

# ChildCareGroup

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**Child Care Assistance**

## **Regulated Child Care Provider Manual**

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**Billing and Attendance Assistance: 214.905.3570**

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# Chapter 1

## Overview of the CCA System

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### **The Texas Workforce Commission**

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the state agency that provides support services to low income families working to become and remain self-sufficient by moving them from the welfare system into the workforce.

### **The Child Care Assistance System**

Most TWC services that help eligible families with child care are combined into one system called the Child Care Services or Child Care Assistance program.

- TWC contracts with local workforce development boards across the state of Texas to administer child care funds. Each local board serves a county or a group of counties that together form a “service delivery area”. Currently there are 28 local boards established in Texas. Dallas County is one service delivery area, and Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas is the local board.
- Each local board contracts with community-based agencies across the state to manage the delivery of child care services in their areas. These agencies are referred to as the “contractor” or “CCA contractor”. ChildCareGroup is the child care contractor for Dallas County.
- Over 6,000 child care providers in the state participate in the child care system.
- Over 100,000 eligible children are served each day in Texas through the child care system.
- Each CCA contractor is responsible to the local board for the operation of the child care system in their area, and the local board is in turn responsible to TWC for administration of funds and the child care system.

### **Child Care Assistance Staff**

CCA staff that providers will see or talk to most often are:

- Provider Services Representatives, who:
  - Visit the child care facility,
  - Maintain and update provider records,
  - Offer program support, training, technical assistance and resources,
  - Help providers comply with CCA requirements, and
  - Help providers access special projects for additional training and equipment
- Family Services Staff, who:
  - Help parents determine if they are eligible for services,
  - Educate parents on choosing child care that meets their needs,
  - Enroll CCA children into provider facilities, and
  - Give providers updated information on family eligibility and fees
- Financial Management Staff, who:
  - Process payments for providers, and

Answer payment questions

### **Laws, Regulations and Rules Governing the CCA System**

Most rules, policies, and procedures in this CCA Provider Manual are based on federal or state laws and regulations. TWC develops rules, policies, and procedures to implement the federal and state laws and regulations. Each local workforce development board then develops policies based on these laws and regulations to meet the needs in the community that they serve. The CCA contractor, in turn, will develop its own operating procedures to carry out all of the rules, policies, and procedures developed by TWC and the local board.

### **Funding For Child Care**

The Federal and Texas state governments provide funding for children referred to providers by CCA.

Funding sources administered by TWC that help families with their child care needs include:

- Choices funds that pay child care expenses for parents who are participating in the Choices program, a TWC training program that prepares parents on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to enter the workforce,
- Workforce Applicant funds that help pay for child care to support the employment of parents for the first year after the parent is approved for TANF benefits, but becomes employed before the TANF benefits begin,
- Transitional funds that help pay for child care to support the employment of parents for the first 12 to 18 months after TANF benefits are discontinued because of the parent's income,
- Child Protective Services funds that help parents receiving services through CPS with child care while they complete their program with CPS,
- Foster Care funds assist foster care parents with child care expenses for children placed in their care through CPS,
- Food Stamp Employment and Training funds for parents participating in this program, and
- At Risk funds that support the employment of low income parents.

The first three funding categories, Choices, Workforce Applicant, and Transitional funds are "entitlements" in the state of Texas. It is mandatory that all parents qualifying for these funds receive child care assistance from the CCA contractor. TWC or its employment and training contractors determine parent eligibility for these categories, and refer the parents to CCA for child care.

Parents who qualify for other funding sources are served as funds are available. In the event that the entitlement categories deplete available funds and additional funds are needed to serve this population, services to families in other categories may be terminated until new funding becomes available. Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas has established criteria for discontinuing funding if needed.

A limited amount of funding is also available through public and private donors, or “Local Match” partners. These funds are typically used for parents not in the entitlement categories in order to help the deficit caused by TWC funds being used for the entitlement categories.

Although the amount of child care funding in Texas has increased over the past several years, the total amount available is enough to serve only a small percentage of the eligible children in Texas.



## Chapter 2

### Becoming a CCA Provider

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#### **Who May Become a CCA Provider**

Any licensed or registered child care facility in Texas may apply to become a CCA provider.

#### **Requirement 1: Licensing and Registration**

To be a CCA provider, a child care facility must:

- Have a current permit to operate a licensed child care center, licensed child care home, or registered child care home from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), and
- Not be on corrective or adverse action with TDFPS, or
- Be licensed as a youth camp by the Texas Department of Health (TDH), or
- Be operated and monitored by the United States Military Services

#### **Requirement 2: Abiding by Program Requirements**

To be a CCA provider, a child care facility must:

- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding, which is also signed by a representative of CCA,
- Agree to abide by the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, and
- Agree to read and follow procedures outlined in this CCA Provider Manual.

#### **Memorandum of Understanding**

When a child care provider decides to participate in the CCA program and has submitted all required paperwork, CCA Provider Services will complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which will:

- Have information needed by the CCA Contractor;
- Explain to providers what they must do;
- Must be signed before CCA can pay for child care services to CCA-referred children;
- Are the basis of payment to providers for child care services provided to CCA-referred children; and
- Include this CCA Provider Manual as part of the agreement.

All regulated child care providers must care for CCA-funded children in a location other than the eligible child's own residence.

**Having a Memorandum of Understanding in place does not guarantee that a provider will have children referred by CCA. All referrals made by the CCA Contractor are based on parent choice.**

**Note:** A Board shall not reimburse providers that are debarred from other state or federal programs unless and until the debarment is removed.

### **Changes Effecting the Memorandum of Understanding**

Some changes in the way a facility runs will mean that a new Memorandum of Understanding must be implemented, and others simply require CCA staff to update provider records. It is critical that providers notify the CCA Provider Services staff *prior* to any changes as possible, or at least with in one day. See “REMEMBER” at the end of this chapter for changes in a facility that must be reported to a CCA Provider Services Representative.

#### **A MOU will be immediately terminated in cases where a facility:**

- **Changes location**
- **Changes ownership**
- **Changes EIN or Tax ID, and**
- **Loses TDFPS license, registration, or certification status**

The MOU, referrals of children, and payment do not automatically transfer to another location or owner. Payment for care will be made through the last day at the location listed on the MOU and TDFPS permit to operate if a facility changes location, and through the date of sale of the facility if it changes ownership.

Payment for care will *not* resume until:

- A permit to operate has been issued by TDFPS for the new location or owner, and
- The owner or responsible party completes required CCA paperwork,
- A new MOU is signed, and
- The new permit information is verified by phone with TDFPS staff, via the TDFPS public website, or by copy of the new permit.

While TDFPS does allow a facility to operate after moving to a new location or changing ownership as long as proper notification was made, CCA can not pay for care provided until the permit process has been completed. This includes the application phase for new owners. Therefore, it is critical that providers notify CCA *before* moving or selling so that Provider Services staff can assist with a smooth transition. Paperwork and an updated MOU can be completed in advance, but not made effective until all steps above are completed.

#### **A new MOU will be implemented, and a new provider number established in cases where the facility:**

- Changes location
- Changes ownership
- Is issued a new EIN/tax ID number
- Changes facility type (licensed center, licensed home, registered home)



## **Remember**

### **These changes must be reported to CCA Provider Services Staff:**

- A change in the facility name,
- A change in the governing body or corporate status,
- A change in the facility rates or fees,
- A change in hours of operation,
- A change in the holiday schedule,
- A change in the ages of children served,
- A change in the facility owner's address,
- Any change in facility license or registration
- A change in the contact person or director, and
- A change in transportation policies or services.

### **Changes that cause immediate termination:**

- A change in facility ownership,
- A move to a different location,
- A change in EIN or Tax ID, and
- Loss of TDFPS license, registration, or certification status.

In any of these cases, a new Memorandum of Understanding will be issued as soon as all requirements to be a CCA provider are met.

**CCA will not reimburse providers that are debarred from other state or federal programs unless and until the debarment is removed.**



## Chapter 3

# Getting Child Care Through CCA

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Parents get help with child care services by contacting CCA Family Services staff, who will determine if they are eligible for assistance. Some parents are referred to CCA by the local workforce development board or TWC employment contractor “Choices staff”, or by TDFPS Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers. These employment staff or caseworkers determine the parent’s eligibility and authorize CCA to provide the child care services.

### **Parent Choice of Provider**

Federal law requires that parents be given a choice of where they want their children to go for care. CCA Contractors cannot tell parents where they must take their children for care, except that:

- Children who are referred to CCA by CPS must be placed in Texas Rising Star (TRS) facilities unless no TRS facilities are available or no space is available in TRS facilities; and
- Parents who need only part-time or part-day care will choose from providers who offer part-time or part-day care and have it listed on their Memorandum of Understanding.

Parents may choose child care providers who:

- Are licensed or registered with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), or
- Are an eligible relative of the child, and
- Are willing to meet requirements to provide and bill for child care.

### **Termination of Enrollment**

The Child Care Contractor may terminate child care services for several reasons, including:

- The parent is no longer working or looking for work,
- The parent is no longer in training,
- The family income is too high,
- The parent is no longer eligible for child care services,
- The child no longer lives with the parent,
- The parent no longer needs child care,
- The child is too old for care,
- The parent did not pay the parent fee to their child care provider,
- The parent did not record attendance through the Child Care Automated Attendance system,
- The parent did not comply with the terms of the CCA parent agreement,
- The parent did not return required paperwork in a timely manner,
- Funding for child care has been depleted.

As often as possible CCA will notify the provider in advance that a child's enrollment is to be terminated, and will pay the provider through the stated termination date. The provider will also receive paperwork for each referral that lists a beginning date and/or an end date, which allows the provider to track when care may end or should be updated. There are occasions when a child's enrollment is terminated immediately and CCA is unable to let the provider know ahead of time. These cases have eligibility determined by TWC or Child Protective Services. Child care benefits may be terminated immediately by the TWC or TDFPS caseworker, and CCA is not given advance notice that the child care benefits will be terminated.

**Many providers have a policy that requires advance notice from parents that they will be ending care with their facility. Due to the federal requirements regarding parent choice, this type of policy can not be enforced between CCA providers and parents. Parents are required to pay their copay through the last day of care, and CCA will pay only through the last day of care for the family.**

**Note:** Providers should not terminate a child's enrollment without first consulting with the CCA Contractor. CCA staff are available to assist both the parent and the provider in maintaining the child care placement and continuity of care.

### **Waiting Lists**

Sometimes families who meet eligibility requirements to receive child care must be put on waiting lists due to the following:

- Funds are not available,
- The family has moved from one funding category where funds were available (such as Transitional) to another category where funds are not available.
- The family had funding in the at-risk categories and are still eligible, but had to be discontinued due to shortage of funds in this area.

## Chapter 4 Enrolling Children

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### **The Enrollment Process**

When a parent is determined to be eligible for child care services, and if funds are available for the child's care, CCA Family Services Staff:

- Reviews what the parent and child's needs are for care,
- Reviews the parent's rights and responsibilities,
- Gives the parent information on types of child care available as well as how to choose quality child care,
- Encourages the parent to visit several child care facilities,
- Tells the parent to let them know when a decision has been made about where to place the child for care.

When the parent notifies the Family Services Staff that a decision has been made, the staff:

- Contacts the child care provider to be sure that space is available, and if so,
- Verbally authorizes care to start with the provider, and
- Sends the provider Form 2450, Authorization for Child Care Enrollment.

Form 2450 tells the provider:

- The date child care is to begin,
- When the parent's eligibility will end or is due for review,
- The amount of the monthly parent fee,
- The days that the parent is able to use care,
- If care is authorized for part day (1-6 hours) or full day (6-12 hours), and
- Whether transportation is authorized.

**The provider must not accept a child unless CCA has called the provider to authorize enrollment.** Even if the child is referred by a CPS or TWC caseworker, the provider still must have CCA authorization before accepting the child into care. **Without authorization by CCA, the provider may not be paid for care provided.**

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, requires that all individuals, regardless of their disabilities, be allowed access to child care facilities, including registered family homes.** See Chapter 5 for additional information on working with children with disabilities.

See **“REMEMBER”** at the end of this chapter for what providers must remember to do in the enrollment process.

### **Provider Policies**

Parents must comply with all policies that a provider has, unless the provider's policy is in conflict with CCA or TWC policies.

Most providers have policies that require parents to pay a late fee if they pick children up after the facility closes. Parents of CCA-referred children are expected to comply with provider late pick up policies. **Providers may not:**

- **Charge CCA-referred children a higher late fee than other children are charged, or**
- **Have a different late fee policy for CCA-referred children than for other children.**

If a parent is late in paying the fee assigned by CCA, the provider is required to report the information to CCA by the end of the third day for follow up with the parent. See Chapter 8 for additional information on collecting parent fees.

**Many providers have a policy that requires advance notice from parents that they will be ending care with their facility. Due to the federal requirements regarding parent choice, this type of policy can not be enforced between CCA providers and parents. Parents are required to pay their copay through the last day of care, and CCA will pay only through the last day of care for the family.**

### Units of Child Care Service

CCA purchases child care based upon the “units” of service delivered:

- A unit of service may be a full day or a part day.
- A **full day** unit of service is **6 to 12 hours** of care within a 24-hour period.
- A **part day** unit of service is **less than 6 hours** of care within a 24-hour period.

<b>If, within a 24-hour period a parent needs...</b>	<b>...then the CCA Family Services Specialists</b>
...less than six hours of child care...	...enroll the child for one part-day unit
...at least six hours of child care...	...enroll the child for one full-day unit
...more than 12 hours but less than 18 hours of child care...	...enroll the child for 1 ½ units (1 full-day and 1 part-day)

Children may not be enrolled for more than 1 ½ units of care per day (24 hour period).

