HB619 TWC Strategic Plan

Final Report

Executive Summary

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) engaged Social Finance, Inc. (SFI) to conduct research and develop recommendations as key inputs to drafting its 2026-2028 Child Care Workforce Strategic Plan. The project centered practitioner perspective, employed rigorous statewide data collection, and produced recommendations that are feasible within TWC's scope and funding. Three pillars guided the work: focus on solutions feasible for TWC to implement, minimize burden on stakeholders, and ensure that the perspectives of all communities and stakeholders are heard through the Workgroup.

Project Approach

The project leveraged three project workstreams:

- **Director Survey:** A representative sample of ~3,000 licensed programs yielded 1,129 responses (953 complete). The survey provided statewide, representative data on demographics, compensation, benefits, staffing, program operations, and workforce challenges.
- **Focus Groups:** Three virtual groups (15 child care program directors total) offered qualitative depth to the research questions. Separate sessions for rural, urban, and home-based child care programs ensured wide-ranging perspectives.
- **Expert Workgroup:** Four in-person meetings (September 2024 – August 2025) brought together child care program directors, teachers, employers, and other experts from across Texas. These sessions surfaced insights from practitioners and served as a forum for developing and refining recommendations.

These three components were iterative and reinforced each other. The survey findings helped refine focus group questions, and both focus group and survey findings informed Workgroup discussions that produced the final set of recommendations in this report. The mutual reinforcement ensured recommendations reflected not just research findings but also the expertise of child care industry practitioners.

Research & Analysis

The analysis focused on answering five guiding research questions, included below along with key themes and findings from our survey and focus groups:

RQ1. What are the demographic characteristics of child care workers?

- **Demographic overview:** The Texas child care workforce is overwhelmingly female, racially and ethnically varied, and significantly more bilingual than the national average. Survey data show that 97% of teachers are women, 41% are Hispanic or Latino, 38% are White, and 20% are Black. One in four teachers speak Spanish—almost double the national rate.
- **Home-based child care programs in particular stand out for their racial and linguistic makeup:** They have much higher representation of Black educators (36% compared to 20% of the overall surveyed child care workforce), and English is less commonly spoken as a first language, with directors reporting that 85% of home-based program teachers speak English, versus 95% in centers.
- **National comparison:** Compared with national averages, Texas's child care workforce is more bilingual and more racially varied. Hispanic/Latino and Black workers are both overrepresented relative to the national workforce. This linguistic and cultural variation is a strength: focus group participants highlighted how bilingual educators are essential for serving families across the state.

RQ2. What are the major challenges that child care program directors are facing in maintaining a stable and high-quality workforce?

- **Compensation:** Directors consistently identified low compensation as the single largest barrier to recruiting and retaining staff. In survey results, 58% of centers and 34% of home-based child care programs cited "wages are too low to attract qualified staff" as the top hiring challenge, while focus group participants explained that COVID-stimulus funding briefly stabilized retention, but funding expiration left programs unable to compete with other industries paying $18–$20 per hour.
- **Difficulty meeting wage and compensation expectations:** A second theme was the growing gap between what prospective workers expect and what programs can offer. Nearly nine in ten directors said that increasing pay would be the most effective strategy to reduce turnover, followed by offering more benefits (52%) and more paid time off (38%). At the same time, directors reported applicants requesting hourly wages well above what programs could sustain, including $19 per hour with no experience.

- **Enrollment is a key challenge:** Directors emphasized that external conditions undermine their ability to maintain a stable workforce. Nearly half of home-based child care program directors (46%) and more than a third of center directors (35%) said enrollment was their most pressing operational challenge. In addition to enrollment, focus group participants described how rural programs lose staff to nearby cities, while staff based in urban areas face long commutes and increasing numbers of children with behavioral challenges—both of which contribute to teacher burnout and turnover.

RQ3. What compensation and benefits do child care workers receive?

- **Compensation** in the Texas child care sector is very low compared to other fields. The survey found that the median wage for teachers was just $14 per hour, while directors reported a median salary of $45,000. Higher levels of education lead to clear yet modest increases in pay—teachers with bachelor's degrees earn about $2 more per hour than those without. Focus group participants confirmed that directors struggle to compete with entry-level jobs in warehouses and retail that pay far more for less demanding work.
- **Benefits** access is limited and uneven, with stark disparities between centers and home-based child care programs. Only 38% of centers and 4% of home-based programs reported offering health insurance. Paid vacation was available in 74% of centers but only 27% of home-based programs. Directors across settings described how the lack of formal benefits makes it difficult to retain staff.
- **Creative incentives:** In the absence of strong pay and benefits, many programs rely on small-scale, creative incentives. Focus group directors described using strategies such as sign-on bonuses and attendance-based rewards to sustain staff morale. While these efforts provide some relief, they remain inconsistent and insufficient; survey data showed that only 22% of child care programs offered retention bonuses and just 7% offered sign-on bonuses.

RQ4. What are the educational and professional development experiences and preferences for child care workers?

- **Experience and credentials:** Many child care workers bring years of valuable experience, but relatively few hold formal education credentials. Survey findings showed that the average worker has seven years of experience in early childhood education, 29% hold a bachelor's degree, and 48% hold a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Among home-based child care programs, CDA attainment drops to 23%. Focus group directors emphasized that teachers often lacked training for specific needs such as infant/toddler care or managing challenging behaviors.

- **Lack of awareness of Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS):** Use of professional development systems is uneven. Just over half of directors reported that most of their staff use TECPDS or CLI Engage, but many directors were unaware of these systems or unclear on their value. In fact, 64% of directors who did not use TECPDS said it was because they were unaware of it, while another 20% said they were unclear of the benefits. Focus group participants further described TECPDS as cumbersome and noted that mentor support was inconsistent.
- **Cost and accessibility emerged as major barriers** to professional development. Survey results indicated that cost, inconvenient training times and locations, and lack of substitutes were the top obstacles. Focus group participants reinforced these findings, with home-based directors explaining they simply could not leave classrooms to attend training, and rural child care programs pointing to long travel distances as a major burden.

RQ5. How can the Texas Workforce Commission, given its resources and mandate, best improve and support worker recruitment, training, and retention?

- **Simplify programs and oversight:** Directors agreed that TWC programs such as Child Care Services (CCS) and Texas Rising Star are essential, but they also described these programs as overly complex and administratively burdensome. Focus group participants described Texas Rising Star paperwork and weekly family communication requirements as excessive—particularly for home-based programs with limited staff capacity.
- **Expand focused, topical training:** Stakeholders called for expanded and more tailored training opportunities. Survey responses highlighted challenging behaviors, child development, and special needs as top training needs, while focus groups emphasized the importance of remote CPR and first aid training for rural staff and Spanish-language CDA training for urban, bilingual workforces.
- **CCS and Texas Rising Star improvements:** Both surveys and focus groups pointed to the need to strengthen CCS and Texas Rising Star systems. Directors cited long CCS waitlists, inadequate reimbursement rates, and mentor turnover as barriers to program stability. Many recommended raising reimbursement rates for higher-quality programs, simplifying CCS applications, and providing more hands-on, experienced mentors to better support staff retention and development.

Recommendations

The recommendations reflect Workgroup deliberations, survey evidence, focus group insights, and national best practice. They are organized under three strategic goals:

Goal 1 – Child Care Program & Workforce Support: Strengthen the organization employing child care workers to be more effective, efficient, and a better place to work.

- ***Improve access to and affordability of health and wellness benefits.*** Increase knowledge of and access to affordable options for child care workers to access health insurance and wellness benefits through pooled purchasing and child care program guidance.
- ***Support Local Workforce Development Boards to direct Child Care Development Funds towards teacher retention incentives.*** Encourage local boards to allocate funds for workforce stability measures such as stipends, bonuses, or retention supports.
- ***Improve strategic use of TECPDS data to support child care programs in making data-based decisions.*** Strengthen TECPDS data collection and reporting so child care programs can make more informed staffing, employee development, and workforce planning decisions.
- ***Facilitate formal partnerships between child care centers and Local Education Agencies***. Continue supporting Pre-K partnerships with LEAs/ISDs/charter schools and work with Texas Education Agency (TEA) to bring more LEAs/ISDs into these partnerships.
- ***Develop a caregiver relief online hub to connect substitutes with child care programs.*** Create an online platform that connects substitute caregivers with child care programs to relieve staffing shortages.

Goal 2 – Professional Development: Provide information and resources to existing child care workers to improve service quality and encourage professional growth.

- ***Improve access to training opportunities for employees.*** Expand the availability and affordability of professional development opportunities across the state.
- ***Offer relevant and targeted support and training to address workforce needs.*** Connect child care programs to specialized training opportunities in high-need topics such as managing challenging behaviors and supporting children with varying needs.
- ***Create a standardized and customizable director competency framework, supported by accessible director training.*** Develop a flexible framework with training supports to guide professional growth and competency development for child care directors.

Goal 3 – Pipeline and Recruitment Support: Offer information and resources to remove barriers and increase entrants of prospective child care workers into the field.

- ***Develop an updated career map for early childhood education.*** Publish an updated, user-friendly career progression map to help early childhood educators navigate professional advancement.

- ***Expand apprenticeship programs and CDA training as part of an aligned, integrated, systems approach across high schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges.*** Grow apprenticeship and CDA opportunities through coordinated partnerships across educational and workforce institutions.
- ***Align career pathways with compensation data.*** Link education and career advancement pathways to reliable wage and compensation data to ensure transparency and informed decision-making.
- ***Conduct needs assessment to understand and address barriers facing new home-based child care programs.*** Study the unique challenges faced by home-based child care programs to inform targeted workforce recruitment and retention strategies.

Conclusion

Texas's child care workforce comes from a wide range of backgrounds, is experienced, and central to children's early learning. Yet compensation remains low, benefits sparse, and professional development uneven. Programs face a widening gap between what staff expect and what programs can deliver. Within current funding and authority, TWC can make immediate, meaningful improvements by broadening benefits access, simplifying professional development systems, investing in retention strategies, and clarifying career pathways.

Disclaimer

The information in this report was developed, analyzed and prepared by Social Finance, Inc. (SFI) for presentation to the Texas Workforce Commission. The recommendations and conclusions resulting from SFI's research and analysis are SFI's alone and represent the professional opinion of SFI and not that of the Texas Workforce Commission or any other third party.

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Terminology

- **Child Care Director Survey:** Survey of child care program directors conducted by Social Finance.

- **Child Care Development Funds (CCDF):** Federal funds allocated from the Texas Workforce Commission to local workforce development boards to be used to strengthen the early child care workforce through activities such as mentorship and professional development.

- **Children's Learning Institute (CLI):** Organization housed at The University of Texas Health Science Center – Houston who oversees several statewide programs supported by Texas Workforce Commission to provide learning solutions supported by documented research.

- **HB2:** Bill that passed in the 89th Texas legislative session that includes several early elementary components including new restrictions for tuition-based Pre-K in public schools.

- **Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB):** Organizations charged with overseeing and implementing regional child care workforce strategies.

- **Quad Agency Child Care Initiative:** HB 4903 that passed in the 89th Texas legislative session created a Quad Agency Commission to reconcile regulations between the four child care agencies in Texas.

- **Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS):** Statewide workforce and trainer registry to support the early childhood system, managed by CLI.

- **Texas Workforce Commission (TWC):** State agency that oversees the provision of workforce development services in Texas.

- **TWC Mentors:** Mentors working directly at LWDBs to provide technical assistance to child care and early learning programs, funded through TWC's Texas Rising Star Program.

- **Workgroup:** Members of the four statewide workgroups facilitated by Social Finance over the course of our work.

Project Approach

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) engaged Social Finance, Inc. (SFI), to conduct research to provide data and insights that inform a comprehensive, updated strategic plan for the child care workforce in Texas. Social Finance's approach to this project was grounded in a commitment to centering the voices of practitioners and experts in the child care industry. At the start of the project, Social Finance and Texas Workforce Commission agreed upon three **guiding principles**:

- **Focus on recommendations that are feasible for TWC to implement**
- **Prioritize data collection that minimizes burden for respondents**
- **Ensure that the perspectives of all communities and stakeholders are heard**

Our approach focused on developing recommendations that are both grounded in data and feasible within the scope of TWC's existing resources and mandate. This included identifying strategies that can be implemented through current funding streams and with existing partnerships, while still aiming to drive meaningful improvements in workforce recruitment, retention, and professional development.

Recommendations were informed by **three project activity streams**:

- **Director Survey:** A representative sample of ~3,000 licensed programs yielded 1,129 responses (953 complete). The survey provided statewide, representative data on demographics, compensation, benefits, staffing, operations, and workforce challenges.
- **Focus Groups:** Three virtual groups (15 child care program directors total) offered qualitative depth to the research questions. Separate sessions for rural, urban, and home-based child care programs ensured wide-ranging perspectives.
- **Expert Workgroup:** Four in-person meetings (September 2024 – August 2025) brought together child care program directors, teachers, employers, and other experts from across Texas. These sessions surfaced insights from practitioners and served as a forum for developing and refining recommendations and helped ensure that our findings would reflect the practical experiences and operational realities of child care and early learning programs. (see Appendix 3 for a Workgroup membership roster).

Each project workstream—Workgroup meetings, the survey, and focus groups—was designed to inform and reinforce the others. Insights from the Workgroup meetings shaped the survey and focus group protocols, while findings from the survey helped identify priority areas for deeper exploration in the focus groups. The Research & Analysis section describes insights from the survey and focus groups, and the outputs of the Workgroup's recommendations are highlighted in the Recommendation section.

Research & Analysis

Through this engagement, SFI set out to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of child care workers?
2. What are the major challenges that child care program directors are facing in maintaining a stable and high-quality workforce?
3. What compensation and benefits do child care workers receive?
4. What are the educational and professional development experiences and preferences for child care workers?
5. How can the Texas Workforce Commission, given its resources and mandate, best improve and support worker recruitment, training, and retention?

To answer these questions, SFI conducted the following research:

- **Literature Review:** We completed upfront and ongoing desk research to refine our understanding of key challenges facing the child care industry and to identify state- and national-level child care best practices and policy approaches to addressing workforce issues and improving quality in the child care industry.

- **Survey:** We administered a survey of child care program directors which provided input from a representative, statewide sample. Drawing from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Child Care Regulation database, we selected a random sample of approximately 3,000 licensed programs. We received 1,129 responses and 953 respondents completed the entire survey. The survey instrument was designed to capture detailed information on workforce demographics, compensation and benefits, staffing patterns, and access to professional development. It also included modules on director and teacher characteristics, program operations, and turnover dynamics. See Appendix 1 and 2 for the complete survey text and summary of responses.

- **Focus Groups:** To complement the survey and explore emerging themes in greater depth, we also conducted three virtual focus groups with a total of 15 child care program directors. Participants were selected from among survey respondents using a criterion-based sampling strategy to ensure representation across program types, geographic regions, and certification statuses. Each focus group had a different population focus: one included rural center-based directors, one included urban center-based directors, and one included rural and urban home-based program directors. These sessions provided a forum for participants to elaborate on survey responses and engage with peers on key topics covered in the survey.

The focus groups also surfaced insights into how state systems and policies are experienced on the ground, and where improvements could be made to better support the workforce.

Please see Appendix 4 for a detailed methodology description for each of the research methods.

In order to confidently draw conclusions from our survey results, we ensured that the respondents were broadly representative of all child care programs across the state, as shown in Table 1 below. The survey sample reflects the distribution of programs across urban and rural areas, center-based and home-based settings, and aligns with the average Texas Rising Star rating and program capacity. Program capacity dips slightly for survey completers, likely due to fewer larger centers willing to complete the teacher roster for all staff members. The one notable difference is that our surveyed sample includes a larger share of programs that accept CCS scholarships. However, this variable is changing over time. For example, 9% of the sample reported active CCS participation, despite conflicting data from the HHS child care database. While we aimed to make the survey accessible, including Spanish-language translation and an option to complete the survey over the phone, there could still be other differences between our surveyed sample and the population sample driven by language barriers or comfort in responding to a survey.

Table 1: Survey representativeness across key characteristics

	All survey respondents		Survey completers		Population sample	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Accepts CCS Scholarships	60%	1,129	60%	953	51%	12,503
Texas Rising Star rating (if certified)	2.03	714	2.02	601	1.99	6,789
Children capacity at program	89	1,129	85	953	89	12,502
In an urban locale (vs. rural)	90%	1,129	89%	953	91%	12,503
Is a licensed center (vs. home-based)	73%	1,129	72%	953	73%	12,503

Research Question 1: What are the demographic characteristics of child care workers?

Key Themes

1. The Texas child care workforce is predominantly female, racially and ethnically varied, and more likely to be bilingual than the national average.

2. Home-based child care programs have some demographic differences from licensed centers, for instance they have higher Black representation and are less likely to speak English as a first language.

Survey Findings

Survey data show that the Texas child care workforce is predominantly female, racially and ethnically varied, and more likely to be bilingual than the national child care workforce.

Race and Ethnicity

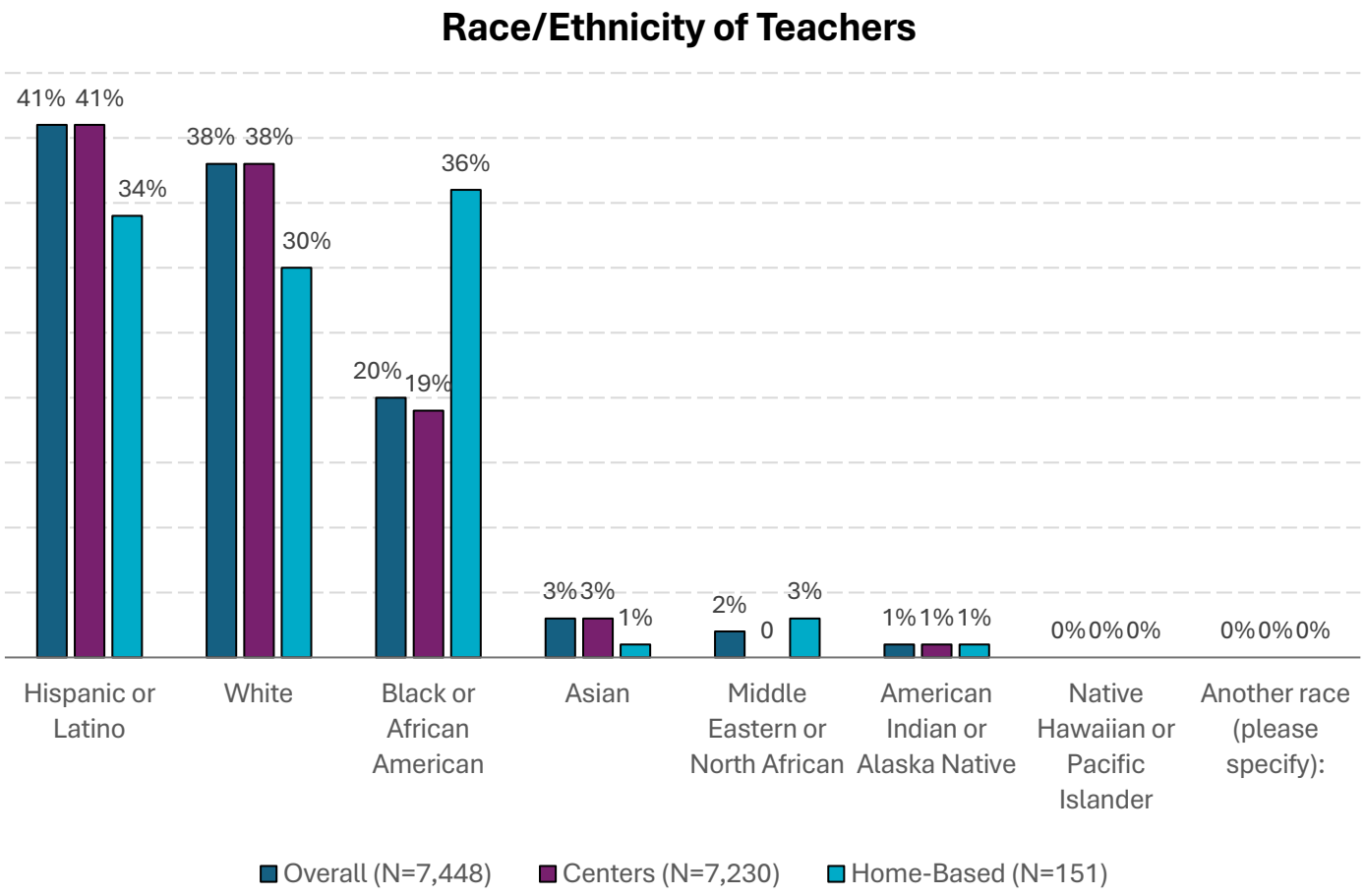
As illustrated in Figure 1, Texas child care workers reflect the state's broader racial and ethnic makeup. Hispanic or Latino individuals represent 41% of the child care workforce—closely mirroring the Hispanic/Latino share of the Texas population (~40% per U.S. Census Bureau estimates).[1] White (non-Hispanic) individuals account for 38% of the workforce, a proportion roughly consistent with their statewide representation (~39%).

Black or African American individuals are notably overrepresented in the child care field, comprising 20% of the overall workforce and as much as 36% among home-based child care programs, despite making up only about 12% of the state population. In contrast, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native individuals remain underrepresented compared to the general population, although that could be partly due to survey response bias for those groups and more limited measurement precision for smaller subgroups from the survey.

[1] U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates: Demographic and Housing Estimates – Texas*. Retrieved from https://data.census.gov

When compared to national data from the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE)[2], Texas's child care workforce appears more racially and ethnically varied overall. Nationally, White (non-Hispanic) child care workers make up 50–55% of the workforce, compared to just 38% in Texas. Texas also has significantly higher representation of Hispanic/Latino (41% vs. 20–25% nationally) and Black (20% vs. 15% nationally) workers.

Figure 1: Race/Ethnicity of Teachers in Texas, by Program Type



[2] McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., Powell, A., Jaggi, S., Kim, Y., Knight, J., Muñoz, S., & Schlieber, M. (2024). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2024*. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2024/.

Language

As summarized in Table 2, 95% of teachers report speaking English and 25% report speaking Spanish. Among home-based child care programs, Spanish language use is more prevalent at 29%, and English language use drops to 85%, compared to 95% in centers.

This trend likely reflects the bilingual nature of many home-based child care programs and the communities they serve. It also points to the critical role that Spanish-speaking educators play in ensuring access to care for dual-language learners and Spanish-speaking families across Texas. Nationally, only about 13–15% of child care workers speak Spanish, making Texas's workforce substantially more bilingual than the national average.

Table 2: Language Spoken by Teachers, by Program Type

	Overall	Centers	Home-Based
Teacher speaks English	95%	95%	85%
Teacher speaks Spanish	25%	25%	29%
N	7,991	7,761	157

Gender

As shown in Table 3, the child care workforce in Texas is overwhelmingly female, consistent with national patterns—97% overall and 97% in center-based settings, with a slight drop to 89% in home-based programs.

Table 3: Teacher Gender, by Program Type

	Overall	Centers	Home-Based
Teacher is Female	97%	97%	89%
N	7,805	7,581	155

Research Question 2: What are the major challenges that child care program directors are facing in maintaining a stable and high-quality workforce?

Key Themes

1. Inadequate compensation and expired relief funding
Directors across all settings cited low wages as the most significant barrier to recruiting and retaining staff. Temporary pay increases made possible by COVID-stimulus funding have ended, leaving programs unable to compete with higher-paying sectors such as retail, warehousing, and Independent School Districts (ISDs).

2. Inability to meet workforce needs with program resources
Many directors reported a growing gap between what job candidates expect—such as higher wages, more non-wage benefits, and manageable workloads—and what programs can offer. This disconnect contributes to staff burnout, turnover, and difficulty attracting qualified applicants.

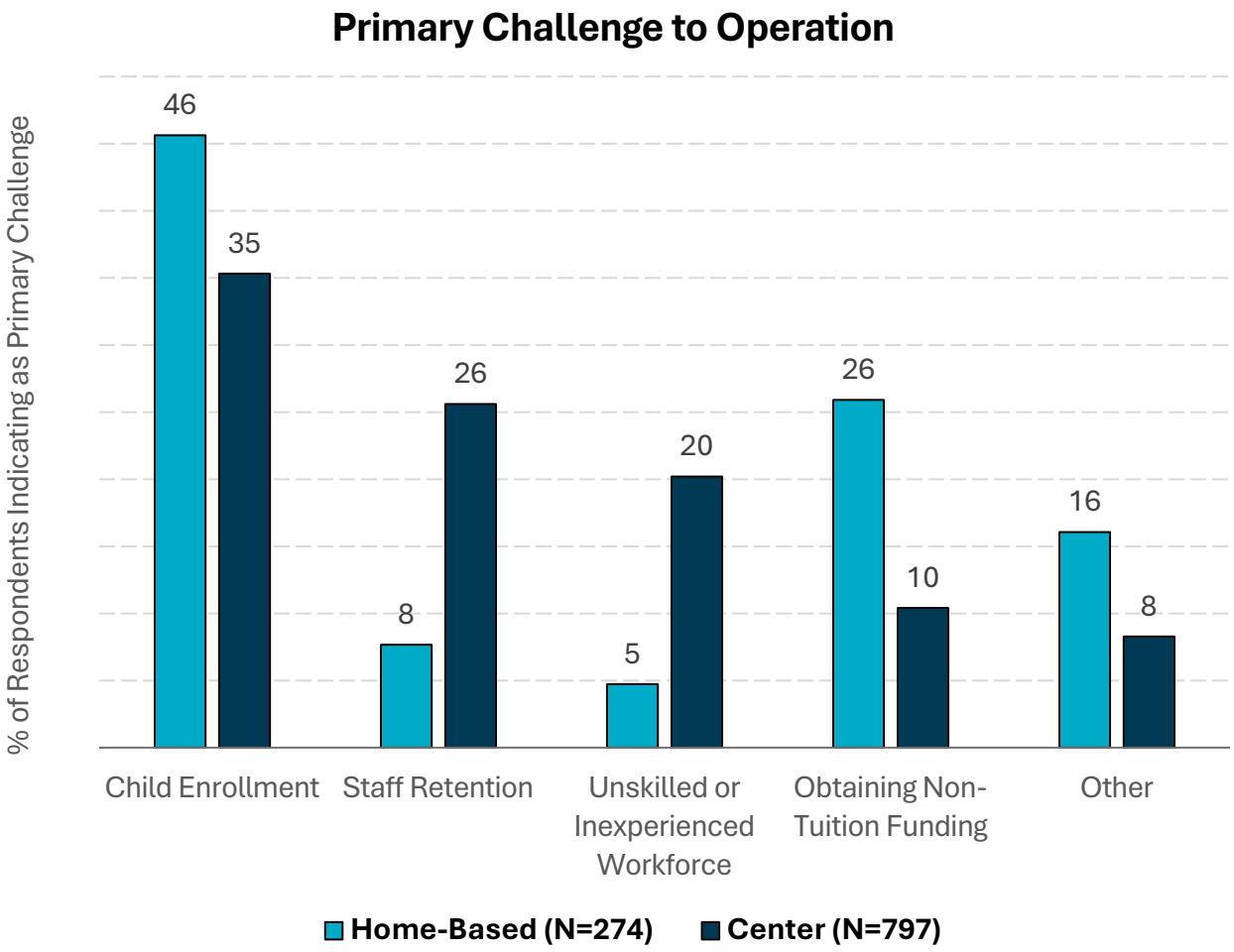
3. External conditions undermine workforce stability
Directors pointed to several external factors that strain their ability to maintain a stable workforce, including declining or unpredictable enrollment—particularly among home-based child care programs affected by the expansion of public Pre-K. Geographic and economic dynamics also play a role: rural programs lose staff to nearby cities, while staff in urban settings face long commutes and high cost-of-living challenges that limit staff availability. Across all settings, directors noted an increase in challenging child behaviors (such as hitting or biting), which contributes to staff burnout and turnover and exceeds what programs are trained to manage.

Survey Findings

Operational Challenges

When asked to identify the single greatest challenge facing their operation, 35% of home-based child care programs and 46% of centers cited enrollment as the top concern. In addition to enrollment, center-based child care programs frequently cited workforce instability as their primary challenge, including difficulties retaining staff (26%) and managing inexperienced employees (20%). Hiring and retention issues were less common among home-based child care programs, many of whom reported not actively hiring or not having staff beyond the primary caregiver. Instead, the most-often cited challenge of home-based programs after enrollment was obtaining non-tuition funding (26%), such as the unpredictability or insufficiency of financial supports beyond parent fees. See Figure 2 below.

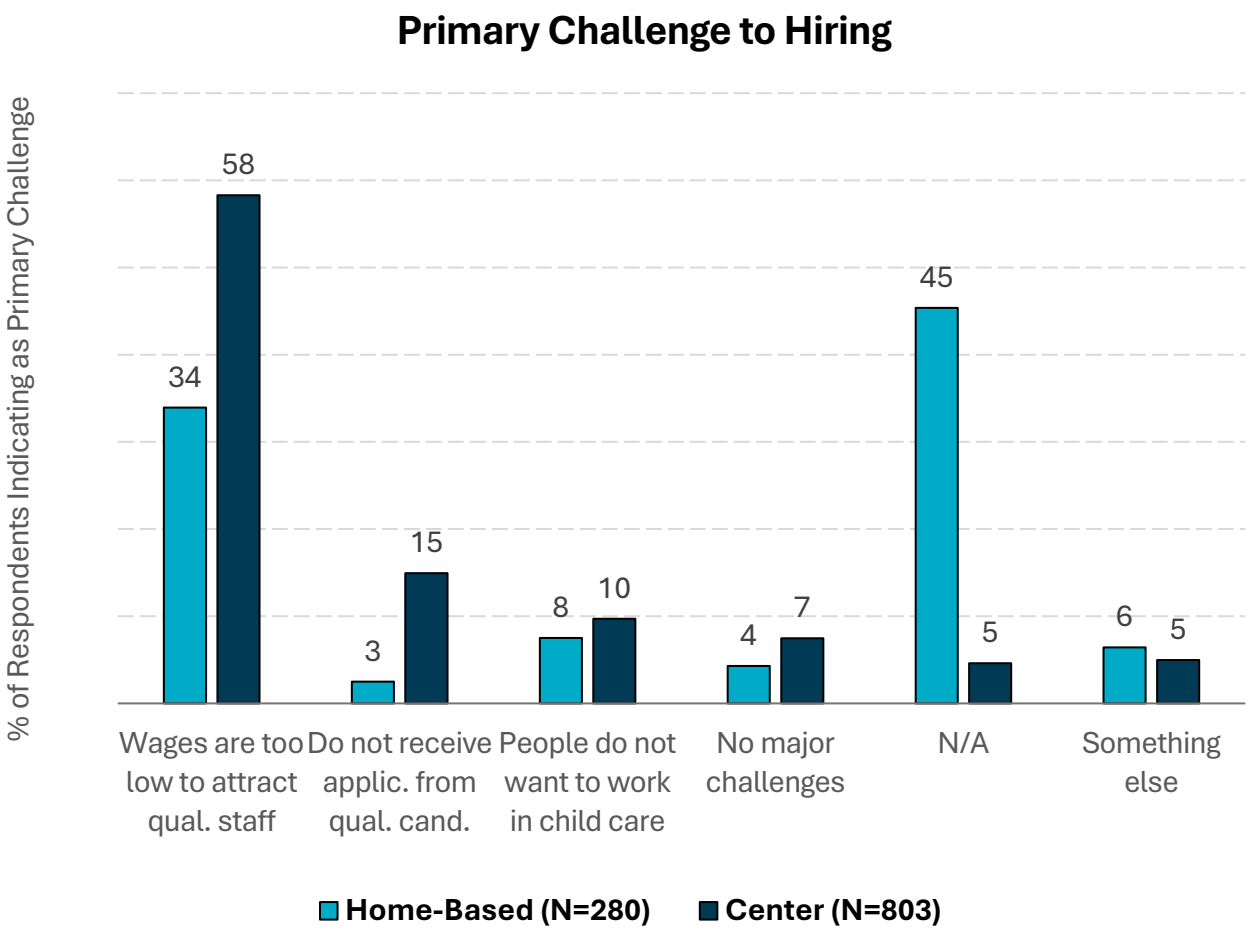
Figure 2: Primary Challenge to Operation, by Program Type.



Hiring Challenges

The survey found that across all program types, low wages was the most commonly reported challenge in recruiting and hiring staff—identified by 58% of centers and 34% of home-based child care programs. However, for home-based child care programs, as noted above, directors often work alone or with 1-2 staff, so the most frequent response (45%) to this question was simply "N/A". 15% of center directors identified their primary hiring challenge as not receiving applications from qualified candidates, with many expressing concern that interest in entering the child care field is declining. The next most-cited hiring challenge—10% of centers and 8% of home programs—was simply that people do not want to work in child care. See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Primary Challenge to Hiring, by Program Type.



Focus Group Findings

Child care programs across rural, urban, and home-based programs are grappling with a workforce crisis driven by low wages, lack of benefits, and rising staff turnover. Directors reported that while COVID-stimulus funding temporarily helped improve compensation and stabilize staffing, those gains are quickly eroding with the loss of federal support. Programs now struggle to remain competitive with other industries offering better pay and fewer demands, such as retail and warehousing. In rural areas, the geographic mobility of staff exacerbates these issues, while in urban settings, long commutes and burnout further strain staffing. Home-based child care programs reported distinct challenges, including regulatory burdens and a concentration of children with behavioral needs. Across all groups, directors stressed the widening gap between what programs can offer and what prospective or current employees expect—particularly wages,

workload, and work environment. These systemic issues, left unaddressed, continue to threaten the stability and quality of early childhood education statewide.

> *"It's really hard because everybody has jobs in warehouses…making $20 an hour and child care can't offer them that."*

Rural Licensed Centers

Program directors in rural communities emphasized the difficulty of offering competitive pay without raising tuition fees—an approach that risks pricing families out of care. Many rural child care programs cannot match the salaries and benefits offered by public preschool programs, Head Start, or even non-care-sector jobs like retail. The absence of benefits such as health insurance adds another barrier to recruitment and retention. Staff often leave for higher-paying opportunities in nearby cities, leaving rural programs with few options. Temporary pay raises made possible through COVID-stimulus funding helped during the crisis, but the expiration of that funding has left programs with unsustainable operating budgets and renewed staffing instability.

Urban Licensed Centers

Directors in urban settings cited the increasing behavioral needs of children—such as hitting and biting—as a growing challenge that contributes to teacher burnout and turnover. Staff absences are frequent, and some long-tenured educators have exited the field entirely, replaced by younger, inexperienced applicants seeking wages that child care programs cannot afford to pay. For example, some candidates requested $19 per hour with no experience—wages well above what many programs can sustain. Directors also highlighted commute-related issues, particularly in affluent areas where staff must travel long distances to work, compounding fatigue and contributing to absenteeism.

Home-Based Programs

Home-based child care programs faced a distinct set of challenges. Directors reported that staff hired online were often overwhelmed by the extensive training requirements needed to meet state licensing standards. Frequent changes to licensing policies created an additional layer of stress, as directors struggled to stay compliant while actively caring for children. Like their center-based counterparts, home-based child care programs faced high turnover and absenteeism. Competition with local warehouse jobs—offering $20 per hour—made it nearly impossible to attract or retain staff. Many home-based programs serve children with higher needs, often those expelled from

center-based care for behavioral reasons. However, staff in these settings typically lack access to adequate training and resources to support these children effectively. Additionally, the expansion of public pre-kindergarten programs for 3-year-olds has reduced enrollment in private home-based care, particularly for older children. This shift has resulted in an increased proportion of infants and toddlers—who require more staff attention and have stricter caregiver-to-child ratios—thereby reducing overall enrollment capacity and increasing per-child costs.

Research Question 3: What compensation and benefits do child care workers receive?

Key Themes

1. Wages and other compensation are insufficient and low compared to other sectors
Focus group and survey findings indicate that child care wages remain low across all program types. Directors reported difficulty competing with other sectors where entry-level positions offer higher pay with fewer responsibilities. They overwhelmingly identified increased pay, access to health insurance, and more paid time off as the top strategies to reduce turnover.

2. Benefits are limited across the field
Access to benefits such as paid leave, health insurance, and discounted child care is generally low and varies by setting and staff role. Availability is substantially lower in home-based programs compared to center-based settings, and in rural child care programs compared to urban child care programs. Most benefits are available only to a minority of staff surveyed, with full-time teachers having the comparatively highest access.

3. Compensation is limited but supplemented by small, creative incentives
While base pay remains low across the sector, directors are using creative strategies to boost staff satisfaction, including sign-on bonuses, attendance rewards, and small-scale appreciation efforts. However, these approaches remain relatively uncommon among child care programs—e.g., 22% of programs surveyed offer retention bonuses and only 7% offer sign-on bonuses. These incentives are often personalized and non-monetary—such as flexible schedules or workplace recognition—which help sustain morale in the absence of competitive wages.

Survey Findings

According to our survey results, median salary for a child care director is $45,000 a year. Median wage for teachers is $14/hour. There are modest increases in earnings correlated with higher education levels. Program characteristics also influence pay, with rural and home-based settings

typically offering lower compensation than urban and center-based programs. Directors see the largest salary increases when advancing from a CDA or associate degree to a bachelor's degree, while teachers experience similar but smaller wage gains.

Director Compensation

Figure 4 below summarizes results from our survey data on director compensation. Educational attainment is correlated with director compensation. Median salaries increase with each additional level of education, with the most notable jump occurring between directors who hold a CDA or associate degree and those with a bachelor's degree. This suggests that formal education continues to serve as a key lever for upward mobility in early childhood leadership roles.

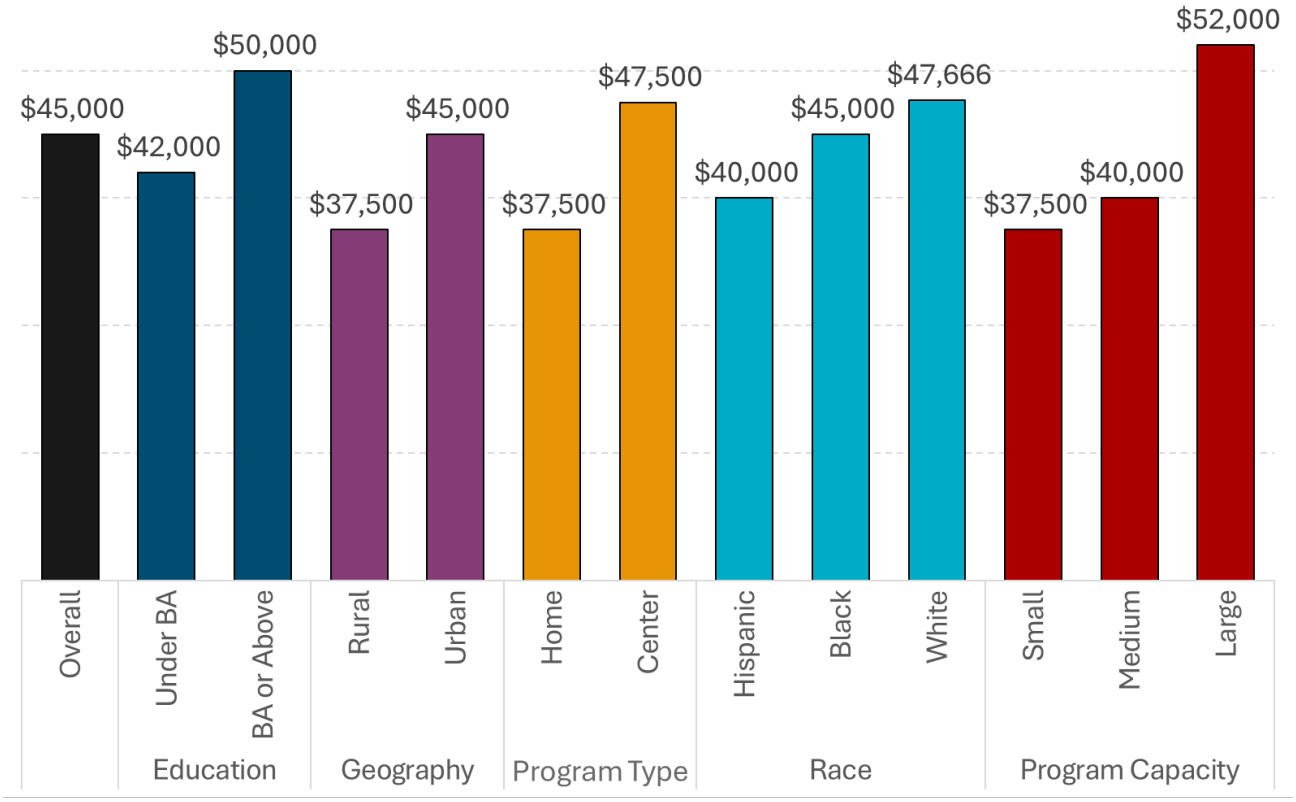
Participation in state-supported programs also appears to influence pay levels. Similarly, while median salary tends to increase with higher Texas Rising Star quality levels, an unexpected pattern emerges: directors at non-Texas Rising Star programs report higher median salaries than those at Entry Level and Three-Star programs. This may reflect differences in business models, funding sources, or administrative burdens associated with quality rating participation.

Geographic location is another determinant of compensation. Directors working in rural programs earn significantly less than their urban counterparts, indicating a persistent rural wage gap that could impact the ability to attract and retain leadership in rural areas. Home-based child care programs, who often serve as both caregivers and administrators, report the lowest median salaries of all director types.

The data also indicate a connection between compensation and program size. Directors of larger programs—those with higher enrollment capacity—tended to report higher salaries than those overseeing smaller programs, likely reflecting greater administrative responsibilities and revenue potential.

Finally, while the data point to racial and ethnic gaps in compensation, these appear to be driven by other factors associated with pay differences. For instance, Hispanic directors earn less on average than White and Black directors, but Hispanic directors are 13 percentage points less likely to have a bachelor's degree than other directors. They are also less likely to work in large child care centers, where directors tend to earn higher salaries.

Figure 4: Director Median Annual Salary, by Selected Characteristics



Note: Salaries <$1,000 and >=$500,000 were excluded. Capacity is determined by the number of children the program can serve. Under 26 is small, 26-100 is medium, over 100 is large. N = 844 (overall), 526 (under BA), 317 (BA or above), 102 (rural), 742 (urban), 196 (homes), 648 (centers), 259 (Hispanic), 195 (Black), 394 (White), 215 (small), 324 (medium), 305 (large).

Teacher Compensation

Figure 5 below summarizes key results from our survey data on teacher compensation. The results indicate that wages for child care teachers in Texas are generally modest, with most falling between $12 and $16 per hour. Median wages increase with educational attainment, showing similar gains between earning a CDA credential or associate degree and progressing to a bachelor's degree. Teachers with a bachelor's degree earn roughly $2 more per hour than those without.

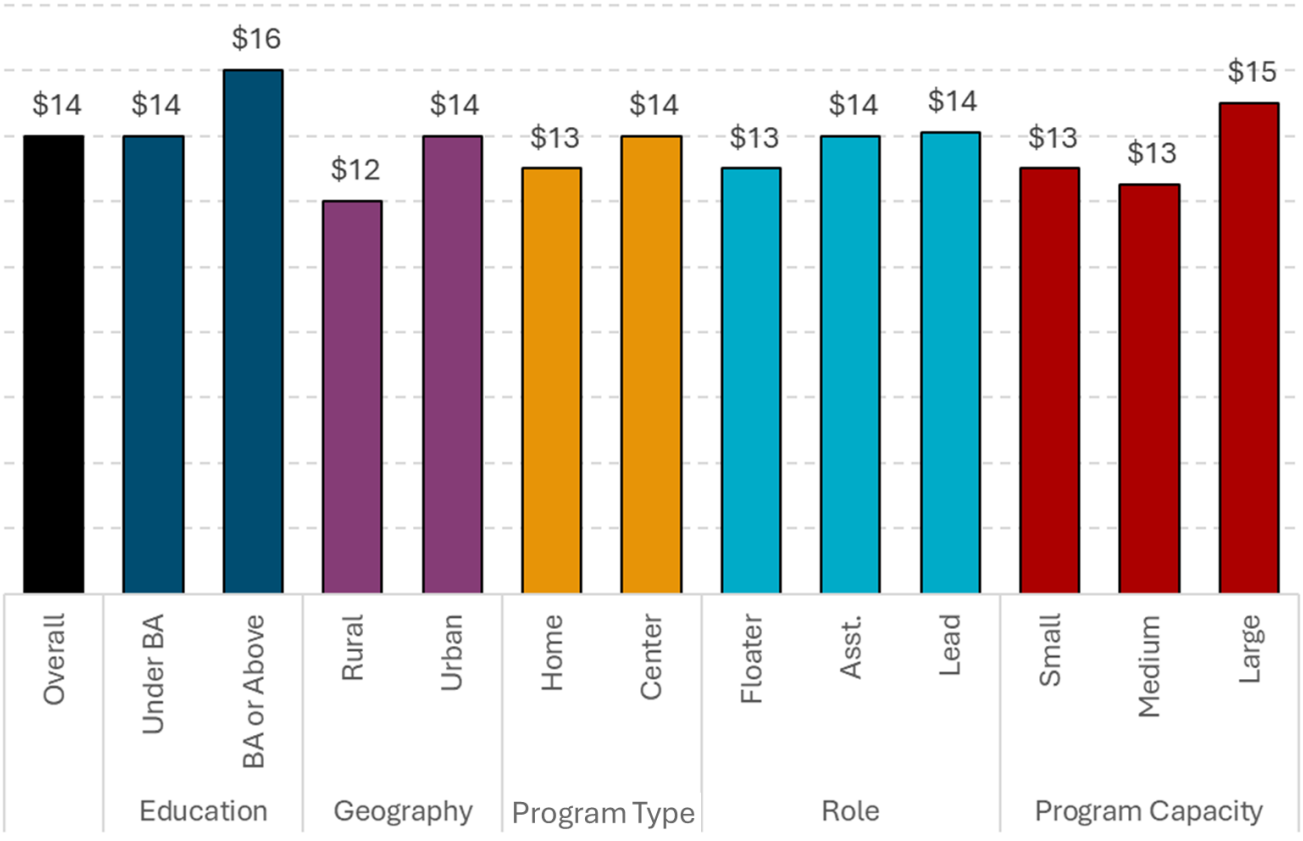
There are no significant differences in teacher wages by race. However, program characteristics do influence pay. Teachers in programs that do not accept Child Care Services (CCS) scholarships report higher median wages ($15.00) compared to those in CCS-participating programs ($13.50).

Median wages also tend to increase with higher Texas Rising Star quality levels, although non-Texas Rising Star programs report the highest wages overall.

Geographic and operational factors also play a role. Teachers in urban settings, center-based programs, and larger programs earn slightly more than those in rural, home-based, or smaller programs. In terms of job role, advancing from assistant teacher to lead teacher results in only a modest pay increase, suggesting limited wage differentiation between these positions, or other factors driving those differences (i.e., location, program size, and program type).

These patterns highlight a structured but low wage scale for Texas child care teachers, with modest rewards for higher education and certain program characteristics, but relatively small incentives for role advancement.

Figure 5: Teacher Compensation, by Selected Characteristics.



N = 6,600 (overall), 5,218 (under BA), 980 (BA or above), 762 (rural), 5,838 (urban), 136 (home), 6,420 (center), 947 (floater), 1,754 (assistant), 3,745 (lead), 234 (small), 2,242 (medium), 4,124 (large).

Wage comparison

To put the wage results of child care directors and teachers in context, we compared results from the Child Care Director Survey to findings from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Child care directors in Texas earn a median annual salary ($45,000) that is similar to the Texas state median across all occupations ($47,500)[3]. However, that small gap masks the substantial experience that child care directors have. From our survey, directors report a median of 19 years of experience, suggesting little wage growth opportunities for even highly tenured professionals in early childhood education. Nationally, child care directors earn a median annual salary of $56,270[4], about 25% higher than the median wage for the same position in Texas.

The differences in early childhood teacher pay are even more pronounced. Our survey data shows that teachers earn a median hourly wage of $14, roughly equivalent to an annual salary of $29,120 for a full-time position. That is about 39% lower than the state median annual salary. Nationally, preschool teachers earn a median annual salary of $37,120 according to the BLS, which is about 27% higher than what teachers are earning in Texas according to our survey data. These findings point to a broader issue of low compensation in the Texas early childhood workforce, even when compared to national statistics for the same occupational categories.

Benefits

Survey results indicate that access to staff benefits in the child care sector varies significantly by program type, geographic location, and staff role. In general, rural programs report slightly lower availability of benefits across all roles compared to their urban counterparts. The most pronounced differences emerge when comparing center-based programs to home-based child care programs, with the latter offering substantially fewer formal benefits.

The survey specifically asked about a range of employee benefits. Generally, the most commonly reported offerings included:

- Paid vacation/holidays (74% of center directors; 27% of home directors)
- Paid sick leave (46% of center directors; 12% of home directors)
- Health insurance (38% of center directors; 4% of home directors)
- Free or discounted child care (58% of center directors; 7% of home directors)

[3] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics: Texas – May 2024 (Accessed August 2025)
[4] Education and Child care Administrators, Preschool and Daycare (SOC 11-9031)

In addition, respondents were asked about other benefits such as dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, retirement accounts, health savings accounts, and free meals. These benefits were reported less frequently, particularly among home-based child care programs and rural programs.

Notably, there is a decline in reported benefit access from full-time teachers to program directors, and an even sharper drop for part-time teachers. The lower rates of benefits for directors are likely driven by owner-directors, particularly in home programs, not having staff or formal benefits for themselves. There was a notable but expected drop in responses to the question about benefits for part-time staff—possibly indicating that these roles are either rare in some settings or that no benefits are provided to part-time workers. See Tables 4 and 5 below.

When asked for suggestions on how to reduce staff turnover, directors identified three top priorities:

1. Increasing pay to ensure teachers and caregivers earn a living wage (89% of directors)
2. Offering more benefits, such as health insurance (52% of directors)
3. Offering more paid time off, i.e., paid vacation or sick days (38% of directors)

Table 4: % of Workers Receiving Benefits in Urban & Rural Child Care Programs

	Urban Programs			Rural Programs		
	Director	Full-time Teachers	Part-time Teachers	Director	Full-time Teachers	Part-time Teachers
Paid vacation/holidays	61%	74%	41%	63%	72%	36%
Paid sick leave	37%	41%	22%	36%	40%	20%
Health insurance	29%	34%	10%	32%	36%	14%
Disc./free child care	45%	65%	58%	40%	47%	50%
N	953	722	561	114	90	66

Table 5: % of Workers Receiving Benefits in All Centers & Home-Based Child Care Programs

	Center-Based Programs			Home-Based Programs		
	Director	Full-time Teachers	Part-time Teachers	Director	Full-time Teachers	Part-time Teachers
Paid vacation/holidays	74%	78%	43%	27%	46%	21%
Paid sick leave	46%	44%	24%	12%	15%	5%
Health insurance	38%	37%	12%	4%	14%	2%
Disc./free child care	58%	68%	62%	7%	25%	15%
N	780	706	568	287	106	59

Focus Group Findings

Compensation and benefits for child care workers in Texas remain limited, but directors across all settings are finding innovative ways to enhance employee satisfaction and retention. Many programs use small-scale bonuses—such as sign-on, performance-based, or attendance-related incentives—and cover occasional costs like professional development or staff gifts. A few programs, especially in urban areas, have successfully implemented broader benefit packages, including health insurance and free tuition for employees' children, by leveraging collaborations with other child care programs. Support for these types of monetary benefits varies between the state and local level or are just initiatives of the programs themselves. Non-monetary supports such as flexible scheduling, positive workplace culture, and personal gestures from directors also play a significant role in staff satisfaction. Despite limited resources, directors consistently emphasized the importance of showing appreciation and creating supportive work environments as a strategy to retain committed staff.

> *"[Teachers] get bonuses and incentives for being there every day for the month…and we started a teacher of the month program."*

Rural Licensed Centers

Directors of rural programs described offering a combination of modest financial incentives and personalized, non-monetary benefits. Some programs provide quarterly performance bonuses and sign-on bonuses to attract and retain staff. Directors frequently pay for small gifts out of pocket, such as purchasing pizza to celebrate staff birthdays, in an effort to recognize and appreciate their teams. Non-financial benefits, such as flexible scheduling and guaranteed time off during nights, weekends, and holidays, were highlighted as essential offerings. In one example, a program had successfully transitioned to a four-day workweek, using substitute staff to ensure coverage without increasing workload for regular employees. These creative strategies reflect the directors' commitment to retaining staff despite financial constraints.

Urban Licensed Centers

Urban center directors reported a wider range of benefits, with some programs able to offer more comprehensive compensation packages. One program provided health, vision, and dental insurance as well as free tuition for the children of staff members. This was made possible through a collaborative model in which several programs joined together to secure affordable healthcare coverage. Other strategies included referral bonuses and full financial support for employees pursuing Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials, particularly for staff who demonstrated motivation and commitment to the profession. Monthly or quarterly bonuses tied to attendance or performance were also common, helping to reinforce staff reliability and morale. While these benefits are not universal, they reflect a growing trend among urban programs to explore more sustainable and attractive compensation models.

Home-Based Programs

Directors of home-based programs also reported using a mix of financial and non-financial strategies to support staff. Some offered staff benefits such as a 50% discount on child care services, paid vacation, and paid time off. One director described a vacation policy in which families are not charged during a staff member's vacation, although they must continue paying during their own vacations to maintain their child's spot in care. Another program offered families one week of free tuition each year, effectively covering the cost of staff vacation time. These approaches reflect the operational flexibility and client relationships that are often unique to home-based programs, allowing directors to balance staff needs with family expectations.

Research Question 4: What are the educational and professional development experiences and preferences for child care workers?

Key Themes

1. Many child care programs have experience, but formal education and credentials remain limited
The average child care worker has seven years of experience, 29% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, and 19% are currently enrolled in a degree or credential program. The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential is the most common, but less than half of teachers hold it, with particularly low rates among home-based child care programs.

2. Use of professional development systems is inconsistent
Though Texas offers professional development platforms like TECPDS and CLI Engage, usage is uneven—only about half of respondents report widespread staff use. A significant share of child care programs are either unaware of staff participation (22% TECPDS; 15% CLI Engage), indicate no staff have accounts (16% TECPDS; 18% CLI Engage), or only a minority of staff have accounts (10% TECPDS; 11% CLI Engage), indicating a need for better onboarding and support.

3. Cost and accessibility are major barriers to professional development
Child care programs identified cost, training location, and inconvenient timing as primary barriers to accessing professional development. Center-based child care programs also cited a lack of substitute staff as a key challenge, while home-based child care programs emphasized needs in child development and behavioral support.

Survey Findings

Survey response data reveals that many child care workers have valuable experience, and opportunities remain for furthering formal education, credential attainment, and access to ongoing professional development. These formal learning opportunities are particularly pronounced among home-based child care programs, who often work alone with limited access to external resources.

Current Workforce Profile

According to survey respondents (Table 6 below), child care workers:

- Have an average of 7 years of experience overall, and 9 years for staff at home-based child care programs.
- Have an average tenure of 4 years in their current teaching role.

- Are enrolled in a degree or credentialing program in only 19% of cases.
- Hold a bachelor's degree or higher in just 29% of cases.

Table 6: Teacher experience and education

	Overall	Centers	Home-Based
Avg. years of early childhood education	7	7	9
Avg. years tenure as teacher	4	4	4
Teacher is enrolled in a degree or credential program	19%	19%	19%
Teacher has a bachelor's degree or higher	29%	29%	30%
N (range)	5,316-6,929	5,163-6,716	105-151

The most common formal credential—the Child Development Associate (CDA)—is held by 48% of teachers overall. This figure drops to 23% among home-based child care programs.

Other credentials, including state teaching certifications, Montessori credentials, and program-specific training like CIRCLE or First3Years endorsements, remain rare—each under 10% penetration. See Table 7 below for the full list of credentials.

Table 7: Teacher credentials

Credential	Overall	Notable Differences
Child Development Associate (CDA)	48%	Centers: 50% Home-Based: 23%
Child Care Director's Credential	11%	Centers: 10% Home-Based: 31%
Montessori Credential	8%	Centers: 9% Home-Based: 2%

Texas Teaching Certification	7%	
CIRCLE Foundation Training – Pre-K D EC Technical Certificate	7%	
Child and Youth Care (CYC) Certification	7%	
Child Care Professional (CCP)	6%	Centers: 5% Home-Based: 15%
State Teacher Certification	4%	
CIRCLE Foundation Training – I&T	4%	
Infant-Toddler Specialist (ITSN) Certification	4%	
Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) Certification	1%	
Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC)	0%	
Infant-Toddler Specialist (Texas ITSN) Certification	0%	
Family Life Educator Certification (CFLE)	0%	
First3Years Infant Mental Health Endorsement	0%	
N	1,322 (1,240 Centers; 52 Home-Based)	

Access to Systems and Tools

Texas has invested in professional development tracking and training platforms such as TECPDS and CLI Engage, but awareness and use are uneven:

- Just over half of respondents reported that a majority of their staff use TECPDS (52%) and CLI Engage (56%).
- About 1 in 10 report that only a minority of staff have TECPDS (10%) and CLI Engage (11%) accounts.
- A slightly higher percentage report that no staff have TECPDS (16%) and CLI Engage (18%) accounts.
- However, many also indicated that they were unsure of staff utilization (22% for TECPDS; 15% for CLI Engage).

This suggests a mismatch between what these tools offer (or what teachers perceive they offer) and what teachers are seeking, and highlights a need for clearer guidance, user onboarding and adoption support, and strategic communication around how these systems can support career advancement.

Professional Development Needs and Barriers

Child care programs identified several priority areas for additional training, with some variation between home-based and center-based settings (see Table 8):

- Top Areas of Need
    - Addressing challenging behaviors was the most cited need by center-based child care programs.
    - Child growth and development was the most common priority among home-based child care programs.
    - Supporting children with special needs and curriculum planning also ranked highly across child care program types.
- Top Barriers to Access
    - Cost remains the most significant barrier for all child care programs.
    - Additional constraints include:
        - Location of trainings
        - Inconvenient timing
        - Lack of substitute teachers, particularly for center-based staff

Table 8: Top Areas of Need for Professional Development Opportunities, by Child Care Program Type.

Topic	Home-Based	Centers
Addressing challenging behaviors	Top-3	**Top Answer**
Child growth and development	**Top Answer**	Top-3
Supporting children with special needs		Top-3
Learning environments, planning framework, curriculum, and standards	Top-3	
N	291	809

Table 9: Top Barriers for Accessing Professional Development Opportunities, by Child Care Program Type.

Topic	Home-Based	Centers
Cost	**Top Answer**	**Top Answer**
Location of trainings	Top-3	Top-3
Time of trainings is not convenient	Top-3	
Lack of access to substitute teachers/caregivers to attend training		Top-3
N	286	791

Research Question 5: How can the Texas Workforce Commission, given its resources and mandate, best improve and support worker recruitment, training, and retention?

Key Themes

1. Simplify access to TWC programs and reduce administrative burdens
Directors across settings value TWC's funding, training, and support resources/initiatives but find the agency difficult to navigate due to unclear requirements, frequent policy changes, and complex application processes. Simplifying reimbursement systems, streamlining Texas Rising Star documentation, and improving communication—especially for home-based and rural child care programs—would enhance program effectiveness and reduce strain on staff.

2. Expand and tailor training opportunities to meet a range of needs
Participants called for more flexible, affordable, and relevant professional development offerings, including online options and content that reflects challenges in supporting children with varying and complex needs such as autism, ADHD, and behavioral supports. Rural and Spanish-speaking child care programs emphasized the need for accessible CPR/first aid certification and more CDA training in Spanish, respectively.

3. Strengthen CCS and Texas Rising Star to better support program stability and workforce retention
While CCS and Texas Rising Star were widely viewed as essential, directors noted limitations tied to long waitlists, unreliable technology systems, and under-resourced mentoring supports. Suggested improvements include raising CCS payment rates for higher-quality programs, reducing sibling approval delays, and training Texas Rising Star mentors with hands-on experience in the child care setting.

Focus Group Findings

Directors across all settings recognized the Texas Workforce Commission as a critical partner in maintaining and strengthening the child care workforce. Funding for retention bonuses, professional development, and program materials was widely appreciated but often viewed as difficult to access or subject to unclear or changing requirements. Directors consistently called for more flexible, affordable, and relevant training opportunities, particularly those that reflect the realities of working in varied geographic and programmatic contexts. Many noted the value of initiatives like the Early Childhood Professional Development Scholarship program (currently distributed by TXAEYC through their T.E.A.C.H. program) and Texas Rising Star mentorship but

emphasized the need for greater consistency, tailored supports, and reduced administrative burden.

Child Care Services) was praised as an essential program that supports both family access and program enrollment, but directors across all groups expressed concern over systemic barriers—such as confusing application portals, internet-dependent attendance systems, and long approval delays—that negatively impact both families and child care programs.

> *"I wish they could get through their [CCS] waitlist quicker…there's so many waiting…the parents need to get their children in and can't afford private pay."*

Rural Licensed Centers

Participants from rural programs emphasized the importance of targeted funding for staff retention, including grants to support regular bonuses. While TWC's business coaching program was acknowledged as valuable, directors noted budgeting support could be more effective if tailored to the rural context and delivered by coaches with direct rural child care experience. The Texas Rising Star mentorship program was also noted as beneficial, and suggestions for improving the program included reducing mentor turnover and ensuring that mentoring materials are aligned with program needs.

Professional development was a major area of concern. Directors called for more remote training options to address the challenges of travel and staffing coverage, especially for CPR and first aid certification. They also recommended expanding training content beyond repetitive offerings to include topics such as autism and ADHD. The Early Childhood Professional Development Scholarship program (currently distributed by TXAEYC through their T.E.A.C.H. program) was widely praised, particularly its support for CDA attainment and renewal.

While TECPDS was recognized as a useful credential tracking tool, some directors noted usability issues—especially among older staff. Some directors highlighted the usefulness of Texas A&M AgriLife for professional development training.

CCS was viewed as a vital resource, though its impact was limited by accessibility issues, including an 18-month waitlist and unreliable internet access required for KinderConnect. Directors urged TWC to improve the application process and consider increasing CCS payment rates for higher-rated Texas Rising Star programs to further support staff compensation.

Urban Licensed Centers

Urban directors emphasized the importance of clearer guidance for grant and supply reimbursements, citing confusion around changing procedures and purchasing portals. They also identified an unmet need for more CDA training offerings in Spanish, reflecting the linguistic variation of the workforce in metropolitan areas like Houston.

Many urban directors felt that TECPDS was underutilized, especially among non-Texas Rising Star programs, and called for increased outreach to raise awareness of its benefits as a centralized record-keeping system.

Regarding CCS, urban child care programs strongly supported the program but recommended several policy changes to better serve families and stabilize enrollment. These included reducing approval delays for siblings, backdating payments to the child's start date with proof of attendance, and maintaining consistent funding streams.

Home-Based Programs

Directors of home-based programs focused on the unique administrative and operational challenges they face, particularly in complying with Texas Rising Star requirements. They requested a streamlined approach to Texas Rising Star paperwork and communication, highlighting that frequent policy updates often require multiple changes to parent handbooks within a single week. Some Texas Rising Star requirements—such as weekly family communications and milestone updates—were seen as overly burdensome given their limited staffing.

