



### ***Members in Attendance***

Reagan Miller	– Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
Patricia Smith	– Little Dudes Learning Center
Sul Ross	– Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions
Mary Clare Munger	– Amarillo College Child Development Lab
Howard Morrison	– Texas Education Agency
Michelle Adams	– Department of Family and Protective Services
Sharon Davis	– North East Texas Workforce Solutions
Dr. Elaine Zweig	– Collin County Community College
Pattie Herbert	– Infants 123
LaShonda Brown	– Texas Early Learning Council
Rebecca Latimer	– Just Kidding Around
Sandra Solis	– Lower Rio Workforce Solutions

### ***Members not in Attendance***

Doug Watson	– Healy-Murphy Child Development Center
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### ***Additional TWC Attendees***

Laurie Biscoe	– Deputy Director, Workforce Development Division (WDD)
Patricia A. Gonzalez	– Director WDD Technical Assistance and Child Care
Phil Warner	– Child Care Program Supervisor
Regan Dobbs	– Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
Anjali Barnes	– Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
Kimberly Flores	– Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
Adela Esquivel	– Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
Sue Flores	– Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
Kimberly Berry	– Governmental Relations
Katherine Farrell	– Attorney and Policy Advisor, Chairman Alcantar's Office

### ***Meeting Summary***

#### **Welcome, Roll-Call and Overview of the Agenda**

Reagan Miller greeted the audience and invited the workgroup members to introduce themselves.

After introductions, Ms. Miller explained what the general timeline for the TRS workgroup recommendations are and future opportunities for public comment on those recommendations.

Ms. Miller explained that this will be one of three opportunities for public comment on TRS guidelines. The TRS workgroup is accepting public comment on the draft recommendation during today's public meeting as well as via email at [TRSWorkgroup376@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:TRSWorkgroup376@twc.state.tx.us) through March 28, 2014. The workgroup will take input from this public comment period and refine the recommendations for submission to the TWC in May.



TWC will then release a "Concept Paper" outlining the general concepts regarding the TRS criteria revisions. The Concept Paper is scheduled to be released during the summer. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the Concept Paper.

TWC will take the public input on the Concept Paper to prepare proposed rules regarding the TRS certification system. The proposed rules are scheduled to be available by September 2014. There will be an opportunity for public comment on the proposed rules.

The final TRS rules are expected by January 2015.

Ms. Miller proceeded to call attendees to provide public testimony as follows:

***Public Testimony***

**Pat Carter – Elgin ISD Child Development Center**

Ms. Carter spoke of rural perspective, needs of directors, and families on free/reduced lunch. She would like to be able to provide quality child care to everyone, especially to low income families.

The new recommendations require training which costs money. Ms. Carter is concerned about the Director qualification and training requirements for 2 star certification. Ms. Carter noted that rural community colleges do not have child development classes.

The requirement for 75% of staff to have at least a CDA is too high number, considering that courses may not be available locally. Ms. Carter noted that staff may get burned out and leave. We need to raise standards, but consideration needs to be given to how changes affects costs also.

**Jessica Salinas – Montessori Advocacy**

Ms. Salinas suggested accepting Montessori certificate for director's qualifications. The certificate is on a different track (AMI credentials). She suggested adding a 3-6 years mixed age group to the new standards. Ms. Salinas also suggested that the curriculum plan accept Montessori albums.

She wants the standards to be more specific regarding the types of technology used. She mentioned that Montessori does not teach preschoolers using technology. Ms. Salinas prefers sometimes, often, and always for scoring method.

**Dr. Joan Altobelli– Extended-A-Care for Kids**

Standards for special needs children at a center are unclear. Dr. Altobelli stated that the recommendations are not clear if part-time staff is excluded based on the director qualifications as proposed. She suggested considering training for part-time staff as well.

Dr. Altobelli stated that. she would like clarification on requirements for caregivers and programs for school-age children and stated that there should be separate criteria for school-age programs. School-age education requirements differ from other ages, she suggested that we need to develop TRS recommendations specific to school-age only.

Ms. Altobelli suggested that the new recommendations need to include provisions for college students as caregivers. She suggested that the workgroup consider one year of continuity of staff



with a child care provider, rather than two. She noted that it will be difficult to have 75% meet longevity for part-time staff.

