



Early Learning Fellows Legislative Corner

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Raising the Standards for Early Education in Texas



Third year NCSL Early Learning Fellow Representative Dan Huberty recently proposed a bill—[HB 4](#)—that would raise the standards for early education in Texas.

The proposed bill encourages Texas public school districts to implement high-quality and accountable prekindergarten standards. The bill also provides additional funding for districts that already have pre-K programs that meet certain quality benchmarks. Representative Huberty's bill and an identical companion bill proposed in the Texas Senate are based on parts of Governor Rick Perry's plan for education in Texas.

The proposed legislation requires school districts to provide:

- Curriculum be fully aligned with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and measure progress to meet the learning outcomes underlined in those guidelines.
- Prekindergarten teachers be appropriately certified in early childhood education.
- A plan for parental engagement be developed to establish and maintain high-levels of family involvement in a student's educational career.

“With the passage of HB 4, school districts will have the opportunity to measure the success of their existing pre-K programs. Many of them are already operating at or above the standards outlined in this bill and may now be monetarily rewarded by the state,” explained Representative Huberty. “It is our hope that this legislation will encourage other districts to raise the standards of their early education programs and help ensure better learning outcomes for all Texas students.”

Taking a Look at the Child Care Economics in New York State



Third year NCSL Early Learning Fellow Assemblywoman Michaele Solages recently proposed a bill entitled the "Child Care and Early Education Sector on the Economy Act"—[A 5522](#)—to study the impact of quality child care, early education and afterschool programs for young children on New York state's economy. This proposed bill provides an opportunity to get a comprehensive look at the economics of these programs in New York state and includes:

- An evaluation of child care and early education as sectors of the economy, including providing a value of child care worker wages, child care goods and services, dollars flowing from public and private sources, and the amount of federal funds in the state.
- An evaluation of the impact of available child care on parents' work, attending education programs, decreased absenteeism or increased productivity and attracting business to the state.
- An analysis of demographic data to identify gaps between the needs in the state and the return to the economy if that gap is closed, including labor force statistics and future growth in the number of children. An analysis of the demographic make-up of parents in the labor force and of parents with children who might wish to join the work force, the cost of child care and early education in relationship to family income, child care availability and the number of children eligible for state or federal aid and those eligible and not receiving.
- A literature review of the impact of child care and early education programs have on school readiness and a child's future ability to contribute to the workforce, reduced special education classes, improved high school graduation rates, criminal justice implications, being employed and less likelihood of being on public assistance.

“Investing in child care and early education programs is common sense,” said Assemblywoman Solages. She continued by explaining, “the Child Care and Early Education Sector on the Economy Act seeks to provide the legislature and the governor with necessary information in order to make well-informed policy decisions that benefit children, working families and New York's economy.”