

Contents

1.	OVERVIEW OF WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS FOR NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS CHILD CARE SERVICES	1
2.	Establishing a Partnership with CCS.....	2
3.	Early Learning Program Agreement.....	2
4.	PARENT CHOICE PROGRAM	4
5.	Expectations for Servicing CCS Children	4
6.	CHILD CARE AUTHORIZATION	5
7.	Reporting Attendance.....	7
8.	EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM POLICIES.....	7
9.	PARENT SHARE OF COST	8
10.	REIMBURSEMENT RATES.....	9
11.	REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICES	13
12.	CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.....	15
13.	RECORD KEEPING	16
14.	CORRECTIVE OR ADVERSE ACTION BY CHILD CARE REGULATION.....	17
15.	MONITORING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CORRECTIVE ACTION BY CCS	18
16.	CORRECTIVE ACTIONS BY CCS	19
17.	SUSPECTED FRAUD	20
19.	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.....	22
20.	CONTACTING CCS	24
21.	RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE www.dfwjobs.com	25

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 in the state of Texas and their contracted service delivery partners 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 3 million residents, 46,000 employers, and 1.5 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.

WSNCT Child Care Services (CCS) program subsidizes childcare 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. Establishing a Partnership with CCS

Early Learning Programs (ELP) regulated by the Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) can develop a partnership with CCS. To establish a partnership, ELPs must meet 3 requirements.

Requirement 1: Attend the Early Learning Program Orientation

ELPs who inquire about establishing a partnership with CCS will receive an invitation to attend a virtual orientation. The purpose of the orientation is to provide a thorough overview of CCS, the agreement and service manual. Orientations are scheduled biweekly.

Requirement 2: Licensing and Registration

ELPs must have a current permit/registration from HHS:

- as a licensed child care center or child care home,
- as a registered child care home,
- operated and monitored by the United States military.

Requirement 3: Complete, Sign, and Submit Documents

- Early Learning Program Agreement
- Early Learning Program Manual Acknowledgment Form
- IRS Form W-9
- Direct Deposit Authorization Form
- Voided Check with Pre-Printed Personal Information or Letter from Banking Institution with required banking information

3. Early Learning Program Agreement

The Early Learning Program Agreement is a legal agreement that outlines the agreed terms of the partnership between ELP and CCS. It is the basis for payment for care provided to CCS children. The agreement is-renewable every two years.

Agreements remain valid if:

- ELP's HHS permit, registration or certification remains current,
- ,
- ELPs comply with terms of the Early Learning Program Agreement.

An Early Learning Program Agreement does not guarantee children will be referred by CCS. All ELP selections are based on the parent's choice. In the event an ELP has not received an

authorized referral within 12 months, CCS may terminate the agreement. ELPs are expected to comply with the terms of the agreement whether they have authorized referrals or not.

Reporting Changes

Failure to inform CCS of changes within the timeframe listed above could result in corrective action or the termination of the Early Learning Program Agreement.

It is the responsibility of the ELP to report changes to CCS timely. The chart below will help 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 HHS Child Care Regulation, including loss of license/permit	Within 2 business days of notification from HHS (prior to the effective date)
ANY change affecting the status of facilities regulated by HHS or the U.S. Military	Within 2 business days of notification from HHS (prior to the effective date)
Change in EIN or Tax ID Number	14 business days prior to the effective date
New finding of an ELP 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 1 business day after notification received
Changes that may cause termination of the Early Learning Program Agreement	Within 2 business days of the change
Change of facility name, ownership, governing body or corporate status	14 business days prior to the effective date
Change of authorized representatives or owner	14 business days prior to the effective date
Change of address or temporary location	30 business days prior to the effective date or as soon as possible, if a temporary location
Change of operational hours	14 business days prior to the effective date
Change of holiday closings	14 business days prior to the closing

Change in the ages of children served	14 business days <i>prior</i> to the effective date
Change of facility rates	30 business days <i>prior</i> to the effective date
Change or update to liability insurance	14 business days <i>prior</i> to the effective date

Changes that cause termination of the Agreement include:

- 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 TRS certification status, and
- ELP found to be in serious violation of, seriously deficient by or debarred from another State or Federal program

4. PARENT CHOICE PROGRAM

CCS is a Parent Choice Program. Establishing a partnership and signing the Early Learning Program Agreement **does not** guarantee children will be referred to a specific ELP. 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 ELP who currently have a signed Agreement,
- Regulated ELP who do not currently have a signed Agreement, but are willing to sign one,

Note: Children receiving child care services through Department of Family and Protective Services have different requirements for choosing an ELP. These parents work with their DFPS caseworker to determine the ELP that best meets their needs.

