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WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

NORTH TEXAS



Child Care Services

PROVIDER HANDBOOK

A proud partner of the  americanjobcenter® network

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Chapter I: Workforce Solutions Child Care Program Overview

Introduction

Workforce Solutions North Texas has developed this Provider Handbook to inform the Provider about its Child Care Services and to explain their role as a Regulated Child Care Provider.

Licensed Child Care Center and Child Care Home Owners, Directors, and other governing body members who have signed a *Regulated/TRS Provider Agreement (Form 2430)* with Workforce Solutions will be referred to as Providers throughout this handbook.

Workforce Solutions North Texas provides child care services and may be referred to as Workforce Solutions throughout this handbook. All rules, policies and procedures in this Provider Handbook are based on federal and/or state laws and Workforce Solutions policies and procedures.

Please read and review this handbook carefully. It has been designed to be a quick reference for any questions that might come up later. Feel free to call us at the below referenced numbers if you have any questions or concerns.

Purpose

This handbook is for Providers offering child care services to families receiving assistance through Workforce Solutions. It will provide:

- A reference guide for the Provider to keep
- Information about the structure of TWC and the Child Care Services program
- Information about the Provider's role in providing child care to families
- An explanation of the conditions on which child care services are based
- Information about reimbursement for providing child care services
- Information about the consequences for obtaining or attempting to obtain, by fraudulent means, services to which s/he is not entitled.

Texas Workforce Commission and the Child Care Services System

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is one of the state agencies that provide support services to low income families working to become and remain self-sufficient. The Child Care Services Program that strives to promote long-term self-sufficiency by enabling parents to work, attend job training or education activities or a combination of the two. The program is also developed to help prevent child abuse and neglect of children and support the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of children.

Child Care Services are:

- Provided to children through 13 years of age in low-income families in which the parents are working, in a work training program or an education program.
- Limited to families whose gross monthly income does not exceed 80% of the state median income (SMI) at eligibility determination or exceed 85% of the state median income (SMI) during the 12-month eligibility period.

The Child Care Services program encompasses all TWC services that help eligible families with child care assistance.

- TWC contracts with local workforce development boards across the State of Texas to administer child care funds. Each local board serves a group of counties that together form a “service delivery area”. Currently there are 28 local boards established in Texas. North Texas is our service delivery area, and Workforce Solutions North Texas is the local board that oversees the administration of the Child Care program. Our service delivery area covers 11 counties: Archer, Baylor, Clay, Cottle, Foard, Hardeman, Jack, Montague, Wichita, Wilbarger, and Young.
- Each local board contracts with community-based agencies across the state to manage the delivery of child care services in their area. These agencies are referred to as the “contractor”. Our child care contractor is *Rolling Plains Management Corporation*.
- Each contractor is responsible to the local board for the operation of the child care system in their area, and in turn, the local board is responsible to TWC for administration of funds and the child care system.

TWC’s rules governing Texas’ subsidized child care program may be viewed online at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/agency/texas-workforce-commission-rules>.

Child Care Services Local Staff

Our Child Care Services Staff serve both Clients and Providers. Each department’s responsibilities for our contracted Providers will vary depending on the need of the Provider.

Provider/TRS Services – Staff in this department will:

- Offer on-site training, technical assistance and resources
- Help Providers comply with requirements of the *TRS/Regulated Provider Agreement (2430)*
- Update Provider information in the state database
- Conduct on-site visits as required by local, state or federal monitors
- Offer support in improving communication between the Provider and client
- Offer support to promote consistent and stable care and education for the child
- Administer Texas Rising Star program
- Determine eligibility for Inclusion Assistance for children with disabilities

Office Administrative Services – Staff in this department will:

- Answer and direct all incoming phone calls and faxes from both Providers and clients
- Prepare Provider payment reports and submit claims to Contractor for payment processing
- Answer billing and payment related questions
- Process authorized claim adjustments
- Process all incoming and outgoing mail
- Process provider reported absence calls
- Manage and maintain the Child Care Services waiting list for potential clients

Client Services – Staff in this department will:

- Determine eligibility for families
- Authorize care based on the client’s work or training schedule
- Authorize Parent Share of Cost (PSOC) based on income and household composition
- Process change requests for clients (i.e. transfer of Providers, care needs changes)
- Contact Providers regarding attendance issues

Program Administration – Staff in this department will:

- Oversee local Child Care Program staff and ensure compliance with state, local and federal rules, policies, and procedures
- Notify Providers of changes in federal, state, and/or local laws/policies that affect the Provider Agreement

Laws, Regulations and Rules Governing the Child Care System

Most rules, policies and procedures in this 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 communities that they serve. The Contractor, in turn, will develop its own operating procedures to carry out all of the rules, policies and procedures developed by TWC and the local board.

TWC Child Care Guide can be found at: <http://www.state.tx.us/child-care-services-guide>

TWC Child Care Services Rules can be found at:

[http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/ublic/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=40&pt=20&ch=809](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/ublic/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=40&pt=20&ch=809)

Chapter 2: Becoming a Workforce Solutions Child Care Provider

Any child care provider regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services can become a Workforce Solutions Provider. To be eligible to receive Child Care Services funds for providing child care services:

1. Have a current license from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) as a Licensed Child Care Center (LCCC), Licensed Child Care Home (LCCH) or a Registered Child Care Home (RCCH), or
2. Be operated and monitored by the Department of Defense (DOD), United States Military Services

In addition to the requirements listed above, the Provider must also:

- Complete and sign all documents in the Provider Enrollment Packet
- Agree to abide by the terms of the *Regulated/TRS Provider Agreement (Form 2430)*, and
- Agree to read and follow procedures outlined in this Provider Handbook

Please Note: Workforce Solutions cannot provide reimbursement for child care services to a Provider who is debarred from any other state or federal programs (such as the Child Care and Adult Food Program) unless and until the debarment is removed.

Providers who wish to offer Child Care Services for the children of families receiving subsidized child care assistance may do so by entering into a *Regulated/TRS Provider Agreement (Form 2430)* with Workforce Solutions. *Form 2430* outlines the child care program requirements and informs the Provider of their responsibilities to families.

The *Regulated/TRS Provider Agreement (Form 2430)* is the basis for payment for Workforce Solutions referred children. Workforce Solutions may not refer children for care or obligate funding for care prior to a Provider Agreement being executed by both parties.

To enter into an agreement with Workforce Solutions, a child care Provider must have:

- A signed *Regulated/TRS Provider Agreement (Form 2430)*
- A current copy of their DFPS permit or Department of Defense (DOD) documentation
- A *W9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification*
- Proof of *Social Security Number* or *Employer Identification Number (EIN)* and name recognized by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- A signed *Direct Deposit Form* and a voided check for reimbursement of services
- An *Authorized Designee Form (form 2501)*
- A *calendar* of holidays and closures

All regulated child care providers must care for Workforce Solutions referred children in a location other than the eligible child's own residence. "Listed" Providers are not eligible to receive CCS funds except for listed relatives.

Independent Contractor

The Provider shall be an independent contractor. Workforce Solutions does not have the right or power to control how a Provider selects its employees, hires/fires, or otherwise provides child care services; nor does Workforce Solutions have the right to direct the Provider's action in any way. The Provider is not entitled to wages or benefits from Workforce Solutions, and the Provider is fully responsible for the payment of all federal, state and local taxes or contributions imposed or required under unemployment insurance, Social Security and employment tax laws.

Having an Agreement in place with Workforce Solutions Child Care does not guarantee that a provider will have children referred by Workforce Solutions Child Care. All referrals made by the Workforce Solutions Child Care office are based on parent choice.

Chapter 3: Accepting Referrals (Authorizations) and Enrolling Children

Once a family is determined eligible for services, the client will be required to choose a child care center within fourteen (14) days. Eligibility is based on employment or training hours, gross income and family size. Some families are referred to Workforce Solutions Child Care by other programs, such as Choices and DFPS. These programs determine eligibility and authorize child care services for the families they serve.

Parent Choice Program

Federal and state law requires parents be given the choice of where they want their children to go for care. Workforce Solutions Child Care staff cannot recommend specific Providers for child care. Clients are encouraged to tour and visit child care centers before making a choice. Children receiving services through DFPS - Child Protective Services have different requirements for choosing a Provider. These families work with their DFPS case manager to determine the Provider that best meets their needs,

Placements and the Waiting List

Often children who are eligible for services must be placed on the waiting list for available funding. Once children are placed on the wait list, the client will be mailed a letter notifying them of their status and the requirements to keep their information updated while waiting for care.

Once a family is placed on the waiting list, they must contact Workforce Solutions Child Care every 90 days to remain active on the waiting list. Otherwise, the family will be automatically removed from the list.