### Part-Time Care

CCA arranges care based on the time needed to support parents’ employment or training. Many parents are employed part-time or do shift work, so many children need **part-time** care, or **less than 5 days** per week. Children are enrolled with the provider for the number of days that the parent is working or in training during the week. The child will then be enrolled for the type of unit of care needed based on the parent’s work and/or training schedule (example: 3 full day units, 4 part day units).

When determining if parents need full-day, part-day, or part-time care, CCA includes transportation time, or time required to travel to and from the child care facility. (See Transportation Schedules in this chapter.)

CCA should not refer parents who need part-time or part-day care to providers who do not have part-time or part-day care listed on their Memorandum of Understanding and in the CCA database.

**The provider should not accept a part-time or part-day referral if that care is not listed on their Memorandum of Understanding. If they wish to add it, the provider must contact Provider Services staff and have it added to their MOU before the referral can be made and the care can be paid for.**

Providers must:

- Allow a child referred as part-day to attend up to the full six hours
- Allow a child referred as full-day to attend up to the full twelve hours

**Providers must not use the parent's work or training hours to determine how long the child may remain at the facility without being charged a late fee. Care is authorized as either full day or part day based on the parent's needs as listed above.**

### **School-Age Care**

Traditional school-age care for before and after school hours is considered part-day care. School-age children are enrolled according to the school year, and may be enrolled for before and after school care only, summer care only, or full-year care. Providers who offer full-year care for school-age children will need to reserve space for children whose parents need to have them enrolled for full day care during the summer and school holidays.

School-age children who need child care Monday-Friday, part day care on school days and full day care on school holidays will have a single referral for the school year and be paid a blended rate for each day of care. The blended rate combines the full day rate with the part day rate as follows:

- Part day rate for 175 days + full day rate for 30 days
- Divided by total number of days during the school session (205)

During the summer months the children will be referred full day and paid at the full day rate if the parent's work or training schedule requires full day care.





## Remember

### **These are things providers do in the enrollment process:**

- Accept all children referred by CCA unless:
  - The TDFPS license or registration doesn't include children of that age;
  - Accepting a child would exceed the licensed or registered capacity;
  - The Memorandum of Understanding does not include children of that age, or
  - The Memorandum of Understanding does not include the type of care needed, such as part day or weekend care.
- Accept only those children CCA has authorized for care by telephone followed by Form 2450, Child Care Assistance Authorization for Child Care Enrollment.
- Provide parents with written policies and procedures for the child care program.
- Not enroll children for more than 1 ½ units (18 hours) of care in a 24-hour period.



## Chapter 5

# Enrolling Children with Disabilities

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### **Policies for Services to Children with Disabilities**

CCA policies and procedures for serving children with disabilities are to:

- Create supportive environments for children and their families, and
- Provide support to providers.

### **The ADA and CCA Providers**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, that went into effect in 1992 requires public accommodations, including licensed child care centers and homes, and registered child care homes, to ensure access for all individuals regardless of disabilities. All child care programs must comply with this law by accepting children with disabilities into their facility, and by making it possible for parents with disabilities to access child care facilities.

Care for children with disabilities cannot be discontinued or refused, unless the care would fundamentally alter the child care facility's programming, or presents an undue burden to the provider. Providers who wish to discontinue or refuse care for a child with a disability should:

- Prepare to justify their enrollment decisions if their decisions are challenged,
- Contact CCA before refusing or discontinuing care, and
- Document in writing any inability to provide adequately for a child's needs or safety, which may include: accommodations that have been tried, accommodations that are considered necessary, and reasons the necessary accommodations were unsuccessful or not readily achievable.

### **Placing Children with Disabilities**

Parents of children with disabilities have the same right to parent choice as other parents, and CCA staff will follow the same referral process. If parents request specialized care, Inclusion Services can assist the parent in exploring care options and finding a facility to best meet their needs and support their child. Parents may choose to place children according to location or convenience, even if the provider chosen does not have experience caring for children with disabilities.

CCA Inclusion staff are dedicated to working with providers who care for children with disabilities as well as the parents of the children. Support for child care providers and families of children with disabilities or delays is available through

- Referrals to other community agencies
- Training, consulting, or modeling
- Activity ideas
- Enhanced rates to help pay for additional staff
- Observations and recommendations
- Collaborative planning meetings

### **The Inclusion Services Process**

When parents disclose that their child has a disability, CCA staff will ask the parents to complete paperwork authorizing CCA staff to observe the child in the child care setting. Current documentation of the child's disability and any needs or recommendations from specialists working with the child will also be requested.

Inclusion staff will schedule a time to observe the child at the provider facility in order to develop an inclusion plan. The inclusion plan will detail specific goals for the child's development that can be incorporated into the provider's daily plans and routines. Inclusion staff will schedule a planning meeting with provider staff, the parents, and any other professionals working with the child. All will have input on challenges or issues and suggestions to meet the child's needs, prioritize goals, consider adaptive materials or modifications, and staff or parent training or resources that may be helpful.

Inclusion staff will follow up with the provider to give assistance on implementing activities and other items on the inclusion plan, ensure that the child's plan is being followed, and make any changes necessary.

Inclusion staff may also provide assistance to any CCA-contracted facility which is attempting to make accommodations, adaptations, or modifications for children with disabilities in their programs.

### **Confidentiality**

All information providers have about children with disabilities is confidential. Information about children with disabilities cannot be given to anyone who does not directly work with the child or supervise someone who does, either in writing or verbally, without permission from the parent. Provider staff working directly with children with disabilities must learn all they can about the children, however caregivers must not share confidential information with:

- Caregiver staff who do not work with the children with disabilities,
- Other providers,
- Other parents, or
- Visitors.

### **Caring for Children with Disabilities**

Information on caring for children with disabilities is available to help providers who have children with disabilities enrolled in their facilities. Information and assistance are available on:

- Working with parents of children with disabilities,
- Getting a child settled into the facility,
- How CCA will help,
- How to help develop and follow individualized inclusion plans,
- Getting adaptive equipment,
- Determining if more help is needed,
- Finding community resources,
- What to do if a parent has a disability, and

- What to do if caregivers don't think they can meet the child's needs.

### **Inclusion Assistance Rates**

Additional reimbursement is available when extra adult assistance is needed for the child with a disability, beyond what is typical for the child's chronological age. To receive additional assistance, the provider must have a TWC-approved professional complete Form 2419, *Assessment Information for Child Care Services*, indicating additional adult assistance is needed while the child is in the child care program.

The Inclusion Specialist will help the provider with this process. The additional reimbursement rate is 190% of the provider's CCA reimbursement rate for the child's age.

