



The Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board, Inc. is committed to building a strong economic environment, growing industries, profitable businesses, skilled workers and thriving communities. Consistent with this commitment, the Heart of Texas Workforce Board plays a significant role in supporting the availability and affordability of high-quality early learning programs. Research shows that quality early learning environments create an important foundation for later success in school and life, thus making it an important, but often overlooked, part of the workforce development pipeline. Child care not only fuels our region's economy by helping parents work and/or complete their education/training, it also builds the workforce of our future.

Child Care Services (CCS) is a major program of Workforce Solutions. It is a dual-generation program supporting the health, safety and education of children and the economic stability of low-income families. CCS subsidizes the cost of child care for more than 2,100 children every day. In addition, the Board is responsible for implementing the state's Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) known as the Texas Rising Star (TRS) Program. The goal of TRS is to assess and improve the level of quality in early learning programs and to broadly communicate the importance of quality child care and early experiences. Many of the Board's quality improvement activities improve early learning for all children enrolled in a Texas Rising Star facility, not just those receiving a subsidy. Currently, more than 90% of licensed child care providers work with CCS and more than 30% are Texas Rising Star certified. Increasing the number of TRS providers is a Board priority.

Research has found that participation in high-quality early learning programs has lasting benefits for children. There is longitudinal research demonstrating that there are intergenerational benefits too. Professor James Heckman conducted research on the landmark Perry Preschool Project that began in the 1960s. The original participants of the Perry Preschool Project are now in their 50s. The original participants, as parents, provided their own children with more attention and more resources and were more likely to live in a stable two-parent home. Professor Heckman also found that the children, of the original participants, had fewer suspensions, higher levels of education and employment, and lower levels of participation in crime compared with the control group. This suggests that participation in a high-quality early learning program may help to break the cycle of poverty for future generations. Our work with children, families and the child care industry moves us toward our goals of building a strong economic environment with skilled workers and thriving communities.

The Board's quality plan is organized into four overarching goals: (1) to increase the supply of quality child care, (2) to increase the professionalism of the child care workforce, (3) to support developmentally appropriate environments, and (4) to engage parents and community partners in early learning. These goals are used to guide the selection of the projects listed below.

Increase the Supply of Quality Child Care

Activity	Description	Measurement
Promote Texas Rising Star (TRS) Participation	Promote TRS to child care providers, parents, and the community. TRS is the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in Texas. It is a systematic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality and in early and school-age care and education programs. CCS will work with Board staff to utilize promotional materials, marketing, and community outreach efforts to increase awareness of the importance of quality child care and the recognition of TRS.	Increase the number of new Texas Rising Star providers by 20%. New means that the provider was certified after 9/30/19.
Invest in Mentor/Coaches	Build capacity of TRS mentors by providing high quality professional development, opportunities for specializations, and attendance at state and/or national conferences.	Document that CCS quality staff completed 36 hours of professional development.
Provide TRS Incentives	The cost of providing quality child care is a barrier for many providers. TRS incentives may be offered to providers for initial certification, maintenance of a star-level and/or increasing TRS star level or national accreditation. This is based on the availability of funding.	Provide the basis for incentive amounts, description of incentive, and list of providers receiving incentive payments.
Support National Accreditation	Explore opportunities to support TRS providers interested in pursuing national accreditation.	Document efforts to promote national accreditation.
Support PreK Partnerships	Explore opportunities to support partnerships between ISDs and Texas Rising Star providers.	Document efforts to raise awareness of partnerships and support collaborations.

Increase the Professionalism of the Child Care Workforce

Activity	Description	Measurement
Invest in Strong Leadership & Business Management	TRS directors and those working toward TRS certification will have access to free and low-cost professional development in leadership and business management. A pilot project is available for a limited number of TRS providers interested in implementing an online shared services/back office solution funded by TWC.	Provide copies of outreach efforts, enrollment, training descriptions and evaluations, if available.
Advance the Knowledge and Skills of Teachers	CCS will offer high-quality and affordable professional development opportunities to early childhood teachers and directors. Information on available programs offering credentials or degrees in early childhood or related fields will be made available. Programs funds may be used to support post-secondary training in certain circumstances. Training and purchase of assessment tools to measure instructional and classroom quality is encouraged.	Track topics, training hours, numbers of participants, and certificates/degrees awarded. Infant & toddler training must be reported separately.
Offer Wage Supplements	A wage supplement may be offered for completing a certificate/degree, or continued employment at a TRS program after earning a certificate/degree, or for TRS certification. This is based on the availability of funding.	Report the names of recipients, employer, reason, and amount.
Promote the Texas Workforce Registry	The Texas Workforce Registry is a web-based database where early childhood professionals can store and access their education and employment history, as well as the professional development hours they have completed.	Report efforts to increase awareness and usage of registry. Report the number of users in 2nd and 4th quarters.
Explore the CDA High School Apprenticeship	Learn about this project at Waco ISD and explore opportunities to support and/or enhance it.	Document meetings and/or visits with local partners.

Support Developmentally Appropriate Environments

Activity	Description	Measurement
Frog Street Curricula	Frog Street Curriculum is used by TRS providers, Waco ISD PreK, and EOAC's Head Start program since 2010. Frog Street offers an infant, toddler, and preschool curriculum that are provided to TRS providers.	Maintain a list of providers receiving Frog Street curriculum and sign in sheets for attendance at training.
Classroom Materials and Equipment	Funds for the purchase of classroom materials, equipment, and outdoor learning environments may be provided to TRS centers or those working toward TRS as funding allows. Classroom materials may include the purchase of technology.	Report the number of providers receiving materials and equipment quarterly.

Engage Families and Community Partners in Early Learning

Child One Initiative	The Child One Initiative is the Board's family and community engagement initiative that includes a website, an annual child care provider recognition banquet, and a calendar that promotes choosing quality child care, and offers community resources and parent education.	Report efforts to increase awareness of Child One Website, maintain a system for tracking and replenishing print materials promoting TRS, developmental milestones and screenings.
Family and Community Engagement	CCS will support family and community engagement efforts throughout the region to support high-quality early learning programs.	Report efforts to increase family and community engagement practices within child care programs and through partnerships in the region.
Developmental Screening Project	CCS will promote the use of developmental screening tools among parents, providers, and community partners.	Track & report efforts to increase awareness of developmental milestones and the use of developmental screening tools.

Special Statewide Focus on Infant and Toddler Projects

NOTE: TWC requires that infant and toddler projects be reported separately.

Increase the supply of quality infant and toddler care	Projects that establish or expand the numbers of infants and toddlers participating in a high-quality early learning program. Training provided to advance knowledge and skills of teachers, materials and/or equipment that improve the quality of indoor/outdoor learning environments.	Report professional development activities, expansion of slots, materials purchased and collaborations quarterly.
Support high quality care for infants and toddler with disabilities	Projects that increase the ability of parents and teachers to: identify developmental delays and disabilities, more effectively care for children with delays and disabilities, and increase awareness of available services.	Report projects and expenditures quarterly.