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, the family will receive a Determination packet in the mail and will have a deadline to complete all information and return paperwork to Workforce Solutions Child Care,

The Enrollment Process

When a parent is determined eligible for Child Care Services, the client services staff will

- Interview the parent to determine care needs for all children needing care in the household,
- Review the parent's rights and responsibilities,
- Inform the parent of the different types of child care available as well as how to choose a quality child care center, and
- Encourage the parent to tour and visit several child care centers before deciding.

When a parent has identified a chosen child care facility, Workforce Solutions staff will

- Verify that the provider has an active agreement for the age and type of care needed,
- Contacts the provider to verify that space is available for the child(ren),
- Verbally authorizes the child care to start with the chosen provider, and
- Sends the provider the *Authorization for Child Care Enrollment (form 2450)* via mail/email.

Authorization for Child Care Enrollment (form 2450) tells the provider

- The start date for child care services to begin
- The end date in which child care services are scheduled to end,
- The amount of the monthly Parent Share of Cost (PSOC) and applicable prorates,
- The days that the parent is allowed to use care, and
- The referral type (i.e. full time, part time, etc.).

Parents Employed by the Child Care Provider

If a parent is employed by the child care center, the following rules apply:

Licensed Child Care Centers (LCCC)- the parent cannot be the director, assistant director or have ownership interest in the facility and use that child care facility for care of their own children.

Licensed Child Care Home (LCCH) or Registered Child Care Home (RCCH)-the parent cannot be employed and working in the home during the hours that their own children are in care.

****Please see the sample *Authorization for Child Care Enrollment (form 2450)* on the next page****

Sample Form

Workforce Solutions North Texas

Form 2450

**AUTHORIZATION FOR CHILD CARE ENROLLMENT
WITH REGULATED PROVIDER**

ID #: 01010101

To: Cuddle Cuties
1234 ANYWHERE ST
SMALLTOWN, TX 76000

From: (Client Services Specialist name)
Workforce Solutions North Texas
Child Care Services
4309 Jacksboro Hwy. Ste. 230
Wichita Falls, TX 76302
(940) 723-8774

Provide/Discontinue Update/Discontinue child care, according to the terms of our agreement, to the children of the family listed below:

Parent's Name MOMMA AMAZING	Telephone Number 940-010-1010
Address 4321 DOWNTHE ST, SMALLTOWN, TX 76300	

Child's Full Name	Client#	Date of Birth	Care Authorized		
			Days of the Week	Referral Type*	
			Full	Part	Blended
GRACE AMAZING	3	01/01/2010	*Care days Monday-Friday unless noted below	X	X
RACE AMAZING	4	02/01/2016			

Start Date: 11/27/2017	End Date: 11/26/2018	*Referral Type: Full Day – 6- 12 hours of care authorized Part Day – Less than 6 hours of care authorized Blended – Before & After School Care, Holidays & Summer Care authorized
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***Alternate Care Days**

Monday-Friday Blended: Grace Full: Race

Parent Share of Cost (PSOC) is to be paid in advance of care.

Parent Share of Cost=

11/2017	12/2017	01/2018	02/2018	03/2017	04/2017	05/2017	06/2017	07/2017	08/2017	09/2018	10/2018	11/2018
49	230	230	230	230	230	230	230	230	230	230	230	181

“VARIED” schedule authorized No

Care will end on the above date unless otherwise notified.

Form Generation: 11/24/2017

Enrollment Do's and Don't's:

- The provider must NOT accept a child unless Workforce Solutions staff has called the provider to authorize enrollment.
- Children referred by DFPS (CPS) or Choices also REQUIRE authorization from Workforce Solutions prior to enrollment.
- Workforce Solutions DOES NOT back date payments or authorize child care in the past.
- The provider MUST report to our office any child that has been absent for 5 consecutive days. The provider must report absences on the Manual Absence Tracking Form provided by our office. (See the "Child Care Attendance" section of this handbook for more information).
- 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.
- Providers CAN limit the number of children enrolled through Workforce Solutions, and are not required to take a referral that interrupts their business practices applied to the general public (i.e. part day or part week enrollment).
- Providers are NOT allowed to deny a child care referral because of the parent's income status, public assistance status to the child's DFPS (CPS) status.
- Providers are required to give parents a copy of their written policies and parents must agree to comply with those policies, unless the policy conflicts with Workforce Solutions Child Care North Texas, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) or other state or federal policies.
- Providers are NOT allowed to charge parents the difference between the Workforce Solutions reimbursement rate and their private pay rates.
- Providers are NOT allowed to charge a higher late fee to parents than they do for private pay parents or make parents abide by a different late pick-up policy than private pay parents.
- The provider is NOT allowed to charge a parent a penalty if Child Care services end without notice.
- According to North Texas Board policy, effective October 2019:

Reimbursement rates account for additional fees the child care provider may charge, such as registration fees, enrollment fees, supply fees or transportation fees, when the provider's maximum reimbursement rate is being calculated. These fees will not be reimbursed separately.