**Christina Thi – Department of State Health Services (DSHS)**

Ms. Thi mentioned that low income children are at higher risk for obesity. She praised the additions for the nutrition measures. Ms. Thi stated that it is good that the menu meets the CCAFP guidelines. She would like to see fish to be on the menu at least once a week. In addition, she would like the measures to limit fried foods, fat, salt, bread, and desserts.

Ms. Thi commented that the workgroup should consider clarifying that children 0-12 months should not be given cow's milk; 2 years and older should be on reduced fat milk.

**Megan Burke – Texas Association for the Education of Young Children**

Ms. Burke commented on group size and teacher qualifications indicating that both can have structural and process measures. The tiered system of showing a progression of qualifications is good for directors, but should be extended to caregivers as well. Ms. Burke also stated that child-caregiver ratios for 4-Star providers can be on a points system and could be aligned with accreditation ratios.

**Alice Bufkin and Lauren Dimitry – Texans Care for Children**

Ms. Bufkin and Ms. Dimitry presented the need to consider adding a breast feeding room and evaluate the cost options for adding the room. They also stressed the importance of informing the parents of their right to breast feed. They suggested adding breast feeding to the nutrition menu measures and limit unhealthy items, and no sugary drinks. Sugary drinks can be for special events and providers should inform the parents if they are going to serve sugary drinks.

**Sarah Crockett – Texas Association for Infant Mental Health**

Ms. Crockett suggested adding an introduction explaining the differences between structural and process measures in the new TRS measures and recommendations. She suggested having 1-Star rating with no rate increase, but they can strive for 2-Star level. Ms. Crockett also suggested having an age group of 0-3 and point system for low group size and ratios.

**Alison Bentley – School Readiness Action Plan Leadership Team**

Ms. Bentley would like for the workgroup to consider including child to staff ratios as a quality indicator, with small ratios at the higher star levels. She also suggested making group size more stringent at 4-Star level. Ms. Bentley also recommended removing the option for staff to meet the minimum qualification though two years' experience working under the supervision of qualified staff.

**Andrea Brauer – Texans Care for Children**

Ms. Brauer stated there is a need to address child-to-caregiver ratios and to have process measures for ratios. She recommends reviewing best practices on ratios. Ms. Brauer suggested that documentation should be required to reflect the minimum, moderate, and strong evidence noted for curriculum measures. She also asked the workgroup to consider adding process measures to reflect higher qualifications for lead caregivers.

**Cari Browning – DSHS**



Ms. Browning suggested the need for requirements in physical activity to be included in the curriculum plan and space for physical activity to provide any movement that exerts energy. She suggested including "Let's Move" standards and training for caregivers and parent education in physical activity. For the amount of physical activity, Browning recommended the range of 30 to 120 minutes.

Ms. Browning suggested that the workgroup consider creating a stand-alone category for physical activity in the standards and following the format in "Caring for Our Children" healthy weight standards. She would like to incorporate natural design elements in the Outdoor Learning Environment. She sees a need for physical activity and screen time standards to be written into the TRS star system.

**Alison Reis-Khanna – Texas Partnership for Out of School Time**

Ms. Reis-Khanna has the same concerns as Dr. Altobelli regarding the need for standards for school-age programs. She would like to see the new standards include after-school programs. She will share school age qualifications. Reis-Khanna states that staff longevity is an issue in after-school care.

**Lonnie Hutson – Kids R Kids**

Mr. Hutson stated that the program is voluntary so there is a need to take into consideration the cost of compliance with requirements relative to the enhanced rates. For the staff qualifications, 75% of staff with a CDA is too high of standard. He recommends using a point system to achieve a star level and for staff ratios and group size for meeting higher standards.

**Shannon Truesdale-Curry – Knowledge Universe**

Ms. Truesdale-Curry stated that half of their KinderCare centers are TRS. She recommended the need for further incentives to provide quality child care and the need to implement the new standards uniformly across the state. She also suggested using a crosswalk with national accreditation standards in order to streamline the certification process for those providers who are accredited.

