

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Rene Gonzalez**  
**956-722-5174**

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## **Laredo Awarded School Readiness Certifications**

*(Laredo)* – The Texas Migrant Council, Inc. and Senator Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo, announced today (Wednesday) that 82 classrooms in Laredo have been awarded Texas School Readiness Certification for 2007-08 by the State Center for Early Childhood Development at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (SCECD).

This certification program was created by Senator Zaffirini's Senate Bill 76 (2003), which created the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) and Zaffirini's SB 23 (2005), which expanded TEEM and directed SCECD to develop a school readiness system that would ensure children leave early childhood programs ready to attend school.

“We are excited about our TEEM-mentor classrooms being given this certification, also, that we have been given the opportunity to offer families of Laredo access to programs that will help their children start school ready to learn,” said Mary Capello, CEO of the Texas Migrant Council, Inc.

"I am delighted that 82 Laredo classrooms received this important accreditation that will improve the quality of pre-kindergarten education in our community," Senator Zaffirini said. "Quality child care programs provide a positive, long-term economic development impact by allowing parents to re-enter the workforce with the knowledge that their children are prepared for school."

Pre-schools and child-care centers apply yearly to SCECD and provide their review staff with information about classrooms and educational programs, including the learning environment and curriculum. Children attending applicant classrooms are then followed from pre-K into kindergarten and evaluated by the SCECD for early reading and social development to determine if the pre-K classroom helped prepare the student for success in elementary school.

Each year pre-school, Head Start and childcare centers can apply to the SCECD for accreditation. What's more, every center that received accreditation this year must reapply for the next school year. The goal of this program is to provide each child with a school ready experience.