Mentor support was valued, especially when mentors provided timely updates on funding or training opportunities. However, directors recommended more rigorous training for mentors, including classroom experience and policy stability, to prevent burnout and confusion.

Home-based directors also flagged disorganized communications regarding resources and training, and echoed broader concerns about the accessibility and relevance of professional development opportunities.

In terms of CCS, they welcomed recent improvements such as earlier payments and simplified attendance reporting. They appreciated the high-quality materials sometimes received through their local LWDB, but suggested further revisions to attendance policies to remove duplicative reporting requirements—such as unnecessary notes for extended absences.

Recommendations

The recommendations in this section were developed over the course of Social Finance's yearlong engagement with TWC, and in particular were guided by four in-person Workgroup meetings in Austin, TX. In the first Workgroup meeting in November 2024, members brainstormed and aligned on the key challenges facing the child care industry. The subsequent three Workgroup meetings focused on developing and refining solutions to those challenges. These efforts were informed by research findings from the Child Care Director Survey, child care program focus groups, and secondary research on best practices and emerging trends.

As noted in the Research & Analysis section, and also raised prominently by Workgroup members, the key challenge facing the child care industry is low wages. This is widely recognized—nationally as well as in Texas—as driving high teacher turnover and burnout, dampening the talent pipeline and posing a significant barrier to recruitment, and impacting child care quality. However, the parameters of this report as directed by TWC were to develop feasible recommendations within TWC's existing funding levels and existing scope of TWC programs. Therefore, recommendations that required substantive additional funding or were deemed outside the scope of TWC's mandate were not included (see Appendix 5 for deprioritized recommendations).

In alignment with the project's guiding principle to prioritize data collection that minimizes burden for respondents, we provide suggestions for monitoring progress of selected strategies, specifically where the data collection effort is minimal relative to the value of the measurement.

Below are the final set of recommendations developed over the course of this project, organized by three strategic goals:

1. **Child Care Program and Workforce Support:** *Strengthen the child care and early learning programs to be more effective and efficient, and a better place to work.*
2. **Professional Development:** *Provide information and resources to existing child care workers to improve service quality and encourage professional growth.*
3. **Pipeline and Recruitment Support:** *Offer information and resources to remove barriers and increase entrants of prospective child care workers into the field.*

Goal #1: Child Care Program and Workforce Support. Strengthen child care and early learning programs to be more effective and efficient, and a better place to work.

Recommendation #1: Improve access to and affordability of health and wellness benefits

Rationale: Child Care Directory Survey respondents cited lack of healthcare coverage as a key driver of employee turnover. Respondents indicated only 37% of full-time child care center teachers and 14% of full-time home-based child care teachers receive health insurance benefits through their employer. While the survey results are concerning, the data is limited: Survey response data does not include details on the types and costs of health insurance provided to employees, or information about access to or cost of health insurance outside of employer-sponsored plans. However, when asked how to reduce child care worker turnover, survey respondents ranked offering more benefits, such as health insurance, as one of their top three suggestions. This recommendation aims to promote increased access to affordable options for health care coverage for child care workers.

Strategies: The Workgroup recommends that TWC work to expand the child care workforce's access to affordable health coverage through three key strategies:

- **Strategy 1.1: Increase affordable health coverage through Multiple Employer Welfare Arrangements (MEWA).** MEWAs can make it more affordable for directors to offer health insurance benefits to their teachers, in some cases reducing total premium costs by up to 50%, by allowing small employers to purchase insurance in a large-group market,[5] which is limited to employers with at least 50 employees. This reduction in premium costs to employers and employees could in turn could support employee retention. In addition to health insurance, MEWAs can make it more affordable for directors to offer other important benefits, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). Specific strategies that TWC can take to implement this recommendation include:
    - **Enhance TWC's business coaching to support MEWA expansion:** Work with Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) to train TWC's business coaching team on the process for setting up a MEWA in order to support child care programs who want to explore

[5] Wilson Insurance. (2023). How MEWAs Can Save Employers & Employees Big Money.

cooperative benefits purchasing.[6] Develop guidance and a communication plan to proactively push out this information to child care directors, including a standing website page with best practices and frequently asked questions for reference.
    - **Conduct outreach to child care programs.** Provide in-person or virtual group trainings and networking events where child care directors can connect with other child care programs to identify potential partners for a MEWA. Highlight successful MEWAs so that child care programs can learn from each other.
- **Strategy 1.2: Ensure child care programs are aware of other affordable benefits options available to them, such as plans on the Affordable Care Act Health Insurance Marketplace.** Child care programs may not be aware of the options available to their employees through the Health Insurance Marketplace or how to support their employees to enroll in one of these plans. TWC should ensure their business coaches are approaching conversations on benefits with child care programs by raising awareness of affordable options that are available to them (e.g., plans on the Health Insurance Marketplace or development of a MEWA) and then helping them to understand the best choice for their business and employees.

Measurement: TWC should track the proportion of full-time teachers and directors that receive health insurance from employers and from other sources in future Child Care Director Survey.

[6] TDI has relevant forms and consolidated information on forming MEWAs available on their website at https://tdi.texas.gov/forms/form3mewa.html.

Recommendation #2: Support Local Workforce Development Boards to direct Child Care Development Funds towards teacher retention incentives

Rationale: Child Care Director Survey respondents identified low compensation as a key challenge to hiring and retaining teachers. While low wages are still a fundamental challenge, bonus payments tied to retention are a valuable tool for rewarding employee tenure. Directors in focus groups noted how federal Covid-stimulus funding provided a much-appreciated ability to reward tenured staff and improve retention. Despite the end to Covid-stimulus funding, workgroup members are still aware of several LWDBs that spend a portion of their CCDF quality funds allocated by TWC on retention bonuses for child care workers, but there has been no coordinated effort to review different bonus strategies in use and identify which has the greatest impact on retention.

Strategies: TWC should work with LWDBs to identify effective practices for retention incentives and expand retention incentives for staff, including:

- **Strategy 2.1: Leverage TECPDS data to identify staff who are eligible for retention bonuses.** TECPDS' infrastructure can support retention bonus programs, including:
    - Employment documentation
    - Retention confirmation via Administrators on the Center/Staff profile
    - Employment validation through TECPDS and regional TECPDS validation specialists
- **Strategy 2.2: Collect and review data to support the development of best practices.** TWC should ask LWDBs that are already distributing retention incentives to track 1) tenure milestones awarded, 2) frequency of award payments, 3) amount of award payment, and 4) employment tenure following the payment of the award. TWC and LWDBs should then develop a set of best practices to disseminate to all LWDBs outlining successful retention incentive strategy components based on a review of this information and available research on the impact of child care workforce retention incentives. For example, an evidence review summary by the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center found that a $1,500 annual cash bonus program reduced staff turnover by 11% over 8 months.[7] Included in this communication to LWDBs, TWC should highlight their support for retention incentives as a high-impact use of CCDF.

Because this recommendation was highlighted by the Workgroup as having the potential for the highest impact on the child care workforce, Workgroup members recommended that TWC

[7] Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center. (2025). Prenatal-to-3 policy clearinghouse evidence review: Child Care Workforce Retention Incentives.

consider increasing funds available to LWDBs to reward employee retention. This could include distributing additional CCDF funds to LWDBs for this purpose, requesting state general funds in the next Texas Legislature Session, or exploring other federal funding sources. In order to develop sustainable teacher retention programs, other states have been successful in braiding state and federal funds, such as Virginia's program that blended state general funds and federal Preschool Development Grant funds.[8]

Measurement: For each LWDB, TWC should track 1) the annual amount of money spent on child care staff retention incentives and 2) the number of staff who receive child care staff retention incentives.

[8] Viginia Early Childhood Foundation. (2021). Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) 2021-2022 Teacher Recognition Program FAQ.

Recommendation #3: Improve strategic use of TECPDS data to support child care programs in making data-based decisions

Rationale: TECPDS is a critical tool for tracking and supporting educator development, yet its potential remains underutilized. This is due in part to a lack of awareness of TECPDS and its features – approximately 11% of question respondents reported not using TECPDS, with 64% of this group indicating they were unaware of the resource (see Table 10). Programs located in rural areas and home-based programs reported much lower usage and awareness rates than urban or center-based programs. Over a third (38%) of respondents who reported not using TECPDS are directors at home-based programs, with 24% of respondents working at rural programs despite making up only 27% and 11% of the survey sample, respectively. Workgroup and focus group members noted they found the system cumbersome to use and indicated it may be another factor contributing to decreased engagement. Incomplete data limits the system's effectiveness in informing workforce strategies from a state perspective and hampers the ability of child care program directors to effectively manage their employees' professional development and career progression.

Table 10: Director indications of why they report not using TECPDS[9]

Reason	%
Unaware of this resource	64%
Unclear on the benefits of having an account	20%
Don't know how to make an account	13%
Too time-consuming to create an account	4%
Other	7%

Strategies: The Workgroup recommends that TWC continue to work with LWDBs to first increase awareness and use of TECPDS and then identify and amplify opportunities for directors to use TECPDS data to drive strategic decision making for their organization.

[9] 122 survey participants indicated that they did not use TECPDS. 114 answered this follow up question.

- **Strategy 3.1: Confirm awareness of TECPDS information.** The Workgroup recommends that TWC fund TECPDS to develop and distribute a data-focused business glossary to define and explain all data assets that are available to child care directors on their staff. The business glossary should also describe use cases for the different kinds of analysis and measurement directors can perform with the available data. This will support directors in understanding the full set of available data and in utilizing existing TECPDS data assets for the purpose of managing staff. Accessing this data will enable directors to identify training competencies that staff may be lacking in order to offer a variety of supports such as developing customized training plans that align with the needs of both the program and its staff. CLI should continue to train LWDB TECPDS Specialists to educate child care directors on how to access and analyze the data.
- **Strategy 3.2: Identify and implement opportunities to incentivize data collection.** Workgroup members identified approaches to increase utilization of the Workforce Registry including TWC incentivizing the creation of a TECPDS account and TECPDS reducing the amount of information required for account creation to improve TECPDS uptake. In combination with this, child care program directors should continue to receive guidance on using updated TECPDS reporting tools to monitor staff development and data quality.
- **Strategy 3.3: Develop TECPDS report request system**. The Workgroup recommends that TWC work with TECPDS to develop a process or platform feature for LWDB TECPDS Specialists and directors to request one-off custom reports or custom report templates (that can be re-generated by directors as needed) on attributes such as employee demographics (tenure in role, child care age group, etc.), education level, and professional development achievement (certifications, credentials, etc.). This feature can support directors in tracking and planning their employees' specific training and professional development to support employee development.

Measurement: TWC should monitor TECPDS account creation and usage rates, especially among non-Texas Rising Star child care programs. Changes in data completeness, such as credential uploads and training logs, should be tracked over time. Further, TWC should collect data from LWDBs on TECPDS training participation to identify underserved groups that could be targeted in outreach campaigns. Finally, TWC should also use surveys to evaluate whether directors report increased ease of use and satisfaction with TECPDS tools following training and support.

Recommendation #4: Facilitate formal partnerships between child care centers and Local Education Agencies

Rationale: Pre-K partnerships offer potential benefits such as stabilizing enrollment and increasing access to professional development opportunities. Pre-K partnerships can also enable child care programs and partnering schools to pool resources and expand availability of training, coaching, and resources for teachers.

Child care program directors reported in the Child Care Director Survey that child enrollment was the single largest barrier to their operations. While pre-K partnerships can help maintain or increase licensed child care program enrollment, it has historically been challenging to engage Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to join formal pre-K partnerships. HB 2 (89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2025), which requires LEAs to provide child care programs with which they have established a pre-k partnership an amount of money "[no] less than 85 percent of what the school receives for the students," may present an additional barrier to engaging LEAs as LEAs may not consider 15 percent as a sufficient amount to cover the administrative costs associated with the partnership.

Currently, TWC has a Pre-K Partnerships team that provides comprehensive support to licensed child care programs and LEAs interested in exploring and forming pre-K partnerships. In order to increase pre-K partnerships statewide, we recommend TWC continue to work with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to engage LEAs and inform them of the opportunity to partner with interested licensed child care programs.

Strategies: We recommend that TWC continue to support TEA's implementation of HB2 to increase pre-K partnerships using the following strategy:

- **Strategy 4.1: Continue to collaborate with TEA on HB2 implementation and encourage engagement with more LEAs:** The TWC Pre-K Partnerships team should continue to liaise with TEA's child care team in developing guidance and implementation planning for HB2's provision to establish four intermediaries to develop more pre-K partnerships. We also recommend that TWC continue to strategize with TEA on how to encourage LEAs to enter into pre-K Partnerships with licensed child care programs.

By collaborating with TEA on HB2's provision to establish four intermediaries to expand pre-K partnerships, TWC will help TEA design and implement an approach that leverages existing processes and resources to engage child care programs and LEAs to establish pre-K partnerships.

Measurement: TWC should continue to track and report on the annual number of licensed child care programs that are a part of pre-k partnerships.

Recommendation #5: Develop a caregiver relief online hub to connect substitutes with child care programs

Rationale: Currently, substitute services are not centralized and child care programs often struggle to find substitutes when needed. This makes it difficult for child care programs to create opportunities for existing child care workers to take time off for professional development or for personal leave. In the Child Care Director Survey, center directors identified a lack of access to substitutes as one of their top three barriers to accessing professional development opportunities. At the same time, offering paid time off was a top three priority from respondents for reducing turnover. This tool would help address these concerns.

There is a potential pipeline of talent that could work in child care centers part-time as substitutes but has no way of finding employment opportunities other than to go to many individual child care programs, or work for a placement agency. Workgroup members noted these placement agencies lack adequate teachers to meet demand, and working for those agencies is not desirable to some individuals who would otherwise seek work as substitutes. Additionally, substitutes are required to meet the same Child Care Regulation (CCR) and training requirements as regular teachers, and must make relevant records available to the programs at which they work, which would be more efficient with a centralized system.

Strategies: TWC should create a hub for people interested in short-term or substitute opportunities with child care programs and to connect workers with child care programs directly.

- **Strategy 5.1: Explore a TECPDS Connect-based substitute hub.** TWC should investigate the feasibility of leveraging the forthcoming TECPDS Connect platform to create a tool that matches available substitutes with child care programs. Some core functionalities could include:
  - Allowing individuals to indicate where they are willing to work (e.g., specific counties or a radius from their home) and calendar availability.
  - Within the platform, teachers could be enabled to upload their background checks, credentials, and other vital records and make them available to child care programs with whom they work.
- **Strategy 5.2: Conduct outreach to promote new functionality.** TWC could market this functionality of TECPDS Connect to child care programs across the state, and work with LWDBs to advertise within local communities.

Measurement: TWC should track future Child Care Director Survey response data on challenges in finding substitute teachers to understand how prevalent they remain after intervention. Usage data and feedback on the hub itself should also be collected to understand and improve its utility over time.

Goal #2: Professional Development. Provide information and resources to existing child care workers to improve service quality and encourage professional growth

Recommendation #6: Improve access to training opportunities for employees

Rationale: Workgroup members and focus group participants consistently highlighted the lack of career progression opportunities for early childhood educators. Insufficient access to these key professional development opportunities results in a population of educators who feel underprepared to fulfill their responsibilities and address the challenges they face at work. High attrition rates lead to a greater number of newer, less experienced teachers, who require additional training, further exacerbating the issue.

Child Care Director Survey respondents identified cost as the top barrier to accessing professional development, and also noted that they often face logistical challenges such as inconvenient training times, distant locations, and the absence of substitute coverage, all of which hinder their ability to enable staff to participate in professional development (see Table 11). These barriers are particularly acute for home-based child care programs, who also report limited clarity on employer obligations for training support.

Table 11: Barriers identified by directors for their staff to access professional development opportunities[10]

Topic	Home-Based	Centers
Cost	70%	56%
Location of trainings	28%	34%
Time of trainings is not convenient	30%	23%
Lack of access to substitute teachers / caregivers	25%	33%

[10] Participants were given a choice of 12 barriers, in addition to a free response option, and were asked to select their top 3 barriers. Table 11 is based on the top 3 responses from each program type. The survey question and full table can be found in the appendix of this report.

Strategies: To increase the number of training opportunities employees pursue in order to promote professional growth, improve teacher retention, and increase quality of child care services, TWC should implement these strategies:

- **Strategy 6.1: Ensure training meets teacher needs and available funds are prioritized to address barriers.** TWC continue to explore opportunities to improve engagement with training by supporting LWDBs to follow best practices to ensure trainings are accessible and topics are of interest to teachers by:
    - TWC to request that LWDBs continue to collect data from child care programs (e.g., conduct an annual survey) before setting the training calendar for the year to identify 1) training topics of interest, and rough magnitude of demand for those topics and 2) day, time, and location preferences. LWDBs should be encouraged to offer different locations and schedules and track engagement through these different offerings to understand better what works for teachers.
    - LWDBs to dedicate additional CCDF funds to offer trainings at no cost and to subsidize costs related to transportation and substitute teachers to mitigate this access barrier for teachers, using data from the annual survey to inform funding decisions when necessary.
- **Strategy 6.2: Reaffirm child care program expectations for supporting staff professional development.** TWC should also clarify guidance to child care centers on their legal responsibilities including compensating teachers for time spent in training. TWC should encourage centers to prioritize professional development as a core component of quality care.
- **Strategy 6.3: Ensure participating trainers and teachers are registered in TECPDS.** LWDBs should ensure trainers are registered in Texas Trainer Registry, and training participants are registered in TECPDS so that training certifications can be issued and stored electronically.
- **Strategy 6.4: Continue to learn about best practices from other states.** TWC should continue to participate in multi-state communities of practice (CoP), including existing CoPs for quality improvement and the Infant Toddler Support Network (ITSN). TWC should engage in further opportunities if they arise in the future. These cross-state communities can enable TWC to leverage learnings from other states to identify new workforce strategies and professional development approaches that might work for Texas.

By reducing cost, time, and geographic barriers to training opportunities, employers and LWDBs can increase child care teachers' access to professional development activities, and support their continued advancement and persistence in their child care career.

Measurement: TWC should track future Child Care Director Survey response data related to opportunities and barriers for employees' professional development.

Recommendation #7: Offer relevant and targeted support and training to address workforce needs

Rationale: Workgroup meetings, focus group discussions, and the Child Care Director Survey all identified specific training topics that are of interest to educators:

- **Infant and toddler**: There is a growing shortage of qualified educators for infants and toddlers in Texas, a concern echoed by stakeholders across focus groups and workgroups. In the Child Care Director Survey, directors reported that just 5% of their teachers held an infant/toddler certification.[11] Further, focus group members noted that the expansion of public pre-kindergarten programs for 3-year-olds has meant that a disproportionate share of children receiving private care are infants and toddlers.
- **Challenging behaviors**: Workgroup and focus group participants indicated that educators are not equipped to effectively and appropriately manage challenging behaviors. This issue emerged as a top concern in both focus groups and responses from the Child Care Director Survey, with some directors citing it as a driving factor for why people are leaving the profession.
- **Role-specific and practice-based training:** Focus group participants and Workgroup members highlighted some factors that create quality training: role-specific training (i.e., directors benefit from leadership and business training, while teachers need practical support for managing daily classroom challenges) and practice-based training rather than theoretical sessions that lack regular, meaningful updates.
- **Other:** Common topics identified in the Child Care Director Survey included child development and curriculum design (see Table 12). Workgroup members also identified training to work with parents of children, especially those with special needs.

[11] Infant / toddler certifications noted include Infant-Toddler Specialist Certification (4%), Program for Infant / Toddler Care Certification (1%), and First3Years Infant Mental Health Endorsement (0%).

Table 12: Director-identified top areas of need for professional development for staff[12]

Topic	Home-Based	Centers
Addressing Challenging Behaviors	40%	77%
Child Growth and Development	65%	45%
Supporting Children with Special Needs	25%	40%
Learning environments, planning framework, curriculum, and standards	32%	30%

Strategies: TWC and CLI have recently made enhancements to their support for infant and toddler trainings. This work includes TWC establishing an Infant Toddler Specialist at each LWDB that can connect teachers to available trainings such as CLI's Elite Teacher Program and drop-in Professional Learning Communities. TWC should continue to support the uptake and scale of these training opportunities by:

- Encouraging 1) TWC Mentors to continue to work closely with the LWDB's Infant Toddler Specialist and 2) LWDBs to emphasize infant and toddler as a training area of focus.
- To do this, TWC should work with LWDBs to identify and share out ideas for how LWDBs could amplify the impact of their ITSN Specialist's expertise. For example, one LWDB is taking steps to replicate CLI's Elite Teacher Program for the child care programs in their region. In addition to encouraging LWDBs to emphasize training in this area, TWC should also work with CLI to support further expansion of CLI's Elite Teacher Program.

Beyond leveraging the work of Texas' ITSN supports and resources, TWC should also continue to work with LWDBs to align professional development opportunities with areas of interest from child care programs.

[12] Participants were given a choice of 15 areas of need, in addition to a free response option, and were asked to select their top 3 areas. Table 12 is based on the top 3 responses from each program type. The survey question and full table can be found in the appendix of this report.

- **Strategy 7.1: Assess existing offerings of trainings and coaching.** TWC should work with LWDBs to assess the availability and quality of current training and coaching resources and identify both accessibility and content gaps in these offerings. Offerings assessed should include those posted on the TECPDS training calendar and training platforms such as AgriLife. This could include a survey to understand if those child care programs that were aware of professional development offerings in this area were 1) able to access them and 2) satisfied with the quality of the content.
- **Strategy 7.2: Ensure existing trainings to address challenging behaviors are cataloged in Texas Trainer Registry, and TWC Texas Rising Star mentors disseminate this information.** TECPDS and the Texas Early Learning Council are co-creating a training catalog and webpage that will host high-quality training resources around addressing behavioral challenges. TWC should coordinate with TECPDS to ensure these resources are cataloged in the Texas Trainer Registry on TECPDS. TWC Texas Rising Star mentors should disseminate the catalog to child care programs and leverage the mentor session protocols developed by the CLI team to facilitate conversations with child care programs about the professional development opportunities focused on challenging behaviors identified in the training catalog as well as how to leverage the consultant directory to match staff with specialists that can help them.
- **Strategy 7.3: Conduct outreach via TECPDS to raise awareness of offerings and better understand demand and gaps.** TWC should support TECPDS to conduct a "road show" following the launch of TECPDS Connect—visiting each of the LWDBs to offer demonstrations of the platform for child care staff, and train the local LWDB's TECPDS Specialist. TWC and TECPDS should also support outreach to increase awareness among other educational specialists such as behavioral consultants to encourage them to utilize TECPDS resources to make their services available to users of the platform.

By equipping educators with effective strategies and support systems, these strategies will improve classroom environments, enhance job satisfaction, and are likely to reduce workforce attrition.

Measurement: TWC should track future Child Care Director Survey response data related to opportunities and barriers for employees' professional development.

Recommendation #8: Create a standardized and customizable director competency framework, supported by accessible director training

Rationale: Focus group participants and workgroup members have expressed frustration over the lack of a clear, standardized pathway to becoming a child care program director. Many educators are unsure of the qualifications, skills, and training needed to advance into director roles, which limits career progression. One focus group member remarked, "We need sustainable career paths. Pathways for the staff to grow without forcing them to leave child care because they want to make a livable wage."

At the same time, current directors often lack access to professional development opportunities that are specifically designed to build their leadership and management capacity—skills that are essential for fostering positive organizational culture, supporting staff, and improving retention. Research indicates that administrator leadership capability in early childhood education settings can have a significant impact on organizational culture, employee satisfaction, and quality of care.[13] Greater clarity on director competencies paired with increased access to and awareness of relevant training offerings is expected to result in more trained, prepared directors that better support their teachers; and will retain skilled educators in the industry by offering a viable leadership trajectory.

Strategies: To implement this recommendation, TWC should continue to support TECPDS to clarify the director pathway, while also working with LWDBs to ensure professional development offerings address local needs.

- **Strategy 8.1: Utilize the upcoming TECPDS director competency framework to clarify career development and progression pathways.** TECPDS is in the process of developing a director competency framework as well as a structured career development and progression roadmap for aspiring and current directors. This director roadmap will illustrate how teachers can become and progress as a director and enable TECPDS and TWC to work with training child care programs to ensure that available trainings align with this framework. TECPDS should ensure that directors' perspectives are incorporated into the framework and roadmap (e.g., competency-based progression and relevance for both home-based and center-based programs).
- **Strategy 8.2: Utilize the Quad Agency Child Care Commission to facilitate the delegation of the director certification to TECPDS.** To ensure quality training is available

[13] NAEYC. (2015). Expanding the Lens—Leadership as an Organizational Asset

and aligns with this competency framework for directors, TWC should facilitate the delegation of the director certification from Child Care Regulation (CCR) to TECPDS through their leadership of the Quad Agency Child Care Initiative. This would serve to increase alignment between how directors are certified and director competencies indicated by TECPDS.

- **Strategy 8.3: Increase awareness about the new director certification.** Following this change and TECPDS's completion of the director career pathway, TWC should work with TECPDS to make child care programs aware of these updates and support LWDBs to use the tools and trainings that are available to them.
- **Strategy 8.4: Tailor professional development trainings to local needs.** TWC should continue to collaborate with LWDBs to understand demand for additional director or leadership trainings as a path to help prevent teacher burnout and improve retention by building a supportive workplace. This includes determining local demand and funding needs, location and format (including potential need for virtual options), and outreach to encourage director enrollment. For example, Workgroup members identified both 1) leadership training for directors led by instructors with experience in organizational development and coaching as well as 2) training and support for directors to set up and conduct surveys as approaches that could enable leadership to be more responsive to their staff's needs.

Measurement: TWC should utilize future Child Care Director Surveys to assess satisfaction and perceived usefulness of the framework. TWC should also analyze TECPDS data to monitor how directors advance along the director career pathway after the implementation of this recommendation.

Goal #3: Pipeline and Recruitment Support. Offer information and resources to remove barriers and increase entrants of prospective child care workers into the field

Recommendation #9: Develop an updated career map to working in early childhood education

Rationale: Workgroup members noted that the current TECPDS Career Pathway is complicated and difficult to follow, especially for individuals that have never worked in child care. The limited understanding of career progression opportunities, including trainings and credentials, is believed to result in lower retention and lower uptake of professional development opportunities.

Strategies: The Workgroup recommends that TWC fund TECPDS to develop a map that illustrates viable paths to a career in early childhood education and career progression. This could include information for individuals ranging from high school students entering the workforce to adults considering a career change.

- **Strategy 9.1: Align to national standards.** TECPDS should align this map to the Unifying Framework for the Early Childhood Profession and Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators developed by Power to the Profession.
- **Strategy 9.2: Increase accessibility of the visual.** TWC should then work with TECPDS to update the TECPDS Career Pathway to streamline the visual, with the goal of making sure potential entrants to the child care workforce can "find themselves" in the diagram. In particular, the visual should demonstrate which roles tend to hold certain degrees/certifications and where incremental qualifications could translate to upward career progression.
- **Strategy 9.3: Solicit feedback and adapt.** TECPDS should convene focus groups (end-users) to collect feedback and identify opportunities for improving usability and relevancy of the Career Pathway. In collaboration with other agencies, TWC can leverage an improved career map to market the field to new entrants.

Measurement: We do not recommend any specific measurement for any of the strategies in this recommendation.

Recommendation #10: Expand apprenticeship programs and CDA training as part of an aligned, integrated, systems approach across high schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges

Rationale: Potential new entrants to the child care workforce space may not understand the credentials they need, what programs/supports are available to them to attain those credentials, and how attaining those credentials could translate to career progression.

Meanwhile, child care programs may lack awareness of the importance of training opportunities, as indicated by the Child Care Director Survey:

- 48% of teachers had attained their Child Development Associate credential. For comparison, in order to score a 3 on the Texas Rising Star staff qualifications measure, 75% of a child care program's teachers must meet the one of the qualification criteria (of which, the Child Development Associate credential is just one way to meet this).
- Of those programs that did not participate with staff in the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship, which provides funding for teachers to obtain their CDA or college degree, 69% of them said it was because they didn't know it was available.

Strategies: TWC should identify existing and work to support new (where needed) stackable, aligned programs that build skills and experience in child care that are accessible for both high school and community college students as well as individuals early in their child care career. This includes several elements that TWC should lead:

- **Strategy 10.1: Build out knowledge base of existing CDA programs.** TWC should continue to work to understand the availability and success of existing high school, community/4-year college CDA programs, including how many schools are offering these programs, how many students they are serving, and any challenges to persistence or completion.
- **Strategy 10.2: Build out knowledge base of promising pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.** TWC should continue to seek to understand the success of early career pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs in child care such as those below, including to what extent child care programs are aware of such opportunities and what barriers and opportunities exist to scaling/replicating them:
    - Camp Fire First Texas Early Education Apprenticeship Program – the first U.S. DOL-registered apprenticeship for early educators, piloted in Texas.
    - Arkansas's Early Childhood Pre-Apprenticeship Program – links high school students with CDA programs and on-site mentorship.

    - Rhode Island's T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood and apprenticeship program partnership, which blends coursework, on-the-job learning, and wage supplements.
- **Strategy 10.3: Identify landscape of stackable credentials.** TWC should also work to build upon the success of existing programs by identifying, in collaboration with TECPDS, complementary child care qualifications that can be "stacked" on top of the CDA certification as workers seek to continue to build their skill set and advance along the career pathway (as described in Recommendation #9).
- **Strategy 10.4: Develop strategy for scaling with local partners.** TWC should develop a strategy to expand these programs in collaboration with local partners where it identifies successful programs and sufficient demand.
- **Strategy 10.5: Leverage existing policies.** Where possible, TWC should leverage existing policies such as HB117 (Governance of Early Childhood) to track CDA program data and establish new programs in partnership with other state agencies.
- **Strategy 10.6: Create communication plan to increase awareness.** TWC should develop a communications plan to ensure individuals and child care programs are aware of these programs, including information similar to that shared in the CTE CDA Guidance Document. As part of these communications, TWC should also document and share information on scholarship opportunities for relevant degree programs and encourage LWDBs to do the same for opportunities in their respective geographies.

Measurement: TWC should track the availability and completion of high school, community college, and 4-year college CDA programs, as well as any CDA or ECE-focused apprenticeship programs.

Recommendation #11: Align career pathways with compensation data

Rationale: Workgroup members highlighted a lack of transparency around wages and that currently available data is not sufficiently contextualized to local markets, where wage differences can be significant. Individuals looking to enter or advance in the child care workforce lack visibility into how obtaining further professional development should increase their compensation, and are therefore not fully incentivized to do so.

For example, our survey data show the median hourly wage for teachers without a degree is $14, increasing to $15 for teachers with a CDA or associate degree and $16 for those with a bachelor's degree. However, this is based on statewide data and may not accurately reflect the wage premium one could expect in their particular talent market. This is demonstrated somewhat in our analysis that shows the median hourly wage for teachers in rural areas is $12 compared to $14 for those in urban areas.

Strategies: Leveraging existing and future research efforts, TWC should conduct a compensation review for the child care industry and establish typical salary and compensation ranges for the child care workforce.

- **Strategy 11.1: Produce descriptive wage data linking education, advancement, and local market conditions.** As part of the review process, detail career pathways and how educational attainment, professional development, role advancement, and experience, are tied to expected wage increases. Given the variability of wages between local markets, these data should be disaggregated by relevant regions but allow for easy comparison with each other as well as benchmark ranges for the state published by NAEYC. Rather than normative guidelines, these would be descriptive ranges of known compensation across these various factors. As in Recommendation #9, Workgroup members recommended aligning these data with the Power to the Profession framework and standards.[14]
- **Strategy 11.2: Conduct additional, targeted data collection.** In addition to using data collected in the Child Care Director Survey and future iterations thereof, TWC should partner with TECPDS to conduct more frequent, targeted (i.e., shorter and fit for this purpose) representative wage surveys while exploring data collection functionality already being planned, designed, and/or implemented by TECPDS, e.g., for their career trajectory study.

[14] NAEYC. (2019). Power to the Profession.

- **Strategy 11.3: Develop tool to make data accessible and actionable.** Beyond publication in TECPDS' annual report, TWC and TECPDS could create a user-friendly, easily accessible online tool. An exemplar use case of such a tool could be a potential or recent entrant to the child care workforce accessing this tool to better understand how they can expect gaining more experience, obtaining a CDA, and/or finishing an associate degree to affect their compensation.

Measurement: In addition to the analyses recommended, TWC would have the opportunity to track these data longitudinally. Understanding how wages are (or are not) changing over time in specific markets could indicate localized issues and enable TWC to direct attention or resources in a more targeted fashion.

Recommendation #12: Conduct needs assessment to understand and address barriers facing new home-based child care programs

Rationale: A full understanding of the barriers facing new home-based child care programs in Texas is currently lacking. This gap makes it difficult to design effective interventions that would help increase the supply of these critical services. Focus group members shared that the administrative burdens child care programs face are significant barrier for home-based child care programs, as they often have no support staff. These child care programs also reported that many of the resources and trainings available to child care workers are often more relevant to center-based child care programs. More research needs to be done to expand upon these learnings and to develop a more complete picture of the challenges faced by home-based child care programs.

Strategies: TWC should conduct a needs assessment to assess barriers and identify ways it could support new child care programs in the home-based child care market. TWC can implement this in several ways:

- **Strategy 12.1: Leverage the Quad Agency Child Care Initiative (HB 4903).** Use the new policy to initiate an assessment of the barriers to entry for home-based child care programs and identify solutions for addressing these barriers.
    - This would involve establishing a workplan for conducting the assessment, identifying participants for the assessment, developing a strategy for co-creating solutions with assessment participants, and developing a transparent way of tracking progress towards implementing solutions.
    - As part of the communications related to this assessment, members of the Quad Agency Child Care Initiative should designate a TWC staff member to disseminate communications about recent changes to regulations making it easier to become a home-based child care program (SB599).
- **Strategy 12.2: Incorporate broad stakeholder perspectives.** TWC should look to include a range of relevant stakeholders with varying experiences in entering home-based child care, such as:
    - People that have come to HHS orientation but did not open up a center
    - Home-based child care programs that have closed in the last 3 years
    - Referrals from current child care programs who have expressed interest
- **Strategy 12.3: Partner with HHSC to address barriers.** Following this assessment, TWC should work with HHSC CCR to generate solutions to addressing remaining barriers to becoming a home-based child care program such as:

- Pre-application training. HHS has identified this need and is starting a process to procure a contractor to create free, online pre-application training. However, this resource will likely not be published for another 1-2 years. TWC may be able to join this work as a partner and guide its development.
- Development and circulation of a “How-To Guide” on becoming a home-based child care program.

Measurement: To assess the effectiveness of these solutions, TWC should track annually:

- Total number of home-based child care programs
- Number of new applications for home-based child care programs, and rate of approval for new applications
- Persistence in market (i.e., total years as active licensed or registered home-based child care program)

Appendix 1: 2025 Texas Child Care Director Survey

Welcome to the 2025 Child Care Director Survey!

You are invited to contribute to the Texas Child Care Workforce Strategic Plan! This survey is being conducted on behalf of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) by Social Finance, a national nonprofit organization that helps government partners use data to serve communities.

This survey is intended for the director of the child care facility [FACILITY NAME] at [ADDRESS].

Throughout this survey, we use the term "director" to include the center director or program director of a center-based child care facility and the director, owner, or operator of a home-based child care facility.

Your facility was selected from the Texas Child Care Licensing data to participate in this survey. This survey link is unique to [FACILITY NAME]. If you are not the director of this facility, please do one of the following:

1. If you know the current director, forward the email to the current director that contains the survey link.

2. If you do not know the current director or cannot reach them, please email texaschildcaresurvey@socialfinance.org to let us know you received this survey in error.

You will receive a $50 gift card after completing the entire survey.

Survey instructions

As required by the Texas Legislature, we ask for the following information about **each staff member at your facility** who works directly with children (throughout this survey, we will refer to any staff members who work directly with children as teachers/caregivers). To help minimize the time needed to complete the survey, we recommend you gather this information before starting:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Pay rate
- Typical number of hours worked per week
- Educational attainment
- Attainment of professional certifications related to child care / early childhood education
- Professional experience and tenure at facility

- Age groups under their care
- Languages spoken

How to take the survey

Please take your time completing the survey and review your records as needed to provide accurate information. You may leave and return to the survey as many times as needed using the unique link provided. Your answers will not be deleted if you leave and return to the survey.

If you prefer to complete the survey by phone or in a language other than English or Spanish, please email texaschildcaresurvey@socialfinance.org to set up an alternate administration process.

Survey contents

This survey has three sections:

- Section 1 asks general questions about your child care facility and staff
- Section 2 asks specific questions about you, the director
- Section 3 asks specific questions about individual teachers/caregivers in your facility. If you are a home-based child care facility with no other staff members, you will skip section 3

Next, you will be presented with an informed consent form which provides more details about the survey and how information can be used. You may indicate your consent and proceed with the survey or decide not to participate and exit instead.

Section 1: Child Care Facility Information

This section asks general questions about the **child care facility** that you oversee. Please answer these questions based on what is true as of **today**.

Throughout this survey, we use the term "director" to include the center director or program director of a center-based child care facility **and** the director, owner, or operator of a home-based child care facility.

Section 1.1 – General Facility Information

Question 1.1A. Based on Texas child care licensing data, our records indicate that you are the director at [Facility Name]. Is this correct?

- Yes, I am the director at this facility *(skip to question 1.1E)*
- No, I am not the director at this facility OR I am not the director anymore *(skip to question 1.1B)*
- This facility is permanently closed. This will exit the survey.

Question 1.1B. What is the name of the current director? If you do not know or prefer not to disclose, please type "Unsure."

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Question 1.1C. What is the email address for the current director? If you do not know or prefer not to disclose, please type "Unsure." _____

Question 1.1D. What is the phone number for the current director? If you do not know or prefer not to disclose, please type "Unsure." _____. The survey will now exit.

Question 1.1E. What is your name?

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Question 1.2. Is your facility nationally accredited? Please select all that apply.

- No
- NAEYC - National Association for the Education of Young Children
- NAFCC - National Association for Family Child Care
- NECPA - National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
- NAC - National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs
- COA - Council on Accreditation
- Cognia Accreditation
- Montessori Accreditation (AMS or AMI)
- ACSI - Association of Christian Schools International Accreditation
- MSA - Middle States Association
- Something else: _____

Question 1.3A. The list below contains special types of child care facilities. Please select whether your facility is any of the following. Please select all that apply.

- My program is a Head Start or Early Head Start program
- My program is a Public Pre-K program

- My program only provides drop-in care (i.e., on an as-needed basis without fixed schedules)
- My program only provides summer or school vacation care (e.g., summer camp, spring break camps, etc.)
- None of these are true for my program

Question 1.3B. Which of the following describes the times that your facility offers child care? Please select all that apply.

- We offer full-day care on weekdays
- We offer part-day care on weekdays
- We offer before and/or after school care on weekdays
- We offer care on weekends
- We offer care overnight
- We offer care in the evening (after 7PM)

Question 1.3C. Which of the following describes the number of weekdays that children can enroll in care at your facility? Please select all that apply.

- Children enroll in 5 day per week care
- Children enroll in 4 day per week care
- Children enroll in 3 day per week care
- Children enroll in 2 day per week care
- Something else, please describe: _____

Facilities participating in Child Care Services scholarships: skip to question 1.4

Question 1.3D. Why does your facility not participate in Child Care Services (CCS) scholarships? Please select all reasons that apply.

- We are not eligible to participate in CCS scholarships due to our current licensing status
- We choose not to participate because CCS payment rates do not cover the full cost of care
- We do not want to achieve Texas Rising Star certification
- We have another reason. Specify:_____
- Incorrect database information – we do accept CCS

Question 1.3E. If you selected "We do not want to achieve Texas Rising Star certification", please indicate why. Mark all that apply.

- I am unfamiliar with Texas Rising Star and its requirements

- It is too costly to participate in Texas Rising Star
- It takes too much time to participate in Texas Rising Star
- Other reason for not participating in Texas Rising Star:_____

Question 1.4. How many teachers/caregivers work at your facility as of today, **NOT** including yourself?

Please include both full- and part-time staff. Also, include **only** teachers/caregivers who work directly with children, such as lead teachers/caregivers, assistant teachers/caregivers, and aides/floater teachers/caregivers. Do not include bus drivers, cooks, or other staff who do not routinely work directly with children in the classroom. _____

Question 1.5. We are interested in the types of staff at [FACILITY NAME] who work directly with children in the classroom, besides yourself. Please tell us the number, if any, of staff at your facility in each of the following roles, including both full-time and part-time staff.

___ **Lead teacher/caregiver** – Staff responsible for a designated classroom or group of children. Staff may or may not supervise other staff members.

___ **Assistant teacher/caregiver** – Staff who support the lead teacher/caregiver for a designated classroom or group of children.

___ **Floater/rotating assistant** – Staff not responsible for one designated classroom or group of children, but provides support to lead or assistant teacher/caregiver. Staff may offer support in a variety of capacities as needed.

Section 1.2 – Benefits and Pay

In this section, we ask about the benefits (e.g., health insurance and paid sick leave) and non-wage compensation (e.g., signing bonuses) available to you and staff who work directly with children at your facility.

Question 1.6. Which of the following benefits do **you** have access to as a result of your job as a child care director? Please select all that apply.

- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance

- Flexible Spending Account (FSA)
- Health Savings Account (HSA)
- Paid sick leave
- Paid parental leave
- Paid vacation/holidays
- Retirement account (401k, etc.)
- Discounted or free child care slots
- Complimentary meals
- Other, please specify:_____
- I do not have access to any of these benefits

Question 1.7. Which of the following benefits do **teachers/caregivers** have access to? Please select all that apply.

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Health insurance	❖	❖
Life insurance	❖	❖
Dental insurance	❖	❖
Vision insurance	❖	❖
Flexible Spending Account (FSA)	❖	❖
Health Savings Account (HSA)	❖	❖
Paid sick leave	❖	❖
Paid parental leave	❖	❖
Paid vacation/holidays	❖	❖
Retirement account (401k, etc.)	❖	❖
Discounted or free child care slots	❖	❖

Complimentary meals	❖	❖
Other, please specify:_____	❖	❖
Teachers do not have access to any of these benefits	❖	❖

Question 1.8A. Does your facility currently offer a one-time signing bonus to newly-hired teachers/caregivers?

