



Health and Human Services

Early Childhood Intervention Advisory Committee

April 27, 2026

This summary contains supplemental information from reliable sources where that information provides clarity to the issues being discussed. Power Point tables used in the presentations may also be used in this summary. Names of individuals may be misspelled but every attempt has been made to ensure accuracy. Tables and Text have been used from executive and legislative agencies and departments' presentations and publications.





[Early Childhood Intervention Advisory Committee](#) advises the HHSC Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Services program on developing and implementing policies that constitute the statewide ECI system.

The Early Childhood Intervention Advisory Committee, which is required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, advises the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services on development and implementation of policies that constitute the statewide ECI system. The governor appoints the committee members.

The federal law establishing the system of early intervention programs for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities is Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. In Texas, the Part C program is Early Childhood Intervention. ECI is a division of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Each state that operates a Part C program must include as a part of its program an advisory council. Part C of the IDEA calls that council the Interagency Coordinating Council. The HHSC/ECI ICC is the ECI Advisory Committee. The function of the Advisory Committee is to advise and assist HHSC/ECI in its operation of the statewide system of providing ECI services to eligible children and families in Texas. The multidisciplinary and multi-constituency representation on the Advisory Committee contributes to making it an important part of the ECI system. It is ECI's major source of stakeholder input.

Members:

Catherine Carlton, Chair

Program Representative
Arlington

Guillermo Lopez, Vice-Chair

Program Representative
Austin

Pattie Rosenlund

Program Representative
Mission

Deborah A. "Debbie" Cohen, Ph.D.

Parent Representative
Austin

David H. Goff, M.D.

Physician/Pediatrician Representative
Strawn

Audrey K. Jackson

Head Start Representative
San Marcos

Stephanie Klick

State Legislative Representative
Fort Worth

Cynthia (Cindy) Dawn Lee

Public Provider Representative
Wylie

Cynthia (Cal) Azenneth Lopez

Texas Education for Homeless Children



Hannah Holmes English

Parent Representative
Houston

Kristina Borenstein Otterstrom

Parent Representative
Houston

Stephanie Perry

Parent Representative
Denton

Patricia Kay Reedy

Parent Representative
Texarkana

Lizzeth Saldana

Parent Representative
San Antonio

Rachel Cerkovnik Bowden

Texas Department of Insurance (TDI)
Representative
Austin

Lori Gabbert Charney

Department of State Health Services -
Maternal and Child Health
Austin

and Youth (TEHCY) Representative
Austin

Felicia A. Penn

Department of Family and Protective
Services – Foster Care/Child Protective
Services
San Antonio

Rosalba A. Calleros Ramirez

Advocate Representative
Buda

Ryan David Van Ramshorst, M.D.

HHSC Medicaid/CHIP Representative
San Antonio

Chasey Sanchez, Ph.D.,

Program Representative
Texas City

Allison Pearce Wilson

Texas Workforce Commission
Representative
Austin

1. Call to order, logistical announcements, and roll call. Th meeting was convened by Catherine Carlton, Chair. A quorum was present.

2. Consideration of January 28, 2026, draft meeting minutes. The minutes were approved as drafted.

3. [ECI program updates](#)

Quarterly data Megan Young (ECI Director) presented quarterly metrics for FY2026:

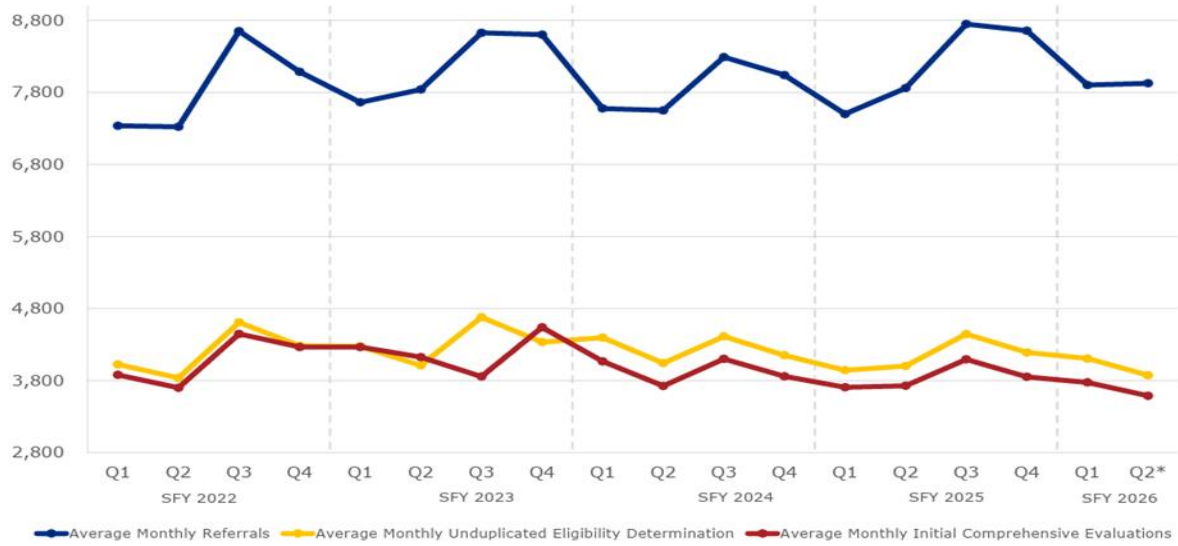
- Referral, eligibility determination, evaluation, and service numbers showed seasonality, with a notable but expected drop in the first quarter after a strong fourth quarter in FY25.
- Local program representatives confirmed these trends matched their experiences.
- Enrollment growth has stabilized at ~1% per year, matching Texas' under-three population growth.
- Service delivery hours and Medicaid coverage percentages remain steady.

Children Referred, Evaluated, and Served

	SFY 2022	SFY 2023	SFY 2024	SFY 2025	SFY 2026 Q1	SFY 2026 Q2*
Average Monthly Referrals	7,765	8,054	7,867	8,190	7,901	7,926
Average Monthly Unduplicated Eligibility Determination	4,209	4,353	4,272	4,147	4,107	3,875
Average Monthly Initial Comprehensive Evaluations	3,912	4,030	3,956	3,847	3,775	3,590
Average Monthly Comprehensive Served	33,697	35,028	35,302	35,390	35,259	34,634
Cumulative Quarterly/Annual Children Served (unduplicated)	65,584	67,512	67,413	67,980	41,311	49,575

*Data from the most recent quarter may be incomplete and is subject to change.

Referrals, Eligibility Determination, Evaluations



Data from the most recent quarter may be incomplete and is subject to change

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Children Served



*Data from the most recent quarter may be incomplete and is subject to change.

