



**ChildCareGroup**

Child Care Assistance

**Regulated Child Care  
Provider Handbook**

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# Chapter 1

## Overview of the CCA System

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### **The Texas Workforce Commission**

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

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

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

- TWC contracts with local workforce development boards across the state of Texas to administer child care and other workforce support funds. Each local board serves a county or a group of counties, and there are 28 local boards established in Texas. Dallas County is one service delivery area, and Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas is the local workforce development board.
- Each local board contracts with community-based agencies to manage the delivery of child care services in their area. These agencies are referred to as the “contractor” or “CCA contractor”. ChildCareGroup is the child care contractor for Dallas County.
- Each CCA contractor is responsible to the local board for the operation of the child care system in their area, and the local board is in turn responsible to TWC for administration of funds and the child care system.

### **Child Care Assistance Staff**

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

- Provider Services Representatives and Inclusion Support Specialist, who:
  - Visit the child care program,
  - Maintain and update provider records,
  - Offer program support, training, technical assistance and resources, and
  - Help providers comply with CCA requirements
- Texas Rising Star Mentors, who:
  - Assist providers with the Texas Rising Star program
  - Provide mentoring to site directors and early learning program teachers
  - Assist early learning programs with accessing funding for quality improvement
- Eligibility Staff, who:
  - Help parents determine if they are eligible for services,
  - Educate parents on choosing child care that meets their needs,
  - Enroll CCA children into provider facilities, and
  - Give child care providers updated information on family eligibility and fees

- Financial Management Staff, who:  
Process payments for child care providers, and  
Answer payment questions

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

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

The TWC Child Care Services Guide can be found at:

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/partners/workforce-program-guides#childCare>

TWC Child Care Services Rules can be found at:

<https://www.twc.state.tx.us/files/twc/rules-chapter-809-child-care-services-twc.pdf>

## Chapter 2

# Becoming a CCA Provider

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Any child care program regulated by the Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Child Care Regulation division can become a CCA provider. There are 2 basic requirements:

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

A child care facility must:

- Have a current permit to operate a licensed child care center, licensed child care home, or registered child care home from the HHS Child Care Regulation, and
- Not be on corrective or adverse action with Child Care Regulation, or
- Be operated and monitored by the United States Military Services

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

A child care provider must:

- Sign a Memorandum of Understanding,
- Agree to abide by the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, and
- Agree to read and follow procedures outlined in this CCA Provider Handbook.

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a legal, non-expiring contract that is valid as long as the provider's permit to operate remains current.

The MOU:

- Has information needed by the CCA Contractor;
- Explains to providers what they must do;
- Is signed before CCA can pay for child care services to CCA-referred children;
- Is the basis of payment to providers for child care services provided to CCA-referred children; and
- Includes this CCA Provider Handbook as part of the agreement.

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

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

**Note:** A Board shall not reimburse providers that are debarred from other state or federal programs unless and until the debarment is removed. Providers terminated or disqualified from the Child and Adult Care Food Program are not eligible to participate as a provider or be paid for care.

### Changes Effecting the Memorandum of Understanding

There are many changes that must be reported to CCA. 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 Child Care Regulation, including loss of license/permit	Within 48 hours of notification from Child Care Regulation (prior to the effective date)
Change in EIN or Tax ID number	2 weeks prior 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
Other changes that may cause termination of the MOU (see below)	Within 48 hours of the change
Facility name, ownership, governing body, or corporate status	2 weeks prior to the effective date
New contact person or director	Within 48 hours of the change
New address or temporary location	2 weeks prior to the effective date
New hours of operation	2 weeks prior to the effective date
Holiday closing additions/changes	2 weeks prior to the closing date
Change in the ages of children served	2 weeks prior to the effective date
Updated/new facility rates	2 weeks prior to the effective date

**Note: All changes should be reported via the CCA web portal. Failure to report changes may/will affect payment for services provided and may cause CCA children to be moved to another provider facility.**

#### Changes that cause termination of the MOU are changes in:

- location
- ownership
- facility type or permit number

The MOU, referrals of children, and payment do not transfer to another location or owner. Updated paperwork must be completed, and a new MOU signed.

