

TEXAS PRENATAL-TO-THREE COLLABORATIVE

Q1 Open Meeting Notes

Federal Update

- Danielle Ewen (Sixth Street Associates) provided an overview of federal policy developments impacting early childhood programs.
- The discussion highlighted ongoing federal activity affecting early care and education, workforce programs, and family supports that states may need to prepare for in upcoming policy and funding decisions.

Texas Sunset Review Process

- Mandi Kimball (CHILDREN AT RISK) shared an overview of the Texas Sunset Review process, which evaluates whether state agencies are operating effectively and should be continued, modified, or restructured.
- The current review cycle includes 16 state agencies, with the PN-3 Collaborative focusing on several that significantly impact early childhood systems, including the Health and Human Services Commission, Texas Workforce Commission, Department of State Health Services, and Department of Family and Protective Services.
- Collaborative partners have formed a Sunset Workgroup including AVANCE, CHILDREN AT RISK, Every Texan, Feeding Texas, Texans Care for Children, Texas Pediatric Society, TexProtects, and United Way of Texas to coordinate recommendations and stakeholder engagement.

Family Financial Security

- Ashley Harris (United Way of Texas) emphasized that family financial stability is central to long-term economic growth and child wellbeing.
- **Key policy ideas discussed included:**
 - Aligning workforce, education, and human services programs to reduce duplication and gaps for families.
 - Implementing braided funding strategies to support coordinated services.
 - Strengthening two-generation strategies that support both parents and children.
 - Standardizing workforce training program quality and performance measures.
 - Creating an Opportunity Youth Advisory Subcommittee and Youth Disconnection Ombudsman to address the needs of disconnected youth ages 16–24.
- Additional recommendations focused on improving SNAP Employment and Training programs by aligning eligibility requirements, expanding partnerships with credential programs and community colleges, and creating a statewide dashboard to track outcomes such as enrollment, completion, and job placement.

Strengthening Families and Connecting Them to Resources

- Presenters from TexProtects, United Way of Texas, and Texans Care for Children highlighted the need for a more coordinated system to connect families with services. Texas currently has multiple entry points for assistance that are often fragmented or duplicative, creating barriers for families seeking help.
- **Key recommendations discussed included:**
 - Developing a coordinated “no-wrong-door” intake and referral system across agencies.
 - Creating shared application processes to simplify access to services.
 - Expanding staffing and capacity for the Early Childhood Interagency Workgroup.

- Modernizing eligibility systems to improve the user experience and streamline application processes.
- Additional proposals included strengthening statewide resource connections by modernizing the 2-1-1 Texas system, expanding Family Resource Centers, sustaining Kinship Navigator programs, and aligning oversight of programs such as Help Me Grow.

Health and Nutrition Access

- Policy ideas were also discussed to improve access to health and nutrition supports for families.

Key recommendations discussed were:

- Streamlining SNAP eligibility processes and eliminating full-family sanctions.
- Strengthening the 2-1-1 Option 2 Medicaid call system.
- Implementing federal CHIP eligibility improvements.
- Aligning Medicaid and CHIP policies to allow 60-day retroactive coverage for children.

Access to Quality Child Care

- Kim Kofron (CHILDREN AT RISK) presented policy recommendations to strengthen Texas' early care and education system. Texas is home to approximately 2.3 million children under age six, and many families continue to face limited access to child care, particularly in low-income communities.
- **Key recommendations included:**
 - Establishing unified governance and stronger systemwide coordination across agencies responsible for child care programs.
 - Creating a single intake and referral system to streamline access to multiple programs.
 - Developing common applications and parent-facing dashboards that provide transparent information about eligibility, waitlists, and scholarship availability.
 - Improving regulatory alignment between child care licensing and Texas Rising Star standards through coordinated training.
 - Reviewing Local Workforce Development Board service areas to better align resources with population needs.
- Additional recommendations focused on strengthening accountability for contracted services and expanding access to child care for children with disabilities through enhanced reimbursement rates, inclusion recognition programs, and stronger pre-K partnerships.

Next Steps

- The Texas PN-3 Collaborative will continue to engage stakeholders and Sunset Commission staff while refining policy recommendations and gathering input from communities and partners. Members are encouraged to stay engaged and share feedback as this work moves forward.