- Yes
- No *(Skip to Question 1.9A.)*
- No, but we have offered one-time signing bonuses within the past year *(Skip to Question 1.8C.)*
- Not applicable – we are not currently hiring *(Skip to Question 1.10C.)*

Question 1.8B. What is the typical amount of the one-time signing bonus offered to newly hired teachers/caregivers? Submit only numbers and **do not include** a dollar sign. $_____ *(Skip to Question 1.9A.)*

Question 1.8C. What was the typical amount of the one-time signing bonus you offered to newly hired teachers/caregivers within the past year? Submit only numbers and **do not include** a dollar sign. $_____

Question 1.9A. Does your facility currently offer a longevity or retention bonus to teachers/caregivers?

- Yes
- No *(Skip to Question 1.10A.)*
- No, but we have offered longevity or retention bonuses within the past year (*Skip to Question 1.9D.)*
- Not applicable – I have no other staff *(Skip to Question 1.10C.)*

Question 1.9B. How much is the longevity or retention bonus for teachers/caregivers? Submit only numbers and **do not include** a dollar sign. $_____

Question 1.9C. How long do teachers/caregivers have to work to receive this longevity or retention bonus? _____months *(Skip to Question 1.10A.)*

Question 1.9D. How much was the longevity or retention bonus for teachers/caregivers offered within the past year? $_____

Question 1.9E. How long did teachers/caregivers have to work to receive this longevity or retention bonus? _____months

Question 1.10A. Does your facility regularly offer salary raises to teachers/caregivers?

- Yes
- No *(Skip to Question 1.10C.)*
- Not applicable – I have no other staff *(Skip to Question 1.10C.)*

Question 1.10B. How do teachers/caregivers earn raises? Select all that apply.

- Raises are given automatically every year
- Meeting performance goals
- Earning new credentials (e.g., CDA, Associate's, Bachelor's)
- Other: _____

Question 1.10C . Does your facility receive funding support beyond tuition revenue and government funding? Select all that apply.

- Yes, we receive philanthropic funding
- Yes, we receive funding from private businesses
- No, we do not receive funding from other sources
- Yes, other: _____
- Prefer not to answer

Section 1.3 – Professional Development

What type of facility is [Facility Name]?

- Center
- Child Care Home

Section 1.3A – Professional Development Section A (Centers)

We would like to learn about the opportunities for professional development that are available in your area, learn which resources you prefer to use, and what additional resources could benefit you and teachers/caregivers at your facility.

Question 1.11. To the best of your knowledge, about how many teachers/caregivers (not including yourself) at your facility have Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) Workforce Registry accounts?

- The majority of staff members have accounts
- Less than a majority of staff members have accounts
- Staff members do not have accounts
- Unsure of staff utilization

Question 1.12. To the best of your knowledge, about how many teachers/caregivers (not including yourself) at your facility have Children's Learning Institute (CLI) Engage accounts?

- The majority of staff members have accounts
- Less than a majority staff members have accounts
- Staff members do not have accounts
- Unsure of staff utilization

Question 1.13A. Does your facility support teachers/caregivers to obtain credential or higher education scholarships, specifically T.E.A.C.H. scholarships administered by Texas AEYC?

- Yes, we have supported one or more teachers/caregivers through this program *(Skip to Question 1.14.)*
- Yes, we offer this, but no teachers/caregivers have requested this benefit *(Skip to Question 1.14.)*
- No

Question 1.13B. Why doesn't your facility support staff participation in T.E.A.C.H. scholarships? Select all that apply.

- Unaware of the program
- Aware of the program, but don't know how to participate
- Unclear benefit to the facility
- Too expensive
- Too time consuming
- Participate in other credential or higher-education scholarship programs

- Other:_____

Question 1.14. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

Overall, teachers/caregivers at my facility can access high-quality professional development opportunities to continue developing their skills as an early childhood educator.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 1.15. Which of the following best describes **the primary way** that teachers/caregivers at your facility earn their annual professional development hours?

- Trainings hosted by the child care facility (e.g., on a day that the children are not there or after hours)
- On their own (e.g., selecting online or in-person trainings and attending on a day off or after hours)

Question 1.16. Does your facility pay teachers/caregivers for the time they spend earning professional development (i.e., count the training time as work hours)? Please select the option that is **most true** for your facility.

- We are unable to pay teachers/caregivers OR we do not pay teachers/caregivers for the time they spend obtaining any of their professional development hours
- We pay teachers/caregivers for some, but not all of the time they spend obtaining their required professional development hours
- We pay teachers/caregivers for all of the time they spend obtaining their required professional development hours **but do not** pay teachers/caregivers for any additional professional development hours
- We pay teachers/caregivers for all of the time they spend obtaining their required professional development **and** additional hours
- Something else, please describe: _____

Question 1.17A. What do you think are the **top 3** most desired/needed professional development topics for your teachers/caregivers?

- Child growth and development

- Supporting children with special needs
- Addressing challenging behaviors
- Responsive interactions and guidance
- Learning environments, planning framework, curriculum, and standards
- Content pedagogy and instructional support (literacy, math, etc.)
- Supporting student skill development
- Observation and assessment
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Supporting Dual/Multiple Language Learners
- Family and community relationships
- Health, safety, and nutrition
- Professionalism and ethics
- Staff mental health and wellbeing
- Business operations (administration, HR, recruitment and marketing, etc.)

Question 1.17B. What are the **top 3** barriers that prevent teachers/caregivers at your facility from accessing professional development on topics that would most benefit them?

- Cost
- Time of trainings is not convenient. Convenient times would be: _____
- Availability of trainers
- Availability of technology resources to access online training
- Lack of administrator support
- Lack of access to substitute teachers/caregivers to attend training
- Location of trainings.
- Online training is not available
- Level of training content does not match experience level
- Personal barriers, such as lack of child care for own children, lack of transportation, etc.
- Trainings not available in primary language of staff. Languages we need: _____
- Something else, please describe: _____

Section 1.3B – Professional Development Section B (Child-Care Homes)

We would like to learn about the opportunities for professional development that are available in your area, learn which resources you prefer to use, and learn what additional resources could benefit you.

Question 1.17A. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:

Overall, I can access high-quality professional development opportunities to continue developing my skills as an early childhood educator.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 1.17B. What do you think are the **top 3** most desired/needed professional development topics for you?

- Child growth and development
- Supporting children with special needs
- Addressing challenging behaviors
- Responsive interactions and guidance
- Learning environments, planning framework, curriculum, and standards
- Content pedagogy and instructional support (literacy, math, etc.)
- Supporting student skill development
- Observation and assessment
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Supporting Dual/Multiple Language Learners
- Family and community relationships
- Health, safety, and nutrition
- Professionalism and ethics
- Staff mental health and wellbeing
- Business operations (administration, HR, recruitment and marketing, etc.)

Question 1.17C. What are the **top 3** barriers that prevent you from accessing professional development on topics that would most benefit you?

- Cost
- Time of trainings is not convenient. Convenient times would be: _____
- Availability of trainers
- Availability of technology recourses to access online training
- Lack of administrator support
- Lack of access to substitute teachers/caregivers to attend training
- Location of trainings.

- Online training is not available
- Level of training content does not match experience level
- Trainings not available in primary language of staff. Languages we need: _____
- Personal barriers, such as lack of child care for own children, lack of transportation, etc.
- Something else, please describe: _____

Section 1.3C – Professional Development Section C (Centers and Homes)

Question 1.18A. Please mark how familiar you are with the following tools to search for and schedule professional development opportunities.

	I have never heard of this resource	I have heard of this resource, but I have never used it	I have heard of this resource, but I cannot access it	I have used this resource
AgriLife Extension Courses	o	o	o	o
Children's Learning Institute (CLI) Engage	o	o	o	o
Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Online	o	o	o	o
Regional Education Service Centers	o	o	o	o
TECPDS Trainer Registry	o	o	o	o
Texas Education Agency (TEA) Monthly Webinars	o	o	o	o
Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) /	o	o	o	o

Local Workforce Solutions (Boards)				

Question 1.18B. What other types of professional development opportunities do you wish you could access? Please include both your desired topic(s) and training format(s). _____

Section 1.4 – Workforce Pay & Turnover

We would like to learn about your experiences and opinions on workforce topics, such as monetary compensation and hiring, in the child care industry.

Question 1.19. What do you see as the biggest challenge currently facing your operation? Select one answer.

- Unskilled or inexperienced staff
- Staff retention
- Child enrollment
- Obtaining non-tuition funding
- Other:_____

Question 1.20. When you need to **hire additional teachers/caregivers**, which of the following is the **primary challenge** you face in the current market? Select one answer.

- People do not want to work in child care
- Wages are too low to attract qualified staff
- We do not receive applications from qualified candidates
- Something else, please describe: _____
- We do not face any major challenges to hiring
- Not applicable; we do not need to hire additional teachers/caregivers

Question 1.21. What are the **top 3** child care workforce changes that would most help to reduce turnover of high-quality teachers/caregivers?

- Increasing pay to ensure teachers/caregivers make a living wage
- Offering more benefits, such as health insurance
- Offering more paid time off (i.e., paid vacation or sick days)
- Decreasing the staff to child ratio (i.e., more teachers/caregivers)
- Increasing the amount of time teachers/caregivers have for planning

- Increasing the number of breaks a teacher/caregiver can take during the day
- Increasing opportunities for free or low-cost continuing education
- Providing more career advancement opportunities
- Other: _____

Section 2: Director Information

In this section, we ask you to provide information about **yourself** as the facility **director**.

Section 2.1 – Director Demographic Characteristics

Question 2. Do you consider yourself to be one or more of the following? Select all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Another race (please specify): _____
- Prefer not to say

Question 2.2. With what gender do you identify?

- Woman
- Man
- Prefer not to say

Section 2.2 – Director Education & Experience

Question 2.3. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

- Less than a high school diploma or equivalent
- High school diploma or equivalent (GED)
- Some college, but no degree
- Specialized Trade Certification or Vocational Degree, such as a Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential
- Associate degree

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree

Question 2.4. Is your degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related field?

- No
- Yes

Question 2.5. We want to learn about the additional early childhood education credentials you may have. Please select all of the credentials, certificates, or certifications you have, if any.

- I do not have additional early childhood education credentials
- Child and Youth Care (CYC) Certification
- Child Care Director's Credential
- Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC)
- Child Care Professional (CCP)
- Child Development Associate (CDA)
- CIRCLE Foundation Training – I&T
- CIRCLE Foundation Training – Pre-K D EC Technical Certificate
- Family Life Educator Certification (CFLE)
- Infant-Toddler Specialist (Texas ITSN) Certification
- Montessori Credential
- Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) Certification
- State Teacher Certification
- First3Years Infant Mental Health Endorsement
- Texas Teaching Certification, please list subject area: _____
- Something else, please describe: _____

Question 2.6. What language(s) do you use to communicate with **family members** at your facility? Select all that apply.

- English
- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- Chinese (Mandarin)
- Chinese (Cantonese)
- Arabic
- Korean

- Tagalog
- French, Haitian, or Cajun
- Another language: _____

Question 2.7. How long have you worked at [FACILITY NAME] as the director? Years _____

Question 2.8. How many total years of early childhood education / child care experience do you have? Years _____

Section 2.3 – Director Compensation and Work Hours

Question 2.9. In a typical week, approximately how many hours do you work?

Hours per week _____

Question 2.10. Are you paid an hourly wage or paid an annual salary?

- Hourly Wage
- Annual Salary *(Skip to Questions 2.12)*

Question 2.11. What is your hourly wage? $ _____

Question 2.12. What is your annual salary? $ _____

Section 2.4 – Director Online Professional Development Accounts

Question 2.13A. Do you have a Texas Workforce Registry Account with Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) in which you are listed as director and teachers/caregivers can link their account to your facility?

- Yes *(Skip to Question 2.14A)*
- No
- I have a Texas Workforce Registry Account, but I am not the listed Center Director account for the facility *(Skip to Question 2.14A)*
- I am not sure *(Skip to Question 2.14A)*

Question 2.13B. Why do you not have a TECPDS Workforce Registry Account? Select all that apply.

- Unaware of this resource
- Don't know how to make an account

- Unclear on the benefits of having an account
- Too time-consuming to create an account
- Other: _____

Question 2.14A. Do you have a Children's Learning Institute (CLI) Engage account?

- Yes *(Skip to Section 3)*
- No
- I am not sure *(Skip to Section 3)*

Question 2.14B. Why do you not have a Children's Learning Institute (CLI) Engage account? Select all that apply.

- Unaware of this resource
- Don't know how to make an account
- Unclear on the benefits of having an account
- Too time-consuming to create an account
- Other: _____

If you entered that there are no staff other than yourself at the beginning of this survey, the survey is now complete.

Section 3: Teacher/Caregiver Information

As required by law, this section will ask you to provide information on each **individual teacher/caregiver** (staff who work directly with children in a classroom) at your facility to the best of your ability.

Fill out Section 3 for each teacher/caregiver, NOT including yourself, currently working at your facility who work directly with children in a classroom. The number of rows / teachers/caregivers is determined by your response in Question 1.4.

To help minimize the time needed to complete this section, we recommend you gather the following information before starting:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Pay rate
- Typical number of hours worked per week

- Educational attainment
- Attainment of professional certifications related to child care / early childhood education
- Professional experience and tenure at facility
- Age groups under their care
- Languages spoken

Section 3.1 – Teacher/Caregiver Roles

	Question 3.0 Enter the initials or names for each teacher/caregiver. This is only to help you track the information you will enter across multiple questions. The information will only be stored temporarily and will not be used to identify any individuals.	Question 3.1 What best describes this teacher's role at your facility? **Lead teacher/caregiver:** Staff responsible for a designated classroom or group of children. **Assistant teacher/caregiver:** Staff who support the lead teacher/caregiver for a designated classroom or group of children. **Floater/rotating assistant:** Staff not responsible for one designated classroom or group of children and may offer support in a variety of capacities.	Question 3.2 What age of children does this teacher/caregiver primarily work with?
Teacher/caregiver 1		○ Lead teacher/caregiver ○ Assistant teacher/caregiver ○ Floater/rotating assistant	○ Infants (age birth – 17 months) ○ Toddlers (age 18 months – 35 months) ○ Preschool (age 3 years – 4 years) ○ School age (age 5 years and older)
Teacher/caregiver 2			
Teacher/caregiver 3			

Section 3.2 – Teacher/Caregiver Demographic Characteristics

	Question 3.3 As far as you know, does this teacher/caregiver consider themself to be any of the following? Select all that apply.	Question 3.4 As far as you know, what gender does this teacher/caregiver identify?	Question 3.5 What language(s) does this teacher/caregiver use to communicate with **children** at your facility? Select all that apply.
[Name/Initials]	• American Indian or Alaska Native • Asian • Black or African American • Hispanic or Latino • Middle Eastern or North African • Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander • White • Another race _____ • Prefer not to say • I don't know	○ Woman ○ Man ○ Prefer not to say ○ I don't know	• English • Spanish • Vietnamese • Chinese (Mandarin) • Chinese (Cantonese) • Arabic • Korean • Tagalog • French, Haitian, or Cajun • Another language
[Name/Initials]			
[Name/Initials]			

Section 3.3 – Teacher/Caregiver Compensation

	Question 3.6 Is this teacher/caregiver paid based on an hourly wage or annual salary?	Question 3.7 What is this teacher's hourly wage?	Question 3.8 What is this teacher's annual salary?	Question 3.9 How many hours a week does this teacher/caregiver work, on average?
[Name/Initials]	○ Hourly wage ○ Annual salary	$_____	$_____	_____
[Name/Initials]				
[Name/Initials]				

Section 3.4 – Teacher/Caregiver Education & Experience

	Question 3.10 What is the highest level of education that this teacher/caregiver has completed?	Question 3.11 Is this teacher/caregiver currently enrolled in a degree or certification program?	Question 3.12 Please select all of the credentials, certificates, or certifications this teacher/caregiver has, if any.
[Name/Initials]	○ Less than a high school diploma or equivalent ○ High school diploma or equivalent (GED) ○ Some college, but no degree ○ Specialized Trade Certification or Vocational Degree, such as a Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential ○ Associate degree ○ Bachelor's degree ○ Master's Degree ○ Doctoral Degree ○ I don't know	○ Yes ○ No ○ I don't know	• Child and Youth Care (CYC) Certification • Child Care Director's Credential • Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) • Child Care Professional (CCP) • Child Development Associate (CDA) • CIRCLE Foundation Training – I&T • CIRCLE Foundation Training – Pre-K D EC Technical Certificate • Family Life Educator Certification (CFLE) • Infant-Toddler Specialist (ITSN) Certification • Montessori Credential • Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) Certification • State Teacher Certification • First3Years Infant Mental Health Endorsement • Texas Teaching Certification
[Name/Initials]			
[Name/Initials]			

	Question 3.13 About how long has this teacher/caregiver worked at your facility?	Question 3.14 About how many total years of child care experience does this teacher/caregiver have?
[Name/Initials]	_____ Years	_____ Years
[Name/Initials]		
[Name/Initials]		

Appendix 2: Summary of Responses to the Texas Child Care Director Survey

Section 1.1 – General Facility Information

Question 1.2

Is your facility nationally accredited?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1063)
No	86%
Yes[15]	14%

Question 1.3A

The list below contains special types of child care facilities. Please select whether your facility is any of the following. Please select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1072)
My program is a Head Start or Early Head Start program	8%
My program is a Public Pre-K program	7%
My program only provides drop-in care (i.e., on an as-needed basis without fixed schedules)	3%
My program only provides summer or school vacation care (e.g., summer camp, spring break camps, etc.)	2%

Question 1.3B

Which of the following describes the times that your facility offers child care? Please select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1077)
We offer full-day care on weekdays	86%

[15] Answer converted to binary due to small sample sizes. Full list of answer options included in Appendix 1.

We offer part-day care on weekdays	38%
We offer care outside of standard weekday hours	53%

Question 1.3C

Which of the following describes the number of weekdays that children can enroll in care at your facility? Please select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1101)
Children enroll in 5 day per week care	95%
Children enroll in 4 day per week care	19%
Children enroll in 3 day per week care	30%
Children enroll in 2 day per week care	25%

Question 1.3D

Why does your facility not participate in Child Care Services (CCS) scholarships? Please select all reasons that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=454)
We are not eligible to participate in CCS scholarships due to our current licensing status	8%
We choose not to participate because CCS payment rates do not cover the full cost of care	25%
We do not want to achieve Texas Rising Star certification	15%
We have another reason.	32%
Incorrect database information – we do accept CCS	20%

Question 1.3E

If you selected "We do not want to achieve Texas Rising Star certification", please indicate why. (Mark all that apply)

Answer Choice	Percent (n=68)
I am unfamiliar with Texas Rising Star and its requirements	25%
It is too costly to participate in Texas Rising Star	24%
It takes too much time to participate in Texas Rising Star	56%

Other reason for not participating in Texas Rising Star	31%

Question 1.4 and 1.5

How many teachers/caregivers work at your facility as of today, **NOT** including yourself?

Please tell us the number, if any, of staff at your facility in each of the following roles, including both full-time and part-time staff.

Answer Choice	Average	Sample size
All teachers/caregivers	8.7	1101
Lead teacher/caregiver	5.6	931
Assistant teacher/caregiver	3.4	849
Floater/rotating assistant	1.8	807

Section 1.2 – Benefits and Pay

Question 1.6

Which of the following benefits do **you** have access to as a result of your job as a child care director? Please select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1067)
Health insurance	29%
Life insurance	21%
Dental insurance	27%
Vision insurance	26%
Flexible Spending Account (FSA)	8%
Health Savings Account (HSA)	10%
Paid sick leave	37%
Paid parental leave	6%
Paid vacation/holidays	62%
Retirement account (401k, etc.)	20%
Discounted or free child care slots	44%

Complimentary meals	21%
Other benefits not listed	7%

Question 1.7

Which of the following benefits do **teachers/caregivers** have access to? Please select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Full-Time (%) (n=812)	Part-Time (%) (n=627)
Health insurance	34%	11%
Life insurance	26%	9%
Dental insurance	33%	10%
Vision insurance	31%	10%
Flexible Spending Account (FSA)	10%	2%
Health Savings Account (HSA)	11%	2%
Paid sick leave	41%	22%
Paid parental leave	9%	4%
Paid vacation/holidays	74%	40%
Retirement account (401k, etc.)	22%	9%
Discounted or free child care slots	63%	57%
Complimentary meals	33%	30%
Other benefits not listed	7%	8%
Teachers do not have access to any of these benefits	11%	20%

Question 1.8A

Does your facility currently offer a one-time signing bonus to newly-hired teachers/caregivers?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1,066)
Yes	3%
No	76%
No, but we have offered one-time signing bonuses within the past year	6%
Not applicable – we are not currently hiring	15%

Question 1.8B

What is the typical amount of the one-time signing bonus offered to newly hired teachers/caregivers?

Median	Average	Sample size
$200	$270	31

Question 1.8C

What was the typical amount of the one-time signing bonus you offered to newly hired teachers/caregivers within the past year?

