

Early Childhood Education & Care

M4 · JUNE 30, 2026

STATUTORY DUTIES

H.B. No. 117, 89th Legislature

THE TASK FORCE SHALL

- Examine governance and operational challenges in the ECEC system, including federal and local programs and regulations
- Develop and recommend standards for high-quality pre-K programs, including programs under Subchapter E-1, Chapter 29, Education Code
- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing HHSC, TEA, and TWC functions related to ECEC, with a focus on improving government efficiency
- Consider methods for large-scale redesign of early childhood administration to improve efficiency, service delivery, quality of care, and use of funding

THE STEERING COMMITTEE SHALL

- Align goals and metrics of HHSC, TEA, and TWC to measure progress, including aligning statewide data systems
- Require agencies to submit periodic progress reports and regularly refine statewide goals and strategic plans to ensure alignment with evolving ECEC needs

REPORTING REQUIREMENT — Chapter 455.005, Texas Government Code

Policy and budget recommendations must (1) facilitate and improve ECEC participant engagement with state agencies, and (2) lead to improved operational efficiency, increased affordable child care capacity, and improved kindergarten readiness.

THE PROBLEM

Why the status quo isn't working for Texas families, providers, or taxpayers

Texas' Early Childhood Education and Care is fragmented across state agencies and local coordinating entities — functions, funding streams, data systems, and regulatory frameworks are not coordinated or aligned. This siloed structure creates governance and operational inefficiencies that make it difficult for families and providers to navigate the system, drive up costs, limit affordable child care capacity, and result in inconsistent program quality. There is no unified vision for ECEC, no unified standards for high-quality programs, no aligned statewide goals or metrics across agencies, and no coordinated strategy for ensuring children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.

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.

QUALITY STANDARDS AND OUTCOME MEASUREMENT

*Our May meeting focused on **early childhood education and care quality** within the current Texas context and considerations for improvement aligned to state needs and national best practices. Following the meeting:*

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 and in our June working session

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 strong agreement with draft statements as written, as well as additional questions and considerations.

AREAS OF GREATEST AGREEMENT

- Consistent/comparable quality framework across settings tied to desired outcomes, centered on teacher-child interactions
- An accountable governance structure will support the quality vision
- Accessible quality information enables families to make informed choices
- Quality expectations must be paired with aligned resources and training
- Shifts to new expectations should not create undue administrative or cost burdens for providers

QUESTIONS

- How quality expectations should relate to publicly funded vs. private providers
- How quality layers onto safety standards and desired environmental measures
- How to balance statewide consistency and local flexibility

CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Quality frameworks should account for child age and provider type
- Changes in quality expectations will likely need to be scaled and implemented over time

DRAFT TAKEAWAYS & CONSIDERATIONS

From the Task Force's conversations on ECEC quality — updated to reflect member feedback



Fragmented Quality Systems

Texas operates multiple, fragmented quality systems across child care, pre-K, and Head Start — inconsistent standards, no shared definition of quality, and no understanding of long-term impact on academic and later outcomes.



Adult-Child Interactions as a Priority Measure

Existing systems include important structural requirements, but adult-child interactions should be a priority quality measure given the research connection to later outcomes; tools that leverage these deserve evaluation.



Quality Information Must Meet Families Where They Are

Quality info enables parent decision-making, but current signals (e.g., TRS ratings) are not actionable. Transparency efforts need to meet parents where they are.



Build on Existing Infrastructure

Texas has infrastructure to build from (elements of TRS, coaching, PD, program bright spots), but it's spread across agencies and at times focused on infractions rather than improvements.



Quality Cannot Stand Alone

Quality cannot be fully separated from access, workforce, and funding — improvements in one area depend on progress in the others.



Lessons from Other States

Other states offer examples of more unified quality systems with consistent measures, public reporting, and regional/local implementation supports.

EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Task Force works to develop quality recommendations to the Texas Legislature, members are coalescing on the following emerging recommendations.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Define an ECEC governance structure that can operationalize a statewide, age-appropriate, data-driven quality vision across all publicly funded programs, complementing safety and environmental licensing expectations.

CORE QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Identify a consistent framework to comparably measure classroom quality across child care, pre-K, and Head Start — incorporating a focus on teacher-child interactions tied to later academic and long-term outcomes.

ALIGNED RESOURCES

Align coaching, professional development, and funding behind the shared quality definition to maximize resources and pull system efforts in the same direction.

ACCESSIBLE, ACTIONABLE INFORMATION

Empower family choice with quality information that's consistent and accessible, backed by engagement that helps parents see exactly how ratings affect their child's outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

Pair any new quality expectations with lead time, training, and reduced administrative and cost burdens; empower the governance structure to build on this aligned system over time.