Attendance and payment for care may continue under the existing permit number and MOU until:

- A permit to operate has been issued by Child Care Regulation for the new location or owner, and
- The owner or responsible party completes required CCA paperwork,
- A new MOU is signed, and
- The new permit information is verified by CCA staff.

All paperwork should be gathered, and a new MOU signed in advance if possible, to help create a smooth transition.

## Chapter 3 Getting Child Care

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

### **Parent Choice of Provider**

CCA is a parent’s choice program and having a MOU in place does not guarantee that children will be referred to a specific child care provider. Federal and State law requires that parents choose where they want their children to go for care.

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

### **Parents Employed by the Child Care Provider**

If a parent is employed by the child care facility, the following applies:

- Licensed Child Care Centers – the parent cannot be the director, assistant director, or have any ownership interest in the facility and use that child care facility for care of their own children.
- Licensed or Registered Child Care Homes – the parent cannot be employed and working at the home during the hours their child is in care.

### **Termination of Enrollment**

The Child Care Contractor may terminate child care services before the eligibility end date due to:

- Permanent loss of work or training and the parent has not resumed activity after 3 months,
- Family income too high,
- Determination of fraud,
- Failure to pay parent share of cost (copay), or
- Accumulating too many absences.

Child care providers will receive paperwork for each family that lists a beginning date and/or an end date, which allows the provider to track when care may end or should be updated. When care will be terminating before the scheduled end date CCA will send the parent and provider a notice 15 days in advance.



**Placements and Waiting List**

At times children who are eligible for services must be placed on a waiting list for funding. Once children are placed on the wait list, the parent will be sent a letter notifying them of their status and the requirements to keep their information current while waiting for care.

Once a family is placed on the waiting list, they must contact CCA every 60 days in order to remain on the list. Failure to contact CCA by the due date will result in them being removed from the list. Parents can contact CCA by phone or on the CCA web portal.

As funds become available, families are pulled from the wait list according to State and Local Board mandated priority groups and in the order in which they applied. Once pulled from the wait list the parent will receive an application packet in the mail and will have a deadline to complete all information and return paperwork to CCA.

## Chapter 4 Enrolling Children

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### **The Enrollment Process**

When a parent is determined to be eligible for child care services CCA Eligibility Staff:

- Reviews the needs are for care,
- Reviews the parent's rights and responsibilities,
- Gives the parent information on types of child care available as well as how to choose quality child care,
- Encourages the parent to visit several child care facilities,

When the parent has identified a child care provider the staff:

- Verifies there is a MOU in place for the age and type of care needed,
- Verbally authorizes care to start with the provider, and
- Sends the provider Form 2450, Authorization for Child Care Enrollment.

Form 2450 tells the provider:

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

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

The provider should verify that a child's personal and referral information matches the authorization given for days of the week and part/full day upon receipt of the 2450. If information does not match, the provider must contact CCA within 5 days.

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

Providers may limit the number of children enrolled through the CCA program in their facility and are not required to take referrals that interrupt their business practices applied to the general public (example: part week or part day enrollment).

Providers may not deny a child care referral based on:

- The parent's income status or lack of parent copay;
- Receipt of other public assistance;
- The child's Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Protective Services (CPS) status.

### **Provider Policies**

Providers must give parents a copy of their written policies and answer questions that they may have. Parents are required to comply with all provider policies unless the policy conflicts with CCA, TWC, or other state or federal policies.

Providers cannot require CCA parents to:

- Pay the difference between CCA reimbursement rates and private pay rates,
- Pay a higher late fee than private pay parents,
- Abide by a different late pick-up policy than private pay parents,
- Pay any mandatory fees charged to private pay parents (example: registration, supply, activity, transportation), and
- Pay a penalty if CCA ends care without notice.

### **Units of Child Care Service**

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

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

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

### **Part-Time Care**

CCA arranges care based on the time needed to support parents' employment or training. In some instances, **part-time** care, or **less than 5 days** per week may be needed. The child will be enrolled for the type of unit of care needed based on the parent's needs (example: 3 full day units, 4-part day units).

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

Providers must allow a child referred as part-day to attend up to the full six hours, and allow a child referred as full-day to attend up to the full twelve hours, during operating hours.

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

charge parents a late fee if care is provided beyond the number of hours authorized for full or part day during their operating hours.

Child care facilities that offer extended hour or 24-hour care may request a schedule of need for the week from the parent so that they can plan for staffing. This should be part of their written policies and given to parents.

### **School-Age Care**

Providers who offer full-year care for school-age children will need to reserve space for children whose parents need to have them attend for full day care during school holidays unless they are also closed those days.

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

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

During the summer months care will be paid at the full day rate if full day care is needed by the family.

## Chapter 5

# Enrolling Children with Disabilities

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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 Inclusion staff will work closely with providers who care for children with disabilities.

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

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, requires public accommodations, including licensed child care centers licensed homes, and registered child care homes to ensure access for all individuals regardless of disabilities. All child care 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 child care facilities.

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

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

### **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 each child's capabilities and needs are met.

A CCA referred child with a disability may have an Inclusion Plan developed by the Inclusion 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 child care providers and their staff with including the child in the care setting with typically developing peers.

### **Confidentiality**

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

disabilities must learn all they can about the children, however caregivers must not share confidential information with:

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

Inclusion staff cannot observe a specific child without written permission from the parent to observe and share information with the provider and staff.

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

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

- Working with parents of children with disabilities,
- Getting a child settled into the facility,
- How CCA will help,
- How to help develop and follow individualized inclusion plans,
- Getting adaptive equipment,
- Determining if more help is needed,
- Finding community resources,
- What to do if a parent has a disability, and
- What to do if caregivers don't think they can meet the child's needs.

### **Inclusion Assistance Rates**

CCA 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, CCA 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 sometimes available when extra adult assistance is needed for the child and an approved professional recommends additional adult assistance. The Inclusion Specialist will assist the provider in the process. The additional reimbursement rate is set at up to 190% of the provider's reimbursement rate, based on the type and amount of additional care that may be necessary according to an approved professional.

The inclusion assistance rate may be used:

- To help pay for extra staff or
- To help pay for additional equipment needed to assist in the care of a child

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

## Chapter 6

# Determining Payment Rates to Providers

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### **Maximum Reimbursement Rates**

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

- Federal and state laws and regulations,
- Funding,
- Market rate surveys,
- Performance measures, and
- Parent share of cost factors

Maximum rates are established for each facility type, type of care (full/part day, blended), age of child (infant, toddler, preschool, school age), and quality rating (Texas Rising Star, Texas School Ready!). Texas Rising Star certified providers have higher maximum rates based on their certification level (2, 3, and 4 star). See chapter 13 for more information on Texas Rising Star certification. Texas School Ready!™ providers are eligible to be reimbursed at a higher rate for preschool age children.

### **Provider Payment Rates**

Actual payment rates for individual providers are set when the Memorandum of Understanding is signed and are based upon the documentation of rates given to CCA by the provider. Rates for full day and part day care are established for each age category that applies to the facility.

Provider reimbursement rates are based on the provider's published rates, or what is charged to the public, and prorated to a daily rate. A copy of the provider's published rates must be provided in order to establish reimbursement rates. The provider must also submit any other mandatory fees required for a child to participate in their program (registration, uniforms, activities, etc.). These fees must be included in the CCA rates and cannot be charged to the parent by the provider.

Daily rates are calculated for full day and part day for each of the age categories listed below:

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

### Calculating Daily Rates

If provider rates are:	To obtain daily rate:
Monthly	Divide the rate by 4.33, then divide the result by 5
Biweekly	Divide the rate by 2.165, then divide the results by 5
Weekly	Divide the weekly amount by 5
Hourly	Multiply the hourly rate by 12 to calculate the full day rate and by 6 to calculate the part day rate

If there are multiple rates within an age category all applicable rates will be averaged to obtain the published rate for the age category, then the daily rate will be determined using the appropriate method above.

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

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

### Optional Fees

Fees that are extra or optional are not included in the daily rate calculation or reimbursement. These would include field trips, class pictures, classes provided by an outside vendor (karate, dance, computer, etc.) or other fees not required for a child to participate in a program. 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. Providers are responsible for collecting these fees.

Activities that are planned for the entire group with no alternate plans are not considered optional and any costs must be included along with the provider's published rates.

### When Providers Change Their Rates

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

### Provider Reimbursement for Transportation

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

- If providers charge a separate transportation fee, CCA will pay the transportation fee for CCA-referred children who have been authorized for transportation



- **The combined total for child care plus transportation cannot be more than the CCA maximum reimbursement rates**

#### **School-Age Care and Blended Rates**

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

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

During the summer months care will be paid at the full day rate if full day care is needed by the family.

## Chapter 7

### Child Care Attendance

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Parents must ensure that their child attends child care on a regular basis. Meeting attendance standards for CCA consists of no more than 40 total absences in their 12-month eligibility period. Absences due to chronic illness, disability, or court-ordered custody or visitation agreements can be removed from the absence count.

#### **Absences**

Child care providers are required to notify CCA if a child has 5 consecutive days of absence. If 40 absences (8 reports of 5 consecutive absences) are accumulated during a child's 12-month eligibility period, CCA will start the termination process. The parent will have opportunity to provide documentation for review if the absences were due to a chronic illness, disability, court-ordered custody or visitation agreement, or other extenuating circumstance. As a courtesy, parents are advised when their children accumulate 15 absences and again at 30. Some cases may not be terminated based on eligibility.

Providers will report all instances of 5 consecutive days of absence on the CCA web portal. The 5 days may be during the same week (Monday – Friday) or across multiple weeks (Wed, Thurs, Fri, Mon, Tues). The information should be reported on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of absence.

If a provider fails to report instances of 5 consecutive days of absence, corrective action may be taken by CCA. This may include issuing a Service Improvement Agreement as well as ending the referral, limiting further placements of children, and recouping funds paid to the provider program.

#### **Suspension of Enrollment**

Sometimes a child must be absent from care for an extended period. This can happen when:

- The child must spend time with a parent on a court-ordered visit or as part of a custody agreement
- A parent has a break in employment (example: parent works for a school district)
- A parent has a break in school and is not working during the break (examples: teen parents, parents enrolled in college)
- A parent is on medical leave and is unable to get the child to the child care provider

A parent can request a suspension so that absences will not accumulate. The Eligibility Staff will:

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

The provider is not paid for the period the child is on suspended enrollment and may enroll another child in that space. When the suspension period is over, the child will be

re-enrolled into the CCA program and may be placed with the original provider if space is available, or with another provider. Providers are not required to hold spaces for children that are on a suspension.

## Chapter 8 Parent Fees

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### Who Pays Parent Fees

Federal law states that many parents must pay part of the cost of their child care, even when they are getting help from TWC. Parent fees are calculated according to the family's *gross* monthly income (before taxes). Eligibility staff will tell providers if parents must pay fees and how much the fees are.

### Collecting Parent Fees

Providers **must** collect the assessed parent fees. Each provider should have a clear written policy that explains when payment is due and consequences for non-payment, including fees charged and practice for termination from the facility. The policy should be given to parents at the time of enrollment. Providers keep the fees they collect, and the amount of the assessed parent fees is deducted from the CCA reimbursement to the provider.

Providers must collect parent fees according to their written policies and document all payments received. Parents should pay before services are provided.

Examples:

- If weekly payments are required, parents should pay for the upcoming week
- If monthly payments are required, parents should pay at the beginning of the month for that month.

Parents must pay their parent fees even when:

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

### Reduction of Parent Fees

Parent fees may be lowered temporarily when parents have unusual circumstances. Only the CCA Eligibility staff can lower parent fees. Providers may **not** lower fees, but they can recommend that a parent contact CCA and ask for a fee reduction. Requests for fee reductions can be entered on the CCA web portal, and the parent will be required to provide documentation to support the request.

Eligibility staff will notify providers when parent fees have been reduced.

### When Parents Do Not Pay Their Fees

Collection of the parent fees is the responsibility of the provider, and CCA will not reimburse the provider for any uncollected fees. The provider should follow their written policy, which can include assessing a late fee, suspending care, and ending care with the facility.

**If a parent does not pay their fee according to the provider's written policy, the provider should report the late fee within 5 business days on the CCA web portal.**

CCA will contact the parent to inform them of the reported late copay and give them the option to request a fee reduction. CCA staff will be able to review their financial situation and see if a fee reduction is appropriate. CCA staff will follow up to see if a fee reduction was requested and approved or not approved. If there is no fee reduction staff will contact the provider regarding the status of payment. If the parent still has not paid the fee balance CCA will start the termination process and send a notice to end child care to the parent and provider.

If the provider works out a payment arrangement with the parent to get them caught up on the outstanding fee, the provider does not need to report the late copay for that month. If the next month begins and the parent does not pay timely, the provider should report the late fee and not continue to offer a payment plan for a second month.

CCA is only able to follow up on late parent fees that are reported timely. Staff are unable to follow up on outstanding balances from previous time periods that were not reported timely.

## Chapter 9 Reimbursement for Services

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Payments are processed (payment calculated, and statement prepared) every 2 weeks, and are released within 5 business days of processing. A schedule for payment processing and payment release dates can be found on the CCA web portal – [cca.childcaregroup.org](http://cca.childcaregroup.org).

### Payment to Child Care Providers

Child care providers are paid for all days the child is enrolled, whether present or absent. All assigned parent fees that the provider should collect are deducted from the CCA reimbursement payment.

### Holidays

CCA will pay up to 9 Federal holidays each year:

New Year's Day	July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Day after Thanksgiving
MLK Day	Labor Day	Christmas Eve
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day	Christmas Day

Texas Rising Star and Texas School Ready!<sup>TM</sup> programs may choose holidays other than the 9 listed above.

**All child care providers must provide CCA a written list of the specific closure dates for the next year by December 1 of each year.** It is important to check which holidays may fall on the weekend for the upcoming year (New Year's Day, Christmas, July 4<sup>th</sup>) and determine if the facility will be closed the Friday before, Monday after, or not at all. Providers must report all planned closures, including those beyond the 9 reimbursed dates in advance. Holidays should be submitted on the CCA web portal.

Holidays are not paid if:

- A child's care ends 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
- The child care provider has already been paid for 9 holiday days in the year
- CCA is not notified in advance of the holiday.

CCA must be notified of any changes in scheduled holidays a minimum of 2 weeks in advance.

### Electronic Payments

All payments are made by direct deposit to a checking account in the business name, or to a debit card issued to the provider. No paper checks are issued. CCA publishes a yearly schedule for payment processing and estimated payment release dates on the CCA web portal.

### **Payment Summaries**

Child Care providers should be sure to review the Payment Summary for each period as soon as possible after receiving it. If an error is found, contact the Financial Management unit within 15 days of receiving the payment summary.

Child Care Providers will be required to refund any payments that they are not entitled to, including:

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

**Accepting payment for services not actually provided may be considered fraud if consecutive absences are not reported as required.** Providers must report all instances of a child being absent for 5 consecutive days. Providers and parents will be referred to the Texas Workforce Commission in cases where it is suspected that a fraudulent claim has been made.

### **Record Keeping Requirements**

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

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

For 3 years and 90 days.

### **Access to Records**

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

- CCA Staff or any entity contracted by CCA to conduct on site monitoring,
- Local Board (Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas) staff or any entity contracted to conduct monitoring,
- TWC staff,
- Representatives of the State Attorney General's office, and
- Representatives of Federal government offices with responsibility for managing and auditing federal and state child care programs.

## Chapter 10

### Taking Corrective or Adverse Actions with Child Care Providers

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

Child Care Providers must comply with all the terms of the MOU and follow procedures in this CCA Provider Handbook. A copy of the MOU is given to all providers once all required paperwork is received, and the MOU is signed and in effect.

#### **Service Improvement Agreements**

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

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

Service Improvement Agreements will:

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

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

**Note: Texas Rising Star providers will lose TRS certification if placed on a Service Improvement Agreement for CCA program requirements.**

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

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

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



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

- Change of ownership
- Change of location
- Revocation or suspension of a license or registration by TDFPS
- Provider is terminated and/or disqualified from participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

**Additional Training**

Providers must participate in orientation provided by CCA on the procedures that are in this Provider Handbook prior to enrolling in CCA. Existing providers may be required to participate in a refresher on the CCA program to help them make corrections and meet requirements.

