



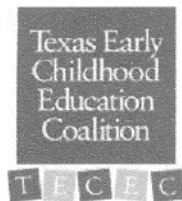
**United Ways of Texas 2007 Legislative Agenda
80th Texas Legislature**

United Ways of Texas (UWT) is the statewide association of Texas' local United Ways. UWT's members represent more than 75 communities and the overwhelming majority of Texans. United Ways of Texas' priorities for the 80th Texas Legislature are:

- 1. Support the Bookends of Education**
 - Expand access to pre-kindergarten and increase the safety of child care
 - Improve high school graduation and college-going rates
- 2. Respect and Protect Texas Seniors**
 - Create a "Silver Alert" system to find and protect lost seniors
 - Support Texas grandparents serving as guardians
- 3. Promote Immunization and Improve the Texas Immunization Registry**
 - Protect adults and seniors with a lifespan immunization registry
 - Retain immunization data for emergencies and natural disasters
- 4. Build Family Financial Stability**
 - Promote asset-building strategies for working Texas families
 - Protect working Texans from predatory lending
- 5. Maintain and Improve Texas 2-1-1**
 - Sustain public and private investment in 2-1-1
 - Improve 2-1-1 as a disaster response and preparation tool
- 6. Strengthen Nonprofits and the Communities They Serve**
 - Protect the tax exempt status of Texas nonprofits
 - Protect the advocacy voice of Texas nonprofits

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United Ways of Texas: Making Texas a Better Place to Live and Do Business



TECEC LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

In 2006, a conservative **cost-benefit analysis** conducted by the **Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University** was released showing that **every \$1.00 invested in high quality pre-kindergarten yields at least \$3.50 to Texas communities**. By investing in high quality pre-k programs children are more likely to perform well on assessment tests, graduate from high school ready for college, and be taxpaying members of society. The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) supports the following legislative priorities to ensure that the state is implementing the critical next steps in building a high quality early childhood education and development system for children ages birth to five in Texas.

Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) Legislative Priorities: 80th Legislative Session

Expand Access to Voluntary and High Quality Pre-kindergarten

Support targeted expansion of an integrated model of service delivery between Pre-kindergarten, Child Care and Head Start to increase access to full-day, full-year quality pre-k services under the control of local communities.

Protect the Safety of Infants and Toddlers in Child Care

Increase payment rates to child care providers serving our highest need infants and toddlers to ensure that safe care is available for our youngest children.

Support Early Childhood Education Professionals

Improve the recruitment, retention and quality of early childhood education professionals and establish a multi-level career path within the field.

Key Accomplishments:

2003—The **Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition** forms out of the overwhelming support for a statewide entity dedicated to quality early childhood education in Texas. As a result, **diverse stakeholders from every region of the state have come together for the first time, agreed upon a set of guiding principles, and committed to working together.**

2003—The Texas Legislature passes with bipartisan support **Senate Bill 76** to develop an integrated early childhood education model that improves the school readiness of children. Over the course of the past four years, Child Care, Head Start, and Pre-kindergarten programs have come together in an unprecedented collaborative manner in partnership with the **State Center for Early Childhood Development** to implement the **Texas Early Education Model (TEEM)**.

2004—The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition releases **The Texas Plan**, a collaboratively developed ten-year public policy vision to enhance early childhood education and development.

2005—The Texas Legislature passes with **bipartisan support Senate Bill 23** to strengthen and expand the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM). TEEM now exists in **32 communities** serving approximately **40,320 children** in **2,016 classrooms** throughout Texas.

2006—The Texas Legislature passes with **bipartisan support** expanded eligibility of pre-kindergarten to include military families.

3 ½ to 1: Invest in Texas

Pre-k Benefits the Texas Economy	Pre-k Leads to School Success
<p>According to the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University every \$1.00 invested in high quality pre-k yields at least \$3.50 to Texas communities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings to the public school system as a result of reduced special education and remedial costs; • Savings to the criminal justice system due to reduced adult crime rates; • Savings to the child welfare system as result of early intervention and reduced cases of child abuse and neglect; and • Increased lifetime earnings for mothers. 	<p>Children Who Have High Quality Pre-k:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are less frequently assigned to special education classes or retained in later years • Have better school attendance rates • Are less likely to drop out of school • Excel in mastery of pre-reading, reading and math skills, and are better prepared for school • Demonstrate significant improvement in social skills such as following directions, joining in activities, taking turns, problem solving, and relating to peers and teachers • Perform better on standardized tests
Pre-k is a Bipartisan Issue	Pre-k Has Strong Voter Support
<p>Pre-k is one of the few social and economic issues that both Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate can agree is a priority for Texas. For example, during the recent Special Legislative Session on public school finance, the Texas Legislature passed with bipartisan support expanded eligibility of the pre-kindergarten program to include military families.</p> <p>Supporters and authors included: Senators: Leticia Van de Putte (D), Eliot Shapleigh (D), Judith Zaffirini (D), Steye Ogden (R), Florence Shapiro (R) Representatives: Carlos Uresti (D), Dennis Bonnen (R), Mark Strama (D), Dianne Delisi (R), Veronica Gonzales (D), Gene Seaman (R), Toby Goodman (R), Joe Strauss (R), Mike Villarreal (D), Toby Goodman (R), Aaron Pena (D), Eddie Rodriguez (D)</p>	<p>A statewide poll conducted by Impact Texas Communications, LLP, a republican polling firm reveals that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of Republicans, 78% of Democrats, and 70% of Independents support pre-k; • 81% of Texas voters believe pre-k is important to the overall learning potential of children; • 68% of Texas voters believe it is important that pre-k be available in non-school settings (such as Child Care and Head Start centers); and • 58% of Texas voters have a favorable impression of public education, but 87% think Texas should be doing more to prepare its children to be productive citizens.

The Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC) represents more than **230 member organizations** from across Texas dedicated to building a quality early childhood education and development system for children ages birth to five. For more information on TECEC and The Texas Plan, please visit www.tecec.org.