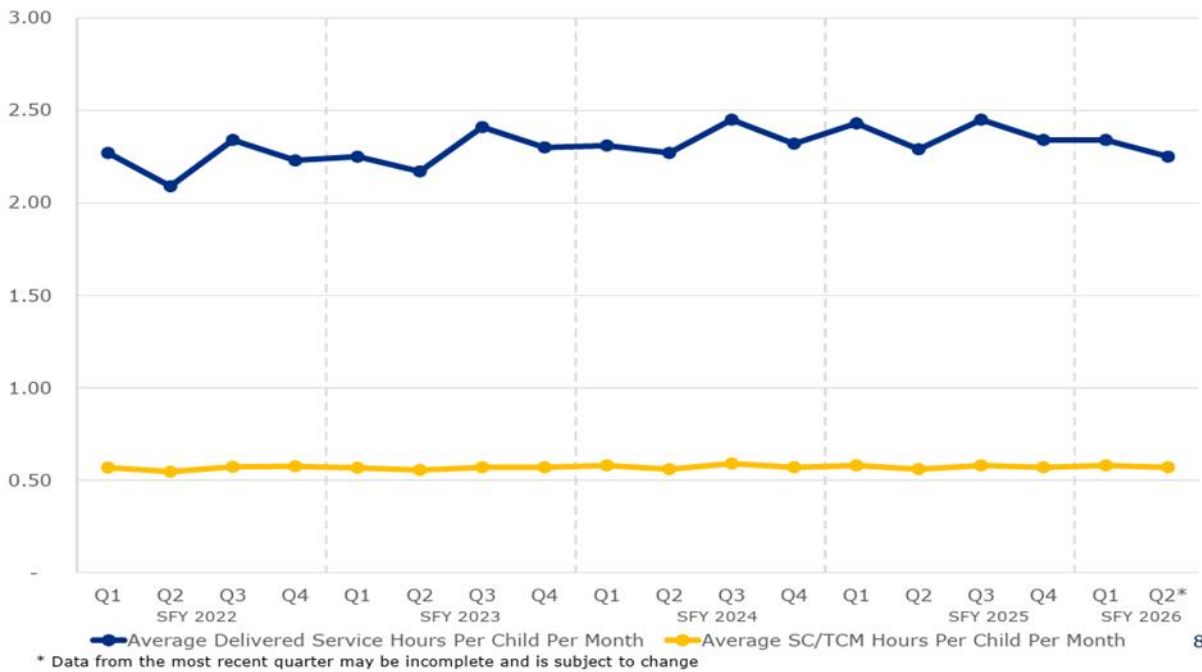
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Delivered Services

	SFY 2022	SFY 2023	SFY 2024	SFY 2025	SFY 2026 Q1	SFY 2026 Q2*
Average Monthly Delivered Service Hours (not parent-arranged)	75,315	79,859	82,658	84,091	82,460	78,094
Average Service Hours Per Child Per Month	2.24	2.28	2.34	2.38	2.34	2.25
Average Monthly Service Coordination (SC)/ Targeted Case Management (TCM) Hours	7,970	9,186	9,964	9,895	9,690	9,148
Average SC/TCM Hours Per Child Per Month	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.58	0.57

*Data from the most recent quarter may be incomplete and is subject to change.

Average Service Hours Per Child Per Month



ECI Children with Medicaid Coverage

	SFY 2025	SFY 2026 Q1	SFY 2026 Q2*
Average Monthly Medicaid-Served	21,707	21,480	20,912
Average Monthly Comprehensive Served	35,390	35,259	34,634
Percent Medicaid	61.34%	60.92%	60.38%

*Data from the most recent quarter may be incomplete and is subject to change.

Training and outreach

The recent transition-focused webinar provided guidance and parent experiences; recording available online. New guidance and resources for children who are deaf/hard of hearing or visually impaired including webinars and flowcharts, were developed with TEA collaboration. ECI staff attended and presented at multiple statewide early childhood and therapy conferences; more planned in the coming months. The Ongoing Family Stories Project collects and shares family testimonials to support peer-to-peer outreach and awareness, with newsletter articles, new video content, and social media campaigns underway.

Series for Meaningful Interagency Learning and Education (SMILE) webinar:

- February 2026: Texas Children in Nature Network
- April 2026: Texas Workforce Commission

Updated Trainings for Child Care Staff

- The ECI Training Team has updated the presentations for childcare staff.
 - Planning and Creating Inclusive Early Childhood Classrooms
 - Building Stronger Brain Foundations
 - All Together Now: Working Together to Create Positive Learning Environments for All Children

- The updated presentations will continue to provide childcare professionals with professional education credits.

Coverage of Child Care Training



Over 1500 people have participated in training.