5. Expectations for Servicing CCS Children

ELPs are expected to provide child care services in the same manner as private paying parents. ELPs in partnership with CCS are expected to accept children authorized for care unless:

- A child is not within the age range the ELP is licensed to serve,
- A child's age group is not covered by the Rate Agreement,
- The ELP has published rates for specific age and referral type
- Capacity for specific age group is met.

ELPs may choose to limit the number of subsidized children they accept, however, the limitation may not be based on the parent's income status, receipt of public assistance or DFPS involvement.

6. CHILD CARE AUTHORIZATION

When a parent is determined eligible for subsidized child care services, CCS will notify the parent's selected ELP for:

- 1. Initial Authorization:** CCS will contact the ELP by phone to ensure space is available. If so, CCS will verbally authorize care to begin on the referral start date. CCS will send the ELP a Child Care Authorization Form (Form 2450). Upon receipt, it is the responsibility of the ELP to read the form in its entirety to ensure they understand the terms of the authorization and retain a copy for their records.

Note: *Under no circumstance, will reimbursement be made for child care services provided before care is authorized.*

- 2. Authorization Updates:** CCS may contact the ELP by phone to report an update to the authorization. CCS will send the Form 2450 to reflect updates. Upon receipt, it is the responsibility of the ELP to read the form in its entirety to ensure they understand the terms of the authorization update and retain a copy for their records.

- 3. Discontinued Authorization:** CCS will contact the ELP by phone to verbally discontinue authorization for care, prior to the referral end date. CCS will send the Form 2450 to reflect the referral end date. Upon receipt, it is the responsibility of the ELP to read the form in its entirety to ensure they are aware of referral end date and retain a copy for their records.

Note: *CCS will not reimburse for child care services provided after the referral end date.*

Form 2450 provides the following information:

- Referral start date
- Referral end date
- Authorized days for care
- Referral Type: full-time, part-time, or blended care
- Authorization for transportation
- Parent Share of Cost amount

Authorized child care referrals are site specific. If an ELP has multiple sites, children cannot be moved from one site to another. Reimbursement will not be made for child care services provided at a site that is not authorized.

Child Care is authorized according to the parent’s needs.

If, within a 24-hour period a parent needs...	...then CCS...
...less than 6 hours of child care per day...	...enrolls the child for 1 part time unit.
...at least 6 hours but no more than 12 hours of child care per day...	...enrolls the child for 1 full time unit.
...more than 12 hours but less than 18 hours of child care per day...	...enrolls the child for 1 ½ units <i>(full plus part time)</i>
...care for school-age child(ren)	...enrolls the child for blended care

Note:

- Full time care is authorized during school breaks, holiday, and summer.
- Children may not be enrolled for more than 1 ½ units or 18 hours of care per day.

ELPs are responsible for properly managing service hours to ensure they are compliant with the HHS licensed/registered regulations. When care is authorized ELPs are expected to:

- Allow a part time child to attend up to 6 hours per day.
- Allow a full time child to attend up to 12 hours per day.

7. Reporting Attendance

ELPs are responsible for reporting the following:

- Report children with 5 consecutive absences; this includes absences with or without notification from parent. To report the 5 consecutive absences, ELPs are required to use the Attendance Form provided by CCS.
 - **Example: A child is absent Thursday and Friday of one week and then Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the next week. This means the child has five consecutive days of absences and needs to be reported on the attendance.**
- Report absences 2 business days from the 5th absence date. Submit the Attendance Form to ccproviders@dfwjobs.com or fax to 940.382.1584.
- Report children who are no longer attending care and the effective date; *this includes discontinuation of care initiated by the ELP or parent*
- Within 2 business days, report children who have not started care within 5 days of initial authorization start date
- Report children who become first time schoolers, when attending school for more than six (6) hours.
Note: Failure to report any of the above may result in a corrective action being taken against the ELP.

8. EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM POLICIES

ELPs must provide parents a copy of their policies, unless the policy conflicts with TWC, WSNCT, CCS or other state/ federal policies.

ELPs 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 fees charged to private paying parents such as registration, supplies, activities, or transportation,
- Provide advance notice before removing children from the facility,
- Pay a penalty if CCS ends care without notice.

9. PARENT SHARE OF COST

Many parents determined eligible for subsidized child care services will be expected to contribute towards the cost of services. This is identified as the Parent Share of Cost (PSOC). The PSOC is a calculated amount to be paid monthly. PSOC amount is deducted from the ELP reimbursement payment.

Parents who have a PSOC are expected to pay the ELP directly. ELPs are expected to collect the monthly PSOC on the 1st day of the month or before care is initially provided.

If the parent does not pay their assigned PSOC, the ELP must notify CCS within 3 business days from the 1st day of non-payment. ELPs have the right to discontinue providing services until payment is made. If the ELP decides to discontinue services due to non-payment of PSOC, CCS must be notified with 24 hours. This will ensure authorization for care is ended and no further payment is made to the ELP for services not rendered.

In the event the parent pays the PSOC owed and the ELP decides to resume services, CCS must be notified before care can resume. CCS will create a new referral to authorize care to begin.

If the parent does not pay the PSOC owed and no extenuating circumstances that would impact the parent's ability to pay is determined, CCS will end the authorization for care. Parents will be ineligible for care for 60 days before they can reapply for care or be placed on the wait list.

Note: Any PSOC payment arrangements made outside of the guidance within this manual is between the ELP and parent. CCS will not participate in any action to collect unpaid PSOC.

How PSOC is deducted from the ELP's reimbursement payment.

Example A:

Care is provided for a child for 20 days in the month. The monthly PSOC is \$100.

Reimbursement Daily Rate <i>(for 1 day)</i>	Days of Care	Monthly Total <i>(rate x days)</i>	Monthly PSOC <i>(paid by parent)</i>	Monthly Reimbursement <i>(paid by CCS)</i>
\$15.00	20 days	\$300.00	\$100.00	\$200.00

Example B:

There are 22 **billable days** in the month

- Monthly PSOC is \$200.00

$\$200$ (PSOC) divided by 22 (billable days) = $\$9.10$ (amount deducted per day for PSOC)

$\$9.10 \times 22 = \200.00 *PSOC is always deducted*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total ↓ Deducted
Week 1	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$45.50
Week 2	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$45.50
Week 3	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$45.50
Week 4	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$9.10	\$45.50
Week 5	\$9.00	\$9.00				\$18.00

By the end of the month, the total deductions for billable days will equal to \$200.00.

Note: The system automatically calculates the deductions for parent share of cost. The example above provides a basic understanding of how these deductions can be calculated. The total deductions at the end of the month will total the parent share of cost.

10. REIMBURSEMENT RATES

The maximum reimbursement rates for subsidized child care services are established based on the following:

- Federal and state laws and regulation,
- Funding allocations,
- Market Rate Survey, and
- Performance measures.

ELPs who partner with CCS, sign the Early Learning Program Agreement and Rate Agreement which constitutes their agreement to accept the CCS reimbursement rates and subsidy children. ELPs will receive reimbursements after services are rendered.

When establishing the Rate Agreement, CCS will compare the ELPs Published Rates (*the rate charged to private paying parents*) and the TWC Maximum Rate for subsidized child care. The ELPs reimbursement rate will be determined based on the lower of the two rates.

Rate Descriptions

- **Maximum Reimbursement Rates**

The Texas Workforce Commission sets maximum reimbursement rates. These maximums are based on market rate surveys and other local factors. The Maximum Rates can be found at <https://dfwjobs.com-childcare/child-care-providers>.

- **Enhanced Maximum Reimbursement Rates**

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

- 5% higher for a program with a 2-star rating;
- 7% higher for a program with a 3-star rating;
- 9% higher for a program with a 4-star rating.

ELPs who participate in the Texas School Ready! program are also eligible to receive higher reimbursement rates..

