

Your Rights and Responsibilities:

As a consumer of child care services you have a right to:

- Ask questions
- Tour the facility
- Talk with your child's teacher
- View the latest licensing report
- Request references from other parents
- Visit the facility at any time

As a parent, your responsibilities include:

- Developing and maintaining a trusting relationship with your child's caregiver
- Picking your child up on time everyday
- Paying all fees on time
- Keeping the program informed of any changes in your child's life
- Adhering to the rules of the program
- Completing and updating enrollment forms as necessary
- Providing required items such as diapers, formula, a change of clothes, etc.
- Keeping your child home when sick

Please Note: If you qualify to receive CCA funding for child care, providers should not charge you the difference between their published rate and the CCA reimbursement rate.



Five Important Steps for Choosing Child Care

Look – Call and visit several facilities that meet your needs before making a decision. Visit more than once and stay as long as possible so you can get a good feel for what the care will be like for your child. After you start using the facility, continue to visit from time to time.

Listen – The children should be happy and involved. The teachers' voices should be cheerful and patient. A place that is too quiet may mean there is not enough activity. If it is too noisy, it may mean there is a lack of control.

Count the number of children in the group and the number of staff members caring for them. The fewer number of children for each adult, the more attention your child will get. A small number of children per adult is especially important for babies and young children.

Ask about the background of all staff and if they have any special training. It is very important the adults who care for your child/ren have the knowledge and experience to give them the attention they need. Inquire if the program is accredited.

Be Informed – Call the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Licensing Division at 214.951.7902 or visit their web site at www.dfps.state.tx.us to find out if there have been any valid complaints and/or other pertinent information about any of the programs you are considering.

Available Resources

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) – Regulatory agency for child care programs. Call to report non-compliance or visit the web site for licensing compliance history and to obtain information on health and safety, such as immunizations, prevention and control of infectious diseases, building and premises safety, and health and safety training for providers. Call 214.951.7902, ask for Child Care Licensing, or 800.862.5252, to leave a message / www.dfps.state.tx.us

Texas 211 – Information and referral to health and human service programs. Dial 2-1-1 from a landline phone (not a cell phone) / www.ccgd.org

ChildCareGroup Child Care Assistance – Child care subsidy program for Dallas County funded by WorkSource of Dallas County. Call 214.630.5949 / www.ChildCareGroup.org/cca

ChildCareGroup Resource and Referral – Information on locating and choosing quality child care programs. Services provided free of charge to parents and child care providers. Call 214.631.2273 / www.ChildCareGroup.org/rr



ChildCareGroup

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ChildCareGroup

Consumer Guide to Choosing Child Care



Finding the right place and the right people to care for your child while you work or go to school is an important decision. Child Care Assistance (CCA), a program of ChildCareGroup, offers a variety of options for child care. Care may be provided by a program that is licensed or registered through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Child Care Licensing division, or by a relative of the child. The choice is yours.

This *Consumer Guide to Choosing Child Care* will give you information you need when considering the child care options for your family. Below is a description of various child care arrangements from which you can choose.



Registered Child Care Homes provide care in the caregiver's home for up to six children under age five. In addition, providers may also care for six more school-age children. The total number of children allowed in a home is determined by the ages of the children. No more than 12 children can be in care at any time, including children of the caregiver. Registered homes are inspected every 1-3 years or more often if a report is filed regarding child abuse/neglect or a violation of standards.

Licensed Child Care Homes, formerly called Group Homes, provide services in the provider's residence or a separate facility for 7 to 12 children from birth to 13 years. No more than 12 children can be in care at any given time, including children of the caregiver. Licensed homes are inspected at least once a year or more often if a report is filed regarding child abuse/neglect or standards violations.

Licensed Child Care Centers care for seven (7) or more children for less than 24 hours per day at a location other than the child's or caregiver's home. Centers may have different names, such as preschool or child development center, or may serve a specific population, such as school-age children. Licensed centers are inspected at least once a year or more often if a report is received related to child abuse/neglect or standards violations.

These three facility types must go through an application process, orientation, and inspection

by DFPS Child Care Licensing before a permit to operate is issued. All staff must meet minimum training requirements related to care and education of children, including CPR and first aid as well as have a high school diploma or GED. DFPS Child Care Licensing is responsible for monitoring all facilities and issuing permits to operate the child care program.

CCA does not monitor licensing regulations. Any concerns or complaints regarding services provided by licensed and registered child care facilities should be reported to Child Care Licensing for investigation and follow up. They can be reached at the following numbers: 214.951.7902, ask for Child Care Licensing; or 800.862.5252 to leave a message.

Relative Child Care allows a parent to use a relative of the child as the child care provider. An eligible relative is an individual who does not reside in the same household as the child, is at least 18 years of age, and is, by marriage, blood relationship, or court decree, one of the following:

- the child's grandparent or great-grandparent;
- the child's aunt or uncle; or
- the child's sibling.

Individuals who are listed on the Texas Department of Public Safety's Sex Offender Registry are not eligible to be a relative care provider.

Relative child care is not monitored by child care licensing or CCA staff. The quality of care provided is based upon an agreement between the parent and the provider, and their individual needs.

Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions you as a parent can make. Before visiting a facility, it is helpful to identify your family's basic needs such as the location of the program, the hours of operation, transportation services, etc.

After selecting child care programs that meet the basic needs, you are urged to visit several programs to learn first-hand if this is the right program for your child and family. There is no substitute for a "walk-through" visit. Take the time to talk to the caregiver and ask questions about the children's activities. Additional information on selecting child care is included in this guide (See "Five Important Steps for Choosing Child Care" listed on the back panel).



Child Care Programs Achieving Higher Quality Standards and Supporting School Readiness

ChildCareGroup is an advocate for quality child care and works daily to support that mission. Below are descriptions of programs that have adopted quality standards for child care and the early learning processes that support literacy and school readiness. The following information may be helpful as you consider your options for child care.

Texas Rising Star Provider (TRS):

A TRS Provider is a child care provider that voluntarily meets requirements that exceed the State's minimum licensing standards for health and safety, group size, child/staff ratios, caregiver training, and age-appropriate curricula and activities for child care facilities. Certification as a Texas Rising Star Provider is available to licensed child care centers, licensed child care homes, and registered child care homes that meet the certification criteria. CCA staff visit these facilities twice yearly to ensure that TRS standards are met and maintained.

Accreditation:

Child Care Programs may choose to complete a voluntary accreditation process through a national organization such as those listed below. These programs agree to adhere to stricter standards than those of regulated programs. Achieving accreditation involves extensive self-study and validation by professionals outside the program to confirm that quality standards are met.

You may visit the web sites below for more information and/or to conduct a search for accredited programs in your area.

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), www.naeyc.org
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation, www.necpa.net
- National Association of Family Child Care, www.nafcc.org
- National After School Association, www.naaweb.org

Texas Early Education Model (TEEM):

TEEM was designed by the State Center for Early Childhood Development at the University of Texas Health Science Center. The Model encourages school readiness programs to share certified teachers and to integrate facility, space, professional development, and funding from Child Care, Head Start, and Pre-kindergarten sources. The critical instructional components of TEEM include:

- research-based curriculum
- ongoing professional development through classroom mentoring
- progress monitoring of children through personal digital assistant devices

For additional information about centers participating in the TEEM project, contact the State Center for Early Childhood Development at 713.500.3575 or visit www.uth.tmc.edu/circle.

To view the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) adopted list of research-based curricula, with strong literacy components and approved by the State Center, visit www.tea.state.tx.us/textbooks/materials/index.html.