Median	Average	Sample size
$500	$608	59

Question 1.9A

Does your facility currently offer a longevity or retention bonus to teachers/caregivers?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1,068)
Yes	16%
No	65%
No, but we have offered longevity or retention bonuses within the past year	6%
Not applicable – I have no other staff	14%

Question 1.9B

How much is the longevity or retention bonus for teachers/caregivers?

Median	Average	Sample size
$200	$568	151

Question 1.9C

How long do teachers/caregivers have to work to receive this longevity or retention bonus?

Median (months)	Average (months)	Sample size
1	1.9	56

Question 1.9D

How much was the longevity or retention bonus for teachers/caregivers offered within the past year?

Median	Average	Sample size
$300	$727	51

Question 1.9E

How long did teachers/caregivers have to work to receive this longevity or retention bonus?

Median (months)	Average (months)	Sample size
1	1.9	149

Question 1.10A

Does your facility regularly offer salary raises to teachers/caregivers?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=919)
Yes	70%
No	28%
Not applicable – I have no other staff	2%

Question 1.10B

How do teachers/caregivers earn raises? Select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=636)
Raises are given automatically every year	40%
Meeting performance goals	75%
Earning new credentials (e.g., CDA, Associate's, Bachelor's)	49%
Other reason	8%

Question 1.10C

Does your facility receive funding support beyond tuition revenue and government funding? Select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1056)
Yes, we receive philanthropic funding	4%
Yes, we receive funding from private businesses	1%

No, we do not receive funding from other sources	83%
Yes, other:	6%
Prefer not to answer	7%

Section 1.3 – Professional Development

Section 1.3A – Professional Development Section A (Centers)

Question 1.11

To the best of your knowledge, about how many teachers/caregivers (not including yourself) at your facility have Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) Workforce Registry accounts?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=774)
The majority of staff members have accounts	57%
Less than a majority of staff members have accounts	9%
Staff members do not have accounts	18%
Unsure of staff utilization	16%

Question 1.12

To the best of your knowledge, about how many teachers/caregivers (not including yourself) at your facility have Children's Learning Institute (CLI) Engage accounts?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=775)
The majority of staff members have accounts	56%
Less than a majority of staff members have accounts	12%
Staff members do not have accounts	19%
Unsure of staff utilization	14%

Question 1.13A

Does your facility support teachers/caregivers to obtain credential or higher education scholarships, specifically T.E.A.C.H. scholarships administered by Texas AEYC?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=772)

Yes, we have supported one or more teachers/caregivers through this program	23%
Yes, we offer this, but no teachers/caregivers have requested this benefit	23%
No	54%

Question 1.13B

Why doesn't your facility support staff participation in T.E.A.C.H. scholarships? Select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=408)
Unaware of the program	69%
Aware of the program, but don't know how to participate	11%
Unclear benefit to the facility	10%
Too expensive	5%
Too time consuming	4%
Participate in other credential or higher-education scholarship programs	6%
Other	11%

Question 1.14

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:
Overall, teachers/caregivers at my facility can access high-quality professional development opportunities to continue developing their skills as an early childhood educator.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=760)
Strongly Agree	58%
Agree	37%
Disagree	5%
Strongly Disagree	1%

Question 1.15

Which of the following best describes **the primary way** that teachers/caregivers at your facility earn their annual professional development hours?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=762)

Trainings hosted by the child care facility (e.g., on a day that the children are not there or after hours)	63%
On their own (e.g., selecting online or in-person trainings and attending on a day off or after hours)	37%

Question 1.16

Does your facility pay teachers/caregivers for the time they spend earning professional development (i.e., count the training time as work hours)? Please select the option that is **most true** for your facility.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=757)
We are unable to pay teachers/caregivers OR we do not pay teachers/caregivers for the time they spend obtaining any of their professional development hours	15%
We pay teachers/caregivers for some, but not all of the time they spend obtaining their required professional development hours	24%
We pay teachers/caregivers for all of the time they spend obtaining their required professional development hours **but do not** pay teachers/caregivers for any additional professional development hours	25%
We pay teachers/caregivers for all of the time they spend obtaining their required professional development **and** additional hours	31%
Something else	5%

Question 1.17A

What do you think are the **top 3** most desired/needed professional development topics for your teachers/caregivers?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=762)
Child growth and development	45%
Supporting children with special needs	40%
Addressing challenging behaviors	77%
Responsive interactions and guidance	31%
Learning environments, planning framework, curriculum, and standards	30%
Content pedagogy and instructional support (literacy, math, etc.)	4%
Supporting student skill development	8%
Observation and assessment	8%

Diversity, equity, and inclusion	3%
Supporting Dual/Multiple Language Learners	3%
Family and community relationships	8%
Health, safety, and nutrition	9%
Professionalism and ethics	13%
Staff mental health and wellbeing	16%
Business operations (administration, HR, recruitment and marketing, etc.)	2%

Question 1.17B

What are the **top 3** barriers that prevent teachers/caregivers at your facility from accessing professional development on topics that would most benefit them?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=745)
Cost	56%
Time of trainings is not convenient	23%
Availability of trainers	19%
Availability of technology resources to access online training	12%
Lack of administrator support	4%
Lack of access to substitute teachers/caregivers to attend training	33%
Location of trainings.	34%
Online training is not available	16%
Level of training content does not match experience level	9%
Personal barriers, such as lack of child care for own children, lack of transportation, etc.	29%
Trainings not available in primary language of staff	5%

Section 1.3B – Professional Development Section B (Child-Care Homes)

Question 1.17A

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:
Overall, I can access high-quality professional development opportunities to continue developing my skills as an early childhood educator.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=263)
Strongly Agree	46%
Agree	48%

Disagree	4%
Strongly Disagree	1%

Question 1.17B

What do you think are the **top 3** most desired/needed professional development topics for you?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=282)
Child growth and development	65%
Supporting children with special needs	25%
Addressing challenging behaviors	40%
Responsive interactions and guidance	8%
Learning environments, planning framework, curriculum, and standards	32%
Content pedagogy and instructional support (literacy, math, etc.)	5%
Supporting student skill development	16%
Observation and assessment	10%
Diversity, equity, and inclusion	8%
Supporting Dual/Multiple Language Learners	4%
Family and community relationships	14%
Health, safety, and nutrition	27%
Professionalism and ethics	4%
Staff mental health and wellbeing	13%
Business operations (administration, HR, recruitment and marketing, etc.)	18%

Question 1.17C

What are the **top 3** barriers that prevent you from accessing professional development on topics that would most benefit you?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=277)
Cost	70%
Time of trainings is not convenient	30%
Availability of trainers	15%
Availability of technology resources to access online training	0%
Lack of administrator support	3%
Lack of access to substitute teachers/caregivers to attend training	25%

Location of trainings.	28%
Online training is not available	21%
Level of training content does not match experience level	8%
Personal barriers, such as lack of child care for own children, lack of transportation, etc.	8%
Trainings not available in primary language of staff	6%
Something else	9%

Section 1.3C – Professional Development Section C (Centers and Homes)

Question 1.18A

Please mark how familiar you are with the following tools to search for and schedule professional development opportunities.

Tools	I have never heard of this resource	I have heard of this resource but have never used it	I have heard of this resource, but I cannot access it	I have used this resource	Sample size
AgriLife Extension Course	7%	4%	2%	87%	1,038
Children's Learning Institute	16%	13%	2%	70%	1,022
Early Childhood Intervention Online	23%	31%	5%	41%	983
Regional Education Service Centers	52%	21%	6%	22%	953
ECPDS Trainer Registry	19%	19%	5%	58%	1,007
TEA Monthly Webinars	35%	38%	6%	20%	967
TWC/Local Workforce Solutions	9%	26%	6%	59%	1,009

Section 1.4 – Workforce Pay & Turnover

Question 1.19

What do you see as the biggest challenge currently facing your operation? Select one answer.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1,019)
Unskilled or inexperienced staff	16%
Staff retention	21%

Child enrollment	38%
Obtaining non-tuition funding	15%
Other	10%

Question 1.20

When you need to **hire additional teachers/caregivers**, which of the following is the **primary challenge** you face in the current market? Select one answer.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1,031)
People do not want to work in child care	9%
Wages are too low to attract qualified staff	52%
We do not receive applications from qualified candidates	11%
Something else	6%
We do not face any major challenges to hiring	7%
Not applicable; we do not need to hire additional teachers/caregivers	16%

Question 1.21

What are the **top 3** child care workforce changes that would most help to reduce turnover of high-quality teachers/caregivers?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1011)
Increasing pay to ensure teachers/caregivers make a living wage	89%
Offering more benefits, such as health insurance	52%
Offering more paid time off (i.e., paid vacation or sick days)	38%
Decreasing the staff to child ratio (i.e., more teachers/caregivers)	20%
Increasing the amount of time teachers/caregivers have for planning	16%
Increasing the number of breaks a teacher/caregiver can take during the day	5%
Increasing opportunities for free or low-cost continuing education	22%
Providing more career advancement opportunities	22%
Other	6%

Section 2: Director Information

Section 2.1 – Director Demographic Characteristics

Question 2.1

Do you consider yourself to be one or more of the following? Select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1043)
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	5%
Black or African American	25%
Hispanic or Latino	29%
Middle Eastern or North African	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%
White	44%
Another race (please specify):	1%

Question 2.2

With what gender do you identify?

Answer Choice	Percent
Woman	95%
Man	5%

Section 2.2 – Director Education & Experience

Question 2.3

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1,039)
Less than a high school diploma or equivalent	<1%
High school diploma or equivalent (GED)	15%
Some college, but no degree	23%
Specialized Trade Certification or Vocational Degree, such as a Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential	13%
Associate degree	11%
Bachelor's degree	26%
Master's degree	11%

Doctoral degree	<1%

Question 2.4

Is your degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related field?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=499)
No	38%
Yes	62%

Question 2.5

We want to learn about the additional early childhood education credentials you may have. Please select all of the credentials, certificates, or certifications you have, if any.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1006)
I do not have additional early childhood education credentials	17%
Child and Youth Care (CYC) Certification	1%
Child Care Director's Credential	39%
Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC)	1%
Child Care Professional (CCP)	4%
Child Development Associate (CDA)	20%
CIRCLE Foundation Training – I&T	2%
CIRCLE Foundation Training – Pre-K D EC Technical Certificate	3%
Family Life Educator Certification (CFLE)	0%
Infant-Toddler Specialist (Texas ITSN) Certification	3%
Montessori Credential	3%
Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) Certification	1%
State Teacher Certification	8%
First3Years Infant Mental Health Endorsement	0%
Texas Teaching Certification	8%
Something else	9%

Question 2.6

What language(s) do you use to communicate with **family members** at your facility? Select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1032)
English	98%
Spanish	33%

Vietnamese	1%
Chinese (Mandarin)	1%
Chinese (Cantonese)	<1%
Arabic	1%
Korean	<1%
Tagalog	0%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	<1%
Another language	2%

Question 2.7

How long have you worked at [FACILITY NAME] as the director?

Median (years)	Average (years)	Sample size
5	8.91	994

Question 2.8

How many total years of early childhood education / child care experience do you have?

Median (years)	Average (years)	Sample size
19	19.29	1015

Section 2.3 – Director Compensation and Work Hours

Question 2.9

In a typical week, approximately how many hours do you work?

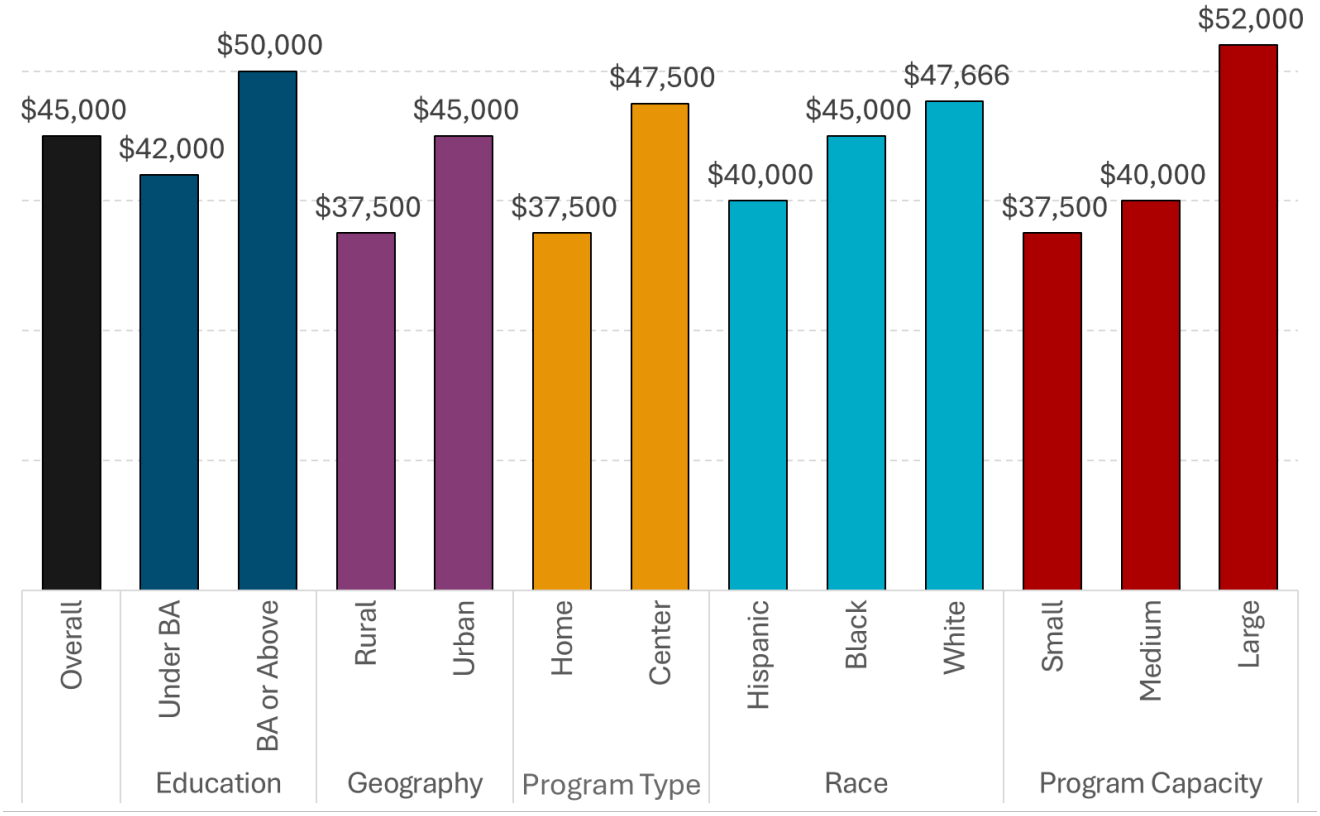
Median (hours)	Average (hours)	Sample size
50	47.25	1021

Question 2.11 – What is your hourly wage?

Note: Due to the small sample size of directors paid by hourly wage, compensation analysis focused on director annual salary (see Question 2.12).

Question 2.12 – What is your annual salary?

Director Median Annual Salary, by Selected Characteristics[16]



Section 2.4 – Director Online Professional Development Accounts

Question 2.13A

Do you have a Texas Workforce Registry Account with Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) in which you are listed as director and teachers/caregivers can link their account to your facility?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1,026)
Yes	65%
No	11%
I have a Texas Workforce Registry Account, but I am not the	5%

[16] Note: Salaries <$1,000 and >=$500,000 were excluded. Capacity is determined by the number of children the facility can serve. Under 26 is small, 26-100 is medium, over 100 is large. N = 844 (overall), 526 (under BA), 317 (BA or above), 102 (rural), 742 (urban), 196 (homes), 648 (centers), 259 (Hispanic), 195 (Black), 394 (White), 215 (small), 324 (medium), 305 (large).

listed Center Director account for the facility	
I am not sure	18%

Question 2.13B

Why do you not have a TECPDS Workforce Registry Account? Select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=114)
Unaware of this resource	64%
Don't know how to make an account	13%
Unclear on the benefits of having an account	20%
Too time-consuming to create an account	4%
Other:	7%

Question 2.14A

Do you have a Children's Learning Institute (CLI) Engage account?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1,024)
Yes	68%
No	23%
I am not sure	9%

Question 2.14B

Why do you not have a Children's Learning Institute (CLI) Engage account? Select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=227)
Unaware of this resource	76%
Don't know how to make an account	11%
Unclear on the benefits of having an account	24%
Too time-consuming to create an account	1%
Other:	1%

Section 3: Teacher/Caregiver Information

Section 3.1 – Teacher/Caregiver Roles

Question 3.1

What best describes this teacher's role at your facility?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=7,773)
Lead teacher/caregiver: Staff responsible for a designated classroom or group of children.	58%
Assistant teacher/caregiver: Staff who support the lead teacher/caregiver for a designated classroom or group of children.	27%
Floater/rotating assistant: Staff not responsible for one designated classroom or group of children and may offer support in a variety of capacities.	15%

Question 3.2

What age of children does this teacher/caregiver primarily work with?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=7,546)
Infants (age birth – 17 months)	24%
Toddlers (age 18 months – 35 months)	33%
Preschool (age 3 years – 4 years)	30%
School age (age 5 years and older)	13%

Question 3.3

As far as you know, does this teacher/caregiver consider themself to be any of the following? Select all that apply.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=7448)
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	3%
Black or African American	20%
Hispanic or Latino	41%
Middle Eastern or North African	2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%
White	38%
Another race	0%

Question 3.4

As far as you know, what gender does this teacher/caregiver identify?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=7805)
Woman	97%
Man	3%

Question 3.5

What language(s) does this teacher/caregiver use to communicate with children at your facility? Select all that apply.

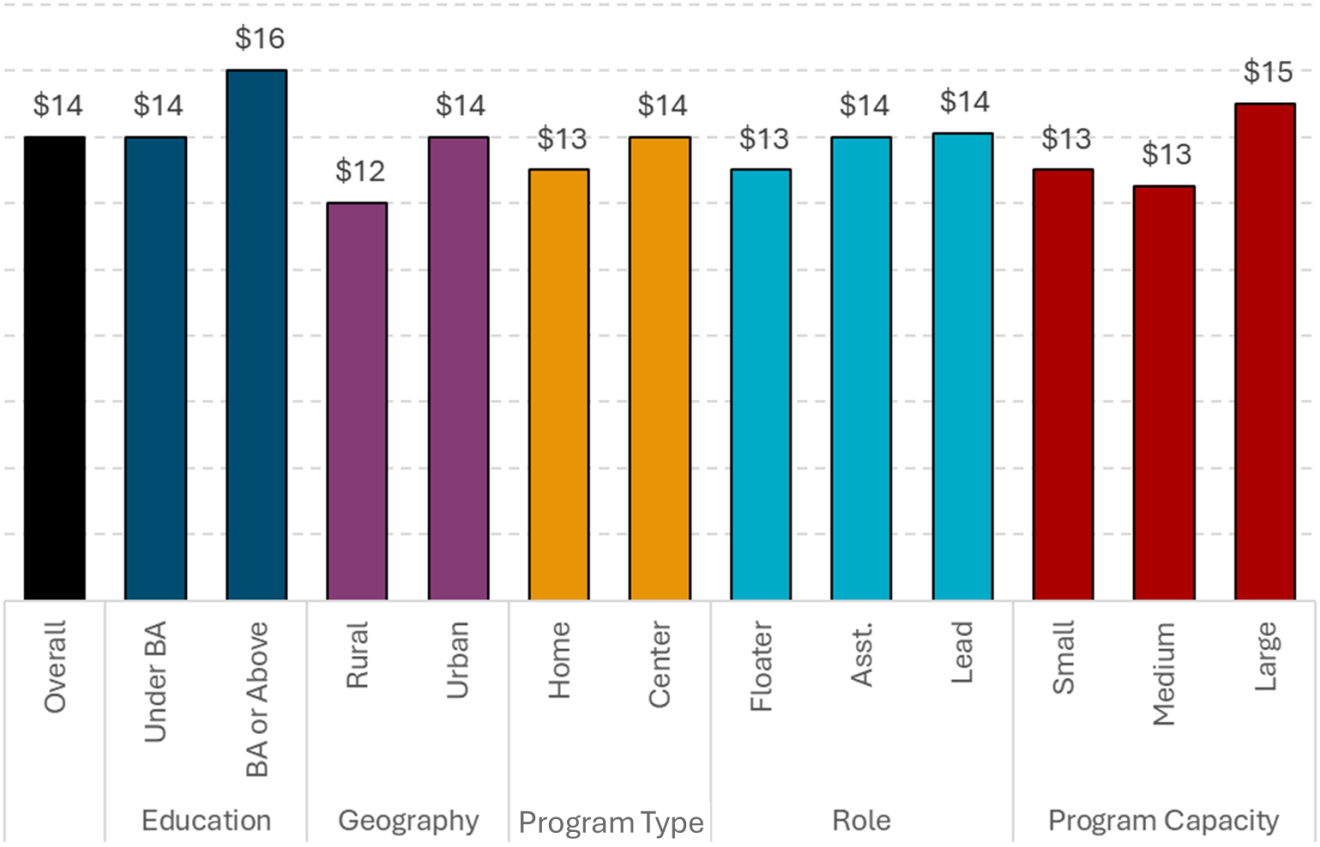
Answer Choice	Percent (n=7991)
English	95%
Spanish	25%
Vietnamese	<1%
Chinese (Mandarin)	<1%
Chinese (Cantonese)	0%
Arabic	1%
Korean	<1%
Tagalog	0%
French, Haitian, or Cajun	<1%
Another language	0%

Section 3.3 – Teacher/Caregiver Compensation

Question 3.7

What is this teacher's hourly wage?