Recently Attended Conferences

Name	Date	Location
Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association 70th Annual Convention & Exhibition	February 19 – 21	Fort Worth
Annual Executive Directors' Conference for Family Violence and Sexual Assault Programs	March 5 – 6	Round Rock
Texas Rising Star Early Educator Conference	April 7 - 9	Grapevine

Upcoming Conferences

Name	Date	Location
Educational First Steps Conference	May 30	Dallas
Texas Autism Conference	June 15 – 18	Virtual
21st Annual Statewide Parent to Parent Conference	July 17 – 18	Georgetown
Work Force Solutions: Child Care Directors and Teachers Symposium	July 24 – 25	Round Rock
Texas Rising Star Early Educator Conference	July 29 – 31	Dallas

New ECI Publications [Early Childhood Intervention : HHSC Forms & Publications](#)

ECI Recruitment Flyer



FY2026 Service Area Map



ECI Family Stories Project

- 10 families have participated in the project.
- The project was recently highlighted in the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired TX SenseAbilities newsletter. [Early Childhood Intervention Family Stories Project | Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#)
- If you know a family that may be interested in participating, please contact the ECI outreach team at eci_outreach@hhs.texas.gov .

Memorandum of Understanding between HHSC ECI and the Texas Education Agency

HHSC ECI and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) have executed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). T

The updated MOU replaces all previous MOUs between HHSC ECI and TEA ([tea-eci-mou-2026.pdf](#)) and addresses:

- The roles and responsibilities between HHSC ECI and TEA for birth to 3 services.
- The transition process for children turning 3 and exiting the ECI program.
- Referral and child find responsibilities for birth to 3, including specific responsibilities pertaining to children who are deaf or hard of hearing are deafblind, or have a visual impairment.

The updated MOU is located on the ECI Extranet in the Document Libraries MOUs section.



Implementation of House Bill (H.B.) 117, H.B. 2310, H.B. 3963, H.B.

5629, 89th House Bill 3963 mandates the creation of a Texas Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) connecting data across agencies; MOU among TEA, TWC, and HHSC is pending, with a public dashboard in development. The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) provided significant funding for workforce support, training, and resources (e.g., assessment kits, provider stipends, autism workshops).

Strategic Plan goals include broadening the ECI peer network and statewide training for inclusive education

Personnel Retention Grant (in partnership with UTEP) concluded with targeted technical assistance, summits, and resources for retention strategies; some local improvements in staff retention were noted despite statewide challenges.

There are new application procedures for military-affiliated professionals to obtain EIS credentials per House Bill 5629; rule amendments and public complaint tracking established. There is ongoing review and refinement of ECI credentialing, onboarding, and training requirements.

House Bill 117

- Created a task force to address governance and operational challenges of the early childhood education system in Texas.
- Governor Greg Abbott launched the task force and appointed 11 members on January 20.
- HHSC informed TEA about their appointments to the steering committee: (Faith Sandberg-Rodriguez; Jennifer Vincent)
- First task force meeting was held on March 31.

House Bill 2310

- University of Texas School of Social Work's Texas Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing is assisting with creating the strategic plan.
- TEA released a stakeholder survey to families, early childhood educators, and providers.
- HHSC, TEA, and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) recruited families to participate in stakeholder focus groups.



House Bill 3963

- HHSC, TEA, and TWC are completing user acceptance testing of the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS).
- Data transfer will begin once HHSC, TWC, and TEA execute the data sharing agreement.
- TEA anticipates publishing the public-facing ECIDS in April 2026.

House Bill 5629

- HHSC ECI announced implementation of the application for active-duty military service members, military spouses, and military veterans in December 2025.
- Rule amendments are in progress.
 - Informal public comment began March 17, 2026.
 - Informal public comment ended April 1, 2026.
 - Formal public comment expected to occur in August 2026.

Texas Early Learning Council Strategic Plan 2024-2026 Texas Early

Learning Strategic Plan has four focus areas:

- Family access, navigation, and engagement
- Workforce recruitment, retention, and support
- Local systems and partnership building
- Data and system coordination The plan is located on the TELC website. Texas Early Learning Council Home (earlylearningtexas.org)

Action 2.4.4: HHSC ECI will continue the Professionalism Engagement Empowerment Resources (PEER) Network for early intervention specialists and service coordinators. • The PEER Network has 308 registered members. HHSC ECI supports ECI programs in leading the PEER Network.

