

Early Matters

88th Legislative Session Recap

Of the 72 early childhood and education related bills that Early Matters monitored throughout 88th regular legislative session, 11 (~15%) passed both Chambers and are awaiting a signature from the Governor. The bills and outcomes listed below were part of a shared legislative agenda that Early Matters supported.



Property Tax Relief to Child Care Providers

[HB 1801](#) – Talarico | [SB 1145](#) – West

**PASSED
AND...**

Summary: A quality rated child care program will be entitled to a tax exemption from the real property the person owns and operates as a child-care facility.

Outcome: Combined with the passing of SJR 64, there will be a constitutional amendment on the November 7 ballot to create targeted property tax cuts for child care providers. If passed by the voters, cities and counties will have the option to cut property taxes for child care providers anywhere from 50 to 100 percent. Eligible child care providers must participate in the Texas Rising Star (TRS) and maintain a minimum 20 percent TRS enrollment. With this going on the November ballot, it creates an opportunity for a statewide conversation about the cost of child care.



Strengthen Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs)

[HB 1979](#) – Raney/Plesa/Bumgarner | [SB 1844](#) – Blanco

**DIDN'T
PASS
BUT...**

Summary: Ensure LWDBs have the standards and supports needed to maximize funding, improve transparency, and provide eligible families with improved access to child care by: 1) creating alternative performance targets to ensure funding can address specific needs in their regions, 2) providing more waitlist and provider data, 3) updating websites, 4) increasing early childhood representation on boards.

Outcome: Voted out of the House with near unanimous bi-partisan support (139-2) but neither the Senate bill nor the House version was heard in the Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee. Conversations throughout the session with TWC resulted in changes at the Agency level: TWC will now conduct bi-annual reviews of performance targets and increase data collection standardization and transparency across LWDBs. A similar provision from this bill around increasing child care expertise of LWDB membership was included in [HB 1615](#) (Button).



Increase PreK Partnerships & Streamline Eligibility

[HB 1614](#) – Dutton

**DIDN'T
PASS**

Summary: This bill would have established a grant program administered by TEA to provide funding for the 3,500 students that are currently estimated to fall in an eligibility gap for PreK Partnerships: students eligible for child care scholarships as administered by TWC but not eligible for free ISD PreK.

Outcome: Voted out of the House (86-59) the bill was subsequently heard in the Senate Education Committee. The bill missed a procedural deadline to be voted out of committee and sent to the Senate floor.



Reimbursement Rates for Quality Care

[HB 1834](#) – Thompson, Jetton | [SB 353](#) – Zaffarini

**DIDN'T
PASS**

Summary: Would have ensured providers in the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) system received reimbursements based on the quality of their program since under current law, TWC cannot reimburse child care providers more than their published rate – even if poverty has driven that rate too low to pay for quality child care.

Outcome: Was heard in the House International Relations and Economic Development Committee but concerns were raised that this bill would reduce the number of children served. The Senate companion was never heard in the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee.



Bedrock Funding

Budget Rider - Rep. Walle

**DIDN'T
PASS**

Summary: The proposed \$2.29B rider in Article II would have continued the state's stabilization grants that were funded by and distributed through federal ARPA dollars.

Outcome: Though the rider was moved to Article XI (the state's "wish list") and was not included in the final budget, the request established a dollar amount and elevated vital conversations about the amount of funding that is sorely needed in the child care industry.