The inclusion assistance rate may be used:

- To help pay for extra staff, or
- For additional wages to a current staff member who has special skills necessary to help the child with a disability, or is willing to receive training to attain these skills in a timely manner.

The provider must have the adult identified and hired **before** the inclusion assistance rate can begin. Inclusion assistance may not be used to pay for counseling, therapy, or medical services. These services may be provided through cooperating agencies and are not considered additional adult assistance needed to include the child in the facility's program.

### **Resources**

Most communities have resources available to parents of children with disabilities, and most of the resources are available to providers. CCA will assist providers in locating local resources, which may include:

- State agencies;
- Federal agencies;
- Local, state, and national associations for persons with disabilities;
- Parent support groups and organizations; and
- Educational services.



## **Remember**

**These things must be done when children with disabilities are enrolled:**

- Develop and follow a child's inclusion plan.
- Contact the CCA Inclusion Specialist if a child's disability status changes. For example, when a child no longer attends a special education class.
- Use inclusion assistance funds as intended.
- Maintain confidentiality about children's conditions.
- Contact the CCA Family Services Staff or Inclusion Specialist if there are problems with a placement.

## Chapter 6

# Determining Payment Rates to Providers

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### Maximum Reimbursement Rates

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas sets the maximum rates that providers can be reimbursed for services to CCA-referred children according to:

- Federal and state laws and regulations, and
- TWC child care services program state plans that have been approved by the federal government.

Maximum reimbursement rates are based on the following:

- The type of child care facility, such as licensed center, licensed home, or registered home;
- The ages of children served, such as infant (0-17 months), toddler (18-35 months), preschool (3-5 years), and school (6-12 years);
- Whether full-time or part-time care is provided, and full-day or part-day; and
- Whether additional adult help is needed for children with disabilities.

In order to determine the maximum rates, TWC periodically conducts a survey of a random sample of child care providers in each local workforce development area. Providers are asked to report their rates for care in each category listed above. This information is then used by each local board for establishing or reviewing rates.

### Provider Payment Rates

Actual payment rates for individual providers are set when the Memorandum of Understanding is signed, and are based upon the documentation of rates given to CCA by the provider. The provider receives these amounts for each authorized day of care provided to CCA-referred children.

Provider reimbursement rates are based on the provider's published rates, or what is charged to the public, and prorated to a daily rate. A copy of the provider's published rates must be provided to Provider Services in order to establish reimbursement rates. The provider will also submit any other fees normally required to be paid by parents (registration, uniforms, activities). The information is used to determine a single rate for full-day care and a single rate for part-day care for each of the four age categories (0-17 months, 18-35 months, 3-5 years, 6-12 years), for a total of eight rates.

There are two standard methods by which a provider can establish their reimbursement rates.

The most common method for determining reimbursement rates is the **“blended rate”** method:

1. Weekly rates are divided by 5; monthly rates are divided by 4.33 to get a weekly amount, then by 5 to get a daily rate.

2. All other fees that are required to be paid by parents as part of the regular program will also be prorated to a daily rate. This includes fees for registration/enrollment, supplies, uniforms/t-shirts, insurance, and activities or field trips. All amounts are totaled for the year, then divided by 260 to get a daily rate.
3. The daily rate for other fees is then added to the daily rate for care to get one daily rate for each age group.
4. If the provider has more than one rate for any of the four age groups listed above, the provider's rates for care will be averaged to come up with one rate.

The provider can also choose “**budget-based**” rates:

1. The provider calculates all of the costs involved with operating their program and determines what the actual cost to provide care for each age group is.
2. This will be prorated to a daily rate.

**Providers will not be paid more than the CCA maximum reimbursement rate even if their published rates are higher than the CCA maximum reimbursement rates. Providers cannot require CCA-referred parents to make up the difference between the providers' published rates and the CCA maximum rates. The provider may not charge CCA a higher rate than what the public is charged.**

### **When Providers Change Their Rates**

If providers change their published rates they must send written documentation of the new rates to Provider Services. A new Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared that shows the new rates. The new rates will be effective the first of the month *after* the MOU with the new rates has been signed. Providers should send new rate information to Provider Services at least two weeks prior to the change if possible to ensure that updates are made and the MOU is completed and signed as needed.

### **Provider Reimbursement for Transportation**

When providers transport children, CCA will reimburse providers as follows:

- If providers charge a separate transportation fee, CCA will pay the transportation fee for CCA-referred children who have been authorized for transportation
- The maximum amount allowed on transportation is \$2.50 per trip per day
- **The combined total for care plus transportation can not be more than the CCA maximum reimbursement rates**

### **School-Age Care**

School-age children who need child care Monday-Friday, part day care on school days and full day care on school holidays will have a single referral for the school year and be paid a blended rate for each day of care. The blended rate combines the full day rate with the part day rate as follows:

- Part day rate for 175 days + full day rate for 30 days
- Divided by total number of days during the school session (205)

During the summer months the children will be referred full day and paid at the full day rate if the parent's work or training schedule requires full day care.



## Remember

- A single rate for full-day and a single rate for part-day care are established for each age category that applies to the facility.
- CCA may not be charged a higher rate than public paying parents are charged.
- Providers may not be reimbursed more than the established maximum rates.
- CCA-referred parents cannot be required to make up any difference between the provider's published rate and the CCA maximum rate.
- If a separate rate is charged for transportation, the provider may charge only for transportation that is used by the CCA-referred child.
- Care for school-age children receiving before and/or after school care as well as holiday care is paid at a blended rate for the school year.



## Chapter 7

# Keeping Attendance Records

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### Recording Attendance of CCA-Referred Children

Parents have the responsibility of recording attendance of their children daily through the Child Care Attendance Automation System, or CCAA. Each parent is issued an attendance card, and the parent can have cards issued for up to 3 other adults. The parent or another adult designated by the parent will record daily attendance and absences. If the child care provider is a licensed center, attendance will be recorded using a POS (Point of Service) machine that is provided by the Texas Workforce Commission. If the child care provider is a licensed or registered home, attendance will be recorded using the provider's telephone. The following steps are completed to record the daily attendance:

Parent uses phone to record drop off/pick up: *Call 1-866-960-6496 and enter card number *Enter PIN *Enter Child Number *Choose the action (check-in, check-out, etc.) etc.) Normal check in on system is 90 seconds to start; approximately 20 seconds with experience	Parent uses POS to record drop off/pick up: *Swipe card *Enter PIN *Enter Child Number *Choose the action (check-in, check-out, etc.) Normal check in takes 30 seconds
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The system will check the following:

- Does the child have an active referral through CCA?
- Is this the correct provider?
- Is care authorized for this day?
- Is the transaction coming from the provider's phone number?
- Does the entry make sense? (Example - on a check-in, is the child already checked in?)

