

CONSUMER INFORMATION

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE CHOOSING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER



An Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
Relay Texas: 1-800-735-2989 (TDD) or 1-800-735-2988 (Voice)

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Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board
in conjunction with Texas Workforce Commission.

CHOOSING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Choosing quality child care is important and a personal decision. What works well for one family may not work for another. You must be the judge. You want to ensure your child is placed in a setting that will help your child learn and grow. In order to make this important decision, it is vital for you to be educated about the people who care for your child.

In the State of Texas, child care is regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' (DFPS) Child Care Licensing Division, the Texas Department of Health, and by individual military installations. In order to be licensed by or registered with DFPS, child care facilities must meet minimum standards that primarily focus on the health and safety of the children. There are requirements for age, experience, and education of the caregiving staff, the ages and number of children who can be cared for, the safety of the environment, activities away from the facility, and many other requirements. Each licensed facility must carry general liability insurance and have separate transportation liability insurance that covers children at all times while they are in the care of the providers, as required by the DFPS. If a provider is unable to secure or maintain the required insurance, the provider must secure a waiver from DFPS allowing them to operate without the required insurance coverage.

The Texas Workforce Commission develops general policies for the implementation of Federal and State-funded child care programs. In the West Central Texas region, the Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas Board is responsible for local management of child care and the Child Care Services contractor.

What is quality child care?

- Care that is provided in a safe and healthy setting.
- Learning and fun activities should be provided.
- Caregiver staff should be involved in all aspects of the child's care.

Visiting a child care provider:

- Make one scheduled and one unannounced visit.
- If possible, take your child with you to observe how your child reacts and how caregivers respond.
- Ask for references and check them out.
- Is the facility clean and cheerful?
- Is the caregiver warm and friendly?
- Are there back-up plans when the caregiver is not there?
- What rules are the children expected to follow?
- What happens when a child becomes sick?
- Do you hear the sound of happy children?
- How are children disciplined?
- Are surprise visits by parents encouraged?
- Is the caregiver involved with children in their play?
- Is the outdoor play area safe and fenced? Is there a variety of equipment?
- Can the caregiver see the entire playground at all times?
- Are there areas for resting, quiet play, and active play?
- Will your child be happy here?

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

- ⇒ Develop a close working relationship with the provider & adhere to their policies/procedures.
- ⇒ Drop off and pick up your child on time.
- ⇒ Bring extra changes of clothing, diapers, etc.
- ⇒ Talk to the provider about your concerns.
- ⇒ Leave emergency telephone numbers.
- ⇒ Keep enrollment records current.

TYPES OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Licensed Child Care Centers are any facilities which care for 13 or more children under 14 years old for less than 24 hours. Within this category there are standards for day care centers, drop-in care centers, kindergarten and nursery schools, and schools-kindergarten and above.

Licensed Child Care Homes provide care for less than 24 hours per day for 7-12 children under 14 years old.

All types of licensed facilities have published standards they are required to follow and are routinely monitored and inspected by DFPS. The application process requires that the facility provider receives orientation, and background checks are conducted. A license is issued after licensing staff completes on-site inspection(s) to ensure minimum standards are met. Facilities are inspected every 4-12 months and if a report is received relating to child abuse/neglect or standards' violations. Licensed facilities include day care and 24 hours' care.

Registered Child Care Homes provide care in the caregiver's home for up to 6 children under the age of 14. They may also take in up to 6 more school-age children. The number of children allowed in a home is determined by the ages of the children. No more than 12 children can be in care at any time, including children of the caregiver. The application process requires that a Registered Child Care Home provider completes an orientation class and receives clearances on background checks. A registration certificate is issued after DFPS' licensing staff completes an on-site inspection to ensure minimum standards are met. Registered Child Care Homes are inspected every 1-3 years and if a report is received relating to child abuse/neglect or standards' violations.

Other Regulated Providers are facilities licensed by the Texas Department of State Health Services as a youth day camp and those operated and monitored by the United States military.

Self-Arranged Child Care (SACC) is a system of paying eligible providers for child care services parents have arranged themselves. State and Federal policies require that parents be allowed to choose the child care provider who will care for their children. Parents may self-arrange care with providers at least 18 years of age who are, by marriage, blood relationship, or court decree, the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle or sibling who is not living in the same household as the child.



PROVIDER PROGRAMS

NAEYC Accredited is an accreditation awarded by the National Association for the Education of Young Children for promoting excellence in early childhood education.

A **Texas Rising Star Provider** is a child care provider that voluntarily meets requirements that exceed the State's minimum licensing standards for health and safety, group size, child/staff ratios, caregiver training, and age-appropriate curricula and activities for child care facilities. Certification as a Texas Rising Star Provider is available to Licensed Child Care Centers, Licensed Child Care Homes, and Registered Child Care Homes that meet the certification criteria.

The **Texas School Readiness** Program certifies preschool education classrooms that effectively prepare their students for kindergarten emphasizing reading and social skills.

REFERRAL CONTACTS TELEPHONE NUMBERS & WEBSITES

Attorney General's Office: (325) 672-4480 (<https://childsupport.oag.state.tx.us/>)
Child support enforcement.

Child Care Services: (325) 795-4200 / 1-800-457-5633
(www.workforcesystem.org)
Child care assistance.

CHIP: (325) 795-5876/1-877-543-7669 (www.chipmedicaid.org)
Children's Medicaid and health insurance program.

Department of Human Services (DHS): (325) 795-5999 (www.hhsc.state.tx.us)
Food Stamps, TANF, Medicaid.

Food Bank of Abilene: (325) 695-6311 (www.fbwct.org)
Assistance with food.

Noah Project: (325) 672-6626 (1-800-444-3551 - 24-Hr. Crisis Hotline) (www.noahproject.org)
Shelter and outreach for family violence victims.

Pregnancy Resources of Abilene: (325) 672-6415 (www.prabilene.com)
Maternity, baby clothes, diapers, formula, pregnancy verification.

Social Security Office: 1-877-607-9525/1-800-772-1213 (www.ssa.gov)
Assistance with Social Security benefits.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: (325) 691-8100/1-800-252-5400 (www.dfps.state.tx.us)
Adult protective services; child care license; child protective services; health and safety information for child care on issues of immunizations, prevention and control of infectious diseases, building and premises safety, health and safety training appropriate to the provider setting, and regulatory compliance history of child care providers; personnel/management services.

Texas Department of Health & Human Services: (325) 695-5750 (www.hhsc.state.tx.us)
Medicaid doctors and dentist list, CIDC.

Texas Workforce Commission Fraud and Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-3642
Call to report fraud or abuse issues concerning child care providers.

211 Texas A Call For Help: 211 (www.211texas.org)
Information and referrals for community health and human services; connecting people with local services and equipping them with information and education to best access resources in their community.

W.I.C. : (325) 692-1680 (www.fns.usda.gov/wic)
Women, Infants & Children. Nutrition and food assistance program for children.

West Central Texas Council of Governments: (325) 672-8544 (<http://wctcog.org/wctcog>)
Aging, 911, housing, economic development.

Workforce Solutions Center of West Central Texas: (325) 795-4200/1-800-457-5633
(www.workforcesystem.org)
Employment and training resources, workshops, internet job search, State employment service.