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1. OVERVIEW OF WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS CHILD CARE SERVICES

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (WSNCT) is one of 28 workforce development boards with contracted service providers and community partners. This network gives customers local access to Workforce Solutions and statewide services at multiple Workforce Solutions offices. WSNCT mission is to advance business-driven talent development strategies that promote economic growth, opportunity, and a quality workforce.

Our service delivery area includes Collin, Denton, Ellis, Erath, Hood, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, and Wise counties. This area is home to over 2.5 million residents, 46,000 employers, and 1.2 million workers.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments that was established to assist governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. The purpose of NCTCOG is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make joint decisions.

Since 1996, WSNCT has partnered with the NCTCOG, who serves as its administrative entity responsible for program implementation. As grant recipient and fiscal agent, the NCTCOG is responsible for an annual workforce development budget in excess of \$60 million.

WSNCT Child Care Services (CCS) program subsidizes child care for low-income families, promoting long-term self-sufficiency by enabling parents to work or attend workforce training or education activities. CCS also educates parents about the availability of quality child care to enhance children's early learning and development.

CCS is funded through the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which is overseen by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Care. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the lead agency for CCDF in Texas. Workforce development boards administer these funds for Child Care Services through Workforce Solutions offices. For more information please visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ>.

2. BECOMING A CHILD CARE SERVICES PROVIDER

Any child care facility regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) can become a CCS Provider. There are only two requirements to become a provider with us.

Requirement 1: *Licensing and registration*

A child care facility must have a current permit/registration from DFPS, options include:

- Licensed child care center or child care home
- Registered child care home
- Listed home (relative care only)
- Operated and monitored by the United States Military

Requirement 2: *Provide required documents and abide by the terms of the CCS Provider Agreement and Provider Manual*

A child care facility must sign and/or submit the following documents:

- CCS Provider Agreement
- IRS Form W-9
- Direct Deposit Authorization Form
- Voided check with pre-Printed personal information or a letter from a banking institution with required banking information
- All other required documents

Provider Agreements are legal, non-expiring contracts that are valid as long as:

- Providers' DFPS permit, registration, or certification remains current
- Providers' liability insurance (transportation and regular) remains in effect
- Providers' comply with terms of the CCS Provider Agreement

Provider Agreements:

- Outline mutual agreements between the provider and CCS
- Are the basis for payment for care provided to CCS children
- Include this CCS Provider Manual as part of the Agreement
- Are legal agreements that are updated as necessary

A Provider Agreement does not guarantee that you will have children referred by CCS. All referrals made by the CCS are based on a parent's choice. However, even if a regulated provider does not have CCS-referred children in care, they must still comply with the terms of the CCS Provider Agreement in order to keep the agreement current. In the event a regulated provider has not had a CCS-referred child in 12 months, CCS may terminate the Provider Agreement. Agreements with an unregulated relative provider will be terminated once the last relative placement has discontinued care.

A. Changes that affect the Provider Agreement

There are numerous changes that must be reported to us. The following chart helps identify what changes must be reported and the timeframes required for reporting:

Type of Change	Timeframe for Reporting
ANY change in facility license, permit, or registration by DFPS Child Care Licensing, including loss of license/permit	Within 48 hours of notification from DFPS (<i>prior</i> to the effective date)
ANY change affecting the status of facilities regulated by Texas Department of Health or the U.S. Military	Within 48 hours of notification from DFPS (<i>prior</i> to the effective date)
Change in EIN or Tax ID Number	Two (2) weeks <i>prior</i> to the effective date
New finding of a provider or their employee found to be in serious violation of, seriously deficient by, or debarred from another state or federal program (such as the food program)	Within 24 hours after notification received
Changes that may cause termination of the CCS Provider Agreement	Within 48 hours of the change
Facility name, ownership, governing body, or corporate status	30 business days <i>prior</i> to the effective date
New contact person or director	2 weeks <i>prior</i> to the effective date
New address or temporary location	30 business days <i>prior</i> to the effective date or as soon as possible if a temporary location
New hours of operation	2 weeks <i>prior</i> to the effective date
Holiday closings	60 business days <i>prior</i> to the closing
Change in the ages of children served	30 business days <i>prior</i> to the effective date
Updated/new facility rates	30 business days <i>prior</i> to the effective date

Note: A failure to report changes may affect payment for services provided and may cause CCS children to be moved to another facility.

B. Changes that cause termination of the Agreement

- Change in Child Care License/Permit/Registration number,
- Change in facility ownership, governing body or corporate status,
- Facility or home moves to a different location,
- Loss of license/permit/registration or certification status, and
- Provider found to be in serious violation of, seriously deficient by or debarred from another state or federal program.

3. RELATIVE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

Relatives must be listed with the DFPS as a Listed Home and must meet the definition of relative as defined below:

- An individual who is at least 18 years of age, and is, by marriage, blood relationship, or court decree, one of the following:
 - Child's grandparent
 - Child's great-grandparent
 - Child's aunt
 - Child's uncle
 - Child's sibling (if the sibling does not reside in the same household as the eligible child)

A Relative Child Care Provider may not reside in the same household as the eligible child or CCS parent (unless under allowable circumstances which have prior approval by CCS).

Relative care may be provided for a child in the child's home only for the following reasons and with approval from CCS:

- Child with disabilities and his/her siblings (parent must provide proof the child meets this requirement)
- Child under 18 months of age and his/her siblings
- Child of a teen parent
- A parent's work schedule requires evening, overnight, or weekend child care and taking the child outside of the child's home would be disruptive to the child
- Other child care arrangements are not available in the community

A relative child care provider shall not be reimbursed for more children than permitted by the DFPS minimum regulatory standards for Registered Child Care Homes.

Relative child care providers are:

- Not reimbursed on days when attendance is not recorded
- Not reimbursed for days when the child is absent
- Not reimbursed for holidays

4. PARENT CHOICE PROGRAM

CCS is a parental choice program, and a signed Agreement **does not** guarantee that children will be referred to a specific child care provider. Federal and State law requires that parents be given a choice of where and whom they want to care for their children. All referrals made are based on parent choice.

Parents may choose from the following child care options:

- Regulated providers who currently have a signed Agreement
- Regulated providers who do not currently have a signed Agreement, but are willing to sign one
- Select relatives who meet requirements to provide relative care

Note: Children receiving child care services through DFPS have different requirements for choosing a provider. These parents work with their DFPS caseworker to determine the provider that best meets their needs.

5. WAIT LIST

At times, children who might be eligible to receive services must be placed on a wait list. Once children are placed on the wait list, the parent will be mailed a letter notifying them of their status and the requirements to keep their information current while waiting for care. This letter is sent within 20 days after a parent has applied for assistance online or by telephone. Families are pulled from the wait list according to State and Board mandated priority groups and in the order in which requests for assistance were received. Once pulled from the wait list, the parent will receive an application packet in the mail and must return the packet to us within the required timeframe.

6. CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

Arrangements for child care are made between the provider and the parent, according to the parent's needs and provider policies. Parents receiving child care services should be treated the same as private paying parents in regard to policies for picking up, dropping off, attendance requirements, participation in activities, discipline, records, etc.

We will authorize payment for child care on a full- or part-time basis. This information will be reflected on the Child Care Authorization Form (Form 2450).

7. CHILD CARE AUTHORIZATION

When funding is available and the parent is determined eligible for child care services, the CCS:

- Provides consumer education to the parent on quality indicators for child care providers
- Informs the parent of their right to choose the type of care they feel is best for their child
- Encourages the parent to visit potential providers
- Makes available a list of providers that accept CCS referrals, if requested

When the parent notifies us of the provider they have chosen, the CCS:

- Contacts the provider to ensure space is available
- Verbally authorizes care to begin if space is available
- Sends the provider a Child Care Authorization Form (Form 2450)

Form 2450 informs the provider of the following:

- Date child care is to start
- Days of care authorized
- Authorized for full- or part-time care
- Authorization for transportation
- Amount of the parent share of cost

Child care referrals are site specific; if a provider has multiple sites, children must not be moved from one site to another. Reimbursement will not be made for child care provided at a site that is different from the site where care was authorized or for a referral where the provider does not designate a rate for that age group or type of care i.e. part time on their rate agreement.

Reimbursement for care is not authorized until CCS has called to authorize the referral. Even if the child is being referred by DFPS, Workforce Center Caseworker, or another entity, a provider will not receive reimbursement for child care services provided unless CCS has called to authorize the care.

Providers must accept all children referred to them by CCS as long as:

- Children are within the age range the provider is licensed to serve
- Children's age groups are covered by the Provider Data Worksheet and the Rate Agreement
- Provider has published rates for the age and type (full time/part time) of referral
- Accepting the children does not put the provider over their DFPS licensed/registered capacity

The Provider may not deny a child care referral based on:

- Parent's income status
- Receipt of public assistance
- Child's Child Protective Services (CPS) status

The Provider may choose to limit the number of subsidized children they accept; however, the limitation may not be based on:

- Parent's income status
- Receipt of public assistance
- Child's CPS status

Child care will be authorized according to the parent’s needs as follows:

- A unit of service may be full time or part time
- Full-time care is 6 to 12 hours a day within a 24-hour period
- Part-time care is less than 6 hours a day within a 24-hour period
- Part-week care is less than 5 days per week
- School-age care is defined as:
 - Part-time care is before and after school
 - Full-time care is during school breaks, holidays, and summer

If, within a 24-hour period a parent needs...	...then CCS...
...less than six hours of child care per day...	...enrolls the child for one part-time unit.
...at least six hours of child care...	...enrolls the child for one full-time unit.
...more than 12 hours but less than 18 hours of child care...	...enrolls the child for 1 ½ units (full/part time or time and a half care).

Children may not be enrolled for more than 1 ½ units or 18 hours of care per day.

CCS arranges care based on the time needed for the parent to work or attend training. Many parents are employed part-time or perform shift work, so children may only need part-time care. When determining if parents need full-time or part-time care, time is included for transportation time.

A Provider must:

- Allow a part-time child to attend up to six hours per day
- Allow a full-time child to attend up to twelve hours per day

A Provider must not:

- Charge a part-time CCS child a late fee unless the child is in attendance for more than six hours or past the closing time for the facility
- Charge a full-time CCS child a late fee unless the child is in attendance for more than twelve hours or past the closing time for the facility

A provider may not, under any **circumstances**, 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. Full-time referrals entitle the parent to twelve hours of child care. Part-time referrals entitle the parent to up to six hours of child care.

Provider Notification to CCS of Referral Issues

The Provider is:

- Responsible for ensuring accurate and timely attendance
- Responsible for reviewing the Child Care Attendance Automation (CCAA) portal every three (3) calendar days to recognize discrepancies between child care authorizations and authorized days in CCAA.

The Provider agrees to report to CCS authorized days that do not match the referral in CCAA/2450 within five (5) days of receiving the authorization. Failure to report the discrepancy can result in withholding payment or non-payment to the provider.

8. PROVIDER POLICIES

Providers must give parents a copy of their policies and answer any questions that they may have. Parents are required to comply with all provider policies, the same as private paying parents, unless the policy is in conflict with CCS policies and guidelines, the TWC policies, or other state or federal policies.

Providers cannot require parents to:

- Pay the difference between CCS reimbursement rates and private pay rates
- Pay a higher late fee than private paying parents
- Abide by a different late pick-up policy than private paying parents
- Pay any mandatory fees charged to private paying parents (e.g. registration, supply, activity, or transportation)
- Provide advance notice before removing children from the facility
- Pay a penalty if CCS ends care without notice
- Abide by any policy set by the provider that conflicts with CCS, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas, and/ or TWC requirements, rules, or policies.

9. NOTIFYING CCS WHEN A CHILD DOES NOT ATTEND

When a child stops attending (with and without notice from the parent), provider must notify CCS within five (5) days. You may use the website www.dfwjobs.com to report that a child is no longer attending.

CCS will discuss attendance issues with the parent and advise the provider if the child's referral will continue at the current provider location. If the child continues in care, the days missed are considered absences.

10. PARENT SHARE OF COST

It is important for parents to contribute in paying for the cost of child care. In doing so, parents begin preparing to assume full cost of their child care as part of acquiring self-sufficiency.

Most parents receiving care will be assigned a **monthly parent share**. Providers are responsible for collecting the **monthly** parent share on the 1st day of the month or **BEFORE** care is initially provided.

If a provider chooses to allow a parent to pay their share other than at the beginning of the month, this is an arrangement that is solely between the parent and the provider.

If the parent refuses to pay their share, the provider must notify CCS within three (3) business days. As a provider, you have the right to refuse service to parents who do not pay their share, just the same as you would for private pay parents who do not pay.

If you refuse services, you must notify us within 24 hours. This will be the last day we pay for child care at your facility. If the parent pays their share and you decide you want care to continue services, we must make a new referral before any additional care is authorized.

If it is determined that there are no extenuating circumstances that would cause a parent to not pay their share, child care services can be terminated. The parent would then be ineligible for care for 60 days before they can reapply for care or be placed on the wait list.

The amount assigned as the parent share will be deducted from your reimbursement.

Example: Care is provided for a child for 20 days in the month. The monthly parent share is \$100.

\$15.00 (rate of pay for one day of care) x 20 days of care

\$300.00 (total cost of care) less \$100 parent share

\$200.00 (total amount reimbursed to provider by CCS)

Example of how Parent Share of Cost (PSOC) is calculated through The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST):

Assuming 22 billable days in the month and the month began on Wednesday (1), the PSOC for the month is \$200.00.

\$200 / 22 = \$9.10 per day deduction of PSOC

1st day of the month begins on Wednesday: 3 days x \$9.10 = \$26.30

2nd week: 5 days x \$9.10 = \$45.50

By the last day of the month, the total deductions will equal to \$200.00.

11. CHILD CARE ATTENDANCE AUTOMATION

The attendance recorded in the Child Care Attendance Automation (CCAA) system is used to record attendance of the subsidized child in care. It is the parent or their designated cardholder's responsibility to record daily attendance, using the CCAA system, for each child receiving services. The parent or their designated cardholder must record the child's attendance, including absences, illnesses, and court ordered visits, every day.

A. CCAA Attendance Cards

Each parent authorized to receive child care services will be issued an attendance card to record attendance and absences for their children.

- **Parent's Attendance Cards**

Attendance cards are mailed to a parent's mailing address when child care assistance is authorized. It normally takes 7 to 10 business days for parents to receive their card.

- **Additional Cardholders**

Parents can request CCS to issue up to three (3) additional cards to friends or family members. These additional cardholders should be people who may take or pick up children from care in the event a parent is unavailable. Each cardholder is issued an attendance card with their name on the card.

- **Activating Cards**

When parents or other cardholders receive their card, they must call the number on the back of the card (1-866-960-6496) to activate it and select a Personal Identification Number (PIN). Parents will receive an error message when trying to report attendance with a card that has not been activated.

- **Personal Identification Number (PIN)**

Each parent or other cardholder must select a four-digit PIN for their card. This PIN must not be shared with anyone.

- **Who can use the Card to Record Attendance?**

Only the person listed on the front of the card is authorized to use that card to report attendance. Using someone else's card may be considered theft of services and may result in fact finding, the loss of child care services and the filing of criminal charges. Parents may also be required to repay the cost of child care already paid. If you discover attendance cards are being used inappropriately, please contact CCS immediately.

- **Lost or Stolen Cards**

If the parent/other cardholder's card is lost or stolen, the parent must contact their caseworker as soon as possible to request a new card, or they can go to our website to request a new one. Once a new card is issued, the old card is inactivated. Even if the parent/other cardholder find the old card while waiting for the arrival of the replacement, it is no longer valid. Any cards issued to additional cardholders will remain active.

Note: The owner, director, or assistant director of the child care facility CANNOT be a designated cardholder for a parent of a child enrolled at the facility.

Parents and other cardholders must keep attendance cards with them. Providers shall NOT have attendance cards in their possession! Providers are not allowed to record any attendance function on behalf of the parent. Any providers found to be in possession of attendance cards or attendance card information may be required to repay any payments received to care for the children whose attendance cards or information they possess and corrective adverse action may be taken. In addition, criminal charges may be filed against the provider and the parent, and the parent may lose their child care assistance. If a card is accidentally left at the provider location by the parent or secondary cardholder, the provider must immediately contact CCS provider services to report this. This requirement is to protect the provider from possible corrective adverse action for having a CCAA card in their possession.

B. Using CCAA

As stated above, parents or their designated cardholders are responsible for reporting attendance for each child receiving services from CCS.

There are three types of absences that can be recorded:

- Illness – the child is out ill
- Court Ordered – the child is out on a court-ordered visit
- General Absence – all other absences count as a general absence

These do not have to be recorded at the facility. These attendance options can be recorded by the parent calling the phone number on the back of his/her attendance card and listening to the prompts.

1. Recording Attendance Daily

Parents are required to report attendance daily when they drop-off or pick-up their children. If they miss a day, CCAA will allow the parent to go back up to seven (7) calendar days (including the current day and six (6) previous days) to make corrections. After the seventh day, CCAA blocks any further reporting.

2. Consequences for Failing to Report Attendance

If more than 65 absences are accumulated during a child's 12-month eligibility period, care is denied at the next eligibility redetermination, and the child shall not be eligible for care for the following 12 months. If the parent fails to use CCAA to record attendance, any unrecorded days are captured as "Z" days. **"Z" days are considered absences and are included in the absence total.**

For customers who are determined eligible or redetermined eligible for services on or after August 1, 2018, and a child exceeds 40 unexplained absences (non-swipes of attendance count as unexplained), care will be terminated early and a mandatory waiting period of 60 calendar days must be observed before the parent can reapply or be placed on the wait list.

3. Reporting Attendance Methods

There are two ways of reporting attendance: 1) Point of Service (POS) device, and 2) the use of a phone and the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system.

POS Devices

a) Installation

Installation of the POS device will be scheduled after you receive your first referral from CCS. A service technician (not a CCS staff person) will contact you to make an appointment for installation of your POS device within 10 days. The technician will:

- Provide the POS device
- Provide seven feet of CAT 5 cable or six feet of telephone cord
- Provide the first two rolls of paper to print receipts
- Provide the Texas POS Operations Manual
- Complete the installation of the POS
- Review how to use the POS device

Things to consider before the service technician arrives:

- **Where will you put the POS?** It should be easily accessible by parents but not in an area that will impede traffic flow. Most parents will be recording attendance during your busiest times of the day. The POS should be placed in an area that will minimize problems for other parents dropping-off or picking-up their children.
- **Will you use a phone line, fax line, or internet connection?** Each option requires a different type of machine and cabling to connect. The technician will need this information when they call to schedule the installation.
- **Is there a phone/fax line or internet connection near the location you want the POS installed?** If there is no existing connection nearby, you can choose to have one installed OR buy a longer cable to connect the device. Either choice will be at your expense.

b) POS Connection Requirements

The POS must be connected to a phone/fax line or have an internet connection to transmit attendance information to/from your facility. It can be connected to an existing phone/fax lines. If an additional connection is needed, it will be at your expense.

c) Problems with the POS

You must report problems with your POS machine to CCS within 24 hours of noticing a malfunction. For your convenience, email CCS at ccproviders@dfwjobs.com and provide your provider name and license number. You must also report problems with the POS to the 24-hour Provider Help Desk number (1-866-320-8720). Leave a message outlining the problem, and a technician will return your call within 48 hours.

In the meantime, you should have parents continue to record their attendance. If the problem has not been resolved within three business days, use our provider email ccproviders@dfwjobs.com, or call your Financial Management Specialist (FMS) or Provider Service Specialist (PSS) to inform them that parents are still unable to record their attendance.

d) Problems with Phone/Fax Line or Internet Connection

If there is a problem with the connection to the POS (phone/fax line is down or internet connection is lost), report the problem to your phone or internet carrier for resolution.

In the meantime, you should have parents continue to record their attendance. The POS device is equipped with a “store and forward” feature. It can save the attendance recorded by parents and forward the information when the connection is restored. Email ccproviders@dfwjobs.com or call your FMS or PSS if there are any problems.

When using Store and Forward (SAF), it is required you upload your attendance at a minimum of two times per week, if there are no data connections at the provider location.

There is no cost to you for the POS; however, you will be responsible for providing the paper used by the device to print receipts, as well as modifications needed to set up the device.

Integrated Voice Recording (IVR) System

With the IVR system, parents will use ***your phone*** to report their attendance.

Phone Requirements

Parents must use the phone number that you reported to DFPS Child Care Licensing as your business phone. It can be a land line or a cell phone. The phone must be available to parents when they drop-off and pick-up their children each day.

▪ **IVR System**

Parents will call the toll-free number (1-866-960-6496) on the back of their attendance card to record their children's attendance. The IVR will prompt them through the check-in process, instructing them to select numbers on the phone's keypad.

▪ **Change in Phone Number**

If you change the phone number of the phone parents use to report attendance, you must immediately contact DFPS and your PSS. Parents will not be able to report attendance using the new phone number until the number is listed as the business phone number with the DFPS Child Care Licensing division.

▪ **Problems with Phone Line**

If there is a problem with the phone line you must contact CCS within 24 hours of noticing a malfunction, and you must report the problem to your phone carrier to resolve the issue. If the problem is not resolved within 48 hours, use our website www.dfwjobs.com or email ccproviders@dfwjobs.com to inform us that parents are still unable to record their attendance.

C. Providers Requirement for Reviewing CCAA Information

All Providers are required to review attendance every three calendar days. This allows time for parents to correct missed or inaccurate attendance. CCAA provides three options for providers to use for this review:

1. POS Device Attendance Reports

If you have a POS you can use the F4 key to print reports showing total number of children with recorded attendance and absences for the day; individual attendance recorded for each child; and other options. Details on how to print these reports can be found in the Texas CCS POS Operations Manual.

2. IVR Attendance Reports

If you utilize the IVR system, you can call from the designated phone to access information on attendance and absences reported for the day, by the child, etc. To access this information, you must call 1-866-960-6496 and follow the menu options.

3. Provider Web Portal

A more useful tool is the CCAA Provider Web Portal. This portal gives you detailed information on the child's referral (start and end dates, days authorized, and full or part time), recorded attendance and absences, and attempts to record attendance.

a) **Website:** www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com

b) **User ID:** Provider license or permit number with Child Care Licensing

c) **Password:**

- Initial password – your five-digit zip code
- Setting password – passwords must be at least eight characters and contain at least one letter and one number
- Changing passwords – passwords must be changed at least once every 60 days (you cannot re-use the last six passwords used)

D. Notifying CCS of Attendance Reporting Issues

All Providers are encouraged to use our website, or contact their FMS or PSS as soon as a problem recording attendance or absences is discovered. This will allow us to work with the parent to resolve problems quickly.

12. REIMBURSEMENT RATES

Maximum reimbursement rates that providers can be reimbursed for child care services are based on the following:

- Federal and State laws and regulation
- Funding
- Market Rate Survey
- Performance measures
- Parent share of cost factors

Reimbursement rates for individual providers are set when the CCS Provider Agreement and Rate Agreement are signed. The provider receives daily reimbursement amounts for each day of care a child is enrolled. Rates are based upon the provider's documentation of their published rates as reported on the Rate Agreement. CCS will reimburse the child care provider after services are rendered. When a provider signs their Provider Agreement, all these factors are calculated and entered into the Rate Agreement, which the provider will sign.