If any of these checks fail, the entry is rejected and the parent will know immediately

**Note: The provider may not record attendance information in the CCAA system for the parent, and the provider can not be an additional attendance card holder. Violation of this rule can result in termination of child care services for the parent, and termination from the program for the provider.**

### When Children Are Absent:

The CCAA system has an absence transaction. Absences work like attendance, except:

- The system will ask for an absence reason – illness, court-ordered visit, or general absence
- Parents can call in the absence from any phone, anywhere
- Child care center families can either record the absences on the POS device, or call it in from any phone
- Absences can be reported up to 3 days in advance and up to 6 calendar days following the absence

### **When a New Child Does Not Attend**

- Providers must notify CCA Provider Services when a child has not attended the first 3 days of scheduled care no later than the end of the third day.
- CCA will drop the child from care if the child does not begin care after the fifth day, *and* the provider has not heard from the parent about beginning care.
- CCA will reimburse the provider for those first 5 days of enrollment. TWC rules prohibit paying a provider for holding a space for a child.
- If the child begins care on the sixth day, the first five days missed count toward the child's total absences for the year.

### **Other Absences of CCA-Referred Children**

Children are allowed a total of 30 absences a year based on their individual anniversary dates. Absences follow the child, meaning that if a child is referred to more than one child care provider during the year, absences at each facility accrue toward the total allowed. Absences are tracked by CCA starting on the day children are scheduled to begin care. CCA sends parents a notice when a child's absences reach 30 or more days to let the parent know that the child's care may be terminated and gives them the opportunity to provide documentation to support absences due to extenuating circumstances.

### **Exceptions. What if...**

- ***The parent forgets to record attendance?*** At the next entry, the system warns the parent that there is an incomplete day or missing transaction. The parent can go back 7 calendar days to fill in any missing transactions (today + 6 days back).
- ***The parent is not available to record an absence at the provider's facility?*** Absence reporting can be done by phone from anywhere. The parent can also go back 7 calendar days (today + 6 days back) to report the absence once they have returned to care, and can report future absences up to 3 days in advance
- ***The parent takes their school age child to school, then the provider picks them up in the afternoon. How does the check in get entered?*** When the parent picks the child up at the end of the day, they will enter a previous check in for that afternoon, then enter a check out.
- ***The parent is not available to record attendance due to the provider giving home transportation services?*** If the provider gives transportation to and from home, the parent or one of their designated card holders will have to come by the provider's home at least weekly to record attendance
- ***There is a problem with the CCAA phone system?*** The provider should call the Help Desk to report the problem. When it is fixed, the parent can go back 7 calendar days (today + 6 days back) to fill in any missing transactions.

### **Reviewing Attendance Information**

The CCAA system has a provider website that will allow providers to view:

- Provider name, address, contact information, scheduled holidays, and billing cycle

- Referral information for all CCA children enrolled in the child care facility
- Activity for attendance recording by child
- Transactions (check-in, check-out, etc.) for all children
- Daily recorded attendance and missing attendance information for all children for a month

The website can be found at: [www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com](http://www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com)

Providers will log in with their DFPS facility number. The password for the first visit to the site will be the provider's zip code. After the initial log in the system will have the provider set up a new password. Please refer to the User Manual posted on the CCA website for additional information on reports in the system.

**All attendance information for the week should be recorded in the CCA system by the parent by the end of each week.**

All CCA providers are required to review attendance information entered by the parents at least every 5 calendar days to ensure attendance is recorded. If a parent fails to report attendance or absences in the CCA system, the provider must contact CCA within 5 calendar days of the missing report of attendance. If the parent does not record attendance information for 5 days in a row, child care services may be terminated. If the provider does not report days of missing attendance recording and the parent does not enter the information in the system, the provider will not be paid for those days

**Suspension of Enrollment**

Sometimes a child must be absent from care for more than two weeks in a row. This can happen when:

- The child must spend time with a parent on a court-ordered visit or as part of a custody agreement.
- A teen parent does not have transportation to bring a child to care during school breaks lasting more than two weeks in a row, or
- A parent lives too far from the facility to bring a child to care during breaks in employment that last more than two weeks (example: parent works for a school district. Care can be suspended over the summer break)

A parent must notify Family Services when a child will be absent for this length of time.

The Family Services staff will:

- Authorize the child's suspension,
- Terminate the child's enrollment with the provider, and
- Place the child on suspended enrollment.

The provider is not paid for the period of time the child is on suspended enrollment and may enroll another child in that space. When the enrollment suspension period is over, the child is guaranteed re-enrollment into the CCA program and may be placed with the original provider if space is available, or with another provider.



## Remember

- Parents must record attendance and absences through the CCAA system for each day of enrollment
- Providers may not record attendance information for parents, and may not be an additional card holder for the family
- Absences are recorded with a reason for the absence
- Absences can be recorded from any phone, and can be recorded for up to 3 days in advance
- Attendance and absences can be recorded for the current day as well as the 6 previous calendar days
- If a parent does not record attendance information for 5 days, the provider must report the missing attendance to CCA
- If a parent does not record attendance information for 5 days in a row, child care can be terminated
- Call CCA when a new child does not attend for the first 3 days of enrollment
- Children can have no more than 30 absences per year
- All providers must review attendance information on the CCAA website at least every 5 days
- If a child needs to be out of care for more than 2 weeks, the parent should request a suspension of care

## Chapter 8

# Collecting Parent Fees and Subsidies

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### Why Parent Fees Are Assessed

The federal government and TWC believe that it is important for parents to participate in paying the cost of their child care. In this way, parents can begin preparing to assume full cost of their child care as part of acquiring self-sufficiency.

### Who Pays Parent Fees

Federal law and state regulations say that many parents must pay part of the cost of their child care, even when they are getting help from TWC. CCA figures parent fees according to the family's *gross* monthly income. Income includes child support and other benefits received. Family Services staff will tell providers if parents have to pay fees and how much the fees are.

Typically parents who are earning an income and not receiving any type of public assistance will have a fee assessed. Those parents who are receiving public assistance such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) while they are attending training, or who have recently received assistance will not have a fee to pay.

### Collecting Parent Fees

Providers **must** collect parent fees. Collection of these fees is the sole responsibility of the provider. Providers keep the fees they collect, and the amount of the assessed parent fees is deducted from the CCA reimbursement to the provider.

Providers may collect parent fees:

- Once a week,
- Once a month, or
- On a schedule that meets the parent's needs, as long as collection is documented and the fee is collected **before** child care services are provided.

Parents must pay their parent fees and subsidies even when:

- Children are scheduled to attend but do not attend, and
- The parent takes vacation days.

Deduction of parent fees from provider reimbursement is discussed in Chapter 9.

See **“REMEMBER”** at the end of this chapter for requirements on collecting parent fees.

### Reduction of Parent Fees

Parent fees may be lowered temporarily when parents have unusual circumstances. Only the Family Services staff can lower parent fees. Providers may **not** lower fees, but they can recommend that a parent contact CCA and ask for a fee reduction.

