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Texas School Ready!™ Certification was implemented by the State Center for Early Childhood Development to establish a school readiness certification program for early education and child care programs. Certification is based on a child care provider's demonstrated ability to prepare children for kindergarten. Preschool classrooms eligible for Texas School Ready! Certification are composed of children who will be attending kindergarten the following school year and include:

- Licensed child care centers (for profit, non-profit, and faith-based programs)
- School districts and charter school pre-kindergarten programs
- Head Start programs

Your Rights and Responsibilities:

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

- Ask questions and 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: Providers should not charge you the difference between their published rate and the CCCS 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 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 teachers' voices should be cheerful and patient. The children should be happy and involved.

Count – The number of children in the group and the number of staff caring for them. A small number of children per adult is especially important for babies and young children.

Ask – Check on the background of all staff and if they have any special training. Inquire if the program is nationally accredited.

Be Informed – Check with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Licensing Division to find out if there have been any valid complaints and/or other pertinent information about the programs you are considering. DFPS phone numbers and web address are listed on the next panel.

Check Out Available Resources for Southeast Texas

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) – Regulatory agency for child care programs. Call to report non-compliance or visit the website 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. Visit www.dfps.state.tx.us or call 1-800-862-5252. You may also go to www.txchildcaresearch.org or call 409-951-3303.

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

Child Care Contractor Services – Subsidy programs in Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange Counties are funded by Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas at 1-877-834-JOBS (5627), or go to www.workforcechildcare.org.

Contact Information:

Beaumont Child Care Contractor Services (CCCS)
304 Pearl Street
Beaumont, TX 77701
Phone: 409-835-1411

Port Arthur Child Care Contractor Services (CCCS)
3901 Twin City Highway
Port Arthur, TX 77642
Phone: 409-962-1236

Toll Free:

Phone: 1-800-258-1411

Fax: 1-800-

e-mail: cccs@workforcechildcare.org
web site: www.workforcechildcare.org



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 Contractor Services (CCCS), 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. A description of various child care arrangements from which you can choose is below.

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.



The previous **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: 409-951-3303, or call toll free 1-800-862-5252, or www.txchildcaresearch.org.

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
- 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 are considering 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 following websites 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 Accreditation Commission—www.naccp.org
- National Association of Family Child Care—www.nafcc.org
- National After School Association—www.naaweb.org

Texas School Ready! Project: TSR!, previously known as TEEM, was developed by Dr. Susan Landry of the Children's Learning Institute at UT Houston, Health Science Center. Implementation of the model across the state has demonstrated improved educational outcomes for preschool children. 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 goal is to improve the school readiness skills for those children who are most at-risk. The critical instructional components of the TSR! Model include:

- research-based curriculum
- ongoing professional development through classroom mentoring
- progress monitoring of children to plan for individualized instruction

For additional information about centers participating in the TSR! project, contact the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) at 713-500-3575, or www.childrenslearninginstitute.org.

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