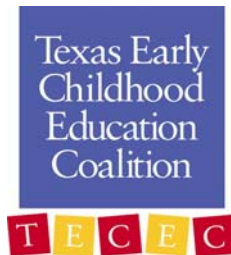


Testimony of:

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



State Advisory Council  
on Early Childhood Education and Care

Wednesday, November 3, 2010

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 thousands of members 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 purpose of my remarks today is to comment on how the priorities of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (SAC) align with TECEC's priorities outlined in The Texas Plan, as well as lay out the TECEC Legislative Agenda for the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session which begins in January of 2011.

In 2005, the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) partnered with the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University in order to develop *The Texas Plan*. *The Texas Plan* includes 50-policy recommendations to pass over a 10-year period. Five years later, dozens of policies in this document have passed into law and more than \$125 million has been infused into a collaborative system between child care, Head Start, and public school pre-k.

I am thrilled to report that each of the goals and objectives outlined by the State Advisory Council to accomplish over the next three years is included in The Texas Plan. I have put together a chart that outlines how the goals and objectives overlap and where you can find additional information in The Texas Plan. That chart is included at the end of your testimony.

I wanted to acknowledge that there are a few policy recommendations in The Texas Plan that are more challenging than others that TECEC has been unable to address to date. I am thrilled to see that the State Advisory Council will be able to take on some of these challenging issues over the next three years.

One example is the creation of an integrated data system. For a long time this issue has gone unaddressed because it is one of the hardest and most complex issues. In addition, there are a number of legal and technical barriers that must be overcome in order to build this type of system. Texas cannot adequately serve the children and families of Texas without this type of a system. Therefore, TECEC supports the efforts of the State Advisory

Council over the next three years to develop an integrated data system that is beneficial to parents, teachers, and policymakers, while building a system that Texas can be proud of.

I also wanted to highlight the goals and priorities of the State Advisory Council to focus on improving existing standards with a special focus on three things:

1. **Linking infant and toddler guidelines to existing 4 year-old public school prekindergarten guidelines;**

The Texas Plan focuses on birth to five and the need for alignment so I was pleased to see this priority included.

2. **Improve existing standards and guidelines across all institutions in order to support the needs of children who are learning English as a second language;**

The Texas Plan, Policy Recommendation VI-7, recommends the creation of a task force to be convened to develop a report and recommendations on the relationship between the standards being applied generally and their suitability for English Language Learners. We are thrilled that this work will be done by the State Advisory Council.

3. The same goes for number three which is **improving existing standards and guidelines for children with special needs.**

The Texas Plan, Policy Recommendation VI-6 recommends the creation of a task force to develop a report and recommendations on the relationship between standards being applied generally and their suitability for children with special needs.

The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition also plans to improve on these systems over the next five years and will make sure we stay in communication with the Council to ensure we are not duplicating efforts.

Now I would like to shift gears for a moment. Two weeks ago, the Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) unveiled its legislative agenda for the 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session in 2011. TECEC will focus on the following:

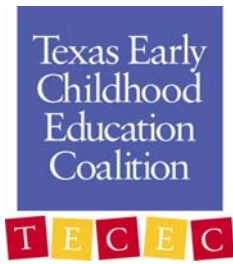
**Protect. Protect. Protect.** The top priority for Texas early childhood education advocates includes protecting all proven, high quality investments including funding to the following programs:

- Prekindergarten Early Start (PKES) (Article III Rider 45)
- Texas School Ready! Project (Article VII Rider 27)
- Early Childhood School Readiness Program (Article III Rider 41)
- Texas Higher Education and Early Childhood Education Development Project
- Enhanced Reimbursement Rates for Child Care Providers Participating in High Quality Initiatives
- Half-day State Funded Pre-k Program
- Home Visitation Programs

Our second priority is to reform the Child Care Subsidy System. During the interim, TECEC worked closely with Chairman Mark Strama and the Technology, Economic Development, and Workforce Committee on an interim charge related to the increasing demand for high quality child care that prepares children to succeed in school and life. In addition, TECEC pulled together the top experts from across the state to devise 10 policy recommendations on how to improve the system. In 2011, TECEC supports reforming the child care subsidy system in Texas and will work to gain bipartisan support on this critical issue.

Finally, TECEC will work with its partners across the state, including the Texas Association of Business, Raise Your Hand Texas, and others to implement other revenue neutral quality reforms in order to improve the overall early education system in Texas.

With that, I would like to thank each of you again for your commitment to participate on the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. There is so much to be done for the early learners of Texas and I want to remind you to call on TECEC as a resource at any time.