Family Services staff will notify providers when parent fees have been reduced and Financial Management staff will adjust the reimbursement to the provider for that child.

**When Parents Do Not Pay Their Fees**

If a parent does not pay their fees as scheduled, the provider should contact Provider Services on the **third** day that the fee is past due. CCA will then remind the parent of the fee requirement and send a notice to the parent discontinuing care if the fee is not paid within 15 days. If the parent does not pay the fee, care is discontinued on the 15<sup>th</sup> day. If the parent does pay the fee, then the provider should notify Provider Services so that care can continue. Collection of the parent fees is the responsibility of the provider, and CCA will not reimburse for any uncollected fees. **The provider may discontinue services for the family if the fee is not paid timely.**

See “**REMEMBER**” at the end of this chapter for time frames for reporting failure of parents to pay parent fees.



## **Remember**

### **Collect parent fees as required:**

- Fees are collected before child care services are provided.
- The amount collected from each parent should be documented.
- Providers should give parents receipts for fees they pay.
- Providers should file and keep copies of receipts.
- Providers must notify Provider Services on the third day if a parent does not pay their parent fee on time.



## Chapter 9

# Processing Payments for Child Care

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All parents record attendance information through the CCAA system. The information is then automatically sent to CCA twice monthly on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> to process for payment to the provider.

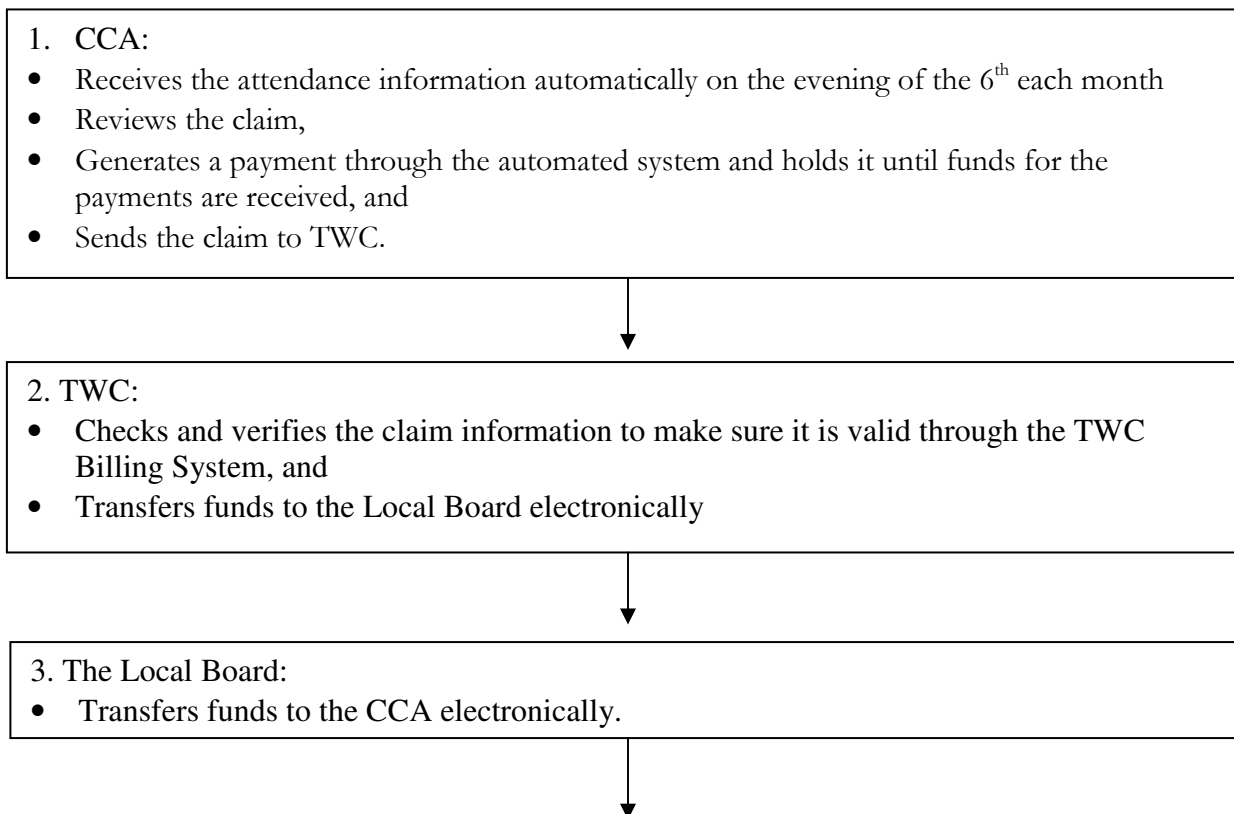
CCA providers will be on a once or twice monthly payment cycle.

- Once monthly covers the first of the month through the last day of the month. The information for payment processing is transmitted to CCA the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- Twice monthly covers the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, then the 16<sup>th</sup> through the end of the month. The information for the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month is transmitted to CCA on the 21<sup>st</sup> of each month, and information for the 16<sup>th</sup> through the end of the month is transmitted to CCA on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

### Payment to CCA Providers

There are many steps that take place between the time the attendance information is received and the time the provider receives payment for the services. Providers are paid for days recorded as present as well as absent. All parent fees and other subsidies that the provider collects are deducted from the CCA reimbursement to the provider.

The payment process is outlined in the following chart:



#### 4. CCA:

- Releases the payment to the provider via ACH direct deposit or debit card.

All payments to providers are made by direct deposit to a checking or savings account, or to a debit card issued to the provider. Once the claims are entered into the CCS database and uploaded to TWC, it may take up to 10 business days for payments to be released to providers. **There is no set date for payment release.**

#### **Payment Summaries**

Providers should be sure to review the Payment Summary (*check proof*) for each period as soon as possible after receiving it. If an error is found, the provider should call the Financial Management unit within 15 days of receiving the payment summary.

**Accepting payment for services not actually provided is fraud.** Providers and parents will be referred to the Texas Workforce Commission in cases where it is suspected that a fraudulent claim has been made.

This includes:

- Allowing parents to record children as present when they were not in care,
- Allowing attendance information to be recorded or recording the information for children after care has been terminated by CCA
- Allowing attendance information to be recorded or recording the information for children after the parent has withdrawn the child from care

Providers should thoroughly review attendance reports on the CCAA website by the 6<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of each month to ensure that accurate information is submitted for payment. Providers will be required to refund any payments that they are not entitled to, including:

- Overpayments,
- Duplicate payments, or
- Payments made in error.

#### **Manual Billing**

If attendance information is not recorded in the CCAA system and the provider has notified CCA timely, then the provider will be asked to bill for the child care. A manual billing form will be sent to the provider to complete with the child's attendance information and return to CCA by the due date listed on the billing form. Failure of a parent to record attendance information must be reported to CCA within 5 business days.

#### **Payment for Children's Absences**

Providers are paid for days children do not attend, as long as:

- The absence policies outlined in Chapter 7 are followed,
- The absences fall on one of the nine provider holidays listed on the Provider Data Worksheet, or
- The provider had to close the facility due to weather or natural disasters, up to five days within the calendar year.

**Providers are not paid for any holidays that are not submitted in writing or are not submitted prior to the date of the holiday.**

### **Record Keeping Requirements**

Providers must keep records while a CCA-referred child is in their care. After a CCA referred child is no longer coming to the facility, it is recommended that providers keep:

- Financial documents and supporting documents such as attendance records and receipts for parent fees, and
- Any other records having to do with financial claims.

### **Access to Records**

Providers must allow reasonable access to their records and must provide copies on request to people who are authorized to see records and documents. The access only has to be during regular business hours. People authorized to see provider records are:

- CCA Staff,
- Local Board (Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas) staff,
- TWC staff,
- Representatives of the State Attorney General's office, and
- Representatives of Federal government offices with responsibility for managing and auditing federal and state child care programs.



## **Remember**

### **Follow These Guidelines**

- Parents must record daily attendance in the CCAA system.
- Attendance information can only be submitted for children authorized by CCA and for only the period covered by the child's enrollment.
- Records and documentation that have anything to do with attendance or parent fee payments are kept on file while a child is in care.
- Days when a child is not authorized for care will be blank on the attendance report.

**Providers can contact the customer service line at 214-905-3570 for payment questions. For payment release dates, call the recorded information line at 214-905-2474.**

## **Chapter 10**

### **Taking Corrective or Adverse Actions with CCA Providers**

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#### **Complying with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Providers must comply with all the terms of the MOU and follow procedures in this CCA Provider Manual. CCA will take corrective or adverse action with providers who do not comply as required.

A copy of the MOU is provided to all providers once all required paperwork is received, and the MOU is signed and in effect.

#### **Service Improvement Agreements**

CCA Provider Services staff will negotiate Service Improvement Agreements (SIA) for providers if they:

- Do not meet the terms of the MOU.
- Do not follow the procedures in this CCA Provider Manual.

Service Improvement Agreements will:

- State the problem,
- Explain to providers what improvements must be made,
- List any training requirements,
- List ways for the provider to work on improvements,
- Tell what CCA staff will do to help providers make the improvements, including any technical assistance to be provided by CCA,
- Set time limits for making improvements, and
- List the results of not making the improvements.

Provider services staff will discuss SIA's with providers and will offer what help is needed for providers to correct the problems or make the improvements. SIA's must be signed by the provider and Provider Services staff. If a serious problem happens with a provider, CCA can take immediate action instead of writing a Service Improvement Agreement.

#### **Adverse Action by CCA**

Consequences for serious problems (in which immediate action may be taken by CCA), noncompliance with policy, or failure to make needed improvements as defined by a Service Improvement Agreement by providers might include the following:

- Temporarily withholding payment,
- Permanently withholding payment,
- Discontinuing referral of children to the provider,
- Recouping funds from the provider.

**A Memorandum of Understanding will be terminated immediately in the following instances:**

- Change of ownership
- Change of location
- Revocation or suspension of a license or registration by TDFPS

**Corrective and Adverse Action by TDFPS**

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) will notify TWC when a facility is placed on evaluation status, probationary status, or adverse action. In all cases CCA staff will contact both the provider and parents of children enrolled through CCA after receiving notice of the action through the Texas Workforce Commission. The following table summarizes the actions to be taken by CCA when a child care provider has been placed on corrective or adverse action with DFPS. More detailed information follows.

<b>Status</b>	<b>Provider Notified</b>	<b>Parents Notified in Writing</b>	<b>New Enrollments are Stopped?</b>	<b>Currently Enrolled Children are Removed?</b>	<b>Provider is Eligible to Receive TRS/TEEM Rates?</b>
Corrective Action/ Evaluation Status	Within 2 business days	Within 5 business days	No	No	No
Corrective Action/ Probation Status	Within 2 business days	Within 5 business days	Yes	No	No
Adverse Action	Within 1 business days	Within 2 business days	Yes	Yes – within 5 business days	No

For providers placed on Evaluation Status:

- CCA will send letters to all parents of CCA enrolled children notifying them of the status and giving them the option to remain in care or transfer
- Parents wishing to keep their children in care must sign a form acknowledging they are aware of the provider’s status and choose to continue care at the facility
- Enrollment of new children may continue
- If the provider is receiving a higher reimbursement rate due to Texas Rising Star certification or TEEM participation, the rates will be lowered and the standard maximum rates will be applied

For providers placed on Probation Status:

- CCA will send letters to all parents of CCA enrolled children notifying them of the status and giving them the option to remain in care or transfer
- Parents wishing to keep their children in care must sign a form acknowledging they are aware of the provider’s status and choose to continue care at the facility

- No new children may be enrolled through CCA
- If the provider is receiving a higher reimbursement rate due to Texas Rising Star certification or TEEM participation, the rates will be lowered and the standard maximum rates will be applied

For providers under Adverse Action:

- CCA will send letters to all parents of CCA enrolled children notifying them of the status and requiring them to transfer to another child care provider within 5 days
- All children are required to transfer
- **No new children may be enrolled through CCA**

### **Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

Everyone in Texas is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. If the suspected abuse or neglect happens while the child is in care with a provider, the TDFPS Child Care Licensing or a local or state law enforcement agency must be notified. CCA staff will notify TDFPS if they receive a complaint against a provider.

If a provider suspects abuse or neglect of a child is happening away from the facility, the individual who suspects the abuse or neglect must immediately report the suspicion to TDFPS Child Protective Services.

### **Reasons Providers Could Be Prosecuted**

Providers may be prosecuted under applicable federal or state laws for:

- False claims for payment,
- False statements, or
- False documents.

Provider representatives should carefully review all documents that they sign and note that their signature is considered to be confirmation of the information included on the document. This includes information contained on the Memorandum of Understanding, Form 2429-B (Provider Rates), and any other paperwork submitted.

CCA staff are required to investigate all allegations of fraud and report the findings to Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas. CCA staff may make unannounced visits to provider facilities to investigate allegations, review documentation, and verify attendance of CCA children.



## Chapter 11

### Helping and Monitoring Providers

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#### **How CCA Staff Help Providers**

The CCA Contractor serves as a resource for providers and will provide help that fits the provider's situation and needs. CCA staff will help providers understand and comply with requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding and this CCA Provider Manual. Providers who choose to become certified as Texas Rising Star providers will receive assistance in that process.

Providers may ask for help with program problems. Provider Services staff may offer help to providers when problems are observed, and Provider Services staff may also develop Service Improvement Agreements to help providers to correct problems.

#### **Visits to Provider Facilities**

Providers who are certified as Texas Rising Star (TRS) providers will receive visits to renew their TRS certification, and as needed or requested by the provider.

If a provider has a child with disabilities enrolled, an Inclusion Specialist will visit:

- Every six months to monitor implementation of the child's Inclusion Plan, and
- Quarterly if the provider receives the inclusion assistance rate.

Providers must allow Local Board, Texas Workforce Commission, or other state or federal authorities to conduct program and fiscal audits as requested. This will be done during regular business hours.

The TDFPS Licensing division monitors provider compliance with licensing or registration standards. **CCA staff, Board staff, or TWC staff who observe noncompliance with TDFPS minimum standards are required to report the noncompliance to TDFPS licensing staff.**



## Chapter 12

# Asking Questions and Solving Problems

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### **Questions About Policies**

When providers have questions about the Memorandum or Understanding or about any of the policies outlined in this CCA Provider Manual, the provider should contact CCA Provider Services staff. CCA staff will contact the Local Board/Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas for additional information when necessary.

### **Waivers**

Sometimes a provider may not be able to comply with a rule or procedure. If the provider can meet the intent of the rule or procedure, the provider may ask CCA if a waiver is possible. A waiver could allow the provider to:

- Meet the requirements in a different way, or
- Have the rule or procedure set aside because of extenuating circumstances.

Providers should send written requests for waivers to CCA. CCA will forward waiver requests to the Local Board/ Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas to see whether they can be approved. CCA staff will notify providers whether or not waivers are approved.

### **Complaints from Parents regarding Providers**

Providers may receive complaints from parents about provider care or policies. Most complaints can be handled directly by providers and the parents. If providers and parents cannot work out the problems and the complaints cannot be resolved, providers should refer parents to CCA.

Occasionally parents will report complaints to CCA staff regarding services provided by the provider. If the complaint involves a possible noncompliance to TDFPS minimum standards, then CCA staff are required to report the complaint to licensing staff for follow up. The parent is given the information to contact TDFPS to report the complaint as well.

Sometimes parents want to move children from a facility when they have problems with the provider. If this happens, the CCA staff will make effort to find out the cause of the problem and try to assist the parent with solving the problem rather than move the child. If the problems between the parent and the provider cannot be resolved, then the family will be transferred to another facility.

It is the goal of CCA to assist parents in making the best choices for their children and for their needs as a family. Parents are encouraged to take their time in selecting child care so that their choice is a good fit and children remain in care at the facility long term. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the provider staff on a regular basis so that when concerns arise, they are comfortable in addressing them. CCA staff can serve as a mediator between the parent and provider; however, direct communication between the parent and provider is always encouraged first.

### **Complaints from Parents or Providers regarding CCA**

Providing a high level of service to customers is extremely important. When a provider or parent has a complaint regarding the level of service received or the outcome of an issue that needed resolution, it is important to:

- Speak with the Supervisor in charge. The issue will be investigated and followed up.

If the need still has not been met:

- Speak with the Manager of the department. The issue will be further investigated and followed up as requested.

Following this step, if the need still has not been met:

- Contact the CCA Director

Providers and parents have the right to speak with Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas staff when issues cannot be resolved with the staff at ChildCareGroup. Any feedback is appreciated, and staff would like the opportunity to resolve any issues directly.

### **Provider Appeals of Decisions made by CCA or Action Taken**

If providers do not agree with a decision or action taken by CCA, they should first try to review the situation with CCA management staff. If the provider is not satisfied with results, CCA management staff will consult with Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas to review the situation. The provider may request a meeting to resolve the situation.

## Chapter 13

### Improving Quality of Care

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#### **Texas Rising Star Certification**

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program offers providers the opportunity to participate in a voluntary plan to improve the quality of child care by meeting program criteria that exceed the Minimum Standards for TDFPS Child Care Licensing.

Texas Rising Star Criteria cover;

- TDFPS licensing compliance,
- Caregiver staff qualifications,
- Director qualifications,
- Staff orientation,
- Ongoing staff development and training,
- Group sizes,
- Activities for children,
- Caregiver-child interaction,
- Physical environment,
- Health and safety,
- Nutrition and meal time, and
- Parent involvement.

Child Protective Services (CPS) has funding for child care that is managed through the CCA program. CPS requires that CPS children be placed only in Texas Rising Star facilities. If no TRS facilities are available, or if available TRS facilities do not have space, a waiver must be requested to place a CPS child with a non-TRS provider.

Every parent in the CCA program or on the waiting list will receive a Consumer Guide, which gives information about the Texas Rising Star program, as well as national accreditation.

#### **How to Apply for the Texas Rising Star Program**

Providers who are interested in being certified as TRS may ask Provider Services staff for an application, and a copy of the criteria to be met. The provider will need to complete the application and send it to CCA along with copies of required documentation listed on the application. The provider should use the criteria to review their program themselves and identify any areas in need of improvement to meet the TRS criteria. Once the completed application and required documentation have been received by CCA, Provider Services will complete a licensing screening form to determine further eligibility for the TRS program. Staff will schedule a visit to the facility for a pre-assessment visit. This will be an opportunity for the provider and Provider Services staff to discuss areas of the criteria already being met and identify any areas that need improvement. Together they can develop a plan to get the facility ready for the formal assessment. The Provider Services staff will work closely with the facility in helping them implement changes to

meet the criteria, and can provide technical assistance and training for staff on appropriate practices and how to meet the criteria.

### **Levels of Certification**

Providers can work toward three levels of certification:

- Four-Star certification is the highest level of certification awarded. The provider with this certification represents the highest quality in the TRS system.
- Three-Star certification represents a high quality program that meets many of the quality standards in the TRS program.
- Two-Star certification is issued temporarily to a provider who does not yet meet enough of the quality standards for the Three-Star certification. The Two-Star provider has the potential for reaching Three-Star certification within six months.

Some providers apply to become a Texas Rising Star provider but do not meet enough of the quality standards to be certified at any level. These providers are on a deferred status and are not certified, but they are in the TRS track. Providers on deferred status have one year to reach a level of quality to be certified.

TRS providers certified at the three and four-star levels are eligible for higher reimbursement rates from CCA. The maximum rates for TRS providers are higher than for other providers, however CCA cannot reimburse at rates higher than the provider's published rates.

### **Additional Training Requirements**

Providers must participate in orientation provided by CCA on the procedures that are in this Provider Manual prior to enrolling in CCA. Existing providers may be required to attend the orientation as well as a refresher on program requirements.

CCA orientation and any training on CCA program policies and procedures <b>does not</b> count toward TDFPS minimum licensing standards requirements, and certificates will not be issued.
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## **Important Contact Information**

**Child Care Assistance Provider Information Line:** 214.905.3579

**Child Care Assistance Payment/Attendance Assistance:** 214.905.3570

**Payment Information Line:** 214.905.2474 (recording only)

**CCAA System Provider Help Line:** 1-866-320-8720

**CCAA Website:** [www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com](http://www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com)

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