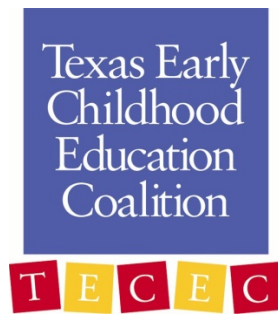


Kara Johnson
President and CEO
Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition
(TECEC)



Before the:

House Human Services Committee
Senate Bill 400

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

Good afternoon. 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 Chairman Raymond, Vice Chairman Morrison, and the entire House Human Services Committee for hearing my testimony. The purpose of my remarks today is to testify in support of Senate Bill 400 by Senator Florence Shapiro. We applaud Senator Shapiro for recognizing ways in which we can help high quality child care providers save their scarce resources.

This is a fairly straightforward bill that gives child care providers access to purchasing through the Texas CO-OP Program. Across the state, more than 9,000 child care providers care for more than 1.5 million young children every day. Senate Bill 400 gives those providers that are Texas Rising Star certified access to purchase goods, services, supplies and technology at a discounted rate, thereby saving them much needed funds. These savings would in turn enable providers to enhance quality elements that have been proven to produce positive outcomes for children.

Additionally, access to the CO-OP Program and its discounted rates serves as an incentive to providers to participate in the Texas Rising Star program. The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition is in favor of Senate Bill 400 as a way to support child care providers who participate in quality enhancing practices. Saving these providers money through participation in the Texas CO-OP Program is a simple step toward supporting further investments in high quality education that enables success for students in school and in life.

The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition would like to thank Senator Shapiro 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.