

TLCCA's Legislative Effort for the 81st Session

- 1. TLCCA supported publicly funded pre-k that is truly integrated, triggered real rate reform, and protected parental choice.**
- 2. TLCCA supported at least a \$100 million increase in rates to expand quality care and education for at-risk children.**
- 3. TLCCA wanted Texas to protect the health and safety of all children no matter the place, age of the child, or number of hours care is given.**

Our TLCCA legislative team, with the help of our consultants Seth Winick and Anthony Haley of HRWK, tracked more bills than TLCCA followed in the previous session, 63 in 2009, compared to 56 in 2007. TLCCA members testified 15 times, compared to 7 in 2007. Eleven bills in 2009 were amended because of TLCCA's work. We met with legislators and their staff to share our experience in the child care industry, and to offer language that would improve the bills.

The 81st Texas Legislature ended June 1, 2009, after five months of furious activity. A three day special session was called on July 1, 2009 to conclude unfinished business. The Legislature meets in regular session in odd numbered years, and the Governor may call special sessions after the conclusion of the regular session. Governor had until June 21 to either sign, veto, or allow a bill to pass without his signature.

Pre-K Bill Vetoed by Governor. One of the most significant bills of the 2009 session for the child care industry was House Bill 130 and its identical companion bill Senate Bill 21, which was proposed to increase public pre-k to a full day (until 3). TLCCA's legislative team worked with the TECEC, Texas Association of School Boards, United Way of Texas, Head Start, and Raise Your Hand Texas for over a year. TLCCA's goal was to ensure that any expansion program included significant funding for private providers. Many frank conversations took place over what private providers could embrace.

The bill was limited to expanding pre-k only to the populations now served (at risk, military families, ESL, low income, etc.). TLCCA secured language in the bill which gave community providers 20% of all new money spent on this expansion of pre-k, with an appeals process if school districts did not partner with private providers. Language was also added that allowed school districts to pay community providers for expenses, beyond the cost of the teacher. The final language allowed teachers in community providers to have a CDA, with at least 3 years of experience, but be working on a BA degree. The shortage of state funds affected the failure of the bill, and, at the end of the session, the funds were reduced from \$300 million to a \$25 million pilot project. Governor Perry vetoed the bill in the days following the session for several reasons which can be read on this link to the [Austin American Statesman](#).

Unlicensed After-School Programs To Have Minimum Standards. A major success of the session was the passage of Senate Bill 68 regulating certain karate, gymnastics, and other single-skill after school programs. New law defining before and after school programs and single skill programs gives DFPS authority to develop minimum standards, investigate, and take enforcement action. These new rules will make these programs safer for children.

Two Additional Required Hours of Transportation Training. SB 572 was passed requiring two additional hours of training for employees in programs which transport children. Known as Jacob's Law, this law was passed in honor of a child who died after being left in a child care vehicle.

New Requirement for Booster Seats for Children under Eight. Senate Bill 61 was easily

passed by both houses and signed by the governor with broad based support from law enforcement and medical groups to prevent serious injury to children strapped into seat belts inappropriate for their size and weight. This law goes into effect immediately. For more clarification of this new law, go to this [Texas Department of Public Safety document](#).