

**Texas Rising Star Four-Year Review
2019–2020 Workgroup Recommendations**

Background

Pursuant to Texas Government Code §2001.039 and 40 Texas Administrative Code §809.130, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) must review and update the Texas Rising Star guidelines at a minimum of every four years. The review must consider input from stakeholders and include at least one public hearing before submitting stakeholder input to TWC. TWC must then adopt the final updates in an open meeting.

Beginning in May 2019, TWC convened a workgroup to review and recommend revisions to the guidelines. The workgroup includes child care program directors from around the state, early childhood advocacy organization representatives, professional development providers, Local Workforce Development Board (Board) staff members, and representatives from TWC, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission’s Child Care Licensing (CCL) division, and the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI), State Center for Early Childhood Development.

In the last eight months, the workgroup met regularly to review the Texas Rising Star guidelines in detail and to engage in a collaborative effort to improve them. The following overview summarizes the changes that the workgroup recommends for TWC’s consideration and for the public’s input.

System-Wide Recommendations

Increasing the Quality of Child Care and Early Learning in Texas

- Develop a statewide framework for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) to assist early learning programs to achieve higher levels of quality.
- Develop a long-range plan and statewide goals for moving more early learning programs to higher levels of quality.
- Add a 1-star level for programs currently participating in the child care subsidy program that meet the minimum screening criteria for the Texas Rising Star program.
- Study options to ensure equal access to high quality care in areas where Texas Rising Star providers’ published rates are below the Board’s maximum daily rate, regardless of a program’s published rate.
- Require Texas Rising Star 2-, 3-, and 4-star–rated programs to participate in the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) Workforce Registry (WFR).
- Implement a statewide transition timeline to allow Texas Rising Star staff and currently certified programs time to become familiar with and plan for the changes to the guidelines.
- Change common terminology throughout Texas Rising Star documents, communication, and outreach collateral to promote professionalization of the early childhood field, including the following terms:
 - Early learning program
 - After-school program
 - Facility, or program

- 1 ➤ Early childhood educator
- 2 ➤ Teacher, or staff
- 3 • Develop an outreach plan to emphasize family and consumer education around choosing high-
- 4 quality programs and encouraging and informing programs to remain or become high-quality
- 5 programs.

6 *Ensure Consistent and Valid Program Ratings Across the State*

- 7 • Require Texas Rising Star staff (assessors and mentors) to complete all Texas Rising Star
- 8 Assessor Certification course components.
- 9 • Require Texas Rising Star assessors to achieve Assessor Certification and to pass quarterly
- 10 reliability checks developed and administered by the state.
- 11 • Consider centralization of the Texas Rising Star assessment function to support strong inter-rater
- 12 reliability and fidelity of program ratings.
- 13 • Provide supports to build the skills of Texas Rising Star staff, including publishing an
- 14 onboarding process and offering professional development on coaching and leadership
- 15 development in early childhood settings.

16 **Recommended Revisions to Standards**

17 **Screening Form Changes**

- 18 • Change terminology on how child care licensing deficiencies are categorized on all facility types
- 19 ➤ Change “Critical” to “Level 1”
- 20 ➤ Change “High/Medium-High” to “Level 2”
- 21 • Change the following two standards from Level 1 (Critical) to Level 2 (High/Medium-High) for
- 22 all facility types:
- 23 ➤ Director Annual Training—30 Hours Required
- 24 ➤ Caregiver/Site Director Training
- 25 • Remove the “Responsibilities of Caregivers—Children in Control” standard from the screening
- 26 form for all facility types.

27 Additionally, the workgroup recommends not adding additional standards to any of the facility-type

28 forms and to keep all current processes.

29 Also, the workgroup recommends limiting the impact of licensing deficiencies and increasing technical

30 assistance for programs at risk of losing or dropping their Texas Rising Star certification in order to limit

31 the monetary impact..

32 **Consideration of Programs with National Accreditation**

- 33 • Allow Early Head Start and Head Start programs that meet eligibility requirements to participate
- 34 in the Texas Rising Star program so that they may be considered nationally accredited programs.
- 35 • Require all nationally accredited programs to undergo a modified initial and recertification
- 36 assessment that is specific to Categories 2 and 4 only.

