

Texas Early Learning Council Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2024 from 11:00am – 1:00pm
Teleconference via Zoom

Attendance

- Katherine Abba, Ph.D. (Faculty, Child Development Program for Houston Community College)
- Sarah Abrahams (Deputy Chief Officer of Prevention and Early Intervention for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services)
- Shruthi Arismendez (Director of the Maternal and Child Health Unit at the Department of State Health Services)
- Weldon Beard (President of the Texas Head Start Association)
- Terri Breeden (Section 619 Lead Coordinator for the Texas Education Agency)
- Becky Huss-Keeler (Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake)
- Kim Kofron (Director of Early Childhood Education for Children at Risk)
- Tori Lee (Director of Early Childhood for Texas Education Agency)
- Reagan Miller (Director of the Child Care and Early Learning Division for the Texas Workforce Commission)
- Marisela Nava (Director of Texas Southmost College Early Childhood Center)
- Stephanie Rubin (CEO of Texans Care for Children)
- Amber Scanlan (Senior Vice President and Director of Client and Community Relations for PNC)
- Kierstan Schwab (Executive Director of the Texas Public Broadcasting Association)
- Jennifer Stockemer (Owner and Director of Ivy Vine Preschool, LLC)
- Meghan Young (Director of Early Childhood Intervention Program for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission)

1. Call to Order

Reagan Miller called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM.

2. August 2024 Minutes Approval

Katherine Abba moved to approve the August 2024 meeting minutes and Kim Kofron seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken, and the minutes were approved. A quorum was met during roll call.

3. Public Comment

No public comment.

4. Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan

Jody Snee, from Family Support Services of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, provided updates on Goal 3: Local early learning systems are well-coordinated, appropriately resourced, and successfully support the children and families in their communities of the [Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan](#). Jody Snee specifically discussed Action 3.1.1: DFPS/HHSC will continue offering sub-grants to existing PEI local programs to help local communities focus on community needs.

Stephanie Bonnet-Kramer, State Coordinator of PreK Partnerships of the Texas Workforce Commission, provided updates on Action 3.1.2: TWC and TEA will continue to support statewide staff working towards prekindergarten and child care partnerships.

Megan Schneider, from the Texas Education Agency, shared an update on Goal 4: State early learning system entities are collaborating on family- and data-informed decisions about the Texas Early Learning System to improve services, programs, and resources for children and their families. She specifically discussed Strategy 4.1: Develop an ECIDS to strengthen data sharing across agencies and better inform state-level policy and program improvement.

Reagan Miller, Director of the Child Care & Early Learning Division of the Texas Workforce Commission, proposed standing up a Strategic Plan Workgroup to advance all Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan action items to the Texas Early Learning Council.

Reagan moved to amend section 3.3 of the Texas Early Learning Council Operating Procedures open meeting to state, “Regular and special meetings of the council shall be open to the public”, removing “and work group” from that statement. Kim Kofron seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion to amend section 3.3 of the Texas Early Learning Council Operating Procedures carried.

5. Updates from TELC Members

Kierstan Schwab of Texas PBS shared information about Carl the Collector, a new animated PBS Kids show about an autistic racoon character.

Meghan Young, Director of HHSC Early Childhood Intervention (ECI), gave two updates. The first update was regarding the request for applications (RFA) for ECI services, which is

scheduled for publication in December 2024. The second update was that HHSC has submitted their Appropriations Request, including an exceptional item for ECI.

Allison Wilson, Director, Program Policy & Quality Improvement, Child Care & Early Learning, gave an overview of funding for the Child Care Development Fund in Texas. Over the past 10 years it has increased 150% to 1.22 billion. She also presented updates on Child Care Services (CCS) and discussed the increases in CCS payment rates and enhancements for Texas Rising Star certified providers on top of base rates. She discussed increases in CCS local funds for quality improvement. The increase has gone from 2% in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2022 to 6% in FFY 2025. She shared that in FFY 2017 the average number of CCS children served daily was 98,994 and as of August of FFY 2024 the daily average was 149,859 children. The current waitlist for FFY 2024 is 80,107 children. Finally, the new statewide parent application, TX3C, is planned to launch in December.

6. Upcoming Early Childhood Events

Announcements from Texas Head Start Collaboration Office:

[Region VI Head Start Association Conference:](#) October 22-25 in Albuquerque, NM

[Head Start Program Performance Standards \(HSPPS\) Implementation:](#) October 29-30 in Dallas, TX

[Texas Head Start Association Fall Conference:](#) November 14-16 in Dallas, TX

[Southmost College hosting a Texas AEYC conference:](#) October 26 in Brownsville, TX

7. Proposed Meeting Dates:

January 10, 2025

April 11, 2025

August 8, 2025

October 24, 2025

8. Adjourn

Reagan Miller adjourned the meeting at 12:55 PM.