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

- **ELP Rates - Calculating Published Daily Rates**

ELPs have different fee structures, and a number of calculations are required to determine Program Rates. Program Rates are based on the documentation ELPs provide of the rates that are charged to private pay parents, pro-rated to a daily rate. Rates for full-time and part-time care for each of the age categories listed below is required if an ELP 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, other fees are considered, such as:

1. 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.

2. 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 PSOC. ELPs are responsible for collecting these fees.

3. Transportation Fees

These are fees 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 pro-rated and included in the daily rate calculation (if not already included in ELP’s published rate).

4. Penalty Fees

These are fees charged by the ELP, 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 PSOC. ELPs are responsible for collecting these fees.

Note: Fees that are not charged to private paying parents should not be charged to parents who receive subsidized child care.

Calculating Daily Rates

	To obtain the daily rate:
ELPs with monthly rates	Divide the rate by 4.33, then divide the result by 5
ELPs with biweekly rates	Divide the rate by 2.165, then divide the result by 5
ELPs with weekly rates	Divide the weekly amount by 5
ELPs with hourly rates	Multiply the hourly rate by 12 to calculate the full-day rate and by 6 to calculate the part-day rate

ELPs with multiple rates within an age category will have all applicable rates averaged 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 ELP'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 mandatory fees.

A. Determining the "Blended Rate" for School Age Children

The Texas Workforce Commission 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 only 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 ELP published rate

or the maximum reimbursement rate. That rate combines the full time and part time rates using the following calculation:

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

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.

E. Charging the Difference Between the Board Maximum Rate and your Published Rate

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

F. Changes in Reimbursement Rates

Any changes in reimbursement rates require a new Rate Agreement that must be signed by the ELP.

1. Changes to the Maximum Reimbursement Rates

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

2. Changes in ELP Rates

ELPs must submit written documentation of changes to published rates to CCS no less than 30 days prior to the effective date. A new Rate Agreement will then be prepared. The Agreement must be signed by the ELP 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.

11. 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.

Reimbursement will not be paid for a child at the following facilities:

- Licensed child care centers, including before- or after-school programs and school-age programs, in which the parent or his or her spouse, including the child's parent or stepparent, is the director, assistant director, or has an ownership interest; or
- Licensed, registered, or listed homes where the parent also works during the hours his or her child is in care.

ELP Holidays

CCS will pay up to nine (9) holidays for licensed and registered ELPs per calendar year. All TRS programs may receive up to twelve (12) holidays per calendar year. To receive reimbursement for holidays ELPs must:

- Submit the CCS Holiday Form using exact dates, example: 1/1/2021, of the requested paid holidays for the next calendar year no later than **October 31 of each year**.

ELPs 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,
- ELP has already been paid for the allowed holiday days in the calendar year,
- CCS is not notified in advance of the holiday closure.

CCS must be notified of any changes in scheduled holidays a minimum of 14 days in advance.

A. ELP Reimbursement Schedule

Reimbursements are made every two weeks by North Central Texas Council of Governments based on the Reimbursement Schedule published by CCS. This schedule can be found on our website, www.dfwjobs.com.

B. 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 circumstances the ELP will receive one or two paper checks until the bank routing/reimbursement information is established.

C. Filing Taxes

NCTCOG will send a Form 1099 to all ELP's by January 31st of each year, if required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Taxes are not withheld from reimbursements made for providing child care. It is the ELP's responsibility to report all earnings to the IRS.

D. Employment

Early Learning Programs (licensed child care center and child care home, registered child care home, or military base) are **not employees** of the Texas Workforce Commission, Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas, North Central Texas Council of Governments or the Child Care Services Contractor.

12. 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 ELPs who are chosen do not have experience caring for children with disabilities. In these cases, our staff will work closely with ELPs who care for children with disabilities.

A. The American Disabilities Act (ADA)

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 ELPs must comply with this law by accepting children with disabilities into their facility, and by making it possible for parents with children with disabilities to access the child care facilities.

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

A CCS referred child with a disability may have an Inclusion Plan developed by WSNCT Early Childhood Specialist, if the parent elects to participate in the program. Inclusion Plans are

reviewed with the parents, the ELP, staff, and any professionals that care for the child. The Inclusion Plan is written to assist Early Learning Programs 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 ELPs in maintaining an inclusive child care setting, WSNCT Early Childhood Specialist can support the ELP 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 ELP in the inclusion process. The additional reimbursement rate is set at up to 190% of the ELP'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.