1 **Category-Specific Revisions**

2 *Director and Staff Qualifications Category*

- 3 • Remove the following measures:
 - 4 ➤ S-DQT-02: Director Certification Course
 - 5 ➤ P-DEQT-06: Part 5 Director Training (condensed into S-DQT-04 and in CQIP)
 - 6 ➤ S-COTQ-02: Volunteer and Substitute Orientation (condensed into S-COTQ-01)
 - 7 ➤ S-COTQ-06: Staff Training Plans (condensed into S-COTQ-03)
 - 8 ➤ P-CQT-03: Staff Training Alignment
- 9 • Revise the following measures:
 - 10 ➤ S-DQT-04: Director Responsibilities
 - 11 ➤ P-DEQT-01: Director Education (Centers)
 - 12 ➤ P-DEQT-02: Director Education (Homes)
 - 13 ➤ P-DEQT-03: Director Education (School Age)
 - 14 ➤ P-DEQT-04: Part 4 Director Experience (Centers)
 - 15 ➤ P-DEQT-05: Part 7 Director Experience (School Age)
 - 16 ➤ S-COTQ-01: Staff Orientation (includes substitutes and volunteers)
 - 17 ➤ S-COTQ-03: Staff Training Plans
 - 18 ➤ P-CQT-01: Staff Qualifications (Centers)
 - 19 ➤ P-CQT-02: Staff Qualifications (School Age)

20 *Teacher-Child Interactions Category*

- 21 • Split Group Size and Ratio into two point-based measures.
- 22 • Reword all scoring language about quantitative measures to focus on caregiver consistency.
- 23 • Move Instructional Formats and Approaches to Learning (IFAL) measures from the previous
- 24 Category 3: Lesson Plans and Curriculum to this category as a fifth subcategory.
- 25 • Place a points-based, restructured nutrition measure in the Support for Children’s Regulation
- 26 subcategory of Category 2: Teacher-Child Interactions focused on self-help skill building.

27 *Lesson Plans and Curriculum Category*

- 28 • Rename this category because of the removal of measures LPC-02 through LPC-15.
- 29 • Condense, revise, and place PSNRD-01 through PSNRD-03 in the new Program Management
- 30 subcategory.
- 31 • Place the remaining IFAL measures in Category 2.
- 32 • Place the following new measures in the new Category 3: Program Administration:
 - 33 ➤ Curriculum Used
 - 34 ➤ Curriculum Supports
 - 35 ➤ Child Assessments
 - 36 ➤ Child Assessment Policy
 - 37 ➤ Revised Accommodations for Families/Child

1 *Nutrition and Indoor/Outdoor Environments Category*

- 2 • Condense all structural nutrition measures into other program measures within the new Category
- 3 3: Program Administration to form a new measure named “Health and Nutrition Practices.”
- 4 • Remove, condense, or place all points-based nutrition measures within Category 2.
- 5 • Remove indoor structural measures that duplicate CCL standards.
- 6 • Reword and move indoor measure P-ILE-06 to Category 2: Teacher-Child Interactions sub-
- 7 category Play-Based Interaction and Guidance as an additional measure focused on providing
- 8 and facilitating small group play.
- 9 • Condense outdoor measure P-OLE-04 into P-OLE-01.

10 *Parent Education and Involvement Category*

- 11 • Rename this category as Category 3: Program Administration, which will have the following
- 12 three following subcategories:
 - 13 ➤ Family Education
 - 14 ➤ Family Involvement
 - 15 ➤ Program Management
- 16 • Remove S-PE-02: Parent Communication.
- 17 • Add P-PM-01: Compensatory Supports as a new measure.
- 18 • Add new curriculum measures and a nutrition measure within the new subcategory titled
- 19 Program Management.

20 **Changes to the Texas Rising Star Processes**

- 21 • Require that the scheduling of assessments of programs allow for a two-week window in which
- 22 the assessments will be conducted. Annual monitoring visits will remain unannounced. Allow
- 23 programs to submit blackout date options within the two-week period provided.
- 24 • With the removal of a category, there will be four categories in the Texas Rising Star program.
- 25 The workgroup recommends weighting the four categories when determining overall star level.
- 26 Category 2: Teacher-Child Interactions will be weighted 40 percent of the total score, and the
- 27 remaining three categories (Category 1: Director and Staff Qualifications and Training, Category
- 28 3: Program Administration, and Category 4: Indoor/Outdoor Environments) will be weighted 20
- 29 percent each.
- 30 • Require all initial assessments to be full assessments of all measures.
- 31 • No longer require programs to report major staff changes to Texas Rising Star staff or Boards.
- 32 Score any staff changes observed at the next visit as applicable.
- 33 • Require all programs to participate in an online-generated Continuous Quality Improvement Plan
- 34 (CQIP), focusing on growth and continued compliance of high quality. The initial CQIP will
- 35 include base requirements for applying to the Texas Rising Star program.

36 **Decision Point**

37 Staff seeks direction on publishing these draft recommendations from the Texas Rising Star Four-Year
38 Review Workgroup and making the draft available for public comment.