**Corrective and Adverse Action by Child Care Regulation**

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

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

For providers placed on Probation Status:

- CCA will send letters to all parents of CCA enrolled children notifying them of the status and giving them the option to remain in care or transfer
- No new children may be enrolled through CCA
- If the provider is receiving a higher reimbursement rate due to Texas Rising Star certification or TSR participation, the rates will be lowered, and the standard maximum rates will be applied

For providers under Adverse Action:

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

**Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

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

If a provider suspects abuse or neglect of a child is happening away from the facility, the individual who suspects the abuse or neglect must immediately report the suspicion to DFPS as well.

The DFPS toll-free abuse hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

**Reasons Providers Could Be Prosecuted**

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

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

Provider representatives should carefully review all documents that they sign and note that their signature is confirmation of the information included on the document. This includes information contained on the Memorandum of Understanding and any other paperwork submitted.

Anyone suspecting program abuse by either a parent or provider should contact TWC's Fraud and Program Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-3642.

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

## Chapter 11

### Helping and Monitoring Providers

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#### How CCA Staff Help Providers

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

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

#### Visits to Provider Facilities

Providers who are certified as Texas Rising Star (TRS) providers will receive visits to renew their TRS certification, complete annual monitoring, and provide mentoring and technical support to meet TRS criteria.

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

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

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

The Health and Human Services Child Care Regulation division monitors provider compliance with licensing or registration standards. **CCA staff, Board staff, or TWC staff who observe noncompliance with TDFPS minimum standards are required to report the noncompliance to TDFPS licensing.**

## Chapter 12

# Asking Questions and Solving Problems

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### **Questions About Policies**

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

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

Parents are encouraged to communicate with the provider staff on a regular basis so that when concerns arise, they are comfortable in addressing them. CCA staff can assist when needed, however, direct communication between the parent and provider is always encouraged first.

Parents report complaints to CCA staff regarding services provided by the provider. If the complaint involves a possible noncompliance to Child Care Regulation minimum standards, then CCA staff are required to report the complaint to Child Care Regulation staff for follow up. The parent is given the information to report the complaint as well.

### **Complaints from Parents regarding CCA**

In cases where services are terminated, parents are given written directions for filing an appeal. The parent should put their request/grievance in writing and submit it along with any additional documentation. A supervisor will review the appeal request and contact the parent as well as provide written information on the outcome of the appeal request. If the appeal is not granted, directions to file a formal appeal will also be given.

If parents have concerns or complaints regarding the CCA staff, they should call CCA at 214-630-5949 and request that a supervisor contact them. CCA staff will route the request to the appropriate supervisor.

If concerns or complaints are not resolved with the supervisor, the parent may request to speak with the department manager, then director.

### **Complaints from Providers regarding CCA**

If providers have concerns or complaints regarding the CCA staff, they may contact CCA at 214-630-5949 and request that a supervisor contact them. They can also put a request in on the CCA web portal and it will be routed to the appropriate supervisor.

If concerns or complaints are not resolved with the supervisor, the provider may request to speak with the department manager, then director.

If a provider wishes to appeal an adverse action taken against them by CCA, they should put their request in writing along with reasons they feel the action is being taken in error.

Requests can be submitted via the CCA web portal, mailed, or faxed (214-688-4436) and should be addressed to the manager for the department taking the action.

For general CCA issues:

Provider Services Manager  
ChildCareGroup – CCA  
1420 W. Mockingbird Lane, Suite 300  
Dallas, TX 75247

For Texas Rising Star issues:

Texas Rising Star Program Manager  
ChildCareGroup – CCA  
1420 W. Mockingbird Lane, Suite 300  
Dallas, TX 75247

The manager will complete a review the information and actions taken, then follow up with the provider via phone and in writing once a decision is made. The provider will be given additional options if they wish to further appeal once a decision has been made and they are not satisfied with the outcome.

## Chapter 13

### Improving Quality of Care

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

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program is a voluntary, quality rating and improvement system for child care programs participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) subsidized child care program. TRS certification is available to Licensed Center, Licensed Home, and Registered Home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS program offers three levels of quality certification (2-star, 3-star, and 4-star) to encourage early learning providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements.

The Texas Rising Star program organizes measures into four categories:

- Category 1: Director and Staff Qualifications and Training
- Category 2: Teacher-Child Interactions
- Category 3: Program Administration
- Category 4: Indoor and Outdoor Environments

For more information on the TRS program, the certification guidelines, self-assessment tools, and the application process please visit the Texas Rising Star website at: [www.texasrisingstar.org](http://www.texasrisingstar.org).

Every parent in the CCA program or on the waiting list will receive a Consumer Guide, which gives information about the Texas Rising Star program as well as national accreditation. A list of child care providers with TRS certification will be published on the CCA web portal as well as the TRS website.

#### **Benefits of Texas Rising Star Certification**

- Providers can receive higher reimbursement rates from CCA. The maximum rates for TRS providers are higher than for other providers, however CCA cannot reimburse at rates higher than the provider's published rates.
- Providers are eligible for incentives to help them meet TRS criteria and improve their quality, such as workshops, series-based training, equipment awards, and curriculum resources. Projects and funding amounts vary from year to year.

## Important Contact Information

### Child Care Assistance:

Phone: 214.630.5949

Web portal: [cca.childcaregroup.org](http://cca.childcaregroup.org)

Main Fax: 214.688.4436

Provider Fax: 214.905.2471

Address:

1420 W. Mockingbird Lane, Suite 300

Dallas, TX 75247

### CCA Web Portal Information

Providers can use the portal for:

- Reporting absences of 5 days in a row
- Reporting or updating holiday and other closure information
- Payment questions, errors
- Payment schedule
- Reporting any other issues related to a specific family
- Requesting copies of forms
- Sending CCA a general question
- Getting updates and other information from CCA (message center)

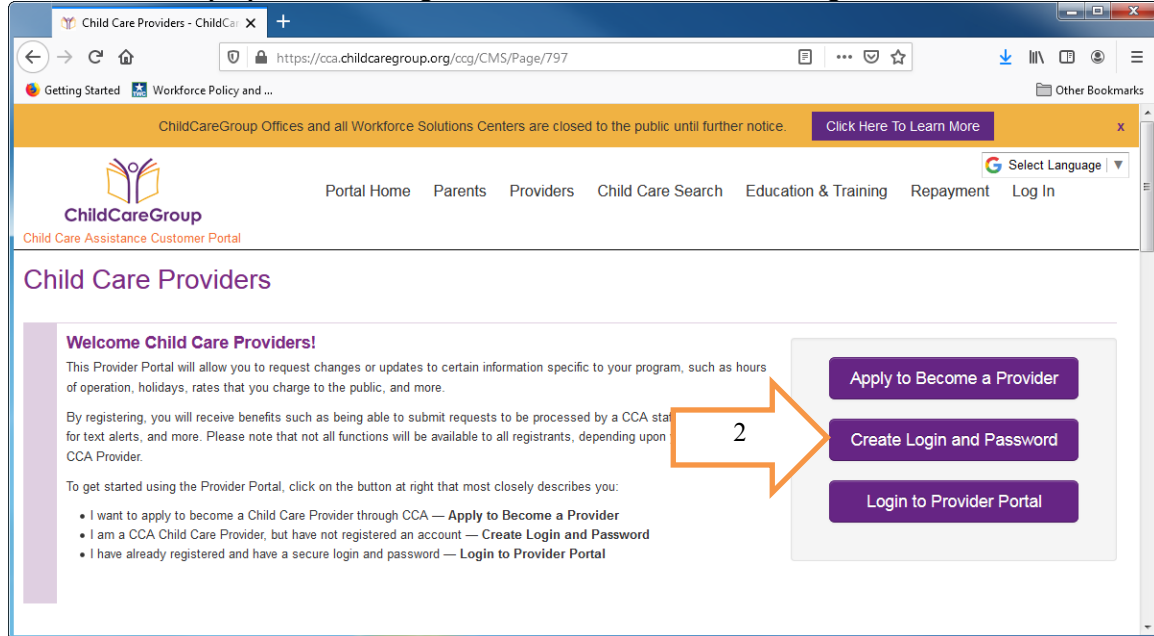
Parents can use the web portal for:

- Reporting changes in income, work/school status, family size, phone number, address, or any other info related to their case
- Searching for a child care provider
- Information on choosing child care
- Requesting a transfer to another child care provider
- Sending CCA a general question
- Getting updates and other information from CCA (message center)

# Creating an Account on the CCA Web Portal

Website: [cca.childcaregroup.org](https://cca.childcaregroup.org)

1. From the main page, click on the purple “Learn More” button under Child Care Providers
2. Click on the purple “Create Login and Password” button on the right side of the screen



3. Complete all information in the boxes down the Left side of the screen (picture of the screen is below)
  - a) First and Last Name of the person registering
  - b) Email – can be a different address than the one CCA has on file
  - c) Password – person registering will create a password for the account
4. Complete all information down the boxes on the Right side of the screen.
  - a) Address is the address of the child care facility or home
  - b) Last 4 of SSN or Last 4 of EIN –
    - i. Relative care providers will enter the last 4 numbers of their Social Security Number in the SSN box.
    - ii. All regulated providers (licensed centers & homes, registered homes) will enter the last 4 numbers of the SSN or EIN on file with CCA in the EIN box (even if the number used is SSN)
5. Click on the purple “Submit” button at the bottom

You should get a message that says your registration was completed successfully.



## Provider Account Registration

Help with SSN or EIN: Regulated providers use the last four digits of either the EIN or SSN associated with your child care license. Relative providers use the last four digits of your SSN.

### Your Information

(Required fields are in bold)

**First Name**

**Last Name**

**Email Address**

**Confirm Email Address**

**Password**

**Confirm password**

### Facility Information

**License Number**

**Street 1**

**Street 2**

**City**

**State**

**Zip Code**

**Phone**

**Regulated Providers' Last 4 of EIN or SSN (Licensed centers, licensed homes or registered homes)**

OR

**Relative Providers' Last 4 of SSN**

3. Name of person registering

4a. Address of child care facility or home

4b. Relatives use SSN, all others enter # in EIN box

5

Once this is done you are able to log into the website any time using the email address and password you entered in the registration screen.

## Submitting 5 Consecutive Absences via the CCA Web Portal

Providers are paid for all days a child is enrolled/authorized to attend by CCA. Providers must report all absences of 5 days in a row regardless of reason or knowledge for the reason for absence. The 5 absences may be all in one week (Monday – Friday), or carry over from one week to the next (Thursday, Friday, Monday-Wednesday).

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### **Directions:**

1. Provider logs into portal with the email address & password they have set up.
2. Select Case Inquiry/Reporting, then Report Absences – 5 consecutive from the drop down menu
3. Use the drop-down menu to
  - Select the parent/TWIST ID OR Enter the TWIST ID manually (last option)  
*Note: You may manually enter 000000 for the TWIST ID# if you do not have one, then manually enter the child's name.*
  - Select the child OR Enter client name manually (last option)
4. To enter the dates of absences, click in the dates box and a calendar will appear. Click on the date of the first absence and 5<sup>th</sup> day of absence. The date range will then be displayed in the box. Click on the blue “close” button to close the calendar.
5. If the reason for absence is known, the provider can enter that information in the next box.
6. Select the purple “Submit” button
7. From there the provider can sign out of the portal or go to other areas.

## Web Portal Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What if I don't have a computer?**

A: You can access this site from any computer, tablet, or phone with internet access. The site will adapt to the device you are using and still display all information.

### **Q: What if I don't have an email account?**

A: You can set up an email account for free. There are many options such as google, Hotmail, and yahoo. Child Care Regulation requires an email address, so each provider should have one in place.

### **Q: Can more than one person from my child care facility have an account, or do we have to share the login and password?**

A: Multiple people from the same facility can set up their own login and password.

### **Q: How will I know you got the information I submitted?**

A: Providers and parents will get a confirmation when you submit a request or report. Keep that information.

### **Q: Are parents required to use this site?**

A: Parents are not required to use this site, but we do strongly encourage them to use it. Our goal is to make it easy and convenient for parents and providers to request and get information. Please let parents know this site is there for them as well.

## CCA Provider Handbook Acknowledgement

I have received the CCA Provider Handbook. My signature below acknowledges receipt and recognition of rules and guidelines. I accept responsibility for orienting any staff at my child care facility on the information in this handbook, and for contacting CCA for any questions I might have about the contents now and in the future.

I understand that this handbook may be amended during the year without notice. This handbook in the latest version is applicable to my child care program upon the implementation of any change. CCA staff will notify all providers in writing of any changes to the handbook.

Provider Facility:	License Number:
Authorized Representative:	Title:
Signature:	Date: