

Texas Association for Infant Mental Health (TAIMH)
Building Better Beginnings: Improving Texas Child Care Standards
Talking Points

- The Child Care Licensing Division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services is conducting a review (that is required every six years) of child care licensing standards. The purpose of the standards is to “protect the health, safety, and well-being of the children of the state ...” but current Texas standards do not adequately safeguard our children physically, emotionally or developmentally.
- The majority of young children in Texas spend most of their days in child care. Providers often spend more awake time with young children than any other caregiver, so it is critical for child care to meet children’s physical, social, and emotional needs.
- Poor-quality child care is associated with less optimal child outcomes and higher quality care is associated with desirable outcomes.
- Early experiences occur in the context of relationships and these experiences play a critical role in the short and long term success of a child.
- A recent statewide survey of child care programs conducted by The Texas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (TACCRRRA) found that a majority of respondents support lower child/adult ratios, smaller group sizes and increased training requirements. Interestingly, many providers already exceed state standards for infants and toddlers.
- Texas must improve licensing standards to improve early experiences and promote optimal development of our youngest Texans.
- Texas should follow the ratios/group size recommendations outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics and supported by national experts.
 - Rather than ratios of 4:1 toddlers, for example, Texas allows up to 9:1 and for preschoolers up to 15:1 rather than the recommended 9:1
 - At a minimum, group size should still adhere to ratio standards. For example, currently for infants, the standard is 1:4 but 2:10 (which should be 2:8) and for children 12-17 months, it is 1:5 but 2:13 (rather than 2:10).
- Caregivers and directors should be required to receive 24 pre-service and 40 ongoing hours annually to improve the supply of quality child care in Texas.
- Trainers should also be registered with the Texas Early Care & Education Career Development System (TECECDS) or hold a degree or certification in a field related to the training topic. Training should be relevant to the care being provided.
- Texas should phase in a continuity of care model by adjusting its standards of group size and ratios not on an annual or part-year basis but grouped by developmental level as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.