Action 2.4.6: HHSC ECI will continue to develop and make available trainings on children with special needs, including autism, and on managing challenging behavior in young children. Since April 2023, ECI programs and participants have reported providing 172 trainings on creating classrooms for children of all abilities. Since May 2024, HHSC ECI continues to offer four trainings on engaging children with autism and managing challenging behavior. Trainings are located on the ECI Archived Webinars webpage [Learning Stream ::...](#)

4. Family Health Services updates

Family Health Services offers health and social services to meet the needs of Texans in all stages of life. Family Health Services provides:

Services that promote healthy families and communities, including parent education, home visiting, resource navigation, positive youth development programming, and youth and family counseling.

Clinical services, including family planning and breast and cervical cancer services, and primary health and dental care for children and pregnant women.

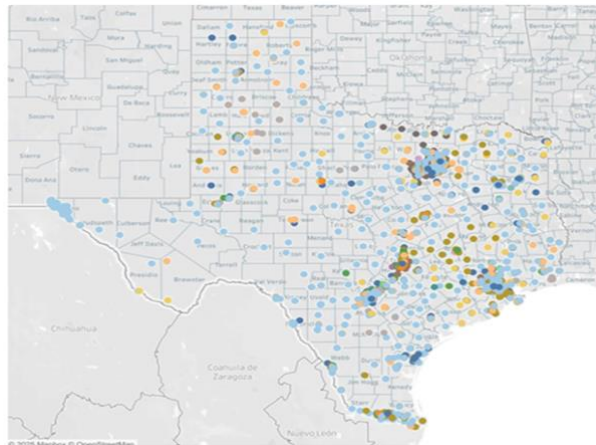
Social and safety support services, including support for pregnant women and young families, and survivors of child abuse, family violence and human trafficking.

Support for young children and families, including nutrition through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and services for young children with disabilities through Early Childhood Intervention.

Specialized services through community-based supports and direct service delivery for people with disabilities or specialty health needs — including blindness, brain injury, deafness and hard of hearing — and access to health care and benefits for Texans with specific diagnoses.

More than:

- 20 programs
- 700 contracts
- 300 grantees



Senate Bill 24, 88th Legislature, Regular Session, requires that HHSC “plan, develop, and administer an integrated continuum of care system of programs providing family support services to at risk families.”

Integrated System



Coordinating Benefits Across State Agencies and Programs Challenges

- Isolated programs that serve similar populations.
- Siloed data systems that can make cross-program analysis difficult.
- Programs have their own eligibility criteria and enrollment processes.
- Can be a lack of coordination between FHS programs and other state programs.
- Families may be unable to connect with supports in a timely manner.
- Potential for gaps in services or missed opportunities for early intervention.

Stakeholder Engagement



Family Experience Maps

High points

- “Having someone supportive] to look into all these programs is a big help.”
- “[Staff] actually listened to what I was saying or discussing and would bring up [other resources].”
- “Applying to WIC and TNFP was easy, they just pulled my information from Medicaid.”
- “I needed help with the modern and new technology and all of that. We had to work through all of that.... [Staff] were really supportive.”

Pain points

- “...Honestly if I didn’t work there, I would have never heard about it.”
- “It’s a very, very long process to get somebody [to help] online.”
- “I get a piece of paper with 15 listed resources, like, where do you start?”
- “There are little resources here and there, and I understand they can’t help everyone. But sometimes the struggle of trying to find where, it was a struggle.”

Partnership with University of Texas Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing
Analysis and recommendations based on:

- Environmental scan of existing efforts
- Staff survey and focus groups
- Interactive community listening sessions

Integration from a Practical Perspective

- Realigning programs into a more effective structure.
- Improving data-driven decision-making.
- Evaluating internal processes.
- Incentivizing collaboration and relationship building.