Teacher Compensation, by Selected Characteristics.[17]



Question 3.8

What is this teacher's annual salary?

Note: Due to the small sample size of teachers paid by annual salary, compensation analysis focused on hourly wage (see Question 3.7).

Question 3.9

How many hours a week does this teacher/caregiver work, on average?

Median (hours)	Average (hours)	Sample size
40	33	6161

[17] N = 6,600 (overall), 5,218 (under BA), 980 (BA or above), 762 (rural), 5,838 (urban), 136 (home), 6,420 (center), 947 (floater), 1,754 (assistant), 3,745 (lead), 234 (small), 2,242 (medium), 4,124 (large).

Section 3.4 – Teacher/Caregiver Education & Experience

Question 3.10

What is the highest level of education that this teacher/caregiver has completed?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=7,075)
Less than a high school diploma or equivalent	1%
High school diploma or equivalent (GED)	49%
Some college, but no degree	17%
Specialized Trade Certification or Vocational Degree, such as a Child Development Associate® (CDA) credential	8%
Associate degree	6%
Bachelor's degree	14%
Master's degree	2%
Doctoral degree	<1%
I don't know	2%

Question 3.11

Is this teacher/caregiver currently enrolled in a degree or certification program?

Answer Choice	Percent (n=6771)
Yes	18%
No	76%
I don't know	6%

Question 3.12

Please select all of the credentials, certificates, or certifications this teacher/caregiver has, if any.

Answer Choice	Percent (n=1322)
Child and Youth Care (CYC) Certification	7%
Child Care Director's Credential	11%
Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC)	0%
Child Care Professional (CCP)	6%
Child Development Associate (CDA)	48%
CIRCLE Foundation Training – I&T	4%
CIRCLE Foundation Training – Pre-K D EC Technical Certificate	7%

Family Life Educator Certification (CFLE)	0%
Infant-Toddler Specialist (Texas ITSN) Certification	0%
Montessori Credential	8%
Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) Certification	1%
State Teacher Certification	4%
First3Years Infant Mental Health Endorsement	0%
Texas Teaching Certification	7%

Question 3.13

About how long has this teacher/caregiver worked at your facility?

Median (years)	Average (years)	Sample size
2	4	6929

Question 3.14

About how many total years of child care experience does this teacher/caregiver have?

Median (years)	Average (years)	Sample size
4	7	6427

Appendix 3: Workgroup Members

Organization Name	Name
Employer Representation	
Las Palmas Medical Center	Bertha Gallardo
Baylor Scott & White	JoAnne Mengelkamp
State Level	
Children's Learning Institute at UT Health Houston	April Crawford Ph.D.
Child Care Regulation	Jennifer Vincent
Advocacy	
Children at Risk	Kim Kofron Lyn Lucas
North Texas Early Education Alliance	Melanie Rubin
Arlington DFW Child Care	Jerletha McDonald
Texas POST	Jenna Courtney Jenny McClure
Employers for Child Care Task Force & Early Matters Texas	Wendy Uptain
Board	
Heart of Texas WF Solutions	Julie Talbert
West Central WF Solutions	Lisa Colyer
Child care programs	
Easterseals, Rio Grande Valley (Special Needs)	Pattie Rosenlund
Braswell CDC, *Metroplex*	Murriel Webb
Creative Minds CDC, *Gulf Cast (PKP)*	Anna Haller
Vogel Alcove, *Dallas (PKP)*	Dr. Karen Hughes
Angels Care and Learning Center, *Capital Area (PKP)*	Chuck Cohn

Appendix 4: Methodology

This section details our data collection and research methods.

Literature Review Methodology

This review and research focused largely on literature from the past two years to update learnings from the prior strategic plan—for example, lessons from states' use of American Rescue Plan Act funding for the child care sector, such as a large child care grants initiative in Kentucky (Powell & Dade, 2023). We collected, reviewed, and synthesized published studies, policy reports, news articles, and data sets on the child care workforce, with a particular focus on Texas but also drawing on policy experimentation and lessons from other states. We identified relevant literature using the following data sources and protocols:

- Other state strategic plans on child care and the workforce
- Recent publications from leading education and education workforce organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley (CSCCE)
    - Internet searches for recent systematic reviews on the child care workforce, including work from think tanks and gray literature such as conference papers, policy documents, and reports
- Reports and publications from organizations focused on children and families such as Child Trends and the Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Data sets including Lightcast, a labor market analytics tool used to analyze occupation demographics, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, used to analyze state and national occupation wage data
- To identify further sources, especially those addressing innovations not yet published in formal research journals, we conducted searches that included key phrases such as "early childhood education policy innovation," "child care innovation," "U.S. child care workforce," "child care employment data," "child care economy," and others. From these reviews, newspaper articles, and studies, we followed citations and references to expand the depth of information included in the literature review.

Sources collected and included in the literature review were tabulated in an Excel document capturing the author, title, publishing organization, date of publication, and the geographic focus of the content (i.e., a specific state or national). Each source was also analyzed to capture a high-level summary of its content and takeaways, with relevance to this project noted. Each source was assigned a priority rating synthesizing its applicability, credibility (strength of evidence), and

insightfulness. Key insights and data were also incorporated in narrative form into an informal report, categorized by topic areas.

Director Survey Methodology

Social Finance's survey of child care program directors was a key instrument in answering the research questions. It provided the broadest and largest set of data regarding the issues we investigated and surfaced key follow-on questions that were explored in focus groups.

The survey instrument gathered detailed information about child care programs and their workforce across Texas. Conducted with a representative group of program directors, it allowed for population-level estimates of the current child care workforce in Texas and provided updated estimates for comparison against the 2023–2025 strategic plan's survey. Each director was asked to provide information on themselves and their employees to capture key data including demographics (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, and educational attainment), wages, benefits, and professional development opportunities (both through the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) and other educational and professional development activities). These results provided insights into the experiences and compensation of child care workers and allowed for analysis of differences by demographic factors. Additionally, the survey collected information about the ages of children in each program and the ages of children taught by each teacher. Questions in this survey instrument were adapted from the prior Director Survey, which allowed us to align question wording, content, and structure to ensure comparability and measure changes over time. The contents of the survey are summarized in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Survey Instrument Modules and Questions

Module	Question Focus
Child Care Operation Information	Ages of children the operation serves, accreditation status, type of operation, times of care, size of staff, roles of staff
Benefits & Pay	Benefits offerings (insurance, paid time off, retirement accounts, child care, bonuses, etc.)
Professional Development (PD)	Staff access to and experience with TECPDS, Early Childhood Professional Development Scholarships (ECPDS), and Children's Learning Institute (CLI); how PD hours are obtained (e.g., trainings hosted by the operation or trainings attended on

	their own, paid or unpaid PD, relevant PD options, barriers to PD accessibility)
Workforce Pay & Turnover	Challenges to hiring, factors that would reduce turnover, general challenges and feedback
Director Information	Demographic characteristics, education and credentials, language ability, years of experience, work hours, compensation, online professional development accounts
Teacher Information	Demographic characteristics, role, ages of children served, education and credentials, language ability, years of experience, work hours, compensation

Informed Consent and Institutional Review Board Approval

All study protocols, including survey instruments, were reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB), a process designed to ensure the ethical protection of human subjects in research. The team selected BRANY IRB, an IRB that is fully accredited and in good standing with the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs (AAHRPP). The IRB was chosen based on its expertise in supporting social-behavioral research and the cost of its services. Team members involved in the data collection process completed Human Subjects Research training through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protections or through comparable training programs, ensuring all met the latest standards for protecting research participants.

The Director Survey included an informed consent process approved by the IRB. To ensure that survey respondents understood how their data would be used and that participation was voluntary, the consent form described the purpose and objectives of the study, the risks and benefits of participation, the expected duration, contact information for questions, and a description of data security and confidentiality protocols.

Sampling Strategy

We used the Search Texas Child Care Program database from the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Child Care Regulation (CCR) as our sampling frame. As of September 19, 2024, this database contained program characteristics and contact information for

14,907 licensed programs in the state.[18] While the database included child care program addresses and phone numbers, email addresses were available for only a subsample of licensed programs. We worked with TWC to obtain contact information for the remaining programs. Where needed, we scraped additional contact information from program websites.

From the list provided by Texas HHSC CCR, we drew a random sample of 3,000 child care programs to survey. The random sample was intended to be statistically representative of all licensed child care programs in the state. To assess representativeness, we compared characteristics of the sample to the full population of child care programs, including program type (center- or home-based), geographic distribution (by county), program capacity, and age groups served.

Conducting the Survey

We first piloted the survey with several child care directors selected from Workgroup members to gather feedback on outreach language, consent protocol, survey question clarity, length, and content. The pilot participants were compensated for their time in accordance with our IRB protocols and were not included in the final survey sample. After incorporating their feedback, we conducted survey outreach using multiple methods to ensure a high and representative response rate. Every respondent with a valid email address received a survey invitation in both English and Spanish, with instructions to complete it online.

- *Programming in Qualtrics:* The survey was a web-based instrument programmed in Qualtrics. Qualtrics allowed us to build in data quality controls and checks, including skip patterns, forced response options, and a confirmation question following income or wage entries. It also provided easy functionality to track sample responses and manage follow-up messages, including SMS reminder integration for respondents who consented to receive text notifications.
- *Compensation:* We compensated respondents for their time. Final compensation was approved as part of the IRB process. We provided a $50 Visa gift card for survey completion.

Our survey outreach strategy included multiple elements to increase response rates, including:

- Email reminders, with varied messages based on whether recipients had opened the survey link

[18] Texas Health and Human Services Commission Child Care Regulation. (n.d.). *Search Texas Child Care* [Data set]. Retrieved September 19, 2024 from https://child care.hhs.texas.gov/public/child caresearch

- Targeted follow-up phone call reminders to those who did not respond to the initial invitation or follow-up emails, prioritizing program directors with characteristics underrepresented in the early response sample

For example, if fewer program directors from rural areas responded relative to their share of the overall population, we focused phone outreach efforts on contacting those individuals. This supported the goal of achieving a final survey sample that was representative of the broader population. The survey opened on February 25 and closed on May 2nd, 2025

Data Cleaning and Analysis
After we completed survey data collection, we cleaned, structured, and organized the response data for analysis. Our data cleaning processes included:

- Correcting incomplete responses or those with typos that were inconsistent relative to other responses from the same respondent.
- Dropping or top- or bottom-coding values that were out of range (e.g., an exorbitant number of employees or a very high reported income).
- Ensuring all variable and value labels were complete and clear.
- Ensuring that all variables were stored and formatted appropriately (e.g., as date, numeric, or string variables).

Data cleaning protocols and decisions were clearly documented. We conducted data cleaning and analysis in Stata, writing code and accompanying specifications that documented each step and its assumptions, ensured reproducibility, and allowed for auditing.

After cleaning and structuring the data files for analysis, we created necessary variable constructs from the underlying data, such as aggregated income and summary variables on employer benefits. We then calculated descriptive statistics for each key variable, populating tables with the mean, standard deviation, confidence interval, minimum and maximum values, and sample size. For earnings figures, we also calculated the median.

In addition to overall results, we disaggregated certain variables to show subgroup-level outcomes. For example, we disaggregated compensation data by demographic characteristics, including race and ethnicity, gender, and educational attainment. We also broke out results by other key child care program characteristics, such as center versus home-based setting, rural versus urban location, whether the program accepted tuition subsidies, and program size.

Focus Group Methodology

We conducted three virtual focus groups with child care program directors. These sessions provided critical insights into the experiences of key types of program directors. The focus groups helped us unpack and contextualize survey findings by exploring the reasoning behind responses—such as challenges in staff hiring and retention, or changes in pay and benefits. Additionally, the format enabled us to gather multiple perspectives simultaneously, facilitated idea-sharing among participants, and helped us identify areas of convergence and divergence.

The moderators emphasized clear, open communication and created an environment that welcomed sensitive questions and encouraged the free expression of varied viewpoints. Prior to each session, we prepared participants by providing an overview of topics and setting conversation norms. We avoided jargon and technical terms that could hinder shared understanding and full participation. We positioned participants as experts from whom we hoped to learn and encouraged them to share openly. Throughout the discussions, moderators worked to ensure that all views were represented and that time was managed carefully to allow space for both planned and spontaneous topics.

Focus Group Topics

We developed a semi-structured interview guide with a series of core topics, questions, and follow-up prompts, while leaving flexibility for discussion based on participant responses. Topics were designed to elicit insights not captured by the survey and to address priorities identified by TWC. We also incorporated findings from the literature review to inform the protocol. Focus group topics included:

- Perceptions of the strengths and challenges of the Child Care Services (CCS) subsidy program
- Key changes needed to strengthen the child care system and support the workforce
- Successes and challenges in staff recruitment and retention
- Approaches and considerations for staff pay and benefits
- Feedback on child care system processes and structures (certification, credentialing, reimbursements, state agency interactions, etc.)

Informed Consent and IRB Approval

The focus group protocol went through the same IRB review and approval process as the Director Survey. The informed consent process was also conducted in the same manner.

Sampling Strategy

We selected a convenience sample of focus groups of rural-based, urban-based, and home-based programs from the cohort of directors who completed the Child Care Director Survey. Within each focus group, we sought to include participants representing programs across various certification statuses, Texas Rising Star ratings, and counties.

Conducting the Focus Groups

We held focus groups on April 17, April 18 and April 25. For each of the three focus groups, we had eight confirmed participants per time slot, and five individuals ended up attending each group.

- *Facilitation and Language*: We used a secure video connection to conduct the focus groups. Each session was led by a facilitator and a note-taker, and we recorded the sessions for analysis (with participant consent). If holding sessions only in English had risked limiting the range of perspectives, we were prepared to organize a Spanish-language focus group.
- *Compensation*: Participants were compensated with a $75 Visa gift card for their time. Each focus group lasted approximately 90 minutes. Final compensation was approved by the IRB as part of the focus group protocol.

Data Analysis

Our primary goal in analyzing focus group data was to identify common themes and points of divergence among participants. Special attention was paid to parts of the transcripts that featured spontaneous comments, differing opinions, changes in participant viewpoints, specific versus general remarks, emotionally charged statements, and topics of particular interest to participants. We analyzed focus group themes alongside survey data to deepen our understanding of responses and generate policy-relevant insights to be discussed with the workgroup.

Appendix 5: Deprioritized Recommendations

This project produced additional recommendations that were deemed to be outside the scope of this strategic plan as set forth by HB619 or to need further evidence to support its potential impact. The first two recommendations included below—on leveraging the newly established Quad-Agency Child Care Initiative Commission to streamline regulations and on encouraging collaboration between child care programs and schools districts to improve kindergarten readiness—are valuable strategies for addressing child care programs' challenges beyond the scope of the child care workforce. The third recommendation on developing a pipeline of talent from nontraditional sectors and industries warrants further exploration to determine the potential impact and define effective approaches. The fourth recommendation, expanding the HB 2 pre-K partnership intermediaries' role in health benefits access and affordability, is outside the scope of TWC. If these responsibilities fall outside the scope of the intermediaries as defined by TEA, then this recommendation should not warrant further consideration. These four recommendations are presented below for TWC's consideration.

Recommendation: Leverage newly established Quad-Agency Child Care Initiative Commission to streamline regulations and increase collaboration

Rationale: Child care programs said in focus groups that they struggle with conflicting regulations and redundant regulatory processes child care regulators, especially Child Care Services (CCS). Focus group participants noted that frequent policy changes, especially from CCS, make it hard for directors to stay compliant, especially when updates to employee training or parent handbooks are required. Sometimes multiple policy changes will be communicated separately in the same week. Participants noted streamlined policy change communications would help reduce burden, and suggested regulators consolidate multiple policy changes into one communication.

The Quad Agency Child Care Initiative bill (HB 4903) passed in the most recent regular legislative session aims to reduce conflicting and redundant regulations across agencies that oversee early childhood 0-8 governance and improve access to quality, affordable child care. TWC will chair the commission created by this bill, and participating agencies are Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and Texas Education Agency (TEA).

Strategies: We recommend TWC use its role as commission's chair to promote a "customer-centric" approach in engaging with workforce to ensure teacher and director pain points are understood and addressed effectively:

- **Develop a customer journey map**: TWC should develop a draft Customer Journey Map with the Quad Agency Child Care Commission. This will allow the Commission to identify all touchpoints in which teachers and directors interact with the Quad Agency Child Care agencies and help determine how to streamline conflicting and redundant regulations.
- **Conduct Statewide listening tour**: Secondly, TWC and peers from the Quad Agency Child Care Commission should conduct a listening tour to solicit feedback on the Customer Journey Map from center directors and workers to better understand how conflicting and redundant regulations can be optimally addressed.
    - SFI recommends TWC work with LWDBs to host these listening sessions and ensure a varied set of centers are represented in each local listening session. Feedback from these sessions should inform development of an action plan to streamline regulations for the Quad Agency Child Care Initiative.
- **Draft and communicate action plan:** TWC should distribute the draft action plan to participants as part of the listening tour and solicit a second round of feedback to ensure workforce feedback is adequately addressed.
- **Provide regular updates on implementation progress and expected improvements in oversight:** Lastly, TWC should communicate the final action plan to child care center directors and workers in a clear, concise manner to inform them of the plan's goals and where they can expect to see more optimal oversight in the future. Regular communications to this group should also provide updates on the action plan's goal progress.

By reducing conflicting and redundant regulations across agencies that oversee child care centers, directors and staff will have to spend less of their work hours on compliance, and proportionally more of their time caring for children and leading and improving center operations.

Recommendation: Encourage collaboration between child care programs and ISDs to increase professional development opportunities that increase children's kindergarten readiness

Description: Children's readiness for kindergarten is a critical predictor of long-term academic success. However, many private child care programs operate in isolation from ISDs, limiting opportunities for resource and knowledge sharing, as well as opportunities for feedback. Strengthening coordination (outside of formal Pre-K partnerships) can help private child care programs and ISDs benefit from knowledge sharing and sharing professional development opportunities.

The Workgroup recommends the following strategies to implement this recommendation:

- **Catalogue approaches and best practices:** TWC's Pre-K Partnerships team to lead an effort to catalogue successful approaches to informal collaboration among ISDs and child care programs, distill findings into a "how to" guide that outlines successful low-cost, low-effort methods to improve collaboration between ISDs and child care programs on the topic of professional development opportunities.
- **Promote "how to" guide to encourage adoption**: Communicate "how to" guide broadly (e.g., TWC newsletter, at Texas Rising Star conferences, etc.). Partner with LWDBs to communicate information to local ISDs and child care programs. Encourage LWDBs to designate a point person to support local communication and collaboration between child care programs and ISDs.
- **Leverage cross-agency collaboration to bring school districts to the table:** In order to increase likelihood of ISD engagement via TEA's support and guidance, TWC's Pre-K Partnership team should strategize with TEA via the Quad-Agency Child Care Commission to understand how ISDs can benefit from informal Pre-K partnerships, and how ISDs can be encouraged to enter into informal Pre-K partnerships. These conversations should focus on how professional development resources can be shared to the benefit of both ISDs and private child care programs.

Recommendation: Develop a strategy to expand the child care workforce pipeline from nontraditional sectors and industries

Rationale: It is unclear how many potential new entrants into the child care workforce there are from nontraditional pathways (e.g., mid-career changers), because the engagement of these potential candidates has not been pursued in a systematic way in Texas.

Strategies: TWC should identify partners that have a vested interest in improving the child care workforce pipeline, such as large employers with on-site child care centers or who are beneficiaries of the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) Act, industries anticipating layoffs that could support their employees to transition into the child care workforce, career coaches at LWDBs and community colleges, and public programs with work requirements such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Once stakeholders have been identified, TWC should support LWDBs by designing an outreach campaign that LWDBs can collaboratively deliver with TWC to enable connections with these stakeholders locally. This campaign should include publicizing the updated TECPDS Career Pathway, once complete (see Recommendation #9: Develop an updated career map to working in early childhood education).

Recommendation: Collaborate with TEA to enable pooled health insurance purchasing facilitated by intermediaries set up under HB2's provision to increase Pre-K partnerships

Rationale: Child Care Directory Survey respondents cited lack of healthcare coverage as a key driver of employee turnover. Respondents indicated only 37% of full-time child care center teachers and 14% of full-time home-based child care teachers receive health insurance benefits through their employer.

Strategy: TWC should collaborate with TEA to encourage Pre-K partnership intermediaries—established under HB2—to explore coordinating pooled health insurance purchasing for participating child care programs. Although HB2 doesn't directly address health coverage for child care workers and TEA is still defining the full scope of the responsibilities of the intermediaries, adding health coverage to the scope of these intermediaries offers an opportunity to aggregate child care programs' purchasing power, enabling access to more affordable group health plans for staff employed by participating child care programs. Similar to United Way of Austin's Shared Services Alliance model, these intermediaries could negotiate large group insurance rates on behalf of participating child care programs. As non-governmental organizations, they could also seek philanthropic or other funding to subsidize premiums. Beyond HB2 implementation, TWC's

leadership of the Quad Agency Child Care Commission (HB 4903) provides another platform to work towards expanded health coverage access for child care workers.

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