

Local Perspective on Early Learning Data & Accountability

Presented by Kara Waddell with
Child Care Associates
to the Governor's Task Force on ECE
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**Critical
Data
Challenges
Facing
Local
Texas
Communities**



Families are unable to see or navigate their place in the system.



We lack a systematic approach to responding to families' ECE needs.



We are trying to solve a workforce crisis without a workforce dataset.



We cannot meaningfully measure the impact of public investments at the state or local levels.

Summary of Recommendations



Deliver transparency that families can actually use.

- At a minimum, families should be able to see where they are on the CCS waitlist, understand expected timelines and access clear information about available care.



Establish a statewide household survey to understand family demand, broken down and made accessible at the regional level.

- A recurring, statewide household survey would provide policymakers and communities a real-time picture of Texas family ECE needs and preferences at the state and regional level, what barriers they face in accessing care, and track how needs are changing over time.



Build a comprehensive early educator workforce data system

- To address the early educator workforce crisis, policymakers and communities need both statewide & regional data that includes educator quantity, age, setting, credentials, stability & turnover.



Make ECIDS actionable – not just aspirational.

- Texas relies on ECIDS being brought to completion in a timely manner, that it connects data across family choices (child care, pre-k, Head Start), and is inclusive of educator data, as well as program and student data.



Build a true state-to-local data partnership

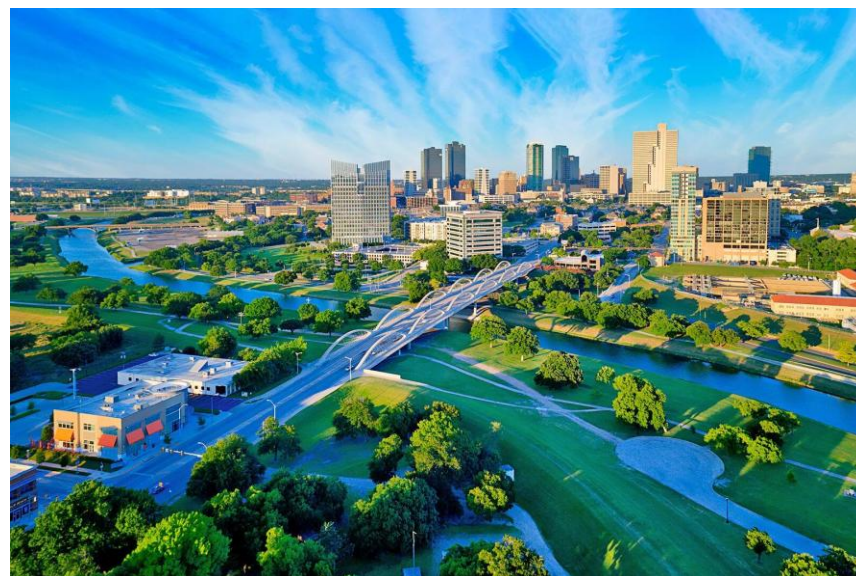
- Statewide coherence relies on a framework that enables local communities to access and utilize their local data “held” by the state. This should include:
 - Timely, routine access to core datasets at the community level
 - Standardized reporting that is consistent, reliable, and actionable
 - Clear guidance on data ownership, privacy, and allowable use

Data & Accountability:

Local Perspective

Child Care Associates operates major parts of the local early learning “system” in North Texas, including:

- Child Care Services Contractor for (2) Local Workforce Development Boards
 - Child Care Scholarships
 - Texas Rising Star quality
- Operate 15 centers including Head Start & Early Head Start
- Pre-K Partnership Coordination
 - 60+ child care programs
 - 2 local LEAs



As the face of the ECE system in our communities, we are responsible for:

- Supporting families to navigate ECE options, financial offsets, and access care that meets their unique needs;
- Developing and implementing local quality improvement plans
- Collaborating with local ISDs to ensure students are kindergarten ready
- Aligning community partners around highest leverage investments

Critical Challenge #1: Families are unable to find & navigate options as well as their place in the system.

Families lack clear insight into basic questions:

**What are
ALL my
options?**

- Where can I find available ECE?
- What are all the different programs out there?
- Are they quality?

**How do I
apply for
different
options?**

- What programs am I eligible for?
- Where do I submit?
- When is it due and when do I find it?

**What is my
status in
receiving
support?**

- Where am I on any waitlist?
- How long will it take until I receive support?

Recommendation #1: Ensure families have a clear picture of what options are available to them and where they are on the waitlist for services.

Critical Challenge #2: There is no systematic approach to understanding or responding to families' unique ECE needs.



American families are averaging 2.1 types of child care simultaneously because no single arrangement meets their full needs (2026).

As a state, we are not consistently asking families:

- What type of ECE are you looking for?
- When and where do you need it?
- What can you realistically afford?



Doing so, would allow state and local leaders to:

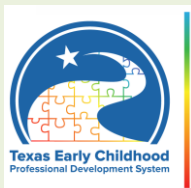
- Provide a real-time picture of demand at the state & regional level
- Track how needs are changing over time
- Ensure investments are made based on reality, not assumptions

Recommendation #2: Establish a statewide household survey to understand family need, broken down by region.

Critical Challenge #3: We are trying to solve an ECE workforce crisis without a meaningful workforce dataset

To best align community resources, training and education systems that address workforce challenges, we must be able to answer critical questions:

- How many early educators do we have? Where are staffing shortages most acute?
- What credentials do they hold? How much are they paid?
- Where are they located? What types of classrooms are they in?
- How many more do we need—and where do we need them? How is this aligned with the evolving needs of families?



Texas has the foundation laid with the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS), however participation is optional and it does not currently include necessary access, data fields, and capabilities.

Recommendation #3: Build a comprehensive, longitudinal workforce dataset, made available at the state and local level.

Critical Challenge #4: Texas cannot measure how public investments are delivering results at the state & local levels.

Texas deploys significant public dollars through child care scholarships, Texas Rising Star, public pre-k and other programmatic quality supports. But we cannot easily answer fundamental questions:

- How are children who receive those supports faring when they enter the public school system?
- How are our investments into early learning program quality actually translating into meaningful outcomes for students?

At the local level, we face two core issues:

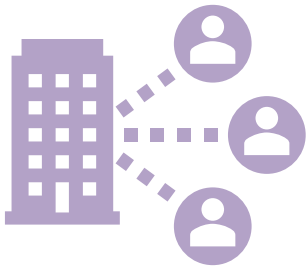


PEIMS numbers have been issued to children receiving CCS; however, they do not matriculate with the student if entering a public school setting; lack of clarity if PEIMS can be used by local communities to track impact.



State-to-local data sharing is largely unavailable, and localized data reports are not systematically provided, despite being locally entered and submitted to the state.

Recommendation #4: Ensure that the state moves towards actionable implementation of ECIDS in a timely manner.



Texas must ensure ECIDS in its final form:

- Empowers us to connect data across programs—child care, pre-k, head start.
- Include educator data, as well as program and student data, so we can understand the full system and how investments interact with one another.
- Enable longitudinal tracking so we can answer whether investments are improving outcomes over time.
- Produces timely insights that are usable at the local level, not simply focusing on statewide reporting.

Recommendation #5: Enable true state-to-local data partnerships by establishing data-sharing frameworks that provide timely and actionable, community-level data.



Texas must establish a clear framework for:

- Timely, routine access to core datasets at the community level
- Standardized reporting that is consistent, reliable, and actionable
- Clear guidance on data ownership, privacy, and allowable use

What could this mean for Texas?

Addressing these critical challenges would allow local communities to better execute on their core responsibilities by making resource decisions with the full-picture.

This includes:

- Accurately assessing and responding to family demand;
- Proactively planning for and stabilizing the workforce;
- Shaping and sustaining the local supply of care, and
- Measuring whether our investments are working.

A strong data foundation also allows communities to better align community partners and resources around highest-leverage investments.

This includes:

- Strategically coordinating community response to stabilize the market and build supply based on community demand;
- Aligning education and training systems to build the workforce, and
- Aligning quality investments around actually improves quality.

**CCA is pleased to offer our support towards
building a strong system for Texas
children & families.**



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