

TEXAS STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE APPLICATION NARRATIVE

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The Texas State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (hereafter referred to as State Advisory Council or Council) is requesting \$11,274,474 to help lead the development of a parent and child focused, high quality, integrated system of early childhood education and care providers, with a focus on collaboration and school readiness. The State Advisory Council is designed to bring together top decision makers in Texas for collective action on how to better coordinate services and collaborative efforts across a diverse array of early childhood programs so that young children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

The Council has identified the following four priority “need” areas, based on which its overarching goals, priority objectives, and activities have been developed in order to ensure school readiness for all children, especially the most at-risk, and to meet federal and state goals:

1. Parental Outreach and Communication

- a) Conduct an initial, rigorous needs assessment, with a focus on parents and providers, to ascertain information on the quality and availability of early childhood education and care. Additionally, develop and plan strategies to update the needs assessment on a periodic basis.
- b) Develop and implement strategies for outreach to underrepresented and special populations.

2. Early Childhood Workforce and Professional Development

- a) Develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood education and care professionals in Texas.
- b) Assess the capacity of 2- and 4-year public/private institutions
- c) Support the professional development, recruitment and retention of the early childhood workforce.

3. Collaborations and Standards

- a) Develop integrated early learning cross sector guidelines to improve collaboration and coordination across early childhood education and care programs.
- b) Enhance existing high quality initiatives.

4. Data Systems

- a) Develop an integrated data collection system for diverse, mixed sector early childhood related institutions, organizations and programs.

NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

Texas’ “Mixed” Early Childhood Education and Care Delivery Systems

Texas offers a variety of opportunities for quality early childhood education and development programs and services for its youngest citizens (i.e., infants & toddlers and preschool age children). Examples of such programs are Head Start/Early Head Start, public school pre-k, private, non-profit and faith-based child care homes and centers, and Early Childhood Intervention. Table 1 shows the “estimated” amount of children being served by each of the foregoing programs/services. In addition, Texas has rich mixture of private child care programs available to parents throughout the state.

Table 1. Number of children being served by different early childhood education and development programs and services in Texas^{1,2}

Program Name	Number of Programs	# of Children Served
Early Head Start	38	5,857
Head Start	81	72,278
Public Pre-K	3,082 - campuses	200,529
Subsidized Child Care	16,698 - providers	237,087
Early Childhood Intervention	58	57,110

Head Start/Early Head Start is a national program that promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families. This program is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The Head Start program provides grants to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills they need to be successful in school. In FY 1995, the Early Head Start

¹ The State of Preschool 2008 – State Preschool Yearbook. National Institute for Early Education Research. www.nieer.org

² Legislative Budget Board. Early Childhood Care and Education Programs in Texas. July 2007. www.lbb.state.tx.us/Health_Services/Early_Childhood_Care_0707.pdf

program was established to serve children from birth to three years of age in recognition of the mounting evidence that the earliest years matter a great deal to children's growth and development.³ The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework is intended to guide Head Start programs in their ongoing assessment of the progress and accomplishments of children in their efforts to analyze and use data on child outcomes in program self-assessment and continuous improvement. The purpose of the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework is to guide agencies in selecting, developing, or adapting an instrument or set of tools for ongoing assessment of children's progress.⁴

The sixty-eighth Texas Legislature (1984), established the Texas pre-kindergarten program. The purpose of this program is to develop the skills necessary for success in the regular curriculum, including language, mathematics, and social skills by offering a half-day entitlement program to eligible children. This program currently serves 3- and 4-year-olds who are considered at-risk (e.g., low income, homeless, limited English proficiency, child of a parent in the military, or in a conservatorship associated with the foster care system) and boasts the highest enrollment rate in the nation. This program is administered by the Texas Education Agency. In May, 2008, the Texas Education Agency released the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, which are voluntary and offer detailed descriptions of expected behaviors across multiple skill domains that should be observed in 4- to 5-year-old children by the end of their prekindergarten experience. The purpose of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines is to help educators make informed decisions about curriculum content for prekindergarten children.⁵

Child care operations are regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). DFPS is responsible for regulating all child-care operations and child-placing agencies to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children in care, largely by reducing the risk

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Administration for Children & Families. Office of Head Start. About the Office of Head Start. www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/about/index.html#prog_desc

⁴ Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. www.hsnrc.org/CDI/pdfs/UGCOE.pdf

⁵ Texas Education Agency. Revised Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. 2008. http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/ed_init/pkguidelines/PKG_Final_100808.pdf

of injury, abuse, and communicable disease.⁶ The Texas Workforce Commission offers child care support services for parents who work, attend school, or participate in job training. Local Workforce Development Boards administer child care services through the Texas Workforce Centers.⁷

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), Part C, is a statewide program for families with children, birth to three, with disabilities and developmental delays. ECI supports families to help their children reach their potential through developmental services. Their services are provided by a variety of local agencies and organizations across Texas. ECI is state and federally funded through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 108-446) and is administered by the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.⁸

Texas' Current and Projected Demographic Profile

Texas is the state with the largest numeric population increase since the year 2000⁹ and has the largest and fastest growing early childhood population in the nation. In addition, this rising population is associated with conditions of poverty. Consequently, the number of children needing quality early childhood education and care is rising. Consequently, it is of vital importance for all service providers to establish strong collaboration and coordination efforts in order to best assist in meeting the needs of this population.

According to the 2006 census, the total population of Texas is 23,507,783, of which 2,294,869 (9.4%) are children under five years of age (Texas State Data Center). Of these children, most of them are receiving care in out-of-home settings, such as child care, Head Start/Early Head Start or Public Pre-K. The cost of early education and care programs for children under five is a strong factor that can affect whether young Texans are being cared for in settings that do not

⁶ Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Child Care Licensing. About Child Care Licensing. www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care/about_child_care_licensing/

⁷ Texas Workforce Commission. Child Care Services. Program Overview. www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/childcare/ccinfo.html

⁸ Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services. Early Childhood Intervention Services. What is ECI? www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/index.shtml

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. www.census.gov

promote their healthy development. Average fees paid for full-time care for an infant in a family child care home in Texas is approximately \$5,824 a year.¹⁰ Only those families who are low income are eligible to receive child care assistance through the Texas Workforce Commission. Head Start and Early Head Start programs are federally funded, but the number of centers is small compared to the amount of demand for their services and they also have strict income eligibility guidelines. Public Pre-k programs are state funded for those who qualify, but are only offered in 980 out of the 1,289 school districts in Texas.

Ethnicity and primary language also play key roles in a child achieving success in school. Overall, Hispanic children are less likely to demonstrate cognitive/literacy readiness skills than white, black, or Asian/Pacific Islander children¹¹. In Texas, 1,139,854 children under the age of five are Hispanic (almost 50% of the total number of Texas children under the age of five)¹² and this population has increased over 30% since 2000, this being the highest numeric population increase in Texas¹³.