**Cynthia Pearson, Tammie Stevenson, Denise Dilliard, and Brenda Peak-Day Nursery of Abilene**

Ms. Pearson stated that they want their child care facility to be part of a system that provides quality child care services. She added that there is a lack of child care services for special needs children, and there needs to be adequate reimbursement rates to provide quality services

They want the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to provide a cost analysis for implementation of the workgroup recommendations and to pay for the quarterly staff training.

They expressed their concern about center directors that will not meet the director qualifications educational requirements because their staff has 30+ years of experience with on job training, but do not have a CDA.

They recommended parental involvement be mandatory and wants to see parent requirements similar to those in Head Start in order for centers to get the child care subsidy.



They also expressed concern that the public meeting notification was not disseminated by TWC in a timely manner.

Following public testimony the Workgroup reconvened to discuss public comments.

**Draft Recommendations Document:**

Pat Smith requested clarification that April Crawford, Children's Learning Institute, has been selected to conduct a comprehensive review of the standards. Reagan Miller confirmed. Pat stated someone on her subcommittee is a national validator and might provide a valuable perspective. This individual has volunteered to assist in reviewing the standards as well.

Mary Clare inquired about the creation of a draft recommendations cost analysis dummy to outline a plan. LaShonda mentioned that the Office of Child Care created a cost estimator tool and access to this tool might be possible by contacting that office.

Pattie stated that this tool would be beneficial to centers in determining feasibility of recommendations.

**Director/staff qualifications:**

On director/staff qualifications, the group agreed that number of college credit hours should not be modified.

The group agreed to separate experience and education from staff qualification as it was done with director qualifications. This would address Dr. Altobelli's concerns (one of the public speakers).

Ms. Miller indicated that if experience will be separated, a standard needs to be created as well as breaking out experience for school age separately.

Ms. Miller indicated that on caregiver qualifications, the word "or" needs to be added after letter "B", pages 1-3. Workgroup agreed. LaShonda mentioned that recommendation offers options, i.e., Under A, an Associate's degree can be obtained and under B, 12 hours or two years of experience are acceptable.

LaShonda also mentioned that public speakers would like professional experience to count and receive credit to meet recommended qualifications. Elaine indicated that credit needs to be obtained through college credit. LaShonda responded that an assessment tool or credit by examination could be implemented.

General consensus was reached that with extra efforts and scholarship availability awareness, minimum recommended requirements can be met and that current education standards need to be raised in order to ensure quality in child care services.

Ms. Miller proposed to change the percentage of caregiver staff with a CDA to 30% from the current recommendation of 50% and graduate the proportion of staff requirements for the higher TRS star levels. Group agreed indicating that this will bring a balance to centers.

Further discussion on director/staff qualifications is pending.



LaShonda stated the importance of a special needs inclusion specialist to provide caregivers with professional assistance to meet the child's special needs.

Mary Clare stressed the importance of state funding to adequately meet the needs of special education/needs children.

**Use of technology:**

Group indicated that licensing already limits the use of iPad playing time and that current recommendations only apply for children older than three years.

**Physical activity:**

Ms. Miller inquired about the number of minutes for physical activity. Group agreed to recommend for 4 star level centers, 60 minutes in the morning and 60 in the afternoon of movement, not necessarily physical activity. Group will also consider changing number of activities to number of movement minutes.

**Nutrition:**

Ms. Miller asked if we need to change recommendations to indicate breastfeeding and whole milk for younger children and 1% fat reduced milk for children older than two. Ms. Miller also asked if no sugary drinks are to be added to the recommendations and group responded affirmatively.

The group also discussed blending physical activity and nutrition, based on the suggestion made by Cari Browning from DSHS. The group is in favor of making this revision.

**Staff Ratios:**

The work group discussed staff ratios as a process measure to reward those facilities who achieve better ratios. Sul' noted that there are already 27 measures, so this would only be adding one more. Overall, the Workgroup is in favor of the idea (to include staff ratio as a process measure), and requested that Subcommittee 2 work out details.

**Work Scope, Work Plan, Parking Lot**

Ms. Miller spoke about the revised calendar. There will be four more Workgroup meetings to address the recommendation.

She requested that staff provide a summary of all comments to the Workgroup.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:10 pm.