



Early Childhood & the 88th Legislative Session

88th Legislative Session Recap

October 2023



We drive policy
change to improve
the lives of Texas
children **today** for
a stronger Texas
tomorrow .

Agenda

I	Legislative Session Context
II	Early Education
III	Early Intervention & Prevention
IV	Health Coverage
V	Next Steps

The 88th Legislative Session

Opportunities & Challenges

The 2023 legislative session presented a rare opportunity. Legislators on both sides of the aisle vowed that children, moms, and families will be a priority, and the state was flushed with surplus revenue to invest.

However, there were also challenges:

- Growing political polarization (Ds vs. Rs, House vs. Senate, Governor vs. Lege)
- Controversial topics receiving a lot of attention
- Fierce competition for bandwidth, resources
- Significant legislator and staff turnover

A photograph of three young children of diverse backgrounds smiling and looking towards the camera. The child on the left is a young girl with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The child in the middle is a young girl with light skin and blonde hair, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. The child on the right is a young girl with light skin and blonde hair, wearing a blue and white zigzag patterned shirt. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Early Education

Early Education Legislative Priorities

- Bedrock child care funding
- Local workforce board reforms
- Expand pre-k partnerships
- Increase state pre-k funding



Early Education Legislative Summary

Despite a few modest steps forward, there was very little done to address children's early learning needs this session. The Legislature did pass:

- HB 1615 by Rep. Button: **Supporting pre -k partnerships**
- SB 1145 by Sen. West: **Child care subsidy property tax exemption ballot proposition** (Proposition 2)
- SB 1327 by Sen. Blanco: **Streamlining child care director training process**

A photograph of three young children of diverse backgrounds smiling and hugging each other. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The child on the left is a young girl with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The child in the middle is a young girl with light skin and blonde hair, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. The child on the right is a young girl with light skin and blonde hair, wearing a blue and white zigzag patterned shirt.

Early Intervention & Prevention

Early Intervention & Prevention Legislative Priorities

- Increase state investments in Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)
- Support child abuse prevention services, including home visiting
- Provide funding for Child First in Texas



Early Intervention and Prevention Legislative Summary

This session, the Legislature made meaningful progress in supporting child abuse prevention and access to early childhood intervention. for adults and older youth and helping keep kids out of foster care.

- Budget: \$63 million **increase** to support Early Childhood Intervention
- Budget: \$65 million **increase** in abuse prevention services

A photograph of three young children of diverse backgrounds smiling and huddled together. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The child on the left is a young girl with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The child in the middle is a young girl with light skin and brown hair, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt. The child on the right is a young girl with light skin and blonde hair, wearing a blue and white zigzag patterned shirt.

Health Coverage

Health Coverage Legislative Priorities

- Expand Medicaid for adults under the poverty line
- Extend postpartum Medicaid coverage for new moms
- Create an “express lane option” to improve access to Medicaid and CHIP health insurance for children who are already eligible but uninsured.



Health Coverage Legislative Summary

After Texas advocates and lawmakers spent three legislative sessions pushing to extend mothers' Medicaid coverage to 12 months after pregnancy, the Legislature finally passed this critical bill during the 2023 session.

- **HB 12 by Rep. Rose: Allows moms to continue using Medicaid health insurance for a full year after pregnancy uninterrupted.**

Next Steps

Next Steps

- Bill implementation
- Special Session Underway
- Proposition 2 on November's ballot
- Developing focused research and advocacy strategies
- Building a renewed policy agenda for the 89th Legislative Session

Questions?

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Thank you!