarten and an emphasis on partnership opportunities. Local education agencies are asked to solicit and consider partnerships with public or private entities in offering full-day prekindergarten for eligible four-year old students.

Programs can access additional funding sources when engaged in partnerships or by providing multiple program types. Blending or braiding these additional funding sources allows programs to maximize the array of funding options. However, only 28% of administrators in the survey reported blending or braiding funding from federal or state agencies (Table C.28, Appendix C). Administrators who blended/braided funding identified the top barriers as:

- regulatory differences across funding streams (47%)
- administrative burden (37%)
- varying processes to access funding across agencies (34%) (Table D.29, Appendix D)

Existing Partnerships

The meta-analysis described many identified partnership opportunities to serve young children and their families, including formal and informal. For example, partnership agreements between Head Start and local education agencies could increase availability for children and families, strengthen the process for cross referrals and outreach, and support transition efforts. In addition, partnering with Head Start and the initiatives included in the federal program will also increase outreach to vulnerable populations through outreach with housing and homeless programs supporting families on the waitlist for services and providing support to children and families experiencing homelessness, particularly in rural areas (Giles, 2017). An additional opportunity identified through partnerships between Head Start, licensed child care, and public prekindergarten is the ability to provide additional wraparound

services so families have access to full-day/full-year services (Giles, 2017).

Additionally, partnerships can be created between a LEA and an early learning center to provide prekindergarten and services at either or both locations. LEAs may establish an in-district charter school that focuses on high-quality early learning programs through partnering with a non-profit organization, government entity, institute of higher education or existing charter school to provide services.

Early learning administrators indicated through focus groups that community partnerships are key to operating and enhancing the quality of early learning programs. In addition to the benefits detailed above, administrators stated that partnerships and collaboration provide the support of early childhood champions, create and implement policies, offer services, leverage and streamline funding, provide professional development, foster data sharing agreements, and meet families' everyday needs.

Through the focus groups, numerous partnership examples were shared, helping to shape an understanding of the early learning partnership landscape in Texas. Partnership examples existing in Texas include:

- partner supports to the teacher through use of science, technology, engineering, and math classroom resources, material, and/or professional development.
- United Way Success by 6 (Austin, TX) provides mental health resources and staff training, as well as a child advocacy partner to work with families that have experienced abuse and trauma.
- programs working toward accreditation (e.g., NAEYC and TRS) developing partnerships to access ongoing professional development support (onsite and remote) and data collection support.

- partnering agencies providing coaching and mentoring, and opportunities for observing colleagues at other centers (e.g., Texas School Ready!).
- partners extending professional development opportunities throughout the community.
- rural teachers partnering with county co-ops to help children with disabilities by providing speech therapist and supports.

Shared services can help create funds, reduce costs, and create more affordable childcare options. For example, workforce dollars can help offset costs to pay and train teachers; partnership with the schools could help with child care space so teenage moms can stay in their classes while their child is in the program.

–Community Organization

Examples of Early Childhood Partnerships Shared During Focus Groups

- In Austin, an early childhood leadership team includes 20 representatives with signed MOUs that outline the partnership goals and resources that will be shared. The coalition consists of workgroups (e.g., quality and access in early childhood) that each have their own strategic plan.
- In one city (not specified by focus group participant), the city council is supportive and has passed regulations to support early childhood. This year the city funded 10 classrooms for prekindergarten for three-year-olds.
- Austin Independent School District collaborates to use early prekindergarten dollars to allow programs to have a degreed teacher (child development or similar background) in the classroom three hours a day.
- Midland used the Early Development Instrument, which led to cross-sector collaboration. They identified the vulnerable neighborhoods that allowed the taskforces to expand their efforts to them. They will start a charter school through Midland College, which alleviates need for infant space. They have also worked to gain support of the oil and gas agencies in the area to push for advocacy changes.
- Children at Risk has worked with three communities to build shared-services models with their local partners to make sure providers can reach quality standards.
- The Houston food bank and the Collaborative for Children are piloting a program to connect child care providers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) with TRS so that they can benefit from both.

Barriers to Creating Partnerships

Developing early learning partnerships takes time, trust, clear communication, and committed leadership. Common barriers to developing a successful partnership include poor collaboration or communication, lack of understanding of roles, insufficient funding, poor financial planning, differences in standards and regulations, and staff turnover. These barriers were reinforced through the focus groups and surveys. Both early learning programs and community organizations in Texas identified the following as the main barriers to forming partnerships (Table C.32, Appendix C):

- understaffed/lacking time/lacking availability (43% and 42% respectively),
- insufficient/uncertain funding (42% each)
- staff turnover (32% and 33% respectively)

Additionally, early learning programs and services indicated that lack of information on partnerships (32%) was a barrier while community organizations indicated that regulatory differences across funding streams was a barrier (26%).

Stakeholder Perspective on Barriers to Partnerships in Texas

Texas values local control. While it is really helpful in a lot of ways, it also leaves some gaps. Each local community has to reinvent the wheel. They don't get a lot of guidance on how to build a partnership, who to reach out to, or how to overcome barriers. If there could be a little bit more cohesion or guidance from the state, on a whole host of issues, that could be really helpful to empower our local communities.

– Community Organization

Resources and Supports Needed for Partnerships

There are many factors to consider when establishing early learning partnerships. Through an open-ended question in the stakeholder survey, data was collected identifying the resources and supports needed by programs to establish and maintain partnerships. Within the results, early learning programs and services indicated a resource need for funding, information about partners, and information about best practices in collaboration. More funding was needed for additional staff, administrative support, supplies, and staff salaries to establish and maintain partnerships. Early learning programs and services also noted needing more opportunities to network with other providers and create supports in sustaining partnerships, including the possibility of developing a leadership position dedicated to establishing and maintaining partnerships. Relevant quotes from stakeholders are as follows:

Stakeholder Perspectives on Resources and Supports Needed to Establish and Maintain Partnerships

Need state or federal guidelines that specify how a district/Head Start collaboration should be managed, especially regarding curriculum, following prekindergarten guidelines, licensing regulations, and trainings that Head Start staff can attend along with district staff.

– Early Childhood Organization

As an organization that works with different programs across the state it is sometimes difficult to establish and maintain partnerships because there is not a clear answer or standard or policy for early childhood programs statewide and there is not a clear definition as to what quality early childhood curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, and early learning environments should include or what is developmentally appropriate.

– Early Childhood Organization

Need best practices on partnership building, defining goals, and holding all partners accountable for assigned tasks to reach the goal.

– Early Childhood Organization

Data Limitations

Texas maintains local control within its communities, allowing each to determine the most effective ways to utilize resources and meet the unique needs of its members. At the same time, there is limited centralized

authority in collecting evidence and data on partnerships across the state. As such, the data collected here is limited to self-reporting through stakeholder surveys and focus groups. The concern remains that many partnerships across the state are not captured, and therefore not receiving

supports and resources to help them continue their success. Further, the limitations in data collection prevent the state from determining a clear understanding of efficient use of resources, including funding, shared services, and supports.

Opportunities for More Efficient Use of Resources

Texas is working to overcome these data limitations as evidenced by the passing of HB 3 and HB 680 during the last legislative session. Establishing and fostering partnerships among early learning programs is supported within HB 3. The Texas Education Agency is working with the Texas Workforce Commission to assemble a reporting process to capture partnership progress among local education agencies. Through the efforts of HB 680, state agencies are beginning to align data systems, progressing towards the development of an unduplicated count of children in early learning programs and shared services, helping to shape the understanding of partnerships across Texas. This momentum will also impact the ability to understand how the early learning system is utilizing funding through partnerships and identify additional ways the community and state can support programs in this efficiency.

Opportunities for Programs and Services

- determine enrollment gaps of eligible three- and four-year-old children
- coordinate waitlist data among programs and services
- determine and coordinate early learning program capacity
- outline differences in program requirements between the LEA, Head Start, and/or child care center

Opportunities for Communities

- explore how to better coordinate available community resources to support early childhood programs and services
- align professional development opportunities to better meet the needs of early learning programs
- identify needs of families within the community
- determine availability of additional funding for eligible children
- support relationship building across programs
- support the development of shared services alliances to maximize cost savings to early learning programs and more efficiently utilize existing funds

Opportunities for the State

- share local success and challenges across the state as resources
- create guidance documents to support establishing and maintaining partnerships
- establish learning opportunities and engagement to support community programs' relationship building
- align professional development opportunities to better meet the needs of early learning programs

Summary of Opportunities

This needs assessment highlighted opportunities for action that can be taken by the State, communities, and programs to better meet the needs of young children and their families. These opportunities are informed by analysis of data from state and federal agencies and data gained from a stakeholder survey and a series of stakeholder focus group. Many of these opportunities do not require new resources, but rather, more efficient or effective use of existing resources. These opportunities are highlighted within each chapter of this report and have been reorganized below to group opportunities by state, community, and program opportunities.

Opportunities for Early Learning Programs

Access and Availability

- provide families with information about other programs and services when placing family on waitlist
- adjust program hours to align with family work schedules

Program Quality

- child care providers with a child care subsidy agreement should participate in Texas Rising Star

Early Learning Workforce

- use the Texas Trainer Registry through the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System to identify highly qualified trainers who can provide trainings related to the topics identified as areas of need
- administrators of subsidized child care providers should partner with TEACH to increase the level of education of their staff

Transitions

- create a transition plan and communicate across program and community
- establish transition meetings/coalitions across partnering programs
- optimize MOU opportunities between LEA's, Head Start programs, and child serving programs

Resources to Support Early Learning Programs

- determine enrollment gaps of eligible three- and four-year-old children
- coordinate waitlist data among programs and services
- determine and coordinate early learning program capacity
- outline differences in program requirements between the LEA, Head Start, and/or child care center

Opportunities for Communities

Access and Availability

- coordinate waitlists across programs and services to maximize the number of children served

Program Quality

- encourage and support child care providers with a child care subsidy agreement to participate in Texas Rising Star

Early Learning Workforce

- host combined professional development opportunities for early childhood professionals working in a variety of program settings
- community colleges and universities should work together to establish articulation pathways for students

Transitions

- support relationship building across early learning programs
- determine resources needed by programs to establish and maintain transition activities

Resources to Support Early Learning Programs

- explore how to better coordinate available community resources to support early childhood programs and services
- align professional development opportunities to better meet the needs of early learning programs
- identify needs of families within the community
- determine availability of additional funding for eligible children
- support relationship building across programs
- support the development of shared services alliances to maximize cost savings to early learning programs and more efficiently utilize existing funds

Opportunities for the State

Access and Availability

- leverage the authority in HB 680 for TEA to assign a unique identifier to children receiving child care subsidies to help achieve an unduplicated count of children being served across programs and services
- explore innovative solutions to increasing the number of eligible infants and toddlers served in programs and services
- support rural communities in creating innovative program models to help serve children in rural areas in which programs do not exist

Program Quality

- support prekindergarten programs with the implementation of required quality components in HB 3
- continue to support efforts to increase the number of subsidized child care providers participating in Texas Rising Star

Early Learning Workforce

- increase outreach and awareness of the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System

- increase outreach and awareness about state-funded professional development supports
- increase outreach and awareness about state-funded education supports
- provide coaching opportunities to ESC and local school districts
- create a robust online professional development system

Transitions

- leverage authority provided in HB 680 to assign unique identifiers to children receiving child care subsidy through TWC that align with TEA PEIMS numbers to build foundation for an integrated early childhood data system
- support the development of a data governance body inclusive of all state agencies

Resources to Support Early Learning Programs

- share local success and challenges across the state as resources
- create guidance documents to support establishing and maintaining partnerships
- establish learning opportunities and engagement to support community programs' relationship building
- align professional development opportunities to better meet the needs of early learning programs

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Appendix A: Methodology & Analytics

Research Questions

The research questions that were used to guide the needs assessment are listed in Table A.1 (bolded questions are those required for the Preschool Development Grant). The research questions were generated from recommendations provided to TEA by the Texas Early Learning Council (Council). There are 51 research questions across seven categories.

A.1. Needs Assessment Research Questions

Research Questions
<p>Demographics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who is the vulnerable population in Texas? How is this defined across programs and services? Where is the vulnerable population? 2. What populations of children are underserved in Texas? Where are these children located? 3. Who are the children in rural communities?
<p>Availability/Access</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What programs and services are available? Which programs exist in which counties? How many “seats” are available for each program within each county? How much funding is provided to each county to provide programs and services? 5. What programs and services do families want? 6. What programs and services do providers want to offer? 7. How many children are currently served in early childhood programs and services? (provide unduplicated count) 8. How many children are waiting to be served in early childhood programs and services? (provide unduplicated count) 9. How many children are eligible for early childhood programs and services? What are the overlaps in eligibility across programs and services? 10. How many children are not eligible for early childhood programs and services? What categories of children do not meet eligibility requirements? 11. What gaps exist in the data of availability of programs and services?
<p>Program Quality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. How is quality currently defined across programs and services? 13. What is the current quality of early childhood programs and services? Which programs participate in Texas Rising Star? Which programs are nationally accredited? How does quality vary from county to county? 14. What supports and resources are available to support quality? 15. What supports and resources are needed to support quality? 16. What is the cost of quality? 17. How do programs and services define quality? 18. How do families define quality? 19. How do communities define quality? 20. What gaps exist in the data related to quality of programs and services? 21. What tools are used to monitor quality at the state and local levels? 22. What is the condition of early childhood program and services facilities?
<p>Workforce Quality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. What are the current qualifications and education levels of the workforce? 24. What are the barriers faced in obtaining additional education? 25. What professional development supports are available? 26. What professional development supports are needed? 27. How do programs and services recruit and retain qualified staff? 28. What gaps exist in workforce data?
<p>Transitions (Across Birth-Five Programs and into Kindergarten)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 29. What are the current supports provided to children and families to ease transitions? 30. What are the gaps in transition supports? 31. What mechanisms are used to facilitate coordination and collaboration across programs and services to support transitions? 32. What are the barriers/challenges families face with transitions? 33. What gaps exist in data about transitions?
<p>Efficient Use of Resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 34. What existing funding sources are available to programs and services? 35. What are the barriers to efficiently utilizing existing funding?

<p>36. What opportunities exist to better utilize funds?</p> <p>37. How can the range of community resources be better utilized/accessed?</p> <p>38. What are the barriers to braiding/blending funding?</p> <p>39. What non-financial resources are available to programs?</p> <p>40. What assurances exist to ensure resources are efficiently utilized?</p> <p>41. What is the availability/capacity of current facilities? Where is there space to expand the number of seats? What are the barriers to expanding the number of seats? What are the resources needed to expand the number of seats?</p> <p>42. What is the sustainability of early childhood programs and services?</p> <p>43. What supports and resources can strengthen the business operations of programs and services?</p> <p>44. How can current eligibility criteria and funding be better coordinated to for more efficiently serve children?</p> <p>45. What gaps in data exist regarding the availability and use of resources?</p>
<p>Reducing Duplicative Efforts</p> <p>46. What are the overlaps in programs' goals and services?</p> <p>47. What partnerships currently exist?</p> <p>48. What are the barriers to creating partnerships?</p> <p>49. What opportunities for partnerships exist?</p> <p>50. How is data shared across programs and services?</p> <p>51. What gaps in data exist regarding the availability and use of resources?</p>

Meta-Analysis of Existing Needs Assessments

In preparation for the analyses conducted for this needs assessment, a meta-analysis review of more than 20 existing needs assessments was conducted to identify gaps and needs in early childhood services for Texas families. Findings from the meta-analysis are provided throughout the report as applicable.

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Analysis of Existing State Agency and National Data

The needs assessment included a new analysis of existing state agency data, which were either provided by state agencies or downloaded through publicly available data. Table A.2 details the core data sets used in this report.

Table A.2. Overview of State Agency Data Sets, Agency Sources, and Core Indicators

Data	Agency	Year(s) of Data Used for Analysis	Core Indicators
2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	U.S. Census Bureau	2013–2017 5-Year Estimates	0-5 population counts by age by race/ethnicity Limited English households Children under 5 years old below Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Children under 5 years old below 149% FPL Employment status for families with children under 5 years old Disability status for children under 5 years old
Texas Birth Data	Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Center for Health Statistics	2015	Children born to mothers 17 or below Children born to single mothers Children born to mothers without High School degree Children born premature
Early Childhood Data System (ECDS)	TEA	2017–18 School Year	Prekindergarten enrollment by Age Kindergarten Readiness
Abuse/Neglect Investigations	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	2018	Confirmed victims of maltreatment by county
Homeless Children	U.S. Department of Education (EDFacts Data Files)	2016–17 School Year	Number of homeless children in the public school system by county
Head Start Program Information Report	Administration for Children and Families/Office of Head Start	2018	Number of children served by Head Start by County Number of children served by Early Head Start by County
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	Texas Department of Agriculture	2018	Number of program enrollments

Prevention and Early Intervention Data	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	2018	Texas Home Visiting Counts by County Prevention and Early Intervention Children Age 0-5 by County
Subsidized Child Care Data	Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)	2018	0-5 Children Receiving Child care Subsidies by County TWC Provider Report FY 16-18
Early Childhood Intervention Services	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	2018	Number of Children Served by Early Childhood Intervention Services by County
Child Care Licensing Daycare and Residential Operations Data	Texas Health and Human Services Commission	2018	Total Capacity of licensed child care operations Total Capacity of licensed child care operations by operation type

Stakeholder Survey

Survey Administration

The stakeholder survey questionnaire included 116 quantitative/categorical items asking participants to either select all applicable options, rank available options from greatest to least, or select Likert scale numeric ratings (e.g., representing agreement). In addition, nine open-ended comment questions were included.

