

Parent-Educator Child Care Pilot Program

Purpose

Develop parent-educator childcare pilot program to expand access and workforce participation utilizing Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) funds to test a parent-participation childcare model. Goals are to address workforce barriers, reduce the childcare waitlist, and strengthen the early childhood instructor pipeline.

Texas continues to face challenges related to child care access and affordability. Providers across the state are challenged to recruit and retain qualified childcare workers, further limiting capacity.

A pilot program could allow qualified parents to receive Child Care financial assistance while also volunteering as caregiving staff at the eligible CCS provider where their child attends. HHSC's Child Care Regulation minimum standards allow volunteers (including parents) who meet the CCR requirements (which include required training and passing criminal background checks) to work in a childcare classroom, and count towards the required adult-to-child staff ratios. Volunteer staff that count in ratio can reduce a program's operating costs.

Explore funding a parent-volunteer and training structure to:

- Equip participating parents with skills and training to enter the early childhood workforce. Participating parents complete 30 hours of training in Early Childhood Development, including required pre-service training under Child Care Regulation's Minimum Standards thus qualifying them to enter the early childhood workforce.
- Support a parent volunteer commitment, in which they agree to work one full day per week, for each child in care, in the childcare classroom; in return, they will be exempt from the CCS waiting list, and will receive CCS financial assistance for a 12-month eligibility period.
(Note: under federal CCDF regulations, parents may choose the childcare provider of their choice and are required to receive 12-months of childcare. If the parents elect to enroll their children in a new childcare provider during their 12-month eligibility period, that request must be honored).
- Address adult-to-child classroom rations in classrooms by having parents volunteer as teachers, which can help reduce a program's overall operating costs and reduce the cost of childcare.
- Require CCS eligible parents to complete required pre-service training and 30 hours of required annual training in Early Childhood Development and volunteer one day per week alongside an experienced educator.

- Support participation family's children attending childcare five days per week. Once parents have completed the CCR required training, parents commit to volunteer one day per week, for each child in care, in the childcare center. In return, the parent receives a Full-Time CCS childcare scholarship, which supports their ability to work, or attend education/training.

Proposal

This model invites parents of eligible children to receive formal early childhood education training and work in a child care classroom under the guidance of experienced early childhood educators.

Once trained, parents commit to volunteer one day per week, for each child in care, in the child care center. In return, their child/children receive a full-time scholarship, enabling the parent to pursue employment or education opportunities.

- **Fund Pilot Sites:** Select up to five childcare program demonstration sites
- **Contracted Slots:** Each participating Board will enter into a contracted slots agreement with the selected childcare program demonstration site.
- **Provide Child Care Scholarships:** Offer flexible scholarships to support participating families using existing infrastructure processes.
- **Evaluate Impact:** Monitor and assess impacts on:
 - Parental employment and education outcomes
 - Waitlist reduction
 - Quality of the participating childcare programs
 - Continuity of care
 - Workforce retention and development within early education.

By piloting this parent-educator child care model, TWC can test a cost-effective, high-impact approach to reducing the child care waitlist while simultaneously strengthening Texas' workforce.

Decision Points

- Dedicate up to \$4.7 million to this pilot project, utilizing funds made available through the agency staff proposed discontinuation of the Child Care Investment Partnerships Program in FY26.
- Allow Boards, working in partnership with a childcare program(s) who offers a parent-caregiver model to apply to participate in this pilot. Boards who wish to participate must ensure that they publicly announce the availability of this funding opportunity to provide any local childcare provider who offers a parent-caregiver model to indicate their desire to participate.

- 90 • Participating Boards must agree to:
 - 91 ○ conduct required CCS eligibility and overseeing the new pilot, and may use
 - 92 pilot project funding for the necessary administrative and operations costs;
 - 93 ○ ensure that the childcare provider meets all CCS requirements, including
 - 94 participation in Texas Rising Star, and TWC/Board payment rates;
 - 95 ○ enter into a contracted slots agreement with the child care program, and
 - 96 oversee the contracted slots parent-caregiver pilot; and
 - 97 ○ ensure the contracted slots parameters align with §809.96 Contracted Slots
 - 98 Agreements, including ensuring that any vacant slots are filled in a timely
 - 99 manner (§809.96 (b)).
- 100
- 101 • Approve the parent-caregiver pilot as a Special Project under TWC rule §809.53, and
- 102 waive the following rules for the pilot project to operate efficiently, as follows:
 - 103 ○ Allow parents who agree to participate in the parent-caregiver pilot project to
 - 104 be exempted from the local CCS waitlist, by waiving the requirements of
 - 105 §809.18.
 - 106 ○ Allow parents who agree to participate in the parent-caregiver pilot to count
 - 107 their hours volunteering at the child care program to count towards their
 - 108 CCS hourly work requirement, by amending the definition of work in §809.2.
 - 109 to include volunteer hours in the childcare program for parents participating
 - 110 in the parent-caregiver pilot program.
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- 112 • Direct staff to implement an application process for Board to apply to participate in
- 113 the parent-caregiver pilot program.
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- 115 • Develop an evaluation framework as described above.
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- 117 • Direct staff to make necessary automation changes in TX3C to support the
- 118 implementation of the pilot, and the tracking of participation parents and providers.