13. RECORD KEEPING

ELPs 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, and
- Any other records regarding reimbursement for child care.
- In the event an ELP should need copies of any documentation, a fee will be charged.

B. Access to Records

ELPs 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 ELP 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.

14. CORRECTIVE OR ADVERSE ACTION BY CHILD CARE REGULATION

CCS is notified by the HHS (Child Care Regulation) when ELPs are placed on Corrective or Adverse Action. CCS is not allowed to continue paying for services or refer new children while the Corrective or Adverse action is in effect. In addition, enhanced reimbursement 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. Corrective Action - Probationary Status

The ELP must be aware of the following actions CCS is required to take if the ELP is placed on Corrective Action with CCR or CCS. Corrective actions include: Probationary Status, Adverse Action.

- **Probationary Status:** CCS must notify all parents of currently enrolled children of the ELP's probationary status with CCR no later than five (5) business days of receiving notification of CCR's decision to place the ELP on probationary status and give the parent's the option of choosing other child care arrangements. CCS will not be able to place any new enrollments with an ELP on probationary status with CCR. Parents choosing to remain with the ELP on corrective action must provide CCS with written acknowledgement before care can continue with the ELP.

If an ELP is placed on Probationary status by CCR, they will not be reimbursed for enhanced reimbursement rates.

B. Adverse Action

- **Adverse Action:** CCS must notify all parents of currently enrolled children of the ELP's adverse action status no later than two (2) business days of receiving notification of CCR's decision to place the ELP on adverse action. Children enrolled with the ELP must be transferred to another eligible ELP within five (5) business days of notification of CCR's adverse action against the ELP. No new referrals are to be made while CCR is taking adverse action.

15. MONITORING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CORRECTIVE ACTION BY CCS

Provider Services Specialist (PSS) are CCS staff who specialize in providing technical assistance to ELPs. Their responsibilities include serving as a liaison, providing support and resources to ELPs. The PSS will also provide technical assistance to ELPs who need assistance with subjects related to the terms of the ELP Agreement and Manual.

A. Monitoring

Monitoring visits and/or virtual reviews will be conducted for all partnered ELPs. Monitoring is conducted by the PSS. The goal is to ensure ELPs are meeting TWC, NCTCOG, WSNCT, and CCS requirements for the CCS program. Monitoring and virtual reviews will include:

- Verifying procedures outlined in the ELP Manual are followed,
- Verifying terms of the ELP Agreement are followed,
- Verifying the process for collecting the PSOC and reporting non-payment is followed.
- Verifying the process to report attendance is followed.

All partnered ELPs must allow CCS or other State or Federal authorities to conduct program and fiscal audits. Audits are conducted during regular business hours.

HHS Child Care Regulation is responsible for monitoring ELPs for compliance with licensing or registration standards; however, if staff observes licensing noncompliance, they are obligated to report the non-compliance to Child Care Regulation staff.

B. Technical Assistance

Within 30 days after CCS authorizes care for the first child with a new ELP, a PSS will contact the ELP to answer questions, provide guidance and resources as needed. The PSS will review the attendance reporting policy and reimbursement process to ensure clarity.

16. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS BY CCS

Partnered ELPs are required to comply with the terms of the Early Learning Agreement, follow procedures outlined in this Early Learning Manual and remain in good standing with HHS Child Care Regulation. Non-compliance of any terms within the agreement or manual may result in a correction action. Corrective actions can include the following:

A. Service Improvement Agreement (SIA)

Non-compliance of the agreement, manual, policies and/or procedures set by the TWC, NCTCOG, WSNCT, CCS, or Curantis Group, LLC may result in an ELP being placed on a Service Improvement Agreement (SIA). The SIA is an agreement for immediate and sustained improvement. The terms of the SIA are specific to the act of non-compliance. Failure to comply with the SIA terms within the designated timeframe could lead to further action including suspension of agreement, denial of agreement renewal or agreement termination.

Service Improvement Agreements will:

- State the non-compliance,
- Explain what action must be made to resume compliance,
- Provide the timeline to meet the terms of the SIA,
- Provide consequence(s) for not adhering to the terms of the SIA.

When a SIA is delivered, the PSS will meet (*in person or virtual*) with the ELP to discuss the terms of the SIA. The PSS will offer technical assistance as requested to help the ELP resume compliance. The SIA must be signed by the ELP and PSS. If the ELP refuses to sign the SIA the partnership between CCS and the ELP will be terminated.

B. Adverse Actions

If there is an egregious act of non-compliance, CCS can take immediate action instead of issuing a SIA.

Egregious acts of non-compliance include, but are not limited to:

- ELP found to be in serious non-compliance with, seriously deficient by, or debarred from another State or Federal Program,
- Child Care Regulation has placed the ELP on adverse action,
- ELP is found to be committing fraud.

Consequences for such acts of non-compliance may include the following:

- Closing intake; discontinue new authorizations for care,

- Notifying parents of Adverse Action to seek other child care options,
- Temporarily withholding reimbursement for child care services provided,
- Suspension of agreement, denial of agreement renewal or termination of agreement,
- Recoupment of funds.

C. Termination or Non-Renewal of ELP Agreement

If the ELP Agreement is terminated for documented violations of the provisions contained in the ELP Agreement, ELP Manual, or placement on adverse action by Child Care Regulation, the ELP cannot renew their agreement or reapply for reinstatement.

17. SUSPECTED FRAUD

A ELP may be investigated for fraud if any of the following acts are reported or identified:

- A.** A request for reimbursement in excess of the amount charged by the ELP for child care;
or
- B.** 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
 - known, or should have known, that child care subsidies were provided to a person not eligible to be an ELP
 - 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 NCTCOG may initiate an investigation and if appropriate may refer the investigation to the Texas Workforce Commission or Law Enforcement for criminal prosecution, if the ELP is suspected of conduct as described above.

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

18. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

CCS partnered Early Learning Programs have access to resources designed to improve the quality of care. Services and resources are based on availability of funding. CCS encourages ELPs to visit the website www.dfwjobs.com/child-care/child-care-providers for more detailed information.

1. Texas Rising Star Program

The Texas Rising Star program is “a quality-based child care rating system of child care providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission’s subsidized child care program.” TRS Certification is available to Licensed Center and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-Star level. All center and home based early learning programs who have an agreement to serve subsidy children in Texas must apply to participate in TRS if they meet certain eligibility criteria. Programs that participate in TRS meet higher quality standards than many other child care programs.

TRS providers must demonstrate consistent compliance with minimum state licensing requirements.

For more information on the Texas Rising Star program please visit www.texasrisingstar.org.

2. A Systems Approach to Improving the Quality of Child Care

In the delivery of Child Care and Early Learning services, certifying ELPs that meet the Texas Rising Star Criteria, awarding quality improvement equipment and materials, offering training for those in the early care and education field and providing mentoring are all part a systematic approach to addressing the quality of life for all young children in child 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 standard for child care services
- The TRS ELP 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 CCR 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 ELP Certification or National Accreditation: Provides measurable indicators of quality child care practices that exceed the state's minimum CCR Standards.

The continuum of quality child care represents a systematic progression in the quality of early learning programs. Data about an ELP's performance are collected in partnership by state agencies, local workforce development boards, child care contractors, and child care ELPs. 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 ELP'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.

3. Early Childhood Education and Professional Development Resources

When funding is available, Early Childhood Resources and Professional Development opportunities may be offered to our ELP base with the goal of improving the quality of child care in the North Central Texas 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 activities will be provided to TRS programs first then offered to non-TRS programs, if funding is available.

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

19. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Questions

If you have questions about the Early Learning Program Agreement and/or any policies outlined in the Early Learning Program Manual, please call 1-800-234-9306; option 2 or email ccproviders@dfwjobs.com.

2. Operational Status with Child Care Regulation: Frontline Portal

Frontline Portal website: <https://childcare.bowtiebi.com/Texaschildcareform>

ELPs should contact their CCR representative via phone or email and cc:

MSC@hhsc.state.tx.us

Contact information for your CCR representative can be found on this website:

<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care/contact-child-care-licensing>

3. Grievances by Parents Against ELPs

ELPs may receive complaints from parents. Most complaints can be handled directly between the parent and ELP. If unable to resolve the issue, parents can contact CCS for assistance.

