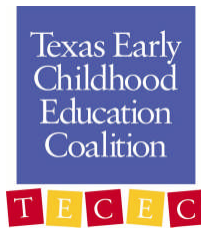


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



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**National Poll of Latinos Reveals Strong Support for Pre-K  
Survey is the first national study focused exclusively on Latinos' early education views**

AUSTIN, TEXAS-June 28, 2006- – Latino families show strong support for increased access to high-quality pre-kindergarten, according to a national poll released today by Pre-K Now. Pre-K Now is a national early education advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. which works with states including Texas to expand access to pre-k.

Latinos are changing the face of early education in Texas and across the country. According to the U.S. Census Bureau racial or ethnic minorities make up nearly half of the nation's children who are five or younger. Much of this increase is fueled by rapid growth among the Latino population, which today represents 46% of children ages birth to five in Texas.

“Texas has one of the fastest growing child populations in the country,” said Kaitlin Guthrow, Executive Director of the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC). “In order to meet the unique early education needs of all Texas children, including the Latino population, we must invest in high quality pre-k programs which have been proven to reduce high school drop out rates, increase college entrance rates, and secure a strong Texas workforce in the future.”

The public opinion survey focuses on Latino families' knowledge, preferences and support for public pre-k programs. Completed between March 1, 2006, and March 12, 2006, the poll showed that 96% of Latinos believe it is important for children to attend a pre-k program before kindergarten. The random telephone survey sampled 1,000 mostly working-class respondents in 10 states (California, Texas, Illinois, Florida, New York, New Jersey, Arkansas, North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee) among Mexican, Cuban, Dominican, Central American, and Puerto Rican respondents.

Some additional highlights:

- An overwhelming majority (95%) of Latinos believe that children who attend pre-k have strong educational advantages over those who do not attend;
- 78% of respondents would be more likely to support a candidate running for city, state or county office if they proposed making early education voluntarily available to all families who wanted it; and
- 73% of Latinos would pay more taxes to expand public pre-k programs if they served more children.

“Latino families not only believe pre-k is important but they also think elected officials should make pre-k a priority before taking on new responsibilities in K-12,” said Danielle Gonzales, Deputy State Program Director for Pre-K Now. “When it comes to raising Hispanic educational achievement, Latinos understand the urgency and importance of pre-k,” she added.

To learn more about the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC), please visit [www.tecec.org](http://www.tecec.org). To learn more about Pre-K Now, please visit [www.preknow.org](http://www.preknow.org).

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*The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) is a policy and advocacy organization comprised of more than 200 member organizations in 60 communities across Texas dedicated to building a movement for a high quality, voluntary, early childhood education system for children ages birth to five in Texas.*