# Alignment of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care’s Goals and Objectives with the Policy Recommendations in The Texas Plan

Priorities	State Advisory Council Goals/Objectives	The Texas Plan Policy Recommendations
<b>Parental Outreach and Communication</b>	Conduct an initial, rigorous needs assessment, with a focus on parents and providers, to ascertain information on the quality and availability of early childhood education and care. Additionally, develop and plan strategies to update the needs assessment on a periodic basis.	C. Strengthening Families and Communities, Policy Area VII: Parental Roles, <b>Policy Recommendation VII-1: Parent as a Learner</b> (p. 41)
	Develop and implement strategies for outreach to underrepresented and special populations.	C. Strengthening Families and Communities, Policy Area VII: Parental Roles, <b>Guiding Principles, Parent Involvement and Parental Education</b> (p. 40-41)
<b>Early Childhood Workforce and Professional Development</b>	Develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood education and care professionals.  a. To develop and implement a Career Development System for early childhood professionals	A. Building an Effective Infrastructure, Policy Area I: Governance, Administration, and Technical Resources, <b>Policy Recommendation I-2: The Administration</b> , and <b>Policy Recommendation I-3: Technical Resources</b> (p. 15-16)
	Support the professional development, recruitment and retention of early childhood professionals.  a. Develop a career lattice  b. Explore compensation parity and funding opportunities for early childhood professionals to attain advanced credentials	B. Building Standards: Teachers, Early Childhood Education Sites, and Children, Policy Area IV: Teachers and Administrator-Professionalization and Compensation, <b>Policy Recommendation IV-1: Standards for Teacher Training and Professionalization and Compensation</b> and <b>Policy Recommendation IV-2: Accreditation and Certification</b> (p. 29)
	Assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public/private institutions  a. Successfully identify models of articulation agreements between community-based training to community colleges to 4-year institutions of higher education.  b. Develop and disseminate model articulation agreements that span from community based trainings to community colleges to 4-year institutions of higher education	B. Building Standards: Teachers, Early Childhood Education Sites, and Children, Policy Area IV: Teachers and Administrators-Professionalization and Compensation, <b>Policy Recommendation IV-3: Expand ECED Teacher Education and Training Capacity</b> (p. 29)

Priorities	State Advisory Council Goals/Objectives	The Texas Plan Policy Recommendations
<b>Collaborations and Standards</b>	<p>Develop integrated early learning cross sector standards/guidelines to improve collaboration and coordination across early childhood education and care programs.</p> <p>a. Gather, review and compile all federal, state, local and association standards/guidelines and develop a linked mechanism to disseminate how these integrate together in order to inform local practice.</p> <p>b. Study and make recommendations on how to improve existing standards with a special focus on linking infant and toddler guidelines to existing 4 year-old public school prekindergarten guidelines as well as how to improve existing standards and guidelines across all institutions in order to support the needs of children who are learning English as a second language as well as children with special needs.</p>	<p>B. Building Standards: Teachers, Early Childhood Education Sites, and Children, Policy Area VI: The Child-Standards and Assessments for Educational and Developmental Outcomes, <b>Policy Recommendation VI-1: Learning and Development Standards</b> (p. 36)</p> <p>B. Building Standards: Teachers, Early Childhood Education Sites, and Children, Policy Area VII: The Child-Standards and Assessments for Educational and Developmental Outcomes, <b>Policy Recommendation VI-6 Children with Special Needs</b> and <b>Policy Recommendation VI-7: Children Whose Primary Language in the Home is not English</b> (p. 37-38)</p>
	<p>Enhance existing high quality initiatives through the development of a school readiness home-based early childhood provider project that builds on existing school readiness initiatives that have proven success records in preparing Texas children for school.</p>	<p>C. Strengthening Families and Communities, Policy Area X: Community Roles, <b>Policy Recommendation X-4: Home-Based Early Care and Education</b> (p. 47)</p>
<b>Data Systems</b>	<p>Develop an integrated data system for diverse, mixed sector early childhood related institutions, organizations and programs.</p>	<p>B. Building Standards: Teachers, Early Childhood Education Sites, and Children, Policy Area VI: The Child-Standards and Assessments for Educational and Developmental Outcomes, <b>Policy Recommendation VI-8: Comprehensive State ECED Data Monitoring System</b> (p. 38)</p>

For more information, please contact Kara Johnson, President and CEO, Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) at 512.476.7939 or [kjohnson@tecec.org](mailto:kjohnson@tecec.org).