Uneven Levels of Quality and School Readiness

The primary goal of this grant application is to enhance Texas' ability to prepare more children for school. Texas is experiencing several warning signs that suggest a lack of statewide exposure to quality early childhood education and care opportunities. For example, during the last academic year, Texas public schools retained over 11,000 kindergarten students and over 21,000 first graders. In addition, disciplinary alternative education placements and expulsions at the pre-k level are increasing and student screening results in early literacy upon kindergarten entry indicate that about 50-60% of all students of all income levels are scoring developed or proficient.

¹⁰ National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. 2009

¹¹ Child Trends Data Bank. Early School Readiness. www.childtrendsdatbank.org/?q=node/104

¹² Texas State Data Center. www.txcdc.utsa.edu

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau. www.census.gov

At the present time, quality across Texas' diverse networks of early learning programs, in terms of what we can measure at the program level, is mixed and uneven. Attainment of national accreditation, especially accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP) is limited and in most cases, participation is declining. Of the roughly 9,000 licensed child care and Head Start (including Early Head Start) facilities roughly 4% of them are accredited. Short of national accreditation, Texas has developed one of the few quality rating systems in the nation (for 3-5 year old children), the *Texas School Ready!* Certification System, that has the ability to monitor quality across mixed provider types (i.e., Head Start, child care and public school) in mixed settings (i.e., homes, schools and centers) and link teacher and facility information to student development outcomes in literacy and social emotional development at the start of the kindergarten year. Most recently, the system certified over 2,000 classrooms in 844 different facilities across the state. Short of national accreditation, the *Texas School Ready!* Certification System and a child care subsidy based quality improvement system called Texas Rising Star, measuring program quality with an emphasis on preparing children for school has been limited. Therefore, Texas needs to make more significant strides towards advancing efforts to ensure that children are being educated and cared for in environments that are demonstrating results so that parents can have peace of mind and school districts will be alleviated with providing significant school readiness remediation efforts once the children arrive.

Texas' Need for Assistance

In order to meet a rising demand for services in responsive, high quality ways, the State Advisory Council has deliberated and engaged the public in order to work toward ensuring that more children in Texas arrive at school ready to succeed. In order to work towards this goal, Texas must identify existing levels of school readiness throughout the state and then build its capacity to

support parents, teachers and providers towards leveraging better school readiness outcomes through high-quality supports and programs. As previously mentioned, the following need areas have been prioritized for funding consideration:

1. Parental Outreach and Communication

While the Council recognizes the importance of building more coordinated networks of early learning across the state, we also want to ensure the needs of parents and guardians are first and foremost at the center of our efforts. Accordingly, all of our efforts will be premised on ensuring that our future plans revolve around meeting the needs of parents, especially working families, and our collaborative efforts will hinge on identifying parental needs, how they think about and identify quality in their communities, all in an effort to ensure that our efforts as a Council are providing them with choices.

Historically, parental outreach has been a matter of local control in community-based programs. While we intend to honor the various philosophies and approaches being carried out in local communities we intend to assign a focus on a need that has been unaddressed for quite some time, namely a strong needs assessment that will provide a real opportunity to understand the dynamics of families as they grow in Texas and assist them in finding suitable early childhood education opportunities geared to their preferences. Texas has not conducted a state needs assessment on early childhood in over 40 years and it is important to conduct one with the support of federal funds and develop strategies to update the assessment on an ongoing basis.

2. Early Childhood Workforce and Professional Development

As previously mentioned, Texas' early childhood professionals work in a range of programs across the state including Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Care (home and center based, non-profit, for-profit and faith-based), Title I Pre-Kindergarten, Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities, and Early Childhood Intervention. The early childhood education preparation and

professional development system in Texas, however, is fragmented. The challenge we are facing revolves around the fact that multiple state and federal funding streams and mandates exist that set different initial credentials and on-going professional development requirements for the early childhood professional, which often times make it hard to identify common opportunities and the development of an adequate career ladder. Accordingly, Texas needs a cross sector Early Childhood Professional Development System that is respectful of and integrates policies across the different types of early learning programs to support the early childhood workforce and their professional development needs, as well as builds on our existing assets and infrastructure.

With regards to the current status of professional development in Texas, the Texas Early Care and Education Career Development System (TECECDS) was developed to recognize and promote the skill advancement among early care and education practitioners. The purpose of the TECECDS is to ensure that high quality professional development opportunities are available statewide to individuals working in diverse early childhood environments. The TECECDS Council represents a diverse group of individuals in communities that include all types of early care and education programs and professional preparation programs which are present in the community. This council is tasked with providing system level consultation to guide and inform the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office to effectively develop, coordinate and implement the Texas Early Care and Education Career Development System.¹⁴

The TECECDS is a voluntary system that began in the early 1990s as the result of the Texas Head Start Collaboration Project Task Force. A national study on *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers* was conducted by the University of Colorado at Denver, which revealed that only 14% of the centers provided good quality care, while 85% provided poor to mediocre care. Texas was not one of the states included in this study and as a result the task force created a Career

¹⁴ Texas Early Care and Education Career Development System. www.uth.tmc.edu/tececds

Development System Sub-group with the purpose of assessing the needs of early care and education practitioners in Texas.

The group discovered several key findings:

- Information regarding early care and education is decentralized and difficult to access
- Training programs and resources are not coordinated among agencies
- Few bridges exist between informal training and formal education
- No link between non-traditional degree programs and traditional baccalaureate programs that achieve teacher certification
- There is no system to recognize varying degrees of skill level and experience among practitioners
- Early care and education practitioners are among the lowest paid in the Texas labor force

Through these findings it was evident that there was a need in Texas for a system that would recognize and promote the skill advancement among early childhood professionals. A proposal and framework for a Career Development System was developed in 1993, which included professional standards, a coordinated training system, and a personnel and credentialing system. The TECECDS was developed to recognize and promote the skill advancement among practitioners, administrators and trainers. The TECECDS is governed by a volunteer Council that represents a diverse group of individuals in communities that include all types of early care and education programs and professional preparation programs which are present in the community.

The core knowledge, skills, and practices of early childhood professionals are critical and they provide a framework to deliver high quality developmental and educational experiences for young children. Currently, child care centers and Head Start and Early Head Start professionals primarily use this system. As previously mentioned, there are plans to create a cross sector Early Childhood Professional Development System that is useful and beneficial to all sectors of early

childhood programs including public preschool programs (Title 1 pre-k and the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities).

The section below outlines the current initial credential and on-going professional development requirements for teachers of young children in licensed child care, Head Start/Early Head Start and Title I pre-K programs in Texas.

*Child Care Licensing Standards Teacher Initial Credentials, Preparation and Ongoing Professional Development*¹⁵

Each child-care center employee who is regularly or frequently present while children are in care must:

- (1) Meet the requirements in Subchapter F of Chapter 745 of this title (relating to Background Checks);
- (2) Have a current record of a tuberculosis examination, showing they are free of contagious TB, if required by the regional Texas Department of Health or local health authority;
- (3) Complete a notarized Licensing *Affidavit for Applicants for Employment* form as specified in Human Resources Code, §42.059; and
- (4) Complete orientation to your child-care center as specified in Division 4 of this subchapter (relating to Professional Development).

Except as otherwise provided in this division, each employee counted in the child/caregiver ratio must comply with minimum standards for employees and must:

- (1) Be at least 18 years of age;
- (2) Have a:
 - (A) High school diploma; or
 - (B) High school equivalent; and

¹⁵ Child Care Standards and Regulations, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services www.dfps.state.tx.us

(3) Complete eight hours of pre-service training, as specified in Division 4 of this subchapter (relating to Professional Development) before being counted in the child/caregiver ratio.

*Head Start/Early Head Start Teacher Requirements*¹⁶

Each Head Start/Early Head Start classroom in center-based programs must have a teacher who has at least one of the following qualifications:

1. A Child Development Associate (CDA) credential that is appropriate to the age of the children being served;
2. A State-awarded certificate for preschool teachers that meets or exceeds the requirements for a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential;
3. An associate, baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education;
4. An associate degree in a field related to early childhood education and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children;
5. A baccalaureate or advanced degree in any field and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children or;
6. A baccalaureate degree in any field and has been admitted into the Teach For America program, passed a rigorous early childhood content exam, such as the Praxis II, participated in a Teach For America summer training institute that includes teaching preschool children, and is receiving ongoing professional development and support from Teach For America's professional staff.

However, a 180-day waiver may be granted to the above requirement if a Head Start agency can demonstrate it has attempted unsuccessfully to recruit a qualified candidate and the individual

¹⁶ Statutory Degree and Credentialing for Head Start Teaching Staff,
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Professional%20Development/Staff%20Development/Teaching%20Teams/resour_ime_012_0081908.html

for whom the waiver is being requested is enrolled in a program that will award that individual a qualifying credential, certificate or degree within 180 days of being hired as a teacher.

By October 1, 2011, each Head Start/Early Head Start classroom in center-based programs must have a teacher who has at least one of the following:

1. An associate, baccalaureate or advanced degree in early childhood education;
2. An associate degree in a field related to early childhood education and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children;
3. A baccalaureate or advanced degree in any field and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education, with experience teaching preschool-age children or;
4. A baccalaureate degree in any field and has been admitted into the Teach For America program, passed a rigorous early childhood content exam, such as the Praxis II, participated in a Teach For America summer training institute that includes teaching preschool children and is receiving ongoing professional development and support from Teach For America's professional staff.

However, a 3-year waiver can be granted to the above requirement if a Head Start agency can demonstrate it has attempted unsuccessfully to recruit a qualified candidate and the individual for whom the waiver is being requested is enrolled in a program that will grant that individual a qualifying degree in a reasonable time period. If such a waiver is granted, there must be, in that individual's classroom, a teacher with a CDA credential appropriate to the age of the children being served or an individual with a State awarded certificate for preschool teachers that meets or exceeds the requirements of a CDA credential. By September 30, 2013 at least 50% of Head Start teachers nation-wide must have a baccalaureate or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education or a

baccalaureate or advanced degree in any subject, and coursework equivalent to a major relating to early childhood education with experience teaching preschool-age children.

The Office of Head Start expects every grantee to make reasonable progress in increasing its numbers of teachers with qualifying baccalaureate degrees, but there is not a requirement for each grantee to assure that at least 50% of its teachers have such degrees. The requirements established in 2011 for every Head Start/Early Head Start teacher will continue to apply.

*Public Prekindergarten Requirements*¹⁷

The statutes that describe the professional development of Public Pre-K teachers are the following:

T.E.C. § 21.003(a): A person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, or counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

T.E.C. § 21.050(b): The board may not require more than 18 semester credit hours of education courses at the baccalaureate level for the granting of a teaching certificate. The board shall provide for a minimum number of semester credit hours of internship to be included in the hours needed for certification. The board may propose rules requiring additional credit hours for certification in bilingual education, English as a second language, *early childhood education*, or special education.

19 T.A.C. § 230.191(c)(2): . . . In accordance with the Texas Education Code (TEC) §21.050(b), additional semester hours in education are permissible for certification in bilingual education, English as a second language, early childhood education, and special education
Generalist: Early Childhood-Grade 6. The Generalist: Early Childhood-Grade 6 certificate may be issued no earlier than September 1, 2008. The holder of the Generalist: Early Childhood-Grade 6

¹⁷ Texas State Preschool Program, http://www.startingat5.org/state_laws/StatelawTXdetail.htm

certificate may teach the following content areas in a prekindergarten program, in kindergarten, and in Grades 1-6:

- (1) Art;
- (2) Health;
- (3) Music;
- (4) Physical Education;
- (5) English Language Arts and Reading;
- (6) Mathematics;
- (7) Science; and
- (8) Social Studies.

The foregoing fragmented system creates barriers for early childhood professionals to meet their respective requirements and hinders the state from developing a more systematic way of ensuring diverse, well-qualified early childhood workforce that can best address the needs of Texas' children and families. Similarly, many early childhood professionals in Texas face articulation challenges. Many practitioners continue to spend personal time and resources pursuing coursework that could advance their careers, only to find that credits will not transfer from two-year colleges to four-year colleges and universities. There is more work needed within higher education to ensure the quality of the early childhood workforce, particularly around developing a workforce that can support linguistically and culturally diverse children and families.

3. Collaborations and Standards

Based on the information presented in the previous section, early childhood professionals in most sectors typically abide by one of three sets of standards and/or guidelines. Public school pre-k programs have the option to align their instruction to the newly developed Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Child care providers must abide by the child care minimum licensing standards and

Head Start grantees are required to abide by both the federal Head Start Performance Standards as well as the state's child care minimum licensing standards. Historically, while Texas has had a rich tradition of promoting collaborations and partnerships across diverse programs and providers (through such programs as the *Texas School Ready! Project*, which currently serves over 60,000 at-risk children), practitioners have struggled to synthesize these multiple standards and guidelines and make sense of them in the classroom.

Given Texas' historical promotion of mixed-delivery early childhood services and how it has incentivized partnerships across diverse programs in local communities throughout the state, there is a need to further strengthen its inclusive, mixed-delivery approach by focusing on how to simultaneously improve our existing standards and guidelines and continue to incentivize ways for local communities to come together and develop shared approaches to school readiness. It is clear that the demographic complexion of Texas will require a broad array of service providers to adequately meet demand in high-quality ways. Accordingly, it is important that the state create cross sector, integrated early learning guidelines to make it easier for local programs and practitioners to effectively carry out their duties.

4. Data Systems

Currently, Texas does not have an integrated early childhood data system to help meet its school readiness goals. In Texas there are several agencies that collect early childhood related data. The Texas Education Agency collects child specific data across a continuum of Pre-K through 12th grade. The Texas Workforce Commission collects some demographic and attendance data on children served and environmental data on centers in the Texas Rising Star program, from infancy through age 13. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services collects environmental data on facilities licensed or registered to serve children, and some data on families and/or children in instances of alleged misconduct or abuse. Head Start/Early Head Start collects demographic and

environmental data on children and families served and facilities used for services. All the data collected by these systems is used independently by each agency with little or no sharing.

The *Texas School Ready!* Certification System collects data for over 6300 classrooms across multiple program types in the state. These data include facility attendance and demographic data, as well as information on classroom environment and teacher best practices and then links this information to student level outcomes as children enter kindergarten. This quality rating system for three to five year-old children was developed and implemented based on a law created by the Texas Legislature (Texas Senate Bill, SB 23) in 2005.

Given the fact this information typically remains housed in a variety of institutions with little to no sharing, it is difficult to ascertain comprehensive information about programs, numbers of children being served and extent to which quality is present, among other things. With the exception of the *Texas School Ready!* Certification System, leaders in Texas, at the state and local levels, lack essential information necessary to inform policy and enhance access for parents to high-quality programs.

There is a need, therefore, to build data collaborations and capacities to share information across these existing institutions and organizations and develop agreements regarding how to legally and effectively share information for a variety of purposes, especially to better prepare children for school. Additionally, data sharing and collaborations should be carried out in such a way as to minimize data entry redundancy and effort, streamline local procedures, ensure the highest levels of security and protection, and eliminate unnecessary costs. As Texas looks to further refine its approaches to measuring program quality, both now and into the future, it is essential that a more robust data system be in place that provides the necessary information needed to build a more inclusive quality rating system.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

While the Council will continue to advance the development of more systematic, integrated networks of childhood education and care both now and into the future, it has designated eight overarching goals (1-8) based on the identified priority need categories, each with their priority objectives, to address the identified critical need areas. These include:

Parental Outreach and Communication

1. Conduct an initial, rigorous needs assessment, with a focus on parents and providers, to ascertain information on the quality and availability of early childhood education and care. Additionally, develop and plan strategies to update the needs assessment on a periodic basis.
2. Develop and implement strategies for outreach to underrepresented and special populations.

Early Childhood Workforce and Professional Development

3. Develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood education and care professionals.
 - a. To develop and implement a Career Development System for early childhood professionals
4. Support the professional development, recruitment and retention of early childhood professionals
 - a. Develop a career lattice
 - b. Explore compensation parity and funding opportunities for early childhood professionals to attain advanced credentials
5. Assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public/private institutions

- a. Successfully identify models of articulation agreements between community-based training to community colleges to 4-year institutions of higher education.
- b. Develop and disseminate model articulation agreements that span from community based trainings to community colleges to 4-year institutions of higher education

Collaborations and Standards

6. Develop integrated early learning cross sector standards/guidelines to improve collaboration and coordination across early childhood education and care programs.
 - a. Gather, review and compile all federal, state, local and association standards/guidelines and develop a linked mechanism to disseminate how these integrate together in order to inform local practice.
 - b. Study and make recommendations on how to improve existing standards with a special focus on linking infant and toddler guidelines to existing 4 year-old public school prekindergarten guidelines as well as how to improve existing standards and guidelines across all institutions in order to support the needs of children who are learning English as a second language as well as children with special needs.
7. Enhance existing high quality initiatives through the development of a school readiness home-based early childhood provider project that builds on existing school readiness initiatives that have proven success records in preparing Texas children for school.

Data Systems

8. Develop an integrated data system for diverse, mixed sector early childhood related institutions, organizations and programs.

APPROACH

Council Structure

The Texas State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care is comprised of 19 council members who serve on a voluntary, unpaid basis and include executive appointees representing a broad range of constituencies, such as public schools, child care centers and homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, higher education, and state and local government agencies.

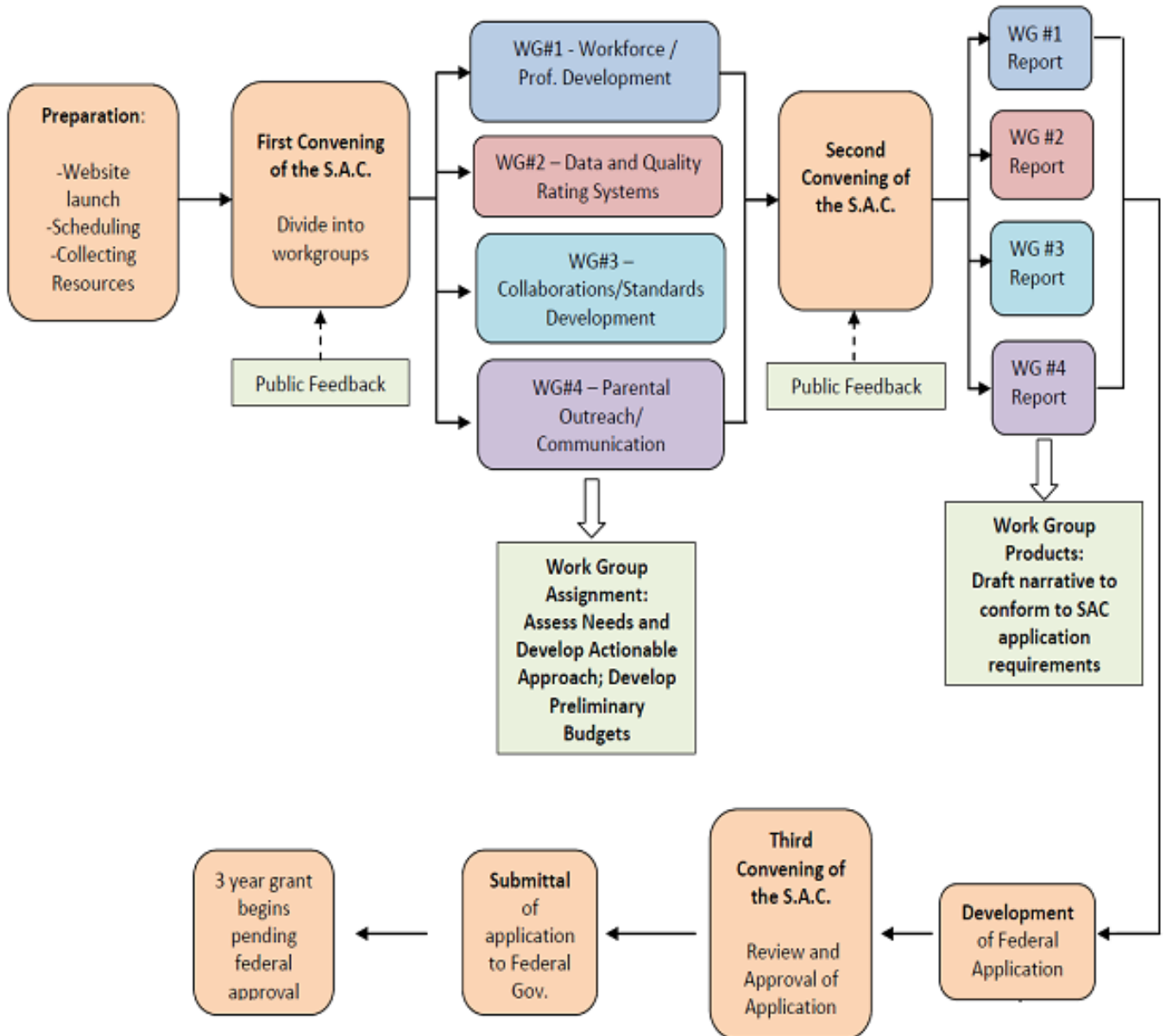
The members of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care are:

- Michael Berry**, Office of the Governor (*a representative of Governor Rick Perry*)
Denise Anne Brady, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (*a representative of the Texas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative*)
LaShonda Y. Brown, Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office (*the State Director of Head Start Collaboration*)
Mary G. Capello, TMC - Teaching and Mentoring Communities (*a representative from local migrant and seasonal Head Start programs*)
Deborah H. Cody, Mount Pleasant Independent School District (*a representative of a local education agency*)
Gina S. Day, Texas Education Agency (*a representative of the State educational agency*)
Ana De Hoyos O'Connor, San Antonio College (*a representative of an institution of higher education*)
Blanca Estela Enriquez, Education Service Center – Region 19 (*a representative from Head Start agencies located in the state*)
John W. Gasko, Children’s Learning Institute (*a representative of an institution of higher education*)
Dorothy Goodman, Texas Education Agency (*a representative of the state agency responsible for programs under section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Act*)
Angela Hobbs-Lopez, Texas Department of State Health Services (*a representative of the State agency responsible for health or mental health care*)
Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan, University of Houston (*a representative of an institution of higher education*)
Robert Ott, Killeen Independent School District (*a representative of a local education agency*)
Sasha Rasco, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (*a representative of a State agency responsible for child care*)
Elaine Shiver, Mental Health America of Texas (*a representative of a statewide program responsible for mental health and parenting services*)
Nicole Verver, Texas Workforce Commission (*a representative of a State agency responsible for child care*)
Kim Wedel, Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (*a representative of the State agency responsible for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act*)
Quincy White, City of Lubbock (*a representative of local city government*)
John Whitcamp, Child Care Associates (*a representative from Head Start agencies located in the state*)

Prior to the submission of this grant, the Children’s Learning Institute developed a website (<http://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/our-programs/program-overview/state-advisory-council/>) dedicated to disseminating awareness about the Council and its activities and created and circulated a statewide newsletter. The Council held its first public hearing and then divided into four workgroups focusing on the aforementioned priority needs areas. Each workgroup was charged with studying Texas’ needs as they related to the charges of the federal legislation and to compile strategic and tactical recommendations how best to build on the state’s strengths and make improvements in order to prepare children effectively for school. At its second public hearing, the Council presented these recommendations to the public for feedback and the current application represents Texas’ strategy moving forward with the support of the federal monies set aside for the purposes of this grant in addition to existing and ongoing state investments. Upon the successful receipt of this grant, the Council intends to integrate its requested staff into its governance structure and conduct quarterly meetings open to the public throughout each year of the grant.

The Children’s Learning Institute (CLI) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston was named the agency responsible for the management of the State Advisory Council and carrying out the council’s activities by Governor Rick Perry as well as the grant’s fiscal agent. Dr. John Gasko was appointed chairman of the Council and is responsible for coordinating its grant submission and future leadership and activities as proposed herein.

Public Process Framework



GOALS

Parental Outreach and Communication

In order to ensure the school readiness of Texas’ children, especially the most at-risk, the State Advisory Council is charged with helping the state understand the needs of Texas’ changing families and children as well as the availability of quality early childhood programs. Providing parents and children with quality early childhood experiences based on their unique, diverse needs is essential. Therefore, the Council requests funds to conduct an initial, rigorous needs assessment, which will focus on parents and providers, to ascertain information on the quality and availability of early childhood education and care. Additionally, the Council seeks funds to develop and plan strategies to update the needs assessment on a periodic basis and develop recommendations for outreach to parents, early childhood providers and underrepresented and special populations through a statewide public awareness campaign that focuses on school readiness.

The specific, three-year priority objectives are to: (1) Conduct periodic needs assessments on the quality and availability of early childhood education and care; and (2) develop recommendations for outreach to underrepresented and special populations. The Council has outlined specific objectives, activities, timelines and accomplishments as described in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Goal 1 – Conduct an Initial and Ongoing Needs Assessments on the Quality and Availability of Early Childhood Education and Care

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	TIMELINE		
			Y1	Y2	Y3
Objective 1: Conduct comprehensive demographic analysis and needs assessment					
Develop an RFP to identify contractors to conduct a statewide needs assessment to understand needs for access to early childhood education and availability of high-quality options, and assess the capacity of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing sources of data (including 2010 census) to determine relevant demographic factors and distributions as well as pertinent early childhood data Assemble a needs assessment committee to work with contractors to 	<u>Years 1, 2, 3:</u> Issue and award RFP. The RFP will be based on a demographic analysis of Texas’ family and child dynamics and will be based on the most recent data available to the state and also be updated as the 2010 Census data is	X	X	X

<p>higher education institutions to support early childhood teachers.</p>	<p>develop survey questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and analyze data related to needs of parents, availability of early childhood education and care with a focus on quality and variety and generate a final report • Develop an online Texas Early Childhood Information Center with appropriate links for parents, educators, and public stakeholders in order to disperse knowledge of the needs assessment findings • Develop strategies to update analysis and needs assessment data profiles in sustainable, cost effective ways 	<p>finalized. In addition, the RFP will seek to create a multi-step pathway to surveying the needs of families and early childhood education providers. Multiple stakeholders will be called upon to provide input into the development of survey questions. Progress milestones and performance metrics will be developed in collaboration with contractors to ensure communication of results and goals are met on an ongoing basis. Contractors will be required to present quarterly reports and specific deliverables to coincide with the Council’s quarterly meetings. An online system will be created to provide various public constituencies with results and progress as they become available. <u>Year 3:</u> Final comprehensive needs assessment report due. Finalize online Texas Early Childhood Information Center for public stakeholders to disseminate information.</p>			
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Table 3. Goal 2 – Develop Recommendations and Engage in Outreach to Underrepresented and Special Populations

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	TIMELINE		
			Y1	Y2	Y3
Objective 1: Enhance awareness of early childhood education availability and quality with a focus on underrepresented and special populations					
Develop an RFP to engage contractors to develop a community-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an effort to provide parents and early childhood education 	<u>Year 1:</u> Issue and award RFP. Develop an advisory panel of experts to help	X	X	X

<p>based, statewide school readiness, public awareness campaign that is parent and provider focused.</p>	<p>providers with an understanding of school readiness and quality early childhood education, the Council will partner with one or more contractors to engage in a multi-sector public awareness campaign that will be multimedia, multilingual-based, and will provide additional opportunities to reach out to underrepresented populations.</p>	<p>develop messaging in collaboration with the contractor(s) selected. Begin the development of messaging strategies and materials development, and begin campaign.</p> <p><u>Years 2 & 3:</u> Engage in ongoing public awareness campaign for identified populations.</p>			
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Early Childhood Workforce and Professional Development

The State Advisory Council is charged with helping to ensure that Texas’ early childhood professionals are prepared to provide high quality early childhood education and care in order to improve school readiness. The core knowledge, skills, and practices of early childhood professionals are critical and they provide a framework to deliver high quality development and educational experiences for young children.

To address these issues, the Council requests funds to develop recommendations and implement plans regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators; assess the capacity of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education toward supporting the development of early childhood practitioners; and support professional development, recruitment and retention. By addressing these key barriers, the Council will further Texas’ professional development system to prepare a well-qualified workforce. The specific, three-year priority objectives are to: (1) Develop and implement a career development system for EC Professionals; (2) Develop articulation agreements that span from community based training to community colleges to universities; (3) Identify successful models of cross sector

collaboration for professional development; (4) Develop a career ladder; (5) Explore compensation parity and explore support for professional development; and (7) Implement recruitment and retention strategies. The Committee has outlined specific objectives, activities, timelines and accomplishments as described in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4. Goal 1 - Develop Recommendations and Implement Strategies Regarding Statewide Professional Development and Career Advancement Plans for EC Professionals in Texas

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	TIMELINE		
			Y1	Y2	Y3
Objective 1: To develop and Implement a Career Development System for EC Professionals					
Develop an Early Childhood Practitioner Registry	<p>A web-based database designed to collect information about those working in the field of early childhood education and care, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assign career lattice levels that outline credentials & qualifications and identify gaps in professional development • bring recognition and professionalism to all those who work in the field • assist individuals and programs directors in professional development planning with a focus on what works. • inform policymakers and state planners about this workforce to track progress in meeting state workforce goals and assess effectiveness of professional development programs regarding school readiness outcomes. 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Develop the Practitioner Registry <u>Year 2 :</u>Pilot the Practitioner Registry <u>Year 3:</u> Fully implement the Practitioner Registry</p>	X	X	X

Develop Quality Training for Entry Level Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop quality training opportunities for the Early Care and Education Workforce that are aligned with Core Knowledge and Skills areas. 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Develop outline & RFP Process for Training Modules</p> <p><u>Year 2:</u> Work with Contractor to develop content for ECE workforce</p> <p><u>Year 3:</u> Distribute and make available training modules to entry level teachers</p>	X	X	X
Expand Core Knowledge and Skills Areas by Age Group and Experience of Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the core knowledge and skills areas specific to Early Care and Education practitioners, Administrators and mentor/coaches of specific age groups (Infant & Toddler ;Preschool) and a list of core knowledge and skills areas specific to the experience of the learner (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced) 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> TECECDS Council works on revisions of core knowledge and skills areas</p> <p><u>Year 2:</u> Attend 3 statewide conferences to get feedback and develop marketing materials</p> <p><u>Year 3:</u> Marketing materials developed and disseminated</p>	X	X	X
Solidify Support for the Texas Early Care and Education Career Development System (TECECDS) as the State Professional Development System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the various sectors of early childhood programs garner support to recognize and utilize the TECECDS as the State Professional System for all ECE professionals. 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Conduct statewide working group meetings to facilitate collaborations and understandings of the TECECDS</p> <p><u>Year 2:</u> Develop marketing materials and literature for TECECDS and disseminate</p> <p><u>Year 3:</u> Attend statewide conferences to present and distribute information on TECECDS</p>	X	X	X

Raise awareness of successful models of coaching/mentoring teachers of young children to share with ECE programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather successful models of coaching and mentoring teachers of young children 	<u>Year 1:</u> Solicit input from across the country and Texas regarding successful mentoring models <u>Year 2:</u> Analyze and compile models <u>Year 3:</u> Distribute and share successful models	X	X	X
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Table 5. Goal 2 - Assess the Capacity of 2- and 4-year Public/Private Institutions

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	TIMELINE		
			Y1	Y2	Y3
Objective 1: Develop articulation agreements that span from community based training to community colleges to universities					
Gather Examples of Articulation Agreements and provide outreach to ECE communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulation agreements that span from community based training to community colleges to universities and encourage the growth of these promising ideas 	<u>Year 1:</u> Develop questions and send to department chairs of ECE programs in colleges and universities & present at focus group at statewide conference <u>Year 2:</u> Analyze and collect data from colleges and universities – 2 & 4 year. Report Compiled.	X	X	
Objective 2: Successfully identify models of cross sector collaboration for professional development					
Promote model sites that demonstrate effective education transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of educational transitions that span from basic early childhood training (i.e. CDA) to levels of higher education (including, but not limited to AA, BA, Masters, etc.) 	<u>Years 2 & 3:</u> Share Toolkit for Promising Ideas to Texas communities		X	X

Table 6. Goal 3 - Support Professional Development, Recruitment and Retention

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	TIMELINE		
			Y1	Y2	Y3
Objective 1: Develop a Career Lattice					

<p>Develop and adapt career lattice that supports all ECE professionals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career lattice developed for early childhood professional to enable them to move in several directions within the field and give them a chance to explore new areas. • Investigate, collect, and review information regarding career lattice that will support the early childhood practitioner in the development of their own career path. 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Draft of career ladder <u>Years 2 & 3:</u> Presentation draft of career lattice to statewide stakeholders. Promote voluntary use of Career Lattice by partnering agencies</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>Create professional development self-assessment tool</p>	<p>Self-assessment tool to help early childhood practitioners develop their own professional development plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate, collect, and review information regarding virtual training tools and self-assessment modules that will support the early childhood practitioner in the development of their own professional development plan. • Utilize the web-based application as resources for the development of a professional development plan. • Develop and publish training opportunities; i.e. access to on-line professional development and links to colleges and community-based 	<p><u>Year 2:</u> Draft of self assessment tool <u>Year 3:</u> Pilot self assessment tool</p>		<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>

	<p>professional development modules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the self-assessment tool and professional development opportunities • Develop and implement a voluntary satisfaction survey by Year 3 to analyze the effectiveness and usability of the on-line professional development system. 				
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Objective 2: Explore compensation parity

Conduct a compensation study	<p>Wage comparability study for cross-sector early childhood professionals and administrators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a wage comparability study for early childhood professionals and administrators including a variety of community sectors (i.e. child care, family care homes, Head Start, and Prekindergarten). • Utilize the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, ACF Region VI Office, and the Head Start State Collaboration Office as resources to collect accurate wage information for early childhood professionals and administrators to ensure all sectors of the community are 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Survey developed <u>Year 2:</u> Survey deployed and analyzed <u>Year 3:</u> Recommendations made</p>	X	X	X
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	<p>represented in the wage comparability study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a baseline state compensation plan for early childhood professionals to be utilized as an agency guideline throughout the state. • Provide a link on the Council and Trainer Registry websites to the baseline state compensation plan. • The baseline state compensation plan for early childhood professionals will be implemented by exemplary programs and required by discretionary state-granted programs (i.e. PKES, TSR!) 				
Objective 3: Explore support for professional development opportunities for EC practitioners					
Explore scholarships/financial aid opportunities for ECE professionals	<p>Listing of opportunities for funding to help early childhood practitioners attend college, training, or return to school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify various funding sources and access to funding to assist early childhood practitioners and professionals attend college or professional development. • Identify best practices or successful models implemented by agencies that offer resources and funding to early childhood practitioners 	<u>Years 2 & 3:</u> Develop a list of opportunities to share		X	X

	<p>and professionals for continuing education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify agencies that offer exceptional compensation packages and salaries to early childhood practitioners and professionals and indicate how these practices have been accomplished. • Provide information to the early childhood community regarding funding opportunities for continuing education and compensation packages/wages. 				
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Objective 4: Implement Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Develop recruitment and retention materials for ECE professionals	<p>Print and electronic materials designed to recruit early childhood professionals to the field and inform the public of the opportunities available in the early childhood profession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate statewide practices regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What are the practices/ approaches to recruit early childhood professionals/ candidates into the job market? * What types of assistance is available to early childhood professionals as they leave college and enter the job market? * What are the most effective practices to recruit and retain high quality early childhood employees in the workplace? * Which agencies are experiencing the highest rate of success in recruitment and 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Data will be documented and analyzed to reveal statewide practices and successful models for the recruitment and retention of early childhood practitioners, professionals and administrators.</p> <p><u>Year 2:</u> Results and best practices/models from the recruitment and retention of early childhood practitioners, professionals and administrators will be made public on the State Advisory Council and Trainer Registry websites. An early childhood statewide repository system will be developed in the Trainer’s Registry whereas candidates for early childhood</p>	X	X	X
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	<p>retention and how is this accomplished? * What type of in public service announcements / advertising for early childhood professionals are present in the state?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a statewide repository system in the Trainer’s Registry where candidates for early childhood employment and employers can register. • Integrate the statewide repository activities with colleges/universities to best canvas the state for recruitment and placement of college graduates in the field of early childhood education. • Develop an approach to sustain the statewide repository for the recruitment and placement of early childhood candidates and employer registration. 	<p>employment and employers can register. <u>Year 3:</u> Information regarding the utilization and success of the job repository will be analyzed and documented. College graduates in the field of early childhood education will respond to the early childhood job repository.</p>			
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Collaborations and Standards

In order to ensure the school readiness of Texas’ children, especially the most at-risk, the State Advisory Council is charged with helping the state build and sustain community-based and cross agency collaborations as well as improve its early learning guidelines and standards. Currently, the statewide early childhood programs that are center or school based follow one of three sets of standards or guidelines: child care minimum licensing standards, Head Start Performance Standards,

and the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. Therefore, the Council requests funds to study and compile existing state standard and guidelines, as well as national association guidelines, in order to create a tool that will allow early childhood stakeholders to understand how these standards and guidelines are related to each other as well as enhance the ability to promote collaborations where one or more sets of standards and guidelines must be adhered to. Additionally, the Council seeks funds to develop cross sector, comprehensive early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers that are linked to the states Prekindergarten Guidelines for public schools. Finally, given that almost 50% of children in the state of Texas are in home-based early childhood settings, with a mixed level of regulation with regards to standards and guidelines, the Council would like to conduct a pilot home-based school readiness project that is modeled on successful Texas center and school-based initiatives like the *Texas School Ready! Project*. This pilot project would allow for trainings to be developed and evidence-based approaches delivered to providers of home-based care that support their school readiness needs and that promote successful integration into the public school system that the providers feed into. The specific, three-year priority objectives are to: (1) gather, review and compile all relevant state and federal guidelines; (2) develop a web-based early learning crosswalk tool that allows for multiple comparisons between programs; (3) develop recommendations to improve Texas’ existing early learning guidelines by linking infant and toddler guidelines to existing state prekindergarten guidelines; and (4) develop and pilot a non-center based school readiness project. The Council has outlined specific objectives, activities, timelines and accomplishments as described in Table 7.

Table 7. Goal 1 - Develop Comprehensive Early Learning Cross Sector Guidelines to Improve Collaboration and Coordination across Early Childhood Education and Care Programs

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	TIMELINE		
			Y1	Y2	Y3
Objective 1: Gather, review and compile all Federal, State, Local and Association Standards/Guidelines					
Staff person to gather,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compile all relevant state 	<u>Year 1:</u> Document will be	X		

review and compile all Federal, State, Local and Association Guidelines	and federal guidelines and align across age population; include, where applicable, guidelines specific to children with developmental delays	organized in order to support data entry into a web-based crosswalk tool			
Objective 2: Develop Early Childhood “Crosswalk” Web-Based Tool					
Develop an RFP to develop web-based tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contractor will develop a tool with user-friendly query options that allow for comparisons across multiple programs 	<u>Year 1:</u> Build web-based architecture of tool <u>Year 2:</u> Finalize web development, test statewide, and house tool on TECECDS website	X	X	
Objective 3: Make recommendations for improvements to Texas’ Early Learning Guidelines					
Develop early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers that can be linked to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gather and compile age appropriate guidelines for infants and toddlers that are linked to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. 	<u>Year 1:</u> Create a matrix that establishes early learning guidelines <u>Year 2:</u> Develop comprehensive, voluntary early learning guidelines that are supportive of the needs of local programs	X	X	
Objective 4: Enhance existing high-quality early childhood education and care programs					
Develop and pilot a school readiness model for non-center based providers based on evidence-based approaches specific to Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish 2-3 community-based pilots that promote the development of a training and mentoring model with non-center based providers using evidence-based approaches that have worked in Texas. 	<u>Year 1:</u> Develop approach and issue and award RFP <u>Years 2 & 3:</u> Implement model in diverse communities and evaluate effectiveness.	X	X	X

Data Systems

In order to ensure the school readiness of Texas’ children, especially the most at-risk, the State Advisory Council is charged with helping the state build an integrated data system that allows for the use of multiple sources of data necessary to understand the needs of children as they move throughout systems and enter school. The State Advisory Council will ensure that the system will provide enhanced information for parents and providers of early childhood education, will assist in

better assessing levels of program quality and provide the foundation for a future Texas QRIS. Currently, the state collects a variety of data regarding children, however, much of the data is contained in separate agency silos and not shared. Therefore, the Council requests funds to build an early childhood information exchange data system that ensures federal and state privacy laws are adhered to, which promotes cost savings across agencies and programs and which ensure data security and protection. Additionally, the Council requests funds to work towards the development of a Texas Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) that builds on its existing strengths and statewide initiatives (e.g., Texas School Ready! Certification System and Texas Rising Star) by studying how to create linkages across these existing initiatives so that as the data system is developed, the state will be in a position to build and pilot one of the nation’s most high-quality, parent and provider focused, next generation quality rating systems to promote the school readiness of all children and allow for all sectors to participate. The specific, three-year priority objectives are to: (1) Conduct research on the Texas School Ready! Certification System, the Texas Rising Star Program, Head Start Performance Outcome Reporting System as well as existing quality rating and improvement systems nationwide and make technical recommendations on how best to align these Texas systems to create an integrated Texas QRIS that is linked to child outcomes in kindergarten, and is inclusive of infants and toddlers; and (2) develop an integrated data collection system. The Council has outlined specific objectives, activities, timelines and accomplishments as described in Table 8.

Table 8. Goal 1 - Development of an integrated data collection system for early childhood programs and services and a strategy to integrate Texas’ diverse quality rating initiatives into one system

ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	TIMELINE		
			Y1	Y2	Y3
Objective 1: Conduct research on the <i>Texas School Ready!</i> Certification System ,the Texas Rising Star Program, and the Head Start Performance Outcome Reporting System, as well as existing quality rating and improvement systems nationwide and make technical recommendations on how best to					

align these Texas systems to create an integrated Texas QRIS that is linked to child outcomes in kindergarten, and is inclusive of infants and toddlers					
Develop an RFP to conduct research based on Texas and national QRIS initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with a contractor to partner with Texas researchers and professionals associated with each of the Texas systems to develop strategies for linking both systems into an integrated, cost effective, web-based Texas QRIS. 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Issue and award RFP and begin work.</p> <p><u>Year 2:</u> Finalize and generate technical report that includes recommendations for an integrated linkage of the Texas systems</p>	X	X	
Solicit stakeholder input statewide, including parents, in order to develop strategies for meeting the needs of various stakeholders served by a potential Texas QRIS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with stakeholders throughout the state to develop strategies to ensure the needs of all who would participate in an integrated Texas QRIS are satisfied, including how to brand the initiative for providers and parents. 	<p><u>Years 2 & 3:</u> Council staff will deploy surveys statewide and conduct focus groups to generate recommendations on the branding of an integrated Texas QRIS in order to enhance appeal to parents and various early childhood stakeholders, including public and private providers</p>		X	X
Objective 2. Develop an integrated data collection system					
Develop an RFP for a high-level design to build an integrated data collection system that includes a web-based interface for public stakeholders, and that is modeled on existing data information exchange systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what system will do through a comprehensive high-level design. Design shall focus on usage and include proposed data and operational requirements Develop, review and approve distinct phases of system development with appropriate progress milestones Develop system architecture Build and test system Deploy system 	<p><u>Year 1:</u> Issue and award RFP; develop a project charter and high-level design based on broad input from multiple sectors. Develop system deliverables and milestones for test and review purposes. Ensure FERPA and HIPAA requirements are satisfied. Execute MOUs between agencies and programs with early childhood data.</p> <p><u>Year 2:</u> Build and test early childhood information exchange system and web-based query tool.</p> <p><u>Year 3:</u> Finalize system and deploy. Develop strategies to allow system</p>	X	X	X

		to serve as the data collection component for a future Texas QRIS			
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CONCLUSION

Texas’ mixed delivery approach to early childhood education, where all sectors are valued for their significant contributions to child development, is poised to continue to be a national leader in early childhood education. Texas now boasts the fastest growing population in the nation and the largest population of young children, from infants to school age. In order for Texas to be able to meet a growing demand on behalf of parents for high-quality, school readiness focused early childhood education, the state has identified areas of need and improvement in order to meet this demand and build its capacity. These needs have been identified based on previously conducted, but limited assessments that have occurred at various points in time, ranging from 40 years to the present, as well as through an inclusive and broad process for public participation in the development of this application, which will continue upon the funding of this application. At the first public hearing conducted for the purposes of this important opportunity, not only were all council members present, but over 50 members of the public came to express their support and to provide ideas and suggestions. At the second public hearing, all council members were present and over 70 members of the public gathered to provide suggestions and support. This demonstrates not only how important early childhood education is to the state of Texas, but how willing its citizens are to engage in the process and help promote high quality initiatives that will promote the school readiness of families and children. Upon receiving funding, Texas plans to continue to partner with the public in order to ensure its initiatives are serving their intended purpose, and parents and children are realizing their benefits.

The Texas State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, appointed by Governor Rick Perry, has established its priority needs and objectives in the context of this application with the purpose of preparing its youngest citizens, especially the most at-risk, for school and for life. Through an initial, rigorous needs assessment that will build on previous efforts and be periodically updated, coupled with a public awareness campaign centered on being responsive to the needs of parents and children, an aligned and effective statewide professional development system, improved collaborations and standards, and an integrated early childhood education data collection system, the Council believes it will promote and incentivize learning and innovation throughout the state that will afford parents the satisfaction of knowing that their children are equipped with what they need to succeed and will build capacity towards being able to meet demand for access to high quality early childhood education based on proven school readiness solutions.

Upon receipt of funding, the State Advisory Council will engage in quarterly public meetings that will be facilitated by experts with a focus on monitoring the progress of its initiatives. These public deliberations will allow the Council to ensure that funds are being leveraged according to the grants priority goals and objectives with a focus on results. Throughout the three year grant process, the broad agencies and programs represented on the Council will work with the elected leadership of the state to ensure the sustainability of its work is ensured. While the initiatives contained in this grant application were designed to be sustainable and build on existing infrastructure, the extent to which Texas continues to provide support for high quality, school readiness focused early childhood education, based on broad public support, especially from parents, local communities and elected officials, will ensure a legacy of unprecedented success.