The online survey was fielded in a two-week period from Monday, March 25, 2019 to Friday, April 5, 2019, via Qualtrics. The survey was sent to a wide range of stakeholders statewide representing the early childhood sector, including providers, early childhood organizations, and community organizations. Survey invitations may have been shared or forwarded to multiple participants to encourage maximum participation. In this sampling approach, a fixed universe and target sample of participants were not defined; therefore, response rate and representativeness of the population could not be calculated.

Participants were advised that their responses would be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and that their completion of the survey indicated their consent to participate. Any identifying information was removed from the data file before transmitting it for analysis.

Survey Response

A total of 8,848 responses were received. Details on stakeholder groups and roles represented are shown in Tables A.5–A.7.

Table A.4. Survey Respondent Role/Program Type

Role/Program Type	Percentage	Count
Early Childhood Program and Service (direct provider)	55%	4,905
Early Childhood Organization (non-provider)*	5%	476
Community organization/partner**	7%	613
Family member (not in any of the above groups)	32%	2,854
TOTAL	100%***	8,848

Source: Survey question number 3: “Which best describes your role?”

*Early Childhood Organizations are those that work directly in the field of early childhood but do not provide direct services to families, e.g., professional development providers, local workforce boards, advocacy groups, etc.

**Community Organizations are a range of community-based organizations that may partner with early childhood providers, but do not provide early childhood related services, including churches, chambers of commerce, businesses, etc.

***Percentages may not total exactly to 100 due to rounding.

Table A.5. Survey Respondent Program Type (Early Childhood Programs and Services)

Program Type	Percentage (n = 4,889)
Local Education Agencies	31%
Child Care Center	30%
Head Start/Early Head Start	17%
Early Childhood Intervention	10%
Family Home Child Care	6%
Home Visiting	2%
Military Child Care	<1%
Other	6%

Source: Survey question number 10: “Which program type best describes your program?”

Note: Percentages may not total exactly to 100 due to rounding.

**Table A.6. Survey Respondent Organizational Affiliation
(Early Childhood Organizations)**

Program Type	Percentage (n = 465)
Education Service Center	17%
Local Workforce Development Board	11%
Early Childhood Consulting Organization	9%
Professional Development Provider	8%
Institution of Higher Education	7%
Local/Regional Early Childhood Coalition	6%
Professional Membership Organization	3%
Advocacy Organization	2%
Research Organization	1%
Other	36%

Source: Survey question number 58:

“Which organization type best describes the organization with which you are affiliated?”

Family Demographics

Tables A.7 describe family demographics. Families (N=2854) who responded to the Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey represented all the 28 regions. Almost half the families were White (49%) and 32% were Hispanic/Latino (Table A.7).

Table A.7. Race and Ethnicity of All Families by Region

Workforce Solutions Region	N	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races	Prefer not to answer
Alamo	472	1%	1%	8%	55%	0%	28%	5%	3%
Borderplex	69	0%	0%	0%	88%	0%	10%	0%	1%
Brazos Valley	86	1%	1%	2%	20%	0%	70%	2%	3%
Cameron County	8	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Capital Area	122	0%	2%	2%	24%	0%	60%	7%	4%
Central Texas	61	0%	0%	7%	7%	0%	84%	3%	0%
Concho Valley	16	0%	0%	0%	19%	0%	75%	0%	6%
Deep East Texas	30	0%	7%	13%	20%	0%	53%	7%	0%
East Texas	42	2%	0%	14%	10%	0%	69%	2%	2%
Golden Crescent	12	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	75%	0%	0%
Greater Dallas	104	0%	10%	20%	27%	0%	37%	3%	4%
Gulf Coast	362	<1%	7%	12%	31%	0%	44%	2%	4%
Lower Rio Grande Valley	16	0%	0%	0%	81%	0%	19%	0%	0%
Middle Rio Grande	45	0%	0%	2%	82%	0%	11%	4%	0%
North Central Texas	407	0%	3%	13%	15%	<1%	61%	5%	4%
North Texas	30	3%	0%	13%	13%	0%	67%	0%	3%
Northeast Texas	28	0%	0%	21%	7%	0%	71%	0%	0%
Panhandle	53	2%	0%	2%	17%	0%	68%	6%	6%
Permian Basin	64	2%	0%	0%	30%	0%	66%	2%	2%
Rural Capital Area	233	<1%	1%	3%	24%	<1%	61%	7%	3%
South Plains	68	0%	0%	3%	40%	0%	56%	1%	0%
South Texas	13	0%	0%	0%	92%	0%	8%	0%	0%
Southeast Texas	18	0%	0%	28%	33%	0%	33%	0%	6%
Tarrant County	174	1%	1%	25%	17%	0%	51%	2%	2%
Texoma	59	0%	0%	3%	12%	0%	78%	5%	2%

The Coastal Bend	103	0%	1%	1%	53%	0%	38%	6%	1%
The Heart of Texas	83	2%	1%	18%	13%	0%	60%	4%	1%
West Central Texas	76	1%	3%	3%	39%	0%	50%	1%	3%
All Regions	2,854	<1%	2%	9%	32%	<1%	49%	4%	3%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding.

Survey Analysis

The survey data was analyzed using SAS and SPSS software to generate descriptive analyses of the quantitative data (e.g., frequencies, means, standard deviations). Qualitative analysis was conducted to develop thematic coding for the open-ended comment data (nine questions).

For the purpose of group analysis, the data were analyzed both by the aggregate level and by the regional level. The regions were defined by the Texas local workforce development board regions. Survey responses were received from 236 out of the 254 (93%) counties in Texas and all 28 regions.

Break-outs used the regional level instead of the county level as the group unit of analysis because 46% of counties represented had fewer than five respondents; therefore, grouping them up by region would allow for the analysis to be more reliable and accurate.

Table A.16 presents the complete list of regions included in the analysis and the counties represented.

Table A.8. Regional Breakdown of Counties Used in Survey Analysis

Region	Counties Represented
Workforce Solutions Panhandle	Armstrong, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, Wheeler
Workforce Solutions South Plains	Bailey, Cochran, Crosby, Dickens, Floyd, Garza, Hale, Hockley, King, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Motley, Terry, Yoakum
Workforce Solutions North Texas	Archer, Baylor, Clay, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, Young
Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas	Collin, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, Wise
Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County	Tarrant
Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas	Dallas
Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas	Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, Titus
Workforce Solutions East Texas	Anderson, Camp, Cherokee, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Marion, Panola, Rains, Rusk, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt, Wood
Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas	Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Fisher, Haskell, Jones, Kent, Knox, Mitchell, Nolan, Runnels, Scurry, Shackelford, Stephens, Stonewall, Taylor, Throckmorton
Workforce Solutions Borderplex	Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Presidio

Workforce Solutions Permian Basin	Andrews, Borden, Crane, Dawson, Ector, Gaines, Glasscock, Howard, Loving, Martin, Midland, Pecos, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Ward, Winkler
Workforce Solutions Concho Valley	Coke, Concho, Crockett, Irion, Kimble, Mason, McCulloch, Menard, Reagan, Schleicher, Sterling, Sutton, Tom Green
Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas	Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone, McLennan
Workforce Solutions Capital Area	Travis
Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area	Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Hays, Lee, Llano, Williamson
Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley	Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson, Washington
Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas	Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity, Tyler
Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas	Hardin, Jefferson, Orange
Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent	Calhoun, De Witt, Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Victoria
Workforce Solutions Alamo	Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Frio, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Karnes, Kendall, Kerr, McMullen, Medina, Wilson
Workforce Solutions for South Texas	Jim Hogg, Webb, Zapata
Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend	Aransas, Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio
Workforce Solutions Lower Rio Grande Valley	Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy
Workforce Solutions Cameron	Cameron
Workforce Solutions Texoma	Cooke, Fannin, Grayson
Workforce Solutions of Central Texas	Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam, Mills, San Saba
Workforce Solutions Middle Rio Grande	Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, Val Verde, Zavala
Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast	Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, Wharton

Focus Groups

The focus group questions were developed by the Council. Eight focus groups were conducted with early childhood stakeholders in Texas, identified with the assistance of the Council and stakeholder community organizations. Teachers, administrators, family members, partners, and other stakeholders of early childhood programs including child care, prekindergarten, Head Start, Early Head Start, home visiting, and migrant and tribal programs participated in these focus groups. The focus groups were conducted during the second full week of May 2019. Three in-person groups were held in community organization settings in Brownsville, San Antonio, and San Angelo, and five virtual groups conducted via conference line to accommodate participants' schedules and widespread locations. In total, 76 individuals participated across the eight focus group sessions.

Target sampling plans and participation/attendance are shown in Tables A.17 to A.21.

Table A.9. Target Sample and Participation of Families Participating/Receiving Services (Three Focus Groups)

		Child Care**	Prekindergarten	Tribal ***	Migrant***	Head Start/ Early Head Start	Special Needs: 1 ECI Services 1/ECSE	Home Visiting Services
Rural	Sample Target	3	2	1	1	1	2	

	Attended*					1	2	
Urban	Sample Target	3	2		1	2	2	
	Attended*	3				1	1	1
Rural/Urban Spanish-speaking	Sample Target	2	1		1	1	2	1
	Attended*	2	1			5	4	

Notes: ECSE = Early Childhood Special Education Services

*Some family participants represent several categories such as Head Start and special needs.

**Included only subsidized child care. Rural/Urban Spanish-speaking families were recruited from Spanish-speaking child care programs.

***Tribal and migrant family participation could not be obtained despite multiple attempts at outreach.

Tribal contacts advised that Tribal Council approval was needed to talk to any tribal families and did not respond to follow-up contacts. Migrant programs that were contacted did not return phone calls; several had "non-working" number

Table A.10. Target Sample and Participation of Teachers/Care Providers (Two Focus Groups)

		English Speaking Child Care*	Non-English Speaking	Tribal	Migrant	Head Start/ Early Head Start	Special Needs	Prekindergarten	Home Visitors	Family Child Care
Rural	Sample Target	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Attended**	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Urban	Sample Target	2	2	NA	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Attended**	2	0	0	1	4	0	1	1	3

*Included only subsidized child care

**Some teachers represent several categories

Table A.11. Target Sample and Participation of Administrators of Early Childhood Programs and Services (One Focus Group)

	HS/EHS	Tribal	Migrant	Home Visiting Administrators	Prekindergarten*	Child Care**
Sample Target	1	1	1	2	2	3
Attended	7	0	0	1	2	5

*One each: Elementary Principal Small District, District-Level Administrator Large District

**Included only subsidized child care

Table A.12. Target Sample and Participation of Programs and Organizations Engaged in Partnerships (One Focus Group)

	Prekindergarten – Child Care	Prekindergarten – Head Start	Early Childhood Coalitions	MIECHV Community Group	Business Partnerships
Sample Target	2	2	2	2	2
Attended	0	5	8	0	2

Table A.13. Target Sample and Participation of Administrators and Faculty at Institutions of Higher Education (One Focus Group)

	2-Year Administrator	4-Year Administrator	2-Year Faculty	4-Year Faculty	Other
Sample Target	2	2	3	3	
Attended*	3	1	2	2	1

Written consent was obtained at the start of each in-person session. For the virtual sessions, participants were asked to consent verbally and in some cases emailed their consent before the session.

Each session was led by a single trained facilitator with one additional staff as note-taker, with the exception of the Spanish-speaking session which was both led and notated by the Spanish-speaking facilitator (who is also an experienced translator).

As an incentive, there was a raffle for one \$50 Walmart gift card for each family focus group, with a total of 3 gift cards distributed. Light refreshments were offered at the three in-person sessions.

The focus group team thematically coded the interview responses based on detailed notes taken at the time of each session. All sessions were audio recorded to permit later transcription, but the full transcriptions were not available as of reporting date due to time constraints. Identifying information of individual participants was removed from coding documentation to maintain anonymity.

Appendix B: State Agency Data Technical Detail

Table C.1. 0–4 Population by Age by Urbanization

Age	Completely Rural (58 Counties)		Mostly Rural (78 Counties)		Mostly Urban (118 Counties)		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Age 0	3,060	20%	29,781	20%	363,161	20%	396,002	20%
Age 1	3,034	20%	29,891	20%	367,318	20%	400,243	20%
Age 2	3,128	20%	30,305	20%	377,372	20%	410,805	20%
Age 3	3,097	20%	30,184	20%	377,972	20%	411,253	20%
Age 4	3,107	20%	29,935	20%	374,401	20%	407,443	20%
Total	15,426	100%	150,096	100%	1,860,224	100%	2,025,746	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2013–2017 5-year Estimates

Table C.2. 0–4 Population by Race/Ethnicity and Urbanization

	Completely Rural (58 Counties)		Mostly Rural (78 Counties)		Mostly Urban (118 Counties)		Total	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Asian	67	0.4%	703	0.5%	82,159	4%	82,929	4%
Black	746	5%	11,744	8%	222,137	12%	234,627	12%
Hispanic	5,423	35%	50,047	33%	950,084	51%	1,005,554	50%
White	8,633	56%	80,780	54%	530,625	29%	620,038	31%
Other	557	4%	6,822	5%	75,219	4%	82,598	4%
Total	15,426	100%	150,096	100%	1,860,224	100%	2,025,746	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2013–2017 5-year Estimates

Note: Percentages may not total exactly to 100 due to rounding.

Table C.3. County Birth-Five Population and Program Availability

County	Birth - Five Population	Child Care	Subsidized Child Care	Number of TRS & Nationally Accredited Providers	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Early Head Start	Texas Home Visiting
ANDERSON	3484	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ANDREWS	1776	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
ANGELINA	7484	Yes	Yes	9	Yes	Yes	No	No
ARANSAS	1520	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
ARCHER	558	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ARMSTRONG	105	No	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
ATASCOSA	4319	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
AUSTIN	2216	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
BAILEY	691	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
BANDERA	1163	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
BASTROP	6550	Yes	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
BAYLOR	277	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
BEE	2615	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
BELL	36624	Yes	Yes	90	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
BEXAR	174465	Yes	Yes	140	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
BLANCO	689	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
BORDEN	37	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
BOSQUE	1333	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
BOWIE	6495	Yes	Yes	14	Yes	Yes	No	No
BRAZORIA	28867	Yes	Yes	26	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
BRAZOS	16563	Yes	Yes	21	Yes	Yes	No	No
BREWSTER	799	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	No	No	No
BRISCOE	80	No	No	0	No	No	No	No
BROOKS	671	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
BROWN	2691	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
BURLESON	1283	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
BURNET	3310	Yes	Yes	5	Yes	Yes	No	No
CALDWELL	3363	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CALHOUN	1902	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
CALLAHAN	873	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No

County	Birth - Five Population	Child Care	Subsidized Child Care	Number of TRS & Nationally Accredited Providers	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Early Head Start	Texas Home Visiting
CAMERON	42039	Yes	Yes	45	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CAMP	1073	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
CARSON	386	Yes	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
CASS	2274	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
CASTRO	715	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
CHAMBERS	3362	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
CHEROKEE	4379	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
CHILDRESS	456	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
CLAY	597	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
COCHRAN	277	No	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
COKE	209	No	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
COLEMAN	601	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
COLLIN	76534	Yes	Yes	26	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
COLLINGSWORTH	232	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
COLORADO	1637	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
COMAL	9876	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
COMANCHE	1050	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
CONCHO	110	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
COOKE	2924	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
CORYELL	6253	Yes	Yes	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
COTTLE	87	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
CRANE	456	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
CROCKETT	293	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
CROSBY	466	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CULBERSON	187	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
DALLAM	777	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
DALLAS	246532	Yes	Yes	164	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DAWSON	994	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
DEAF SMITH	1581	No	No	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
DELTA	2029	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
DENTON	368	Yes	Yes	35	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
DEWITT	60652	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No

County	Birth - Five Population	Child Care	Subsidized Child Care	Number of TRS & Nationally Accredited Providers	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Early Head Start	Texas Home Visiting
DICKENS	100	No	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
DIMITT	1094	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
DONLEY	238	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
DUVAL	1024	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
EASTLAND	1426	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
ECTOR	16222	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
EDWARDS	129	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
EL PASO	85242	Yes	Yes	104	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ELLIS	13740	Yes	Yes	5	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
ERATH	2939	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	No	No	No
FALLS	1170	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
FANNIN	2352	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
FAYETTE	1799	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	No	No	No
FISHER	269	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
FLOYD	497	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
FOARD	78	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
FORT BEND	62617	Yes	Yes	29	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
FRANKLIN	881	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
FREESTONE	1467	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
FRIIO	1493	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
GAINES	2230	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
GALVESTON	26346	Yes	Yes	9	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
GARZA	415	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
GILLESPIE	1655	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
GLASSCOCK	87	Yes	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
GOLIAD	474	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
GONZALES	1824	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
GRAY	1801	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
GRAYSON	9631	Yes	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
GREGG	10435	Yes	Yes	25	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
GRIMES	2046	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
GUADALUPE	12559	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

County	Birth - Five Population	Child Care	Subsidized Child Care	Number of TRS & Nationally Accredited Providers	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Early Head Start	Texas Home Visiting
HALE	3099	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
HALL	218	Yes	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
HAMILTON	639	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
HANSFORD	479	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
HARDEMAN	309	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
HARDIN	3909	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
HARRIS	432799	Yes	Yes	263	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HARRISON	5629	Yes	Yes	6	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
HARTLEY	373	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
HASKELL	365	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
HAYS	14569	Yes	Yes	18	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
HEMPHILL	351	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	No	No	No
HENDERSON	5494	Yes	Yes	8	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
HIDALGO	85522	Yes	Yes	90	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
HILL	2818	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
HOCKLEY	2125	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HOOD	3581	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	No	No	No
HOPKINS	2675	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
HOUSTON	1568	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
HOWARD	2926	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
HUDSPETH	291	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
HUNT	7262	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
HUTCHINSON	1741	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
IRION	92	Yes	No	0	No	Yes	No	No
JACK	648	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
JACKSON	1285	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
JASPER	2749	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
JEFF DAVIS	96	No	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
JEFFERSON	20878	Yes	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
JIM HOGG	513	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
JIM WELLS	4013	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
JOHNSON	14161	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	No	No	No

County	Birth - Five Population	Child Care	Subsidized Child Care	Number of TRS & Nationally Accredited Providers	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Early Head Start	Texas Home Visiting
JONES	1014	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
KARNES	1138	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
KAUFMAN	9791	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
KENDALL	2764	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
KENEDY	31	No	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
KENT	49	Yes	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
KERR	3457	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	Yes	No	No
KIMBLE	295	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
KING	16	No	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
KINNEY	246	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
KLEBERG	2102	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
KNOX	267	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
LA SALLE	571	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
LAMAR	3886	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
LAMB	1167	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
LAMPASAS	1433	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
LAVACA	1502	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
LEE	1302	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
LEON	1364	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
LIBERTY	7008	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
LIMESTONE	1821	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
LIPSCOMB	264	No	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
LIVE OAK	848	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
LLANO	1194	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
LOVING	5	No	No	0	No	No	No	No
LUBBOCK	23960	Yes	Yes	24	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
LYNN	461	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
MADISON	1067	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
MARION	620	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
MARTIN	541	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
MASON	258	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
MATAGORDA	3075	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No

County	Birth - Five Population	Child Care	Subsidized Child Care	Number of TRS & Nationally Accredited Providers	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Early Head Start	Texas Home Visiting
MAVERICK	6194	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
MCCULLOCH	592	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
MCLENNAN	21653	Yes	Yes	27	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
MCMULLEN	50	No	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
MEDINA	3855	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
MENARD	133	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
MIDLAND	16369	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
MILAM	1949	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
MILLS	330	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
MITCHELL	559	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
MONTAGUE	1430	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
MONTGOMERY	44190	Yes	Yes	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
MOORE	2301	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
MORRIS	949	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
MOTLEY	64	No	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
NACOGDOCHES	5028	Yes	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	No	No
NAVARRO	3914	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
NEWTON	824	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
NOLAN	1177	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
NUECES	31131	Yes	Yes	24	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
OCHILTREE	1048	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
OLDHAM	127	Yes	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
ORANGE	6435	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
PALO PINTO	2067	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
PANOLA	1993	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
PARKER	9350	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	No	No	No
PARMER	961	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
PECOS	1340	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
POLK	3247	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
POTTER	10334	Yes	Yes	16	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
PRESIDIO	659	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
RAINS	744	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No

County	Birth - Five Population	Child Care	Subsidized Child Care	Number of TRS & Nationally Accredited Providers	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Early Head Start	Texas Home Visiting
RANDALL	10703	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
REAGAN	342	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
REAL	251	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
RED RIVER	846	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
REEVES	1196	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
REFUGIO	563	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
ROBERTS	66	No	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
ROBERTSON	1321	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
ROCKWALL	6894	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
RUNNELS	770	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
RUSK	3653	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
SABINE	650	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
SAN AUGUSTINE	586	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
SAN JACINTO	2058	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
SAN PATRICIO	5725	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
SAN SABA	407	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
SCHLEICHER	204	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
SCURRY	1332	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
SHACKELFORD	247	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
SHELBY	2178	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
SHERMAN	260	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
SMITH	18998	Yes	Yes	15	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
SOMERVELL	636	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	No	No	No
STARR	7252	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
STEPHENS	727	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
STERLING	87	Yes	Yes	1	No	No	No	No
STONEWALL	93	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
SUTTON	323	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
SWISHER	552	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
TARRANT	168362	Yes	Yes	171	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
TAYLOR	11518	Yes	Yes	21	Yes	Yes	No	No
TERRELL	51	No	No	0	Yes	No	No	No

County	Birth - Five Population	Child Care	Subsidized Child Care	Number of TRS & Nationally Accredited Providers	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Early Head Start	Texas Home Visiting
TERRY	1125	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
THROCKMORTON	102	Yes	No	0	Yes	No	No	No
TITUS	3160	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
TOM GREEN	9302	Yes	Yes	7	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
TRAVIS	100150	Yes	Yes	145	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
TRINITY	883	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
TYLER	1440	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
UPSHUR	2807	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
UPTON	306	Yes	No	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
UVALDE	2225	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
VAL VERDE	5067	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
VAN ZANDT	4056	Yes	Yes	5	Yes	Yes	No	No
VICTORIA	7163	Yes	Yes	4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
WALKER	3989	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
WALLER	3161	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
WARD	1106	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
WASHINGTON	2403	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
WEBB	28153	Yes	Yes	19	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WHARTON	3320	Yes	Yes	3	Yes	Yes	No	No
WHEELER	467	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
WICHITA	10561	Yes	Yes	21	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
WILBARGER	1051	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	No
WILLACY	1861	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
WILLIAMSON	44666	Yes	Yes	28	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
WILSON	3525	Yes	Yes	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
WINKLER	741	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	No	No	No
WISE	4758	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	No	No	No
WOOD	2829	Yes	Yes	6	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
YOAKUM	931	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
YOUNG	1538	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No
ZAPATA	1559	Yes	Yes	1	Yes	Yes	No	No
ZAVALA	1267	Yes	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table C.4. Cost of Care as Percent of Income

Workforce Board	Cost for One Child as Percent of Household Income		
	Infant	Toddler	Preschool
Alamo	28%	28%	25%
Borderplex	21%	21%	18%
Brazos Valley	26%	27%	24%
Cameron County	21%	21%	19%
Capital Area	34%	35%	31%
Central Texas	21%	22%	20%
Coastal Bend	25%	26%	22%
Concho Valley	21%	22%	20%
Dallas	28%	29%	25%
Deep East Texas	21%	21%	19%
East Texas	22%	22%	20%
Golden Crescent	22%	23%	20%
Gulf Coast	28%	28%	25%
Heart of Texas	21%	22%	19%
Lower Rio Grande Valley	22%	22%	19%
Middle Rio Grande	18%	18%	16%
North Central Texas	29%	30%	26%
North East Texas	21%	21%	19%
North Texas	22%	22%	19%
Panhandle	24%	24%	22%
Permian Basin	23%	23%	21%
Rural Capital	30%	31%	28%
South Plains	22%	22%	20%
South Texas	21%	22%	19%
Southeast Texas	23%	23%	20%
Tarrant County	30%	30%	27%
Texoma	24%	25%	22%
West Central Texas	20%	21%	18%

Source: 2018 Texas Child Care Market Rate Survey; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2013–2017 5-year Estimates.

Appendix C: Stakeholder Survey Analysis Technical Details

Table C.1. Sources of Information about Programs and Services Available for Families with Household Income Less than \$30,000

Source	Family Member ¹ (N = 815)
Public school	38%
Family	34%
Co-workers/friends	33%
Child care provider	23%
Primary health care provider/family doctor	20%
Public space (i.e. grocery store bulletin, community center, library)	20%
Social service agencies	19%
Other	18%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question. Respondents who were considered to be under the poverty line were those who selected having a family income of less than \$30,000.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “Where in the community do you learn about programs and services available to you and your child(ren)?”

Table C.2. Barriers Faced by Families with Household Income Less than \$30,000 in Accessing Early Childhood Programs and Services

Source	Family Member ¹ (N=778)
Financial	51%
Lack of awareness	31%
Time	29%
Lack of child care	19%
Transportation	17%
Don't qualify	17%
Other	20%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question. Respondents who were considered to be under the poverty line were those who selected having a family income of less than \$30,000.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “What are the barriers you face in accessing early childhood programs and services within your community?”

Table C.3.Types of Services, Programs, or Supports Currently Provided to Children Ages Birth Through Five Years Old and Their Families

Type of Services and Support	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 4,712)	Community Organization/ Partner ² (N = 77)	Family Member ³ (N = 2,708)
Meal/food support	61%	21%	41%
Enrichment activities/programs (e.g., art, music, field trips)	51%	--	35%
Education support for families	42%	43%	21%
Family support services	41%	--	13%
Before and/or after school care	40%	--	37%
English as a Second Language (ESL) support	40%	--	14%
Transportation	38%	--	24%
Home visiting	33%	--	12%
Mental health support for child	23%	35%	9%
Health services	22%	30%	12%
Oral health	16%	13%	11%
Career and job support for families	12%	21%	6%
Mental health support for adult/families	11%	23%	2%
Housing support	6%	--	3%
Parenting classes	--	34%	--
Supporting unique needs (i.e. physical therapy, speech therapy, dual language learners)	--	25%	--
Other	--	33%	--
None	--	--	8%
Not aware	--	--	25%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “What types of services, programs, or supports does your program currently provide to young children and their families?”² Question asked for this respondent type was, “What type(s) of services, programs, or supports does your entity currently provide to children ages birth through 5 years old and their families?”

³ Question asked for this respondent type was, “Are any of the following services provided by your child's program or service?”

Table C.4. Services, Programs and Supports Early Childhood Programs and Services Would Like to Offer to Young Children and their Families by Program Type

Type of Service or Support	Child Care Center (N=1218)	Head Start/Early Head Start (N=638)	Local Education Agency (N=1367)
Health services	23%	21%	27%
Oral health	14%	17%	22%
Family support services	43%	20%	43%
Mental health support for child	42%	29%	48%
Mental health support for adult	25%	34%	38%
Meal/food support	19%	18%	18%
Home visiting	11%	14%	19%
Education support for families	43%	31%	48%
Career and job support for families	22%	33%	30%
Housing support	10%	28%	14%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding. Question asked for this respondent type was, "What are the types of services, programs, or supports you would want your program to provide to young children and their families?"

Table C.5. Additional Services Families Would Like their Child's Early Childhood Program/Service to Offer by Program Type

	Child Care Center (N=304)	Head Start/Early Head Start (N=182)	Local Education Agency (N=150)
Health services	15%	23%	20%
Oral health	13%	19%	19%
Family support services	19%	27%	23%
Mental health support for child	19%	23%	25%
Mental health support for adult	17%	13%	14%
Meal/food support	21%	22%	20%
Home visiting	7%	8%	8%
Education support for families	21%	25%	22%
Career and job support for families	26%	23%	24%
Housing support	23%	19%	25%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding. Question asked for this respondent type was, "What additional services would you like to have offered to you and your family by your child's early childhood program or service?"

Table C.6. Availability of Child Care Services with Non-Standard Operating Hours

Are child care services available in your community outside of the standard operating hours (Monday–Friday 6:00 am–6:00 pm)?	Family Member (N = 2,830)
Yes	21%
No	32%
Unaware	47%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding.

Table C.7. Waitlist Participation

Response	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 1,590)	Family Member ² (N = 2,809)
Yes	63%	8%

No	37%	92%
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Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, "Does your program have a waitlist?"

² Question asked for this respondent type was, "Is your child currently on a waitlist for an early childhood program or service?"

Table C.8. Mean Responses on Importance of Quality Components in an Early Childhood Program or Service by Respondent Type

	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹			Early Childhood Organization ¹			Community Organization/ Partner ¹			Family Member ²		
	M	N	SD	M	N	SD	M	N	SD	M	N	SD
Child safety	3.95	4,810	0.25	3.88	458	0.49	3.93	588	0.30	3.93	2,698	0.29
How the teacher interacts with children	3.93	4,781	0.28	3.90	454	0.45	3.93	588	0.29	3.92	2,688	0.30
Age-appropriate curriculum and classroom activities	3.90	4,807	0.32	3.83	458	0.51	3.85	588	0.40	3.79	2,722	0.46
Number of teachers in classroom	3.84	4,782	0.45	3.78	465	0.59	3.78	595	0.49	3.59	2,796	0.64
Learning environment (e.g. classroom materials and supplies, number of and availability of materials, design of the classroom)	3.84	4,807	0.40	3.78	462	0.54	3.78	591	0.47	3.70	2,734	0.54
Teacher qualifications	3.78	4,782	0.46	3.68	460	0.62	3.76	587	0.49	3.75	2,710	0.49
Communication and partnerships with families/family engagement	3.74	4,801	0.49	3.71	455	0.58	3.76	589	0.47	3.64	2,735	0.58
Small class size	3.71	4,755	0.58	3.59	454	0.71	3.72	590	0.52	3.46	2,717	0.70
Age-appropriate testing and screenings	3.67	4,776	0.61	3.58	456	0.75	3.63	584	0.64	3.46	2,720	0.81
Nutrition (e.g., type of meals served, instruction on	3.60	4,740	0.58	3.61	454	0.63	3.66	591	0.54	3.50	2,731	0.70

healthy eating habits)												
Health and wellness (assisting families with child health and wellness, prevention and wellness checks, vaccination resources)	3.51	4,737	0.67	3.58	455	0.66	3.67	592	0.57	3.26	2,722	0.93
Transition plans (e.g., transition into the program and service or transition into kindergarten)	3.50	4,754	0.65	3.50	454	0.65	3.56	593	0.62	3.43	2,711	0.79
Vision/mission statement and program philosophy	3.49	4,699	0.69	3.44	452	0.76	3.33	586	0.75	3.17	2,642	0.87
Supports native language	3.44	4,677	0.71	3.48	448	0.75	3.41	583	0.72	3.07	2,536	0.98
Additional services and resources offered to families (e.g. English language classes, job resources)	3.25	4,612	0.80	3.36	448	0.82	3.37	591	0.73	2.83	2,557	1.10
Teacher experience (i.e., number of years taught)	3.22	4,762	0.79	3.20	456	0.80	3.14	583	0.78	3.26	2734	0.80
Other	3.46	994	0.78	3.35	127	0.96	3.33	122	0.86	3.12	799	1.03

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: Scale was ranked where 1 = Not important, 2 = Slightly important, 3 = Important, and 4 = Very important. Response option "No opinion" was excluded.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, "How important are the following quality components in an early childhood program or service?"

² Question asked for this respondent type was, "How important are the following quality components in considering an early childhood program or service for your child?"

Table C.9. Supports and Resources Available to Support Program Quality

Type of Support and Resource	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 4,340)	Early Childhood Organizations ² (N = 435)	Community Organizations ³ (N = 560)
Professional development	71%	71%	--
Classroom materials and supplies	63%	50%	--
Mentoring/coaching	48%	57%	--
Technical assistance	41%	35%	--
Funding	38%	23%	--
Curriculum materials	--	47%	--
Diagnostic materials	--	37%	--
Transition supports	--	23%	--
Training opportunities	--	--	61%
Materials	--	--	45%
Human capital	--	--	27%
Financial	--	--	26%
Venue	--	--	21%
Other	7%	--	27%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “Which supports and resources are available to you to support program quality?”

² Question asked for this respondent type was, “What types of supports and resources do you provide to early childhood programs and services to increase quality?”

³ Question asked for this respondent type was, “What supports and resources do you have available to provide to early childhood programs and services in your community?”

Table C.10. Availability of Supports/Resources for Program Quality by Program Type

Type of Resource	Child Care Center (N=1262)	Early Childhood Intervention (N=414)	Family Home, Military Child Care (N=208)	Head Start/Early Head Start (N=737)	Local Education Agency (N=1373)	Other (N=249)
Funding	34%	40%	23%	49%	37%	39%
Professional	66%	69%	45%	73%	79%	72%
Mentoring/Coaching	45%	46%	24%	65%	47%	42%
Technical assistance	36%	44%	27%	49%	43%	41%
Classroom materials and supplies	65%	48%	34%	67%	69%	65%
Other	6%	7%	24%	9%	4%	10%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding. Question asked for this respondent type was, “Which supports and resources are available to you to support program quality?”

Table C.11. Availability of Supports/Resources for Program Quality by Accreditation Status of Early Childhood Programs and Services

Type of Resource	TRS/Accredited Providers (N=2073)	Non TRS/Accredited providers (N=1118)
Funding	41%	35%
Professional	74%	63%
Mentoring/Coaching	54%	38%
Technical assistance	44%	38%
Classroom materials and supplies	64%	60%
Other	6%	8%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding. Question asked for this respondent type was, "Which supports and resources are available to you to support program quality?"

Table C.12. Availability Supports/Resources for Program Quality by Urbanization Status of Early Childhood Programs and Services

Type of Resource	Urban (N=2598)	Rural (N=1928)
Funding	37%	42%
Professional	72%	68%
Mentoring/Coaching	48%	48%
Technical assistance	40%	43%
Classroom materials and supplies	62%	62%
Other	7%	9%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding. Respondents might be duplicated in both urbanicity due to respondents having the option to select multiple counties in the survey. Question asked for this respondent type was, "Which supports and resources are available to you to support program quality?"

