

A Strong Early Childhood Education Governance Structure is Critical for Texas' Future

HB 117 Paves the Way for a More Coherent ECE System

Texas' early childhood education (ECE) system untapped potential to lay the foundation for workforce participation from parents while providing high-quality and accessible care for young children. A cohesive ECE system is essential to ensuring the 2.3 million Texas children between the ages of 0-6¹ enter kindergarten ready to succeed. However, the state's current ECE governance structure is fragmented, creating challenges for parents, providers, and policymakers. HB 117 establishes a **Governor's Task Force on Governance of Early Childhood Education and Care** to deliver legislative recommendations and pave the way for a more efficient, effective, and outcomes-driven system.

Challenges in the Current System



Parents

Face a disjointed system with multiple applications and **limited visibility into available opportunities.**



State Economy

Loses almost \$10 billion annually due to a convoluted child care system that impacts workforce participation.²



Students

Only **52% of students enter kindergarten ready to succeed**,³ often missing a critical window for development that supports later student outcomes.



Providers

Must comply with multiple regulations across various agencies, **reducing efficiency and limiting participation in the state's subsidized programs.**



Agencies

Operate in silos with duplicative efforts and a lack of a comprehensive approach, **making it difficult to align goals and maximize taxpayer investments.**

HB 117 Creates a Task Force to Improve Systemic Challenges

The **Governor's Task Force on Governance of ECE and Care** will **align policies, increase efficiency, and improve child outcomes** by:



Assessing Governance & Operational Challenges

Examining functions, responsibilities, governance, and inefficiencies across HHSC, TEA, and TWC.



Developing a Strategic Framework

Aligning goals and metrics across these state agencies to measure progress in early learning.



Providing Legislative & Budget Recommendations

Delivering a plan to improve ECE governance with the goal to increase affordable childcare capacity and kindergarten readiness by **December 1, 2026.**

1: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table B09001.

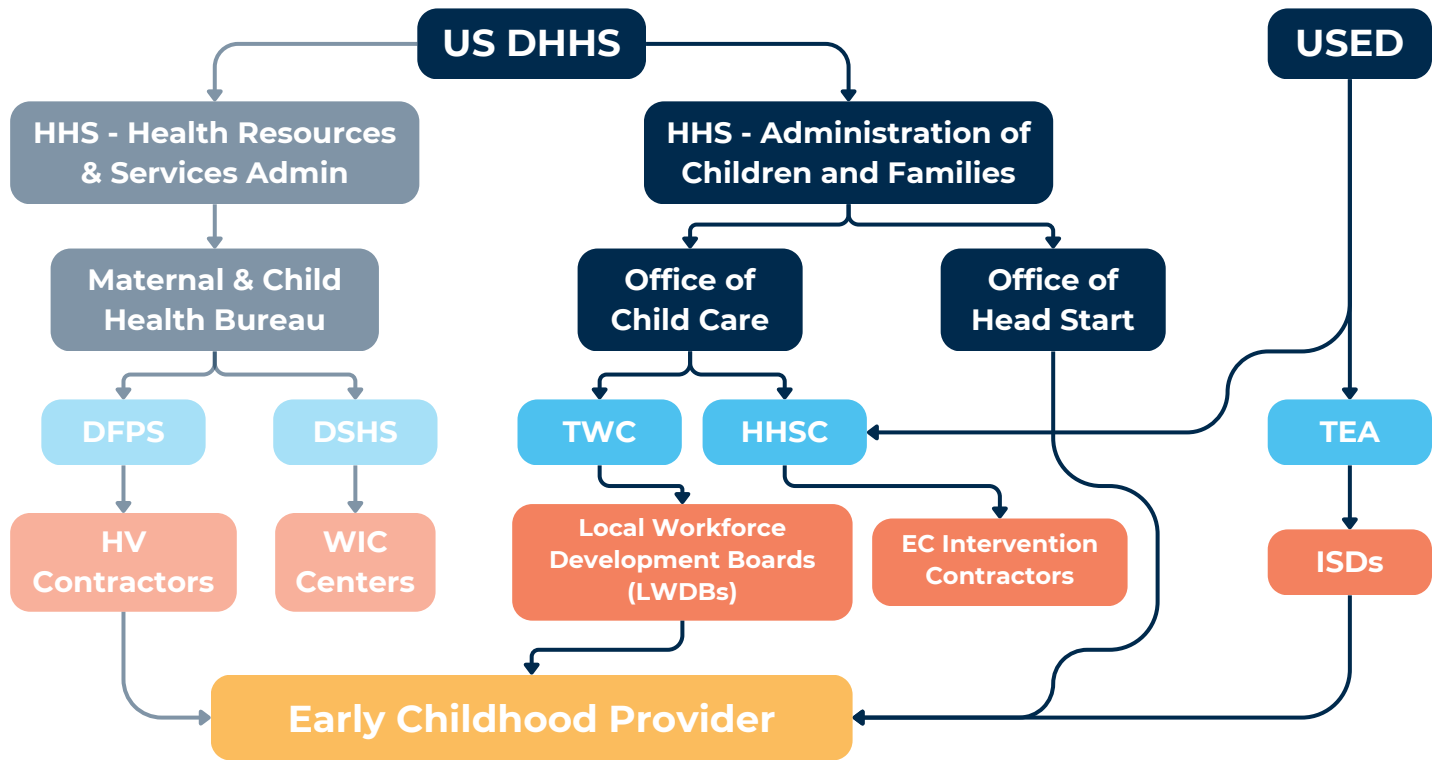
2: First Five Years Fund. (2023). 2023 Child Care and Early Education in Texas. https://www.ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/FFYF_Texas_2023.pdf; Sandra Bishop, Ph.D., (2023). "\$122 Billion: The Growing Annual Cost of the Infant-Toddler Child Care Crisis." ReadyNation, Council for a Strong America.

3: TPEIR. (2024). https://www.texaseducationinfo.org/Home/Topic/texas_public_kg_programs_and_kg_readiness_state

4: Regeinstein, Elliot. (2020). Early Childhood Governance: Getting There from Here.

https://www.fleadvisors.com/uploads/4/2/4/2/42429949/fip_gettingtherefromhere_061120.pdf

Current ECE Programs are Siloed Across a Number of Agencies



A Timely Opportunity: A Coherent ECE System Strengthens the State



Stronger Coordination = Better Outcomes

A coherent governance structure improves efficiency and drives better results for families, providers, and the state.



A Proactive Approach to Kindergarten Readiness

Addressing governance challenges now ensures more students start school on track, reducing later academic struggles.



Long-Term Cost Savings

Investing in a well-governed ECE system reduces inefficiencies.

HB 117's proposed model ensures that Texas takes a thoughtful approach to improving ECE governance that incorporates expert perspectives and builds on lessons learned from other states that have developed more **effective and accountable ECE systems**. By creating a Governor's Task Force on Governance of ECE and Care, Texas has the opportunity to **strengthen early education**, ensure a more **efficient ECE system**, and secure a **brighter future for Texas and its youngest learners**.