4. Grievances by Parents Against CCS

If parents have concerns or complaints regarding their case or caseworker, please refer parents to the CCS Director, Lennis Dounley.

Phone: 940-323-4303

Email: ldounley@dfwjobs.com.

5. Grievances by ELPs Against CCS

ELPs who have a complaint regarding payment or agreement related issues should contact the CCS Program Manager, Felecia Brooks

Phone: 940-323-4311

Email: fbrooks@dfwjobs.com

Note:

If an ELP has the right to appeal an adverse action taken against them by the Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas contractor. ELPs are first encouraged to attempt an informal resolution of the issue by contacting the CCS Director, Lennis Dounley.

Phone: 940-323-4303

Email: ldounley@dfwjobs.com.

If this informal attempt at resolution fails, ELPs may file a written complaint. A written complaint must include the ELP's name, license number, current address, telephone and/or email and a written statement identifying the facts on which the complaint is based.

Send written complaints 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, the ELP will be contacted to set a date for a Hearing and a determination within 60 days. At the time of the decision, the ELP will be provided with additional options to appeal the Board's decision if not satisfied with the outcome.

20. CONTACTING CCS

E-mail address - ccproviders@dfwjobs.com

Website - www.dfwjobs.com

Phone Number - 1-800-234-9306; option 2

ELPs may be contacted by different CCS staff members depending on the specific reason for the contact. Listed below are the CCS staff job functions and possible reason for contacting ELPs.

Provider Services Specialist (PSS)

Program support and technical assistance,
ELP Agreement, ELP Manual and Compliance,
Answer questions regarding rate reimbursements.
Attendance Reporting, Reimbursement Authorization, Recoupment
ELP Agreement, ELP Manual and Compliance,
Answer questions regarding payment reimbursements.

Child Care Advisor (CCA)

Authorize care; update or end care.

21. RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE www.dfwjobs.com

- View the 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)

We hope that you find the Early Learning Program Manual helpful. Our goal is to provide partnered ELPs the necessary information needed to ensure we establish a successful partnership.

Thank you for your commitment in serving children in your community!

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas
Child Care Services

CUSTOMER CODE OF CONDUCT

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas (WSNCT) is committed to providing quality, professional services in a clean, safe, and comfortable environment free from disruptions. This Code of Conduct has been formulated to ensure all can work in an environment that fosters mutual respect and opportunities to achieve the highest impact. The use of WSNCT facilities and resources, as well as working with our staff, implies acceptance of Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas' Code of Conduct. The standards of this Code of Conduct extend to virtual, digital, written, or telephonic communications.

Conduct detrimental to the programs, staff, customers, or general public will not be tolerated. Customers not conducting business related to job search or directly related activities or failing to conduct themselves within the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct, will be subject to punitive action up to and including the filing of criminal charges. All members of the public, no matter the type of relationship with WSNCT are expected to be polite and maintain conduct aligned with this code. This Code of Conduct is intended to provide broad guidance regarding prohibited conduct and does not supersede the reasonable discretion of the management of the Workforce Center, Child Care Services, Mobile Workforce Unit, or other workforce activity locations. The behaviors cited below are expressly forbidden and not considered acceptable. The following list is not an all-inclusive list:

- Use of obscene and/or abusive language,
- Intimidation, threatening behavior, verbal abuse or harassment towards staff, other customers, or the general public,
- Disruption of operations/creating a public disturbance,
- Loitering in the facility/not conducting official business,
- Use of the facility and resources for non-job search related activities,
- Recklessness or disorderly conduct,
- Acts of vandalism, theft, defacing and/or destruction of property, equipment, materials, including technology, etc.,
- Unlawful possession of firearms or weapons, illegal drugs, hazardous materials, or other unlawful items/substances,
- Behavior that threatens to cause or does cause bodily harm to a third party, including staff, other customers, or the general public,
- Obstruction or attempts to obstruct service delivery, including falsification of Workforce Center records, or providing false information/identification,
- Remaining in the facility after closing or when requested to leave,
- Entering non-public areas of the facility, except when accompanied by staff or with proper permission, and/or
- Use of the restrooms for bathing, shampooing, shaving, or washing clothes

Violations of the Code of Conduct are prohibited and may result in punitive action up to and including the filing of criminal charges.