Table C.13. Perception of Support to Increase and/or Maintain Program Quality

Workforce Solutions Region	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 5,016)			
	N	More than Enough	Enough	Not Enough
Alamo	478	10%	53% ^a	38% ^b
Borderplex	99	10%	55%	35% ^b
Brazos Valley	64	9% ^a	63% ^b	28% ^a
Cameron County	59	14%	54%	32%
Capital Area	203	11%	51% ^a	38% ^b
Central Texas	95	13%	48% ^a	39% ^b
Concho Valley	40	20% ^b	50% ^a	30%
Deep East Texas	159	9% ^a	59%	31%
East Texas	189	14% ^b	63% ^b	22% ^a
Golden Crescent	49	12%	59% ^b	29% ^a
Greater Dallas	297	10%	53% ^a	37% ^b
Gulf Coast	986	12%	56%	32%
Lower Rio Grande Valley	185	4% ^a	56%	39% ^b
Middle Rio Grande	60	15% ^b	68% ^b	17% ^a
North Central Texas	411	11%	55%	33%

North Texas	75	9% ^a	61% ^b	29% ^a
Northeast Texas	70	19% ^b	51%	30%
Panhandle	145	14%	56%	30%
Permian Basin	142	8% ^a	57%	35%
Rural Capital Area	197	11%	57%	32%
South Plains	114	15% ^b	51%	34%
South Texas	62	10%	58%	32%
Southeast Texas	91	18% ^b	56%	26% ^a
Tarrant County	269	13%	54%	32%
Texoma	58	7% ^a	60% ^b	33%
The Coastal Bend	134	7% ^a	54%	39% ^b
The Heart of Texas	127	11%	58%	31%
West Central Texas	158	18% ^b	63% ^b	19% ^a
All Regions	5,016	12%	56%	33%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sample for all regions (reported in the bottom row) included a larger N than in the aggregate statewide analysis sample. This accounts for the fact that some respondents' programs covered more than one region. Reported percentages for all regions, as a result, are slightly different from the percentages reported in the aggregate-level analysis. The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, "Do you feel like you receive enough support to increase and/or maintain the quality of your program?"

^a Value was in the lower percent quartile (bottom 25%) from the sample.

^b Value was in the upper percent quartile (top 25%) from the sample.

Table C.14. Areas That Early Childhood Programs and Services Need the Most Support

Areas of Support	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 4,469)
Professional development for staff	47%
Class size/student-to-teacher ratios	37%
Family engagement/partnerships	32%
Mental health and well-being	28%
Curriculum	25%
Administration (operations, finances, human resources, etc.)	25%
Diagnostic and screening	24%
Learning environments	21%
Teacher-child interactions	20%
Transition supports	14%
Program goals	13%
Nutrition and health	10%
Primary language preservation	10%
Additional services and supports	19%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a "select all that apply" question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, "With which area(s) do you need the most support?"

Table C.15. Areas that Need the Most Support by Urbanization Status of Early Childhood Programs and Services

Areas in Need	Urban (N=2611)	Rural (N=2047)
Class size/student-to-teacher ratios	37%	35%
Curriculum	23%	26%
Learning environments	21%	20%
Professional development for staff	48%	46%
Family engagement/partnerships	32%	32%
Teacher-child interactions	19%	20%
Nutrition and health	9%	10%
Diagnostic and screening	26%	21%
Transition supports	14%	15%
Primary language preservation	10%	9%
Mental health and well-being	28%	28%
Program goals	12%	13%
Administration (operations, finances, human resources, etc.)	27%	24%
Additional services and supports	20%	18%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding.

Respondents might be duplicated in both urbanicity due to respondents having the option to select multiple counties in the survey. Question asked for this respondent type was, "With which area(s) do you need the most support?"

Table C.16. Tools Used to Monitor Program Quality

Type of Monitoring Tool	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹		Community Organization/ Partner ²	
	%	N	%	N
Tool developed by your program	70%	3,854	26%	444
Classroom Environment Checklist from CLI	54%	3,869	37%	444
Classroom Observation Tool (COT) from CLI	50%	3,864	31%	444
CLASS	45%	3,624	37%	444
Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment from TEA	38%	3,644	26%	444
National Accreditation Tools	33%	3,548	22%	444
ECERS/ITERS/FCCERS/SACERS	22%	3,604	18%	444
None	--	--	11%	444
Other	48%	2,026	18%	444

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a "select all that apply" question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, "What tools do you use to monitor your own program quality?"

² Question asked for this respondent type was, "Does your organization support early childhood programs and services in utilizing any of the following monitoring tools?"

Table C.17. Frequency of Monitoring Tools Used

Type of Monitoring Tool	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹		
	Mean	N	SD
Tool developed by your program	2.45	2,690	1.53
CLASS	2.65	1,620	1.53
Classroom Observation Tool (COT) from CLI	2.75	1,946	1.36
Classroom Environment Checklist from CLI	2.75	2,081	1.48
ECERS/ITERS/FCCERS/SACERS	2.88	796	1.52
National Accreditation Tools	3.21	1,182	1.66
Early Childhood Program Self-Assessment from TEA	3.33	1,399	1.58
Other	2.42	969	1.52

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: Scale was ranked where 1 = Monthly, 2 = Bi-Monthly, 3 = Quarterly, 4 = Semi-Annually, and 5 = Annually.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, "How often do you use these tools? (select all that apply)"

Table C.18. Facility Impact by Hurricane Harvey

	Early Childhood Programs and Services
Was your facility impacted by Hurricane Harvey? (N = 1,593)	13%
Has your facility been fully-repaired? (N = 210)	82%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding.

Table C.19. Condition of Child Care Facilities by Region

Workforce Solutions Region	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 1,644)		
	Mean	N	SD
Alamo	2.74 ^a	148	0.67
Borderplex	2.78 ^a	27	0.58
Brazos Valley	3.00 ^b	28	0.77
Cameron County	3.00 ^b	13	0.58
Capital Area	2.88	93	0.61
Central Texas	2.78	37	0.53
Concho Valley	2.54 ^a	13	0.52
Deep East Texas	2.70 ^a	40	0.79
East Texas	2.89	76	0.76
Golden Crescent	2.89	18	0.76
Greater Dallas	2.86	100	0.65
Gulf Coast	2.91	330	0.66
Lower Rio Grande Valley	2.78	60	0.76
Middle Rio Grande	2.80	10	0.79
North Central Texas	3.01 ^b	160	0.69
North Texas	2.38 ^a	13	0.77
Northeast Texas	2.95 ^b	20	0.69
Panhandle	2.91	44	0.56
Permian Basin	2.58 ^a	40	0.81
Rural Capital Area	2.98 ^b	66	0.59
South Plains	2.93 ^b	44	0.62
South Texas	2.78 ^a	9	0.44
Southeast Texas	2.93 ^b	29	0.59
Tarrant County	2.78	102	0.64
Texoma	2.81	16	0.54
The Coastal Bend	2.59 ^a	41	0.74
The Heart of Texas	2.83	36	0.56
West Central Texas	2.90	31	0.60
All Regions	2.86	1644	0.67

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sample for all regions (reported in the bottom row) included a larger N than in the aggregate statewide analysis sample. This accounts for the fact that some respondents' programs covered more than one region. Reported percentages for all regions, as a result, are slightly different from the percentages reported in the aggregate-level analysis. Scale was ranked where 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Good, and 4 = New/Like new.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, "What is the condition of your facility? (Building structure, classrooms, playground, drop off/pick up zone)."

^a Value was in the lower percent quartile (bottom 25%) from the sample.

^b Value was in the upper percent quartile (top 25%) from the sample.

Table C.20. Types of Supports Staff from Early Childhood Programs and Services Need to Obtain Additional Education

Type of Support	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 3,897)
Financial aid	70%
Paid time off	37%
Support in navigating higher education processes	31%
Support of employer	20%
Technology support or training	18%
Technology or internet access	15%
Child care of own children	14%
Reading and writing skills development	7%
Transportation	5%
English language supports	5%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “What types of Supports do you need to obtain additional education?”

Table C.21. Barriers Staff from Early Childhood Programs and Services Face in Accessing Professional Development

Type of Barrier	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 4,803)	Spanish-Speaking Staff from Early Childhood Programs and Services (n= 77)
Time of trainings is not convenient	48%	46%
Location of trainings	39%	16%
Cost	18%	58%
Level of training content does not match experience level	16%	5%
Availability of trainers	13%	20%
Lack of administrator support	7%	8%
Availability of technology resources	6%	12%
Trainings not available in primary language	2%	31%
None	18%	13%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “What barriers do you face in accessing professional development?”

