

Early Childhood Education & Care

July 17, 2026

NORTH STAR

The vision guiding Task Force work and recommendations

Texas' early childhood education and care is governed by an effective leadership structure with clear accountability for resource efficiency, quality standards, streamlined regulation, and family-centered outcomes.

AN EFFECTIVE ECEC SYSTEM MEANS...

- **Children** enter kindergarten ready to learn and prepared for lifelong success through access to high-quality ECEC across settings
- **Families** can select an affordable early learning option that fits their needs and allows them to return to work
- **Parents** are empowered as the primary decision-makers for their children with clear information and access to the supports that help their child thrive
- **Providers** are supported to deliver high-quality programs through a prepared workforce and aligned systems and standards

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP MEANS...

- **State leaders** are empowered to create a vision for the state and are held accountable for outcomes of the system as a whole
- **Local leaders** are supported to make improvements in the availability, affordability, and quality of programs in their communities

FOUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Recommendations that serve the North Star, organized to meet the Task Force's reporting requirements

01

Quality Standards & Outcome Measurement

ANCHOR STATEMENT

Statewide quality standards are uniform across settings and funding streams, and programs receive support and accountability to achieve quality goals over time.

02

Transparency & Accountability

ANCHOR STATEMENT

Timely, accurate, and secure data informs decision-making, drives outcomes, and improves access for ECEC leaders and participants.

03

Funding & Affordability

ANCHOR STATEMENT

The ECEC system delivers responsible stewardship of public dollars and supports a healthy supply to meet the needs of Texas families.

04

State Governance & Local Coordination

ANCHOR STATEMENT

Texas' ECEC system is structured around a single state vision, and leadership is empowered and accountable to serve that vision.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ANCHOR STATEMENT: *Timely, accurate, and secure data informs decision-making, drives outcomes, and improves access for ECEC leaders and participants.*

*Our June meeting focused on **early childhood education and care transparency and accountability** within the current Texas context and considerations for improvement aligned to state needs and national best practices. Following the meeting, we continued the previously introduced strategies:*

1

Follow-Up Survey

We shared a brief internal follow-up survey with draft takeaways and emerging recommendations from the discussion, giving members the opportunity to react to the meeting's content

2

Working Session

We captured feedback submitted via the survey

3

Emerging Recommendations

We updated the draft takeaways and emerging recommendations and will continue to refine these over the coming months ahead of drafting the final recommendations

MEMBER FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Feedback showed clear alignment across members and strong agreement with the draft statements as written, along with a few clarifying questions and considerations.

AREAS OF GREATEST AGREEMENT

- Texas' early childhood information landscape isn't fully supporting families, providers, and policymakers; clear pathways exist to reduce fragmentation
- ECIDS is critical infrastructure but insufficient to meet the Task Force's charge; even fully implemented, key questions remain. Someone must be accountable for capturing and acting on the right data
- Better information should serve families, employers, providers, and leaders — and reduce, not add to, provider reporting burden
- Other states and localities (e.g., San Antonio) offer models Texas can learn from
- The current state strengthens the case for governance reform: unified oversight with real authority to act on information

QUESTIONS

- What “ECEC workforce information” would cover and how to collect it meaningfully
- What a “state-to-local partnership” on information and transparency looks like in practice
- How to prioritize the mechanisms an ECIDS needs to present cross-program and longitudinal insights

CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Data collected locally should flow back to communities in usable form
- Reporting should reduce duplication rather than add to what providers already submit

DRAFT TAKEAWAYS & CONSIDERATIONS

From the Task Force's conversations on ECEC transparency and accountability — updated to reflect member feedback



Data Siloed Across Agencies

ECEC data is siloed across multiple agencies — creating friction, proving inadequate for policymakers, confusing for families, burdensome for providers, and inefficient for the state.



Confusion Across Agency Portals

Despite some coordination, agencies each manage their own portals, reporting tools, and analyses — creating duplication, uneven regional access, and room to improve information consistency and insight.



Cannot Yet Analyze Across Settings

Because Texas collects information by program across systems, it cannot yet analyze performance across settings or over time — what it takes to align dollars with what works.



Integrated and Thorough Data

ECIDS is critical to understanding the system, but merging data alone won't drive access and quality gains — especially as no one is accountable for turning insight into action to address stakeholder needs.



Information at Every Level

Clearer, simplified information serves everyone — families navigating care, employers wanting to support their workers, providers working to fill vacancies, system leaders, legislators, and taxpayers invested in their communities.



A Unified System

The current state strengthens the case for governance reform: consolidating programs and oversight into a single, unified structure will position Texas to be accountable for system-wide ECEC outcomes and empowered to leverage data for continuous improvement.

EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Task Force works toward recommendations on ECEC transparency and accountability, members are coalescing on the following emerging recommendations.

COMPLETE AN ECIDS

Prioritize completion of an integrated data system to answer fundamental questions about the state's system, expanded to cover workforce, capacity, and quality information with a named single owner accountable for delivery with clear objectives, timeline, and infrastructure.

ONE FRONT DOOR FOR FAMILIES

Prioritize one clear front door giving families timely, comprehensive information (including quality and cost) so they can weigh their options and eligibility and choose the care that best fits.

ANNUAL SYSTEM-WIDE REPORT

Produce an annual system-wide report on ECEC access, quality, and outcomes so policymakers and taxpayers can see public (federal and state) investments and results together.

UNIFIED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Unify ECEC governance structure with a single entity accountable for system-wide outcomes, equipped to operationalize integrated information, standardize data systems, identify gaps, and act on insights across the mixed-delivery birth-to-five system.