Providers may only charge the following fees, if required, to parents receiving services:

- *Late pick-up fees*
- *Returned check fees*

Costs for field trips and other extra-curricular activities are optional fees that may be paid by parents receiving services at their discretion. Child care must be available for children whose parents choose not to pay for optional fees. The Board will not reimburse optional fees under any circumstances. Providers shall not charge any fees to a parent receiving subsidized child care services that are not charged to a parent who is not receiving subsidized child care services.

Referral types and units of service

Workforce Solutions pays claims to Providers by purchasing “units” of services delivered:

- A unit of service may be a full day or a part day
- A **full-time** unit of service is **6 to 12 hours** of care within a 24-hour period
- A **part-time** 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 (12-hour to 24-hour period). Prior approval is required from Workforce Solutions Child Care administrative staff before children can be enrolled for 1 ½ units of care per day.

Part-Time/Part-Week Care

Workforce Solutions Child Care determines care needs for children based on the parents’ employment or training schedule. In some instances, part-time care (less than 6 hours), part-week care (less than 5 days) or varied scheduled care (rotating days or mixture of full/part time care) may be authorized at the request of the client due to rotating work schedules, family dynamics, etc.

The provider should not accept a Part-Time/Part-Week referral if that type of care is not accepted for other children (both subsidized and private pay) at the child care facility. If the provider chooses to start/stop accepting these types of referrals, the provider must contact their Provider Services Specialist to make the change before the referral can be authorized and paid.

School-Age Child Care

For clients that need child care for their school-aged child before and/or after school and full time on the school holidays and summer months will be authorized as blended referrals. The blended reimbursement rate combines the full-time rate and the part-time rate as follows:

$$(\text{part-time rate} \times 175) + (\text{full-time rate} \times 30) / 205 (\# \text{ of school days})$$

The blended reimbursement rate will be paid to the provider starting the first day of school through the last day of school. Child care will be paid at a full-time rate starting the day after the last day of school through the day before school starts. Providers who offer child care for school-aged children during the school year and the summer must have a full-time slot reserved for school-aged children that need full time care on school holidays and during the summer months.

Other Information about referral types...

Providers must allow a child referred as part-time to attend up to the full 6 hours, and a child referred as full-time to attend up to the full 12 hours during the facilities hours of operation.

- Providers must not use the client's work/school schedule to determine how long the child may be allowed to stay at the center. Late fees can only be charged to those children that have exceeded the 6 or 12-hour authorized referral. Care is authorized based on the client's needs.
- Providers are not allowed to report a change of referral type for the client. It is the client's responsibility to contact their Client Services Specialist to report a change regarding the child's referral type.

Please note: If a Provider chooses to limit the number of subsidized children or refuse part-time/part-week referrals, etc. the Provider must manage these types of limits and be prepared to communicate with the Client Services Specialist that is calling to authorize care.

There is not a place currently in the state database that allows the specialist to view these types of details. A Provider that does not accept part-time toddler care needs to be prepared to deny this type of care at the point of the authorization phone call.

Chapter 4: Enrolling Children with Disabilities

Clients who have children with disabilities have the same right to parent choice as other clients. Clients may choose to place their children in a child care center according to location or hours of operation, even if the provider does not have experience caring for children with disabilities. For these situations, our Provider Services Team can assist the provider in understanding the Inclusion process.

The ADA and WSCC Providers

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, requires public accommodations, including licensed child care centers, licensed homes and registered homes to ensure access for all individuals regardless of disabilities. All child care centers 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 facilities day-to-day routine or presents an undue burden to the provider. Providers who wish to discontinue or refuse care for a child with a disability should:

- Contact their Provider Services Specialist before refusing or discontinuing care, and
- Document in writing any inability to adequately for a disabled child's needs or safety, which may include accommodations that have been attempted, accommodations that are considered necessary and reasons the necessary accommodations were unsuccessful or not readily unachievable.

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 the program evaluation that ensure each child's capabilities and needs are met.

A Workforce Solutions 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 setting with typically developing peers.

Confidentiality

All information providers have about children with disabilities is confidential. Information about children with disabilities cannot 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 the 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 to the child care center

Provider Services 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:

- Getting adaptive equipment
- Determining if more help is needed
- Finding community resources
- How to help develop and follow individualized inclusion plans

Inclusion Reimbursement Rates

Workforce Solutions 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, Workforce Solutions can support the provider in finding additional training for staff or finding other resources to help better meet the child's needs. Enhanced reimbursement rates are sometimes available to aide financially if additional staff are hired or if the facility must purchase supplies or equipment to meet the child's needs. The additional reimbursement rate is set up to 190% of the provider's reimbursement rate, determined on the type of care needed and expenses incurred to care for a child with a disability. Inclusion rates may not be used to pay for counseling, therapy or medical services.

Chapter 5: Child Care Attendance & Provider Closures

Child Care attendance is tracked and reported by the child care provider.

Effective April 1, 2021:

Attendance standards (40 absences during the 12-month eligibility period) are reinstated for subsidized children attending child care centers.

All attendance counts for every child are reset to zero in TWIST.

Child care providers are required to report any subsidized child that accrues five consecutive absences, with the exception of Relative Providers.

Tracking Attendance:

- Consecutive absences include any 5 days in a row that the center is open and includes rolling attendance from week to week-
 - For example: If the child attends a child care center that is open Mon-Fri, 5 consecutive absences could be defined as Mon-Fri, Thu-Wed, Fri-Thurs, etc.
 - If the child attends a child care center that is open Mon-Sun, 5 consecutive absences could include any 5 days in a row such as Tue-Sat, Wed-Sun, etc.
- Each “set” of 5 consecutive absences = 1 Provider Report
 - 3 Provider Reports (15 absences) = 1st Notice will be issued to the client by Workforce Solutions CC staff
 - 6 Provider Reports (30 absences) = 2nd Notice will be issued to the client by Workforce Solutions CC staff
 - 8 Provider Reports (40 absences) = termination of services for the child

Providers & Reporting Responsibilities

- **Providers are required to report ALL children with five (5) consecutive absences regardless of the reason for absences.**
- Providers will use the Manual Absence Report form to report children who have 5 consecutive absences
- Providers must report Consecutive absences on the 5th consecutive day that the child is absent.
- Providers are not required to report attendance for each day for each child.
- Holidays are not counted as absences.

All Provider Agreements (2430) will have updated language to reflect the new provider absence process of reporting absences.

Relative Child Care Providers:

- Relative Providers must report all attendance beginning April 1, 2021.
- Boards/Contractors need to have a process in place for Relative child care providers to report actual child attendance since §809.93(c) states that relative child care providers are paid on attendance. Relative child care providers need to report attendance so staff can mark the referrals, changing the displayed 'Z' day to a 'P' so the provider will be paid correctly.
- Relative child care providers should be instructed to keep a sign in sheet for the parent to use once a day, at drop off or pick up. This sign in sheet would then be used to report child attendance.
- Only attendance that is marked as a 'P' is paid on a referral at a Relative child care provider.

Families & Children Incurring Excessive Absences:

- Staff should reach out to the family to inquire about the reported provider absences prior to counting them towards the 15, and 30-day absence notifications as well as prior to beginning the termination process.
 - If any of the absences included in a Provider Notice can be credited back to the child, then that Provider Notice may no longer contain five (5) consecutive days and would not be counted towards the total of eight (8) Provider Notices required for termination to begin for excessive absences.
- Terminations of child care still only apply to the child who has accrued 40 excessive absences and not the entire family.
- The 60-day waiting restriction still applies to the children that are terminated as a result of excessive absences.
- Providers will continue to be paid on the authorization regardless of attendance (with the exception of Relative child care providers).

Notifying Workforce Solutions of Attendance Reporting Issues

All providers should report problems reporting attendance or absences as soon as they are discovered to Workforce Solutions Child Care. This will allow the staff to work with the provider and client to resolve problems more quickly. Problems can be reported to Workforce Solutions Child Care by calling our office @ 940-723-8774.

What to do when a child is no longer attending

Children stop utilizing child care services for a variety of reasons. Please see below for the appropriate actions to take if the child stops attending.

1. If the child stops attending AND the provider has been contacted by Workforce Solutions regarding a suspension and/or termination of services, the provider is not required to take any further action.
2. If the child stops attending AND the provider HAS NOT been notified by Workforce Solutions, the provider needs to report the absences to Workforce Solutions