Table C.22. Sources Early Childhood Programs and Services Use for Accessing Professional Development

Type of Professional Development Provider	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 4,801)
Local conferences	74%
Onsite trainings provided by employer	70%
Online	69%
Professional organizations or associations	43%
State conferences	33%
National conferences	14%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “Where do you access professional development?”

Table C.23. Areas of Professional Development or Training Early Childhood Programs and Services Need the Most Support

Areas of Professional Development	Early Childhood Programs and Services¹ (N = 4,673)
Addressing challenging behaviors	58%
Supporting children with special needs	41%
Child development /brain development	31%
Family engagement and partnerships	27%
Curriculum/lesson planning	26%
Monitoring and observation	24%
Mental health	24%
Leadership	23%
Creating effective learning environments	22%
Supporting vulnerable populations (i.e., homelessness, foster care, etc.)	22%
Community partnerships	20%
Supporting English Learners	17%
Reflective supervision	17%
Content pedagogy and instructional strategies (i.e., literacy, math, etc.)	17%
Minimum standards	13%
Diversity and equity	12%
Professionalism/Ethics	11%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “In what area(s) of professional development or training do you need the most support?”

Table C.24 Areas Early Childhood Programs and Services Feel Less Confident in their Ability to Support a Child

Areas of Support	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 4,513)
Emotional disturbance	55%
Autism	50%
Traumatic brain injury	41%
Toxic stress	34%
Visual impairment	32%
Auditory impairment	29%
Developmental delays	23%
Learning disability	22%
Orthopedic impairment	20%
Speech or language impairment	19%
Intellectual disability	18%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “In which of the following areas do you feel less confident in your ability to support a child?”

Table C.25. Families’ Mean Level of Comfort with Supporting Transition to a New Program or Kindergarten

Which statement best describes your level of comfort with supporting your child as he/she...	Family Member		
	Mean	N	SD
started a new program/service?	4.05	2,584	1.03
entered kindergarten?	4.83	2,030	1.48

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: Scale was ranked where 1 = Not comfortable at all, 2 = Not extremely concerned, but had many questions, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Comfortable: still unsure of multiple components about the program, but comfortable my child will transition successfully, and 5 = Very comfortable: I am aware of the expectations for my child. My child and I are both comfortable with his/her transition.

Table C.26. Types of Transition Supports Provided/Received

Type of Transition Support	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 4,358)	Family Member ² (N = 1,974)
Assisting families with registration/enrollment into new programs	56%	39%
Child-focused activities	48%	75%
Family conferences	47%	45%
Data sharing (provides kindergarten program with diagnostic data and other information collected about your child)	42%	32%
Tours of /visits to new programs	38%	28%
Teacher-to-teacher conferences	37%	--
Family-focused activities	34%	39%
Previous teacher/caregiver-to-new teacher/caregiver conferences	--	21%
Other	0%	--

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “What types of transition supports do you provide children and families?”

² Question asked for this respondent type was, “Does (Did) your child's early childhood program offer any of the following activities to help your children move into kindergarten?”

Table C.27. Supports and Resources Early Childhood Programs and Services Need the Most, and Currently Do Not Have Access to, to Improve Child Transitions into Other Programs

Type of Support and Resources	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N = 3,713)
Support in collaborating with other programs	26%
Activity ideas and resources for families	22%
Creating transition plans	20%
Professional development	15%
Technical assistance	5%
Other	13%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across may not exactly equal 100% due to rounding.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “Which supports and resources do you need the most, and currently do not have access to, to improve child transitions into other programs?”

Table C.28. Blending or Braiding Funding Sources from Multiple Federal and/or State Agencies

	Early Childhood Programs and Services(N = 1,475)
Does your program blend or braid funding sources from multiple federal and/or state agencies?	28%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Table C.29. Challenges Early Childhood Programs and Services Face in Blending or Braiding Funding Sources

Type of Barrier	Early Childhood Programs and Services ¹ (N=306)
Regulatory differences across funding streams	47%
Administrative burden	37%
Varying processes to access funding across agencies	34%
Capacity of staff	24%
Lack of programs with which to blend or braid funding	19%
Other	15%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a select all that apply question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent was, “What challenges do you face in blending or braiding funding sources?”

Table C.30. Mean Sustainability of Current Business/Operation Model

	Early Childhood Programs and Services		
	Mean	N	SD
Do you feel that your current business/operation model is sustainable with current resources?	3.04	1,532	1.00

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: Scale was ranked where 1 = Not sustainable, 2 = Slightly sustainable, 3 = Sustainable, 4 = More sustainable, and 5 = Very sustainable.

Table C.31. Areas of Business Practices Early Childhood Programs and Services Need Support

	Early Childhood Programs and Services¹ (N = 1,239)
Marketing and outreach	52%
Capital development and fundraising	44%
Human resource management	32%
Facilities maintenance and management	31%
Enrollment management	25%
Billing, bookkeeping and accounting	18%
Fiscal compliance	11%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹Question asked to this respondent was, “In which areas of business practices do you need support?”

Table C.32. Challenges and Barriers Faced When Establishing Partnerships with Early Childhood Programs and Services

Type of Challenge and Barrier	Early Childhood Programs and Services¹ (N = 3,988)	Community Organizations² (N = 76)
Understaffed/lack of time/lack of availability	43%	42%
Insufficient or uncertain funding	42%	42%
Lack of information on how partnerships work	32%	--
Staff turnover	31%	33%
Lack of shared common vision and goals/difference in approach to collaboration	20%	25%
Regulatory differences across funding streams	20%	26%
Discrepancies in standards (child and/or program) across programs and services	17%	18%
Lack of leadership interest in collaboration	14%	24%
Lack of willingness to collaborate amongst other partners	14%	24%
None	--	13%
Other	12%	12%

Source: Statewide Birth-Five Needs Assessment Survey (Spring 2019).

Note: The sum of the percentages across do not equal 100% because it was a “select all that apply” question.

¹ Question asked for this respondent type was, “What challenges does your program face in establishing partnerships?”

² Question asked for this respondent type was, “What are the barriers that you experience in connecting with early childhood programs and services?”

Appendix D: Eligibility Criteria

Table E.1. Eligibility Criteria by Program

Criteria	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Child Care Subsidy (CCDF)
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children at least three years of age as of September 1 of the current school year (if a 3-year-old program is available) or four years of age as of September 1 of the current school year (if only a 4-year-old program is available) and at least one of the following: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnant women and children Early Head Start ages 0-2 Head Start ages 3-4 and at least one of the following: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Children ages 0-12) and at least one of the following:
Income/ Other income-determined programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is educationally disadvantaged (which means a student eligible to participate in the national school lunch program, for which children are eligible by multiple criteria)^{***} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income equal to or below poverty line The family is eligible for or, in the absence of child care, would be potentially eligible for public assistance; including TANF child-only payments 	1st priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choices (TX welfare-to-work)^{**} Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) applicant Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Former Choices^{**}
Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is homeless, as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 1143a, regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of the child, or of the child's guardian or other person having lawful control of the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless as defined in part 1305 	2nd priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children experiencing homelessness
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority; or is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who 		2nd priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children of parents on military deployment Children of a qualified veteran or qualified spouse

Criteria	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Child Care Subsidy (CCDF)
	was injured or killed while serving on active duty		
Foster Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is or ever has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (<i>foster care</i>) following an adversary hearing held as provided by Section 262.201, Family Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is in foster care 	2nd priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children receiving protective services
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is unable to speak and comprehend the English language 		
Star of Texas Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a peace officer under Section 3106.002, Government Code; a firefighter under Section 3106.003, Government Code; or an emergency medical first responder under Section 3106.004, Government Code 		
Other/ Exceptions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A program may enroll an additional 35 percent of participants whose families do not meet a criterion described in paragraph (c) of this section and whose incomes are below 130 percent of the poverty line, if the program: (follows additional requirements for reporting) A child is eligible for Migrant or Seasonal Head Start, if the family meets an eligibility criterion in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section; and the family's income comes primarily from agricultural work. 	2nd priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children of foster youth children of teen parents children with disabilities 3rd priority (locally decided): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other priority adopted by the Local Workforce Board, such as siblings of children already in care, local organizations/ partners

Criteria	Public Prekindergarten	Head Start	Child Care Subsidy (CCDF)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional allowances for Indian tribes 	

*Source: Texas Education Agency, internal memo (2019).

**The Choices program assists applicants, recipients, nonrecipient parents, and former recipients of Temporary

Notes: CCDF = Child Care and Development Fund

Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance to transition from welfare to work through participation in work-related activities, including job search and job readiness classes, basic skills training, education, vocational training, and support services.

(<https://twc.texas.gov/programs/choices-program-overview>)

***National School Lunch Program Fact Sheet: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf>