

## ISSUE

- Expansion and improvement of access to quality Pre-K
- Increase initial training requirements for child care workers

## PRIORITY

**ENSURE THAT LUBBOCK CHILDREN ARE READY TO BEGIN SCHOOL WITH THE COGNITIVE, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL SKILLS TO BE SUCCESSFUL.**

## CURRENT STATUS

- According to TEA estimates, Texas spends more than \$532 million annually on Pre-K programs and serves only 194,000 students which is just 45% of eligible 4 year olds. *SOURCE: Early Ed Watch, New American Foundation, September 3, 2008*
- According to several nationally recognized measurements, Texas falls short on important quality measures. There is no maximum class size or mandated adult to child ratio for Public School Pre-K. *SOURCE: National Institute for Early Education Research, The State of PreSchool, 2007*
- Currently in Texas, to work in a child care setting, the initial training requirement is only 8 hours.
- Cost to increase initial training hours would be minimum to the state. Costs would be more to local communities.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Targeting quality improvements in all types of child care settings in the state would greatly increase the readiness of children entering kindergarten.
- Research shows that 1/3 of children begin school already 2 years behind and are not likely to make up that difference. The achievement gap really begins at age 3 and 4. Expansion and quality could make up this difference in children that cannot afford private preschools.
- These ideas are supported statewide by a broad coalition of business and education professionals, non-profits and state agencies.

## IN 2006-07

CHILDREN ENROLLED AT LUBBOCK EARLY LEARNING CENTERS INCREASED THEIR EARLY LITERACY SKILLS OVER 47.7% WORKING WITH THE TEAM PROGRAM.

PUTTING SOUNDS TOGETHER TO MAKE WORDS INCREASED FROM 12% AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR TO 82% AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support TEA request of \$65 million to improve quality by expanding the ½ day Pre-K program to full day.
- Continue funding of the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) at the State Center which supports partnerships between school districts, childcare centers and Head Start to improve the quality of Pre-K.
- Support legislation that will incrementally increase initial training for child care workers over several years.
- Support increases in reimbursement rates for childcare providers serving low-income children in high quality settings.

# SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

Texans Care for Children, Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition, United Ways of Texas, Raise Your Hand Texas