The three different "rates" used to complete the Rate Agreement include:

- Provider Published Rate: the rates/mandatory fees you charge private pay parents
- Maximum Rate: the Board Maximum Reimbursement Rates
- Reimbursement Rate: the actual amount you will be paid

Providers will be paid the lower of the approved Maximum Rate or the actual Provider Published Rate.

A. Maximum Reimbursement Rates

Maximum Reimbursement Rates are based on market rate surveys and other local factors. The Maximum Reimbursement Rates can be found on the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas website, www.dfwjobs.com.

B. Enhanced Maximum Reimbursement Rates

Providers who meet certain quality requirements are eligible to receive higher maximum reimbursement rates. TWC rules require that the minimum reimbursement rate for a Texas Rising Star (TRS) provider must be greater than the maximum rate established for a provider that is not TRS certified for the same category of care by at least:

- 5% higher for a provider with a 2-star rating
- 7% higher for a provider with a 3-star rating
- 9% higher for a provider with a 4-star rating

Providers who participate in the Texas School Ready! program are also eligible to receive higher reimbursement rates for preschool age children only. All other age groups would receive reimbursement rates based on the regular maximum rates.

The enhanced reimbursement rate cannot exceed the provider's actual published rate.

C. Provider Rates - Calculating Published Daily Rates

Providers have different fee structures and a number of calculations are required to determine Provider Rates. Provider Rates are based on the documentation providers must provide of the rates that are charged to private pay parents, prorated to a daily rate.

Rates for full-time care and part-time care for each of the age categories listed below are required if a provider serves those ages and provides full- and/or part-time care:

- Infants (0 - 17 months)
- Toddlers (18 - 35 months)
- Preschool (3 - 5 years)
- School Age (6 -12 years)

In addition, a number of other fees must be considered, such as:

a) Mandatory Daily Fees

These are fees that are required for children to be enrolled at a facility. They include weekly tuition, registration fees, supply fees, and activity fees that are required for a child to participate in a program. Mandatory fees are prorated and included in the daily rate calculation.

b) Optional Daily Fees

These are fees that are “extras” or optional, such as field trips not included in regular tuition. Field trips, class pictures, classes provided by an outside vendor (karate, dance, computer, etc.), or other optional fees **NOT** required for a child to participate in a program. These fees are not included in the daily rate calculation. If parents choose to have their children participate in these activities, they will be responsible for paying the costs, which are in addition to their parent share of cost. Providers are responsible for collecting these fees.

c) Transportation Fees

These are fees that are charged to transport children to/from child care, either to/from the child’s home or to/from school during the school year. Transportation fees are prorated and included in the daily rate calculation (if not already included in provider’s published rate).

d) Penalty Fees

These are fees charged by the provider, including fees for late pick up, charges for diapers or formula when the parent fails to provide them, etc. Parents are responsible for paying these penalty fees. These fees are in addition to their parent share of cost. Providers are responsible for collecting these fees.

e) Fees

The Provider will not charge fees to a parent receiving child care subsidies that are not charged to private pay parents who are not receiving subsidies.

Calculating Daily Rates

	To obtain the daily rate:
Providers with monthly rates	Divide the rate by 4.33, then divide the result by 5
Providers with biweekly rates	Divide the rate by 2.165, then divide the result by 5
Providers with weekly rates	Divide the weekly amount by 5

Providers with hourly rates	Multiply the hourly rate by 12 to calculate the full-day rate and by 6 to calculate the part-day rate
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Providers with multiple rates within an age category will average all applicable rates to obtain the published rate for the age category, then determine the daily rate using the appropriate method.

The calculated daily fee amount is the total reported fees prorated by the number of days in the provider's program year.

Program Type	Program Days
Full Year	260
School Year	194
Summer Only	66

When identifying applicable fees, activity fees include only the fees that all parents are required to pay and do not include fees for optional activities, such as field trips or optional classes.

a) Determining the "Blended Rate" for School Age Children

The TWC requires that a single "blended" rate be paid for children who attend public school (Early Head Start, Head Start, Pre-K, and Elementary School) and need before and/or after school care when school is in session and full-time care on breaks, holidays, and summer during the school year.

Note: The full-time rate and part-time rate used in this calculation is the lower rate of the provider's published rate or the maximum reimbursement rate. The rate combines the full-time rates and part-time rates using the following calculation:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\text{Part-time rate} \times 175 \text{ days}) + (\text{Full-time rate} \times 30 \text{ days}) = \text{School Year Rate} \\ & \text{School Year Rate} / 205 \text{ school days} = \text{Blended Rate} \end{aligned}$$

Example: School Age Blended Rate

<i>Daily part-time rate (before and/or after school)</i>	<i>\$16.41 per day</i>
<i>x number of school days</i>	<i>175 days</i>
<hr/>	
<i>Total part-time rate</i>	<i>\$2,871.75</i>
<i>Daily full-time rate</i>	<i>\$21.16 per day</i>
<i>x number of school holidays during school year</i>	<i>30 days</i>
<hr/>	
<i>Total full-time rate</i>	<i>\$634.80</i>
<i>Total part-time rate</i>	<i>\$2,871.75</i>
<i>Total full-time rate</i>	<i>\$634.80</i>
<hr/>	
<i>Total School Year Rate</i>	<i>\$3,506.55</i>
<i>Total School Year Rate</i>	<i>\$3,506.55</i>

<i>Divided by the total # of School Days</i>	<i>205 days</i>
School Age Blended Rate	\$17.11 day

Note: Blended rates apply for 205 days during the school year. Full-time rates apply for up to 12 weeks in the summer and are not dependent on school being in or out of session.

b) Charging the Difference Between the Board Maximum Rate and your Published Rate

Providers cannot charge CCS parents the difference in the reimbursement amount they receive from CCS and their published rates. All Providers must agree to accept the rates paid by CCS as full payment for care provided, except for Optional Fees and Penalty Fees.

c) Changes in Reimbursement Rates

Any changes in reimbursement rates require a new Rate Agreement that must be signed by both the provider and CCS representative.

1. Changes to the Board Maximum Reimbursement Rates

All Providers are notified prior to when the Maximum Reimbursement Rate changes are effective. This change requires a new Rate Agreement before the new rates can be effective.

2. Changes in Provider Rates

Providers must submit written documentation of changes to published rates to the PSS no less than 30 days prior to the effective date. A new Rate Agreement will then be prepared. The Rate Agreement must be signed by the provider before the new rates will become effective. The new rates will go into effect the first full month after the Rate Agreement has been signed and returned to CCS.

13. REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICES

CCS will pay for child care when care has been authorized by CCS for a child to attend a facility. CCS payment is based on enrollment. CCS will not pay to “hold a spot” for a child. All reimbursements for child care services will be made after services have been provided due to Federal and State regulations.

CCS will not reimburse a relative provider for absences, holiday, or days when the parent fails to report attendance.

A. Provider Holidays

CCS will pay TRS Providers for up to twelve (12) holidays per calendar year. Non-TRS Providers will be paid for up to nine (9) holidays per year. To receive reimbursement for holidays, you must:

- Provide a written list using exact dates (Example: 1/1/2017) of the nine (9) requested holidays that you would like to be reimbursed for the next calendar year no later than October 31st of each year. This form can be found at www.dfwjobs.com.

Providers are not paid for holidays if:

- A child's care ends the day before the holiday
- A child's care begins the day after the holiday
- The holiday falls on a day the child is not authorized to be in care
- You have already been paid for nine (9) holiday days in the year
- CCS is not notified in advance of the holiday closure

CCS must be notified of any changes in scheduled holidays a minimum of 60 days in advance.

B. Provider Reimbursement Schedule

Reimbursements are normally made every two weeks by NCTCOG based on the Provider Reimbursement Schedule published by CCS. This schedule can be found on our website, www.dfwjobs.com.

C. Reimbursement Method

Reimbursements are made by direct deposit only. Exception: Reimbursements will be made by paper check after the initial setup of a new bank account or a change in bank account numbers. In those instances, you will receive one or two paper checks until the bank routing/reimbursement information is established.

D. Filing Taxes

NCTCOG will send a Form 1099 to all providers if required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Taxes are not withheld from reimbursements made for providing child care. It is the provider's responsibility to report all earnings to the IRS.

E. Employment

Providers (licensed child care center and child care home, registered child care home, military base, or relatives) are **not employees** of the TWC, WSNCT, NCTCOG, or the CCS Contractor.

14. DENIAL OF CARE

CCS will notify the provider before a child's eligibility for care ends. Child care will be denied for the following reasons:

1. Family Gross Monthly Income exceeds 85% SMI
2. Permanent cessation of work, training, or education, and the three months of continuing care have been provided
3. Child has excessive unexplained absences in excess of 40 days within a 12 month eligibility period
4. Nonpayment of a PSOC
5. Eligibility was determined fraudulently
6. A parent requests to voluntarily terminate care

15. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Parents of children with disabilities have the same right to parent choice as other parents. Parents may choose to place their children in child care according to location or convenience, even if the providers who are chosen do not have experience caring for children with disabilities. In these cases, our staff will work closely with providers who care for children with disabilities.

A. The American Disabilities Act and Providers

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, requires public accommodations, including licensed child care centers, licensed child care homes, and registered child care homes to ensure access for all individuals regardless of disabilities. All providers must comply with this law by accepting children with disabilities into their facility and by making it possible for parents with disabilities to access the child care facilities.

Attempts must be made by child care providers and CCS to accommodate all types of disabilities. If it creates a financial hardship for the provider that we cannot assist with, providers must document in writing any efforts to provide for a child's needs and show why they were not successful or readily achievable.

B. Inclusive Child Care

"Inclusive Child Care" ensures that children with disabilities will have access to child care in settings that include typically developing siblings and peers. Inclusive practices encompass programs, materials, equipment, curriculum, schedules, environments, family involvement, and program evaluation to ensure that each child's capabilities and needs are met.

A CCS referred child with a disability may have an Inclusion Plan developed by the Board's Early Childhood Specialist, if the parent elects to participate in the program. Inclusion Plans are reviewed with the parents, the provider, staff, and any professionals that care for the child. The Inclusion Plan is written to assist providers and their staff with including the child in the care setting with typically developing peers.

C. Inclusion Assistance Rates

CCS recognizes that caring for a child with a disability can create challenges in a child care

setting. To assist providers in maintaining an inclusive child care setting, the Board's Early Childhood Specialist can support the provider in finding additional training for staff or other resources to help better meet a child's needs. Enhanced reimbursement rates are available when extra adult assistance or equipment needs for the child are identified and approved by the Early Childhood Specialist. The Early Childhood Specialist will assist the provider in the inclusion process. The additional reimbursement rate is set at up to 190% of the provider's reimbursement rate, based on the needs of the child.

The inclusion assistance rate may be used:

- To help pay for extra staff
- For additional wages to a current staff member who has special skills necessary to help the child with a disability

Adaptive equipment may also be provided based on professional recommendations.

Inclusion assistance may not be used to pay for counseling, therapy, or medical services.

16. RECORD KEEPING

All Providers are required to keep accurate records, both while a CCS referred child is in care and after care has ended.

A. Required Documents

The following types of documentation must be maintained for at least three (3) years and 90 days after a child's CCS enrollment ends:

- Financial documents and supporting documents, such as receipts for parent fees and records of attendance
- Any other records regarding reimbursement for child care

B. Access to Records

Providers must allow reasonable access to their records during regular business hours and provide copies upon request to personnel who are authorized to see those records and documents. Representatives authorized to see provider records are:

- WSNCT representatives
- NCTCOG representatives
- TWC representatives
- State Attorney General's office representatives
- Federal or State representatives with responsibility for managing and auditing Federal and State programs

17. PROVIDERS PLACED ON CORRECTIVE OR ADVERSE ACTION BY DFPS

CCS is notified by DFPS Child Care Licensing when providers are placed on Corrective or Adverse Action. CCS may not be able to continue paying for care or refer new children while the Corrective or Adverse Action is in effect. In addition, enhanced rates cannot be paid while the Corrective or Adverse Action is in effect. TWC requires us to take the following actions when notification is received:

A. Providers Placed on Corrective Action - Evaluation Status

1. Children Currently Enrolled:

- Parents of children receive written notice that the provider has been placed on evaluation status within five (5) business days of CCS notification.
- Parents must decide if they wish to continue to use the provider or choose a different one. If a transfer is requested, it must occur within 14 calendar days.

2. New Enrollments:

- Parents receive written notice that the provider has been placed on evaluation status before care can be authorized with the provider.

B. Providers Placed on Corrective Action - Probationary Status

1. Children Currently Enrolled:

- Parents of children receive written notice that the provider has been placed on probationary status within five (5) business days of CCS notification.
- Parents must decide if they wish to continue to use the provider or choose a different one. If a transfer is requested, it must occur within 14 calendar days.

2. New Enrollments:

- New enrollments will not be allowed until CCS is notified by TWC of the end date of Corrective Action.

C. Providers under Adverse Action

1. Children Currently Enrolled:

- Parents of children are notified, in writing or by phone, that the provider has been placed under adverse action within two (2) business days of notification.
- Parents must choose a new provider within five (5) business days so care can be transferred to the new provider.

2. New Enrollments

- New enrollments will not be allowed as long as the provider remains under Adverse Action.

3. Reimbursement for referrals will cease no later than five (5) days after CCS is notified of a provider being placed on Adverse Action.

18. MONITORING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CORRECTIVE/ADVERSE ACTION

The PSS serves as a resource for providers. Their responsibilities include providing technical assistance to providers to aid the provider in understanding the terms of their provider agreement and provider manual.

A. Monitoring

Monitoring visits will be conducted with the goal of insuring providers are meeting local, state, and federal requirements for the CCS program. You will be monitored for compliance with the following:

- Procedures outlined in the Manual
- Terms of the Agreement
- Collection of PSOC
- Compliance with CCAA requirements

B. Technical Assistance

The PSS will help providers understand the requirements contained in the Provider Agreement, Manual, and provider paperwork. Within 30 days after CCS refers the first child to you, a CCS staff will contact the provider to ensure that the provider is aware of CCS procedure, answer any questions that the provider might have about the program in general, or the attendance and reimbursement process.

All Providers must allow CCS or other state or federal authorities to conduct program and fiscal audits. These will be done during regular business hours.

Texas Department of Family and Regulatory Services (TDFPS) Child Care Licensing is responsible for monitoring providers for compliance with licensing or registration standards; however, if CCS/Board staff observes licensing non-compliances, they are obligated to report the non-compliance to licensing staff.

19. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS BY CCS

All Providers must comply with the Provider Agreement, follow procedures outlined in this Provider Manual, and remain in good standing with TDFPS Child Care Licensing. In some cases, corrective action will be deemed necessary. Listed below are some of the actions we may take:

A. Service Improvement Agreements

The PSS may complete a Service Improvement Agreement (SIA) if providers do not adhere and follow the terms and procedures outlined in the Provider Agreement and/or the Provider Manual.

The SIAs will:

- State the problem or issue
- Explain what improvements must be made
- List ways for the provider to work on improvements
- Set time limits for making improvements
- List the consequences of failing to make required improvements within the time limit

The PSS will discuss SIAs with the provider and offer technical assistance, if needed, to help the provider correct the problem or make the improvements. Both the provider and PSS must sign the SIA. If the provider refuses to sign the SIA, the CCS agreement may be terminated.

B. Adverse Actions

If a serious problem occurs, CCS can take immediate action instead of writing a SIA. Serious problems include, but are not limited to:

- Provider found to be in serious non-compliance with, seriously deficient by, or debarred from another State or Federal Program
- TDFPS has placed the provider on Adverse Action
- Provider is found to be committing fraud

Consequences for these serious problems may include the following:

- Closing intake
- Notifying parents of referred children of other child care options
- Temporarily withholding reimbursement for child care services provided
- Suspending, terminating, or denying renewal of the Agreement
- Recoupment of funds

C. Termination or Non-Renewal of Provider Agreement

After termination or non-renewal of the Provider Agreement for documented violations of the provisions contained in the Provider Agreement or this Provider Manual or placement on Adverse Action by Child Care Licensing, the provider will not be allowed to reapply for reinstatement for a period of one year from the denial date of the Provider Agreement.

Termination, suspension, or non-renewal of the Provider Agreement will be done at our discretion.

20. SUSPECTED FRAUD

A parent, provider, or any other person may be suspected of fraud if the person presents or causes to be presented to the Board or its child care contractor one or more of the following items:

1. A request for reimbursement in excess of the amount charged by the provider for the child care
2. A claim for child care services if evidence indicates that the person may have:
 - known, or should have known, that child care services were not provided as claimed
 - known, or should have known, that information provided is false or fraudulent
 - received child care services during a period in which the parent or child was not eligible for services
 - known, or should have known, that child care subsidies were provided to a person not eligible to be a provider

- otherwise indicated that the person knew or should have known that the actions were in violation of State or Federal statute or regulations relating to child care services

The Board may initiate an investigation and, if appropriate, the Board may refer the investigation to the TWC or law enforcement for criminal prosecution, if the provider is suspected of conduct as described above.

If you suspect program abuse by either a parent or a provider, you can contact TWC's Fraud and Program Abuse Hotline at 800-252-3642.

21. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

As a provider, you may have access to several special projects and resources designed to improve the quality of your program. Availability is based on funding. Watch our website www.dfwjobs.com/child-care/child-care-providers for announcements regarding activities of this type.

A. Texas Rising Star (TRS) Program

A TRS Provider is a child care provider that has an agreement with a Local Workforce Development Board's child care contractor to serve TWC subsidized children and that voluntarily meets requirements that exceed the State's Minimum Child Care Licensing (CCL) Standards. TRS Certification is available to licensed child care centers and licensed and registered child care home providers who meet the certification criteria.

The TRS Provider certification system offers the following levels of certification:

- Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star

For more information on the TRS program, please visit www.texasrisingstar.org.

A Systems Approach to Improving the Quality of Child Care

In the delivery of child care and development services, certifying providers that meet the TRS criteria, awarding quality improvement equipment and materials, and offering training for those in the early care and education field are all part a systematic approach to addressing the quality of life for all young children in care outside their homes. This system is built upon the following premises:

- Subsidized child care is essential to enable low-income families who are dependent, or at risk of becoming dependent, on public assistance to achieve self-sufficiency.
- Quality child care is vital to the development of the state's future workforce.
- The establishment of quality criteria raises the norms for child care services.
- The TRS Provider assessment and certification process is most effectively and efficiently implemented at the local level.

A continuum of quality child care may be described in the following manner:

- Regulatory Requirements (Minimum CCL Standards): defines the minimum acceptable level of care

- Self-Assessment: enables an individual facility to evaluate its own progress in improving the quality of care they provide
- TRS Provider Certification or National Accreditation: provides measurable indicators of quality child care practices that exceed the state's Minimum CCL Standards

The continuum of quality child care represents a systematic progression in the quality of early childhood programs. Data about a provider's performance are collected in partnership by state agencies, local workforce development boards, child care contractors, and child care providers. Measurable data include the structural dimension that can be counted such as a facility's physical space, group sizes, and child/staff ratios. Other data, such as activities, curricula, and staff-child interactions, must be collected by observation. Based on the data collected, a provider's performance may be improved by training, technical assistance, and resource linkages; and the outcome is enhanced physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of the children in care.

B. Early Childhood Education and Professional Development Resources

When funding is available, Early Childhood Resources and Professional Development opportunities may be offered to our provider base with the goal of improving the quality of child care in our Board area. Some of the resources might include:

- Training
- Equipment and materials
- Scholarships for higher education classes
- Scholarships for Local, State and National Early Childhood conferences

These types of activities will be provided to TRS providers first and then all other providers, if funding is available.

Note: Training currently offered is posted on our website www.dfwjobs.com or you may contact the Board office at 817-695-9149.

22. ASKING QUESTIONS AND SOLVING PROBLEMS

As a provider, you need to have all the information you require to provide care for the children you serve.

A. Questions About Policies

If you have questions about the Provider Agreement or about any of the rules or policies outlined in the Provider Manual, you can check our website at www.dfwjobs.com or email ccproviders@dfwjobs.com, and a PSS will contact you for information or contact a PSS.

B. Complaints by Parents Against Providers

Providers may receive complaints from parents about your care or policies. Most complaints can be handled directly between you and the parent. If you are unable to resolve the issue, you should refer the parent to CCS. Sometimes the parent will request to move their children to another facility, if this happens, we will try to resolve the problem rather than move the child. If we determine the problems between the parent and provider cannot be resolved, the parent will be allowed to transfer the child to

another facility. You cannot require parents to provide notice that they will be choosing other care options.

C. Complaints by Parents Against CCS

If parents have concerns or complaints regarding their case or caseworker, you should refer parents to the CCS Director at 940-323-4303.

D. Complaints by Providers Against CCS

Providers who have a complaint regarding payment, attendance, or agreement related issues should contact the CCS Director at 940-323-4303.

E. Complaints by Providers Against CCS

If a provider wishes to appeal an Adverse Action taken against them by the WSNCT contractor, they may do so. Providers are first encouraged to attempt an informal resolution of the issue by contacting the CCS Director at 940-323-4303. If this informal attempt at resolution fails, you may file a written complaint. A written complaint must include your name, current address, telephone and/or email, and a brief statement of the alleged violation identifying the facts on which the complaint is based. Address your complaint to:

**QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS
P.O. Box 5888
ARLINGTON, TX 76005**

After receiving the complaint, and once jurisdiction is determined, you will be contacted to set a date for a hearing. Once the written complaint is received, you will have a hearing and a determination within 60 days. At the time of the decision, you will be provided with additional options to appeal the Board's decision if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

23. COMMUNICATING WITH CCS

E-mail address: ccproviders@dfwjobs.com

Website: www.dfwjobs.com

Phone Number: 1-800-234-9306

The most efficient way of communicating with us is by e-mail or through our website.

Providers may be contacted by different CCS staff members depending on the specific reason for the contact. Listed below are the staff job functions that most likely would be contacting providers and what they do.

Provider Service Specialist (PSS)

- Offer program support and technical assistance
- Assist providers in complying with program requirements

Child Care Advisor (CCA)

- Contact providers to start, update, or end child care authorization

Financial Management Specialist (FMS)

- Review reported attendance
- Authorize reimbursement based on the reported attendance
- Answer questions regarding reimbursements

24. RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE

Website: www.dfwjobs.com

For Providers:

- Report Issues with the CCAA system
- View the Provider Reimbursement Schedule
- View our current Maximum Rates
- Find information on the Inclusion Program
- Find information on the TRS and the Texas School Ready! programs
- Learn about available professional development training classes and other ways to improve the quality of care you provide
- Find additional resources (this is not an all-inclusive listing)

For Parents:

- Information on How to Apply for Services
- Report changes
- Request CCAA Cards
- Access needed forms
- Consumer Education
- Updating waitlist application
- Find additional resources (this is not an all-inclusive listing)

We hope that you find the Provider Manual helpful! We tried to include all the information that you might need to have a successful relationship with WSNCT.