Next Steps

- Analyzing grantee survey results
- Community listening sessions this spring
- UT develops report and recommendations

[5. Overview and discussion of the Strategic Plan to Improve Early Learning Opportunities for Young Children with Disabilities \(H.B. 2310, 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025\)](#)



TEA is developing a professional development program to improve transition from ECI (Part C) to Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE, Part B), featuring online and in-person training, joint planning tools, and aligned guidance.

Stakeholder surveys identified key needs: clearer communication, consistent resources, strategies to engage and reassure families, and logistical support (e.g., for transportation and childcare).

Materials will be posted online and joint training to roll out by summer 2026.

Purpose of House Bill 2310

Four Year Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education and Inclusion

Coordinated, multi-agency collaborative effort

- Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)
- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

Purpose:

- Improve early learning and educational opportunities for young children with disabilities or developmental delays
- Create a seamless continuum of services from birth through school entry, empowering families and providers to support each child's growth and success.

Inclusion means that children with disabilities, and/or developmental delays, learn, play, and take part in activities alongside children of their same age without disabilities. They get the support and services they need so they can take part in the same programs as their peers without disabilities.

Strategic Plan Must Include

- Strategies for inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays in early childhood education settings
- Description of existing barriers
- Recommendations necessary to improve inclusion

- Recommendations to improve provider staffing, training, sustainability, and effectiveness across public schools, child-care programs, and early childhood intervention services

Recommendations for Action

- Improved provider staffing, training, sustainability, and effectiveness
- Effective leveraging of existing funding and resources
- Streamlined transitions for families
- Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) → Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) → Special education programs
- Improved collaboration and partnerships between child-care programs, early childhood intervention service providers, and public schools

Stakeholder Survey

To ensure that the strategic plan reflects the real needs and experiences of families, educators, and service providers. Your feedback is critical in:

- Identifying barriers
- Sharing successful strategies
- Shaping policies to promote inclusion and smooth transitions across programs

Help shape Texas’s Early Childhood Inclusion Plan We want to hear from families, early childhood educators, and providers. Your experiences will help Texas understand what is working well and where improvements are needed. This anonymous survey takes 10–12 minutes to complete and will remain open until May 3rd. Please do not share this survey on social media to protect the integrity of this data protect from possible bots. Survey Link: <https://tinyurl.com/HB2310survey>



Scan to take survey



Other Engagement Opportunities

- April 17, 2026 – Texas Early Learning Council meeting Initial forum for discussion and feedback
- April 29, 2026 – ECI Advisory Committee Early intervention experts and family representatives
- Late April – Parent and Provider Focus Groups Confidential Focus Groups with families and childcare providers of young children with disabilities

What To Expect After Stakeholder Feedback

- 4-year strategic plan must be published by September 1st, 2026
- Survey and focus group summaries will be published with the plan
- Will develop a communications and sustainability plan to keep plan relevant and up to date
- FYI: We are partnering with the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing at UT Austin to assist with research and plan writing

Email: StrategicPlanHB2310@TEA.Texas.gov

6. Member reports Local program activities, Parent activities, Inter/intra-agency partners' activities.

- Program representatives reported strong staff retention, increased early referrals (many before 12 months), expansion of telehealth (especially during storms), new screening and training efforts for visual impairments, and collaborative inclusion conferences.
- Some local challenges: families declining telehealth or evaluations, and logistical hurdles around childcare and transportation during transitions.
- Parent representatives expressed gratitude for ECI's impact and promoted upcoming parent conferences and support resources.
- Agency partners flagged ongoing interest in data integration (HB 3963) and noted current events (e.g., flu season) affecting operations.

7. Public comment. No public comment was offered.

8. Planning for next meeting. August 25, 2026



9. Adjourn. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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