COUNCIL FOR A
STRONG AMERICA

FACTSHEET

88th Session Early Childhood Education Legislative Agenda

Help parents get back to work with affordable child care and pre-K

Many Texans cannot work because they do not have access to any affordable quality child care. Employers all over Texas cannot do business because they do not have workers. Businesses, working parents, and children all suffer the consequences of a lack of child care in Texas.

Texas can do this by:

- Increasing pre-K partnerships between school districts and private child care
- Providing dual eligibility for children in state child care and pre-kindergarten
- Offering property tax relief to child care providers participating in TWC's scholarship program
- Allowing flexibility and increase accountability by adding quality performance targets to local workforce board deliverables.



Support the child care workforce to support business

Child care is in crisis throughout Texas because there are too few educators. Pay is low and benefits are non-existent. When the

child care workforce suffers, the entire economy feels a ripple effect as other working parents are impacted. If you support the child care workforce, you build the economy in Texas.

Texas can do this by:

- Enacting recommendations of House Bill 619 (87th R) (Thompson | Button | et al) to support the child care workforce
- Require two-year and four-year institutions of higher education to develop transferability degree plans across institutions and between child development and education departments

Invest in the child care infrastructure in Texas

From March 2020 to September 2021, 21% of child care closed in Texas. From 2019-2021, available child care seats decreased from 87.1 per 100 children to 54.9. The Child Care Relief Dollars that saved programs from closing their doors and prevented a far worse scenario end in May 2023. Texas needs to act now in order to prevent a complete collapse of the child care market in Texas.

"From March 2020 to September 2021, 21% of child care closed in Texas...Texas needs to act now in order to prevent a complete collapse of the child care market in Texas."

Texas can do this by:

- Creating bedrock funding to provide stable income to child care providers serving infants and toddlers, in child care deserts, or are working towards Texas Rising Star Levels 3 or 4
- Setting reimbursement rates at True Cost of Care vs Market Rate
- Ensuring providers receive the highest reimbursement based on quality rate, not what they can charge families

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites membership organizations, including law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, and business executives, that promote solutions ensuring that our next generation of Americans will be successful, productive members of society.

Kolby Monnig / Texas State Director / kmonnig@strongnation.org / 512.691.5064
Rachel Pearl Piotrzkowski / Texas Deputy Director / rpearl@strongnation.org / 512.789.7508

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Increase pre-K partnerships between school districts and private child care

In 2021 the Texas Legislature passed HB 2607 (Talarico | Button | et al) to ensure that state-funded child care centers are high quality. Texas can now prioritize and expand partnerships between school districts and quality child care centers to expand pre-K at a much lower cost. **Texas can target funding to school districts and quality private child care providers who are committed to pre-K partnerships.**



Ease access to child care for working parents by providing dual eligibility for children in state child care and pre-kindergarten

School districts and private child care providers want to work together to serve more families, support private small child care business, and to increase education outcomes for students. However, registration and eligibility requirements often get in the way of smooth partnerships. **Texas can provide currently eligible kids access to both child care and pre-K and eliminate costly administrative burdens for child care providers and school districts.**



Offer property tax relief to child care providers participating in TWC's scholarship program

Just like other businesses, child care providers struggle to pay property taxes. And the Texas Workforce Commission struggles to enroll providers in its child care scholarship program. Businesses looking for workers suffer. **Texas can provide property tax relief to child care providers who commit to serving children in the state's child care scholarship program.**



Allow flexibility and increase accountability by adding quality performance targets to local workforce board deliverables

Each Local Workforce Board is held accountable for only the number of children they serve with their Child Care Development Block Grant funds. By also measuring LWB on the number of programs at each of the Texas Star levels, TWC ensures LWB are meeting the needs of the children and families they are serving and providing supports to the child care programs in their area. **Texas needs to hold Local Workforce Boards accountable not only for the number of children served, but ensuring families have access to quality programs for all ages of children, specifically for infants and toddlers.**

Support the child care workforce to support other businesses



Enact recommendations of House Bill 619 (87th R) to support the child care workforce

In 2021 the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 619 (Thompson|Button|et al) and required the Texas Workforce Commission to create a plan to improve the child care workforce. That plan will be provided to the legislature in advance of the 88th Texas Legislature. **Texas needs to invest in the early childhood workforce to ensure that the rest of the workforce can work and be competitive.**



Require two-year and four-year institutions of higher education to develop transferability degree plans across institutions and between child development and education departments

An early childhood educator can start their education in a variety of ways including obtaining a Child Development Associate Credential, to associates or Bachelor's degree in child development or early childhood education. However, not all two-year institutions give equal credit for a CDA nor do the degree plans between two-year and four-year institutions transfer between each other or between the degree plans. **Texas needs to improve career pathways by removing barriers for an early childhood educator to get their education.**

Invest in the child care infrastructure in Texas



Bedrock funding to provide stable income to child care providers serving infants and toddlers, in child care deserts, or are working towards Texas Rising Star levels 3 or 4.

COVID Child Care Relief funds saved our child care system from total collapse. However, those funds will run out in May 2023. Bedrock funding will provide the consistent funding stream with which all types (center, faith-based, rural, etc) can compensate their educators to keep their doors open and the Texas economy growing. **Texas needs to provide sustainable funding to support child care programs in the following areas and increase family choice.**



Set reimbursement rates at true cost of care vs market rate

In a rebuilding economy with high labor and supply costs, outdated reimbursement rates are far lower than providers' true cost of care. Child care providers simply cannot afford to continue to subsidize the subsidized child care system with their money and their labor. One solution is to change the way reimbursement rates are determined by looking at the true cost of care which includes professional salaries for early childhood educators. Child care providers can only charge what their families can afford. Only when rates are determined by actual costs—not by what the lowest income workers in our economy can afford—will providers have the ability to offer consistently high-quality care. **Texas needs to determine reimbursement rates at the true costs of providing child care.**



Ensure child care providers receive the highest reimbursement based on their quality rate

Child care programs in the poorest parts of Texas aren't allowed to receive the highest reimbursement rate established because their current tuition fees are less than their quality reimbursement rate. Child care providers are being indirectly penalized for serving low-income communities because current law requires reimbursements be provided at the lowest rate. **Texas needs to pay child care providers based on the quality of their programs, not on what low-income working families can afford to pay.**

Questions? Contact: Kolby Monnig / Texas State Director / kmonnig@strongnation.org / 512.691.5064