

32 Texas Groups Urge Budget Conference Committee to Include Bedrock Child Care Funding in State Budget

So far, the Texas Legislature has not committed to providing the funding needed to keep high-quality child care open so parents can go to work.

Over the past two years, the child care situation has gone from bad to worse. As more child care providers close and classrooms sit empty due to a lack of teachers, some parents cannot work, and businesses throughout the economy cannot hire and retain employees.

- **A challenge for working families:** Parents often have very few choices for high-quality child care — and the available options pose a huge financial burden.
- **A challenge for children’s future success in school:** Many children — especially from families with fewer resources — end up in lower quality child care during the critical early years of brain development.
- **A challenge for underpaid child care educators:** In Texas, the median wage of a child care educator is only \$12 per hour and with little to no benefits — prompting educators to leave the profession in droves.
- **A challenge for child care providers:** With parents paying more than they can afford, staff who are leaving due to low pay, and programs barely able to stay afloat, Texas has 27 percent fewer child care programs operating in 2023 than in 2020, according to HHSC Licensing data.
- **A challenge for businesses in all sectors of the Texas economy:** Texas businesses lose an average of \$11.4 billion annually due to insufficient child care, according to an analysis by Ready Nation.

In the absence of legislative action, the crisis is about to get worse: According to a recent survey from the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, 44 percent of responding child care programs indicated their program is likely or maybe likely to close within the next year when federal relief funding expires.

We urge the Conference Committee to support the proposed rider in Article XI to continue the state’s successful stabilization grants to provide bedrock funding to approximately 13,000 child care providers and over 90,000 Texas early educators. Many other states, including Louisiana and New Mexico, supplement federal funding with additional state funding (beyond required match spending). Texas needs to do the same to ensure working Texans have safe, reliable, high-quality child care for their kids.

Supporting Organizations Listed on the Next Page

Austin/Travis County Success By 6 Coalition
Big Thought
Child Care Associates
ChildCareGroup
CHILDREN AT RISK
Christian Preschool Centers Inc.
Council for a Strong America
Dallas Afterschool
Dallas College School of Education
Early Learning Alliance of Tarrant County
Early Matters San Antonio
Fight Crime: Invest in Kids Texas
Gingerbread Kids Academy
Kids R Kids East Allen
Jovie Childcare Reimagined
Lena Pope
Mission: Readiness Texas
Mommies In Need
Mom's Best Friend
North Texas Early Education Alliance
ReadyNation Texas
Safe Haven For Kids
Texans Care for Children
Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
Texas Licensed Child Care Association
Texas Restaurant Association
TexProtects
United Way Metropolitan Dallas
United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County
United Ways of Texas
Uplift Education
Williamson County Success By 6 Coalition