



# 2009 TECEC LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) is comprised of more than 250 member organizations statewide, and works to build a high-quality, integrated early childhood education and development system for children ages birth to five. Through widespread community and bi-partisan legislative support, TECEC has supported the creation of high-quality initiatives in local communities aimed at preparing low-income children for school entry. TECEC has prepared its Legislative Agenda for the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session which includes the following **five (5) priorities**:

## ***Support Full-Day High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten Programs with an Emphasis on Local, Integrated Community-Based Partnerships***

Support voluntary expansion of existing half-day pre-k programs to full-day with required quality supports in place, including a maximum class size limit. In addition, support the establishment and sustainability of partnerships between Pre-k, Child Care and Head Start programs under the direction of local communities while supporting parents who work full-time.

## ***Increase Reimbursement Rates Paid to Child Care Providers***

Increase payment rates to child care providers serving our highest need children in quality settings. The child care subsidy program, managed by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) serves the most vulnerable children in Texas and is critical in supporting families making the transition from welfare to work. Unfortunately, due to state level funding decisions mandating higher levels of direct child care services, local workforce development boards have been forced to offer providers reimbursement rates that do not cover the cost of providing services.

## ***Support the Development of Early Childhood Professionals***

Currently, child care workers are only required 8 hours of pre-service training before working with young children. A hairstylist in Texas requires 1,500 hours. In order to ensure a well-trained workforce, it is essential that workers have access to adequate pre-service and annual training hours.

## ***Maintain Support for Existing Quality Programs throughout Texas***

Support existing programs in local communities that have been passed into law by the Texas Legislature over the past three legislative sessions with strong bi-partisan support and serve children in quality ways through participation in the pre-k expansion grant program, the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM), the Texas School Readiness Certification System (SRCS), and the Texas Rising Star (TRS) program.

## ***Support Regional Infant and Toddler Training Specialists and Mentors***

It is widely recognized that at-risk children experience developmental difficulties well before they begin to participate in pre-k programs. In order to support the development of children from an early age, especially during the infant and toddler years (ages 0-3), local communities are in need of specialists who can assist early childhood providers in identifying and facilitating support services.