

## Early Childhood Advisory Council Agenda Thursday, September 11, 2025 12:00 p.m.

### Summary

**Attendees:** Carrie Pierce (Chair), Cynthia Pearson, Jennifer Gonzalez, Noreen White, Katrese Scott  
**Guests:** Megan Weaser and Tiffany Falconer – SERCO of Texas staff  
**Board Staff:** Lisa Colyer, Mindy Ross, Amelia Reeves, Jessica Hayhurst

**I. Call to order – Carrie Pierce, Chair**

Meeting called to order by Chair Pierce at 12:05 p.m. Notes from the previous Council meeting were reviewed and approved.

**II. Child Care Data – Lisa Colyer**

Waitlist and Enrollment Numbers – currently there are 1896 children in care and 1482 children on the waiting list. Staff are attempting to devise a means to accurately determine the number of children on the waiting list that are employed in a child care setting, but with this becoming a state priority, TX3C will be updated to track this population.

Regarding the waiting list, Lisa shared that estimating the amount of time one stays on the waiting list, and the amount of time it takes to complete a family's eligibility determination, varies depending upon a number of factors, including availability of funding and the degree to which documentation submission was completed by the parent upon application. Currently we're in open placement, so new children are placed in care daily. The Board is currently meeting performance for the number of children in care.

Special populations – Currently, approximately 80 CPS/Foster children are being served, and Lisa made note of the fact that these children do not count toward performance. We're also currently serving 3 children who qualify as having special needs that may justify paying enhanced reimbursement rates.

Changes in Policies/Rules/Requirements Impacting Early Childhood Providers - Lisa shared that the attendance function in TX3C was activated on August 4, 2025. FY26 income guidelines, maximum reimbursement rates, and PSOC scale were shared with the Council. It was noted

that there was a marked increase over FY25 in the income a family can earn and still qualify for the CCS program. Lisa noted that TWC expects the standardization of the PSOC scale statewide to result in an overall decrease in the amount of parent share of cost contributed by families toward the cost of care.

Questions were posed regarding reporting excused absences or illnesses. Mindy stated that several providers notify CCS staff of absences, and doing so assists staff in tracking absences not due to illness in case the child is at or over the 40 absences allowed during a 12 month period and requires a waiver for continued enrollment.

Texas Rising Star Date – Mindy shared the following information:

- TRS status:
  - 12 providers at Entry Level designation;
  - 35 providers at 2-Star designation;
  - 25 providers at 3-Star designation;
  - 7 providers at 4-Star designation;
  - 3 providers on TRS suspension.
- Of note:
  - Mindy reported that Child Care Regulation citations for providers not meeting minimum standards have increased in many centers.
  - As of 10/1/2025, every TRS assessment will occur in-person now that the Centralized Assessment Entity has caught up on backlogged assessments. There will no longer be a remote assessment option.

FY25 Quality Initiatives Update – final purchases for the FY25 program year included:

- \$289,300 in staff incentives were paid to 817 Early Childhood educators at 66 centers;
- \$220,265 was spent on the purchase of infant/toddler outdoor play equipment/materials for 46 centers;
- \$149,500 in incentive funds were spent on materials for new providers, which included 7 new programs that signed a CCS agreement, 20 programs that had an initial Texas Rising Star assessment, and 2 programs that raised their TRS star level.

Questions surrounding procurement of these incentives was discussed. Mindy shared that several factors contribute to vendor selection, which can include not only purchase price, but also a company's presence in the state vendor procurement system, customer service, ability to deliver within the required timeframe, etc.

### **III. Survey Results Related to FY26 Quality Initiatives that will Improve, Sustain and Support the Quality of Care and the Child Care Workforce – Mindy**

Mindy shared with the Council members the results of this year's Early Childhood Survey. This survey was shared with child care providers, Texas Rising Star mentor staff, and Council members to determine priorities for the FY26 fiscal year. This year's top three priorities included:

- Texas Rising Star – specifically, professional development, outdoor equipment, and curriculum or teacher planning resource books;
- Training and Professional Development – group training sessions, financial incentives for credential attainment, and financial incentives for professional development;
- Infant and Toddler Activities – group training sessions, furniture and equipment, and learning materials/curriculum designed for infants and toddlers.

#### IV. **Council Member Recommendation for New Advisory Council Members**

Due to moves, job changes, and term limits, there is a need to nominate several new members to the Early Childhood Advisory Council. Members in attendance offered several suggestions. Everyone has until 09/15/2025 to submit any additional nominees for the Board’s consideration at the next Executive Committee meeting.

#### V. **Other Business**

Texas School Ready Updates – Mindy announced that two existing Texas Rising Star members have been selected to work with the Texas School Ready program. Amanda Earles will serve as the Texas School Ready Manager, and Joan Simpson will serve as the TSR Coach. They have officially moved into these positions as of 8/1/2025. So far, 18 teachers have been onboarded and Joan and Amanda will begin working in the classrooms with these teachers by the end of September.

Update on Customer Service Recommendations – Lisa and Council member Katrese Scott (CCS Project Director) spoke to several improvements made to customer service, including the creation of a new email address with which to report TX3C issues, the assignment of specific staff to serve as a triage unit for resolving TX3C issues related to payments, referrals, etc. in a timely manner, the development of a means to identify missing payments, and the development of stronger processes to help ensure the accuracy of provider payments. It is believed that these improvements will all result in improved service for both providers and parents.

Child Care Services Contractor Transition – Lisa announced that the Board had voted to enter into contract negotiations with C2 Global Professionals for the operation and management of workforce and child care programming for the Board. Negotiations are going smoothly and the transition is fully under way.

Payment of Maximum Reimbursement Rates – in the last legislative session a bill passed allowing Boards to pay Texas Rising Star providers the Board’s maximum reimbursement rates even if the provider rates are lower than the Board’s max rates. The caveat is that Boards must be able to demonstrate that, in doing so, they can still meet their annual performance targets and do so within budget. At this time, the Board has received no guidance from TWC regarding implementation of this provision, but the Council will be kept apprised as staff are given additional information and guidance.

Holidays for Home Providers – currently, the Board offers 9 paid holidays per year for providers. If a provider is Texas Rising Star certified, they receive one additional holiday for each star level achieved, for a total of 12 potential paid holidays. Providers can also be paid for closures due to weather emergencies or any other circumstances that prevent a provider from being able to operate. Payment for emergency closures are considered on a case-by-case basis.

- VI. Next Meeting** - the next Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 11, at 12:00pm.
- VII. Adjourn** – meeting was adjourned by Chair Pierce at 1:48pm.