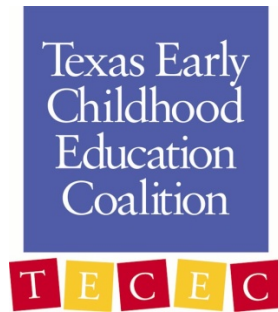


Kara Johnson
President and CEO
Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition
(TECEC)



Before the:

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Good morning. My name is Kara Johnson and I am the President and CEO of the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC). TECEC represents more than 350 organizations and 6,000 members and partners from across the great state of Texas. Our partners include representatives from public schools, Head Start, child care, the business community, higher education, foundations, community-based organizations, and more. The mission of TECEC is to build a system of quality early education that prepares children in Texas for success in their education and throughout life.

I would like to begin by thanking Chairwoman Jane Nelson, Vice Chairman Robert Deuell, and the entire Senate Health and Human Services Committee for hearing my testimony. The purpose of my remarks today is to testify in support of Senate Bill 265 by Senator Judith Zaffirini. We applaud Senator Zaffirini for recognizing the critical role of high quality training for professionals working with young children in early education settings.

Senate Bill 265 requires that child care trainers meet specific professional requirements. The requirements mandated by the bill includes range of professional designations, including registration with the Texas Early Care and Education Career Development System's Texas Trainer Registry, employment with an institution of higher learning or a relevant state agency, or certification in relevant professional fields. The bill goes on to recognize other professional achievements as indicators of trainer expertise, ranging from relevant credentials to previous experience in the field of early education and care. Senate Bill 265 is a straightforward measure that will promote quality training of professionals working with young children in child care and education settings. This bill is essential for promoting the effectiveness of early childhood professionals, who will be able to transfer high quality training experiences into high quality classroom experiences for their young students.

Senate Bill 265 is revenue-neutral, and the state does not anticipate any additional costs due to its passage. The trainer requirements in Senate Bill 265 support the goal of high quality early childhood education for all young Texans by promoting the quality of the professionals in the field.

The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition would like to thank Senator Zaffirini for her continued leadership and dedication to ensuring that young children in Texas have access to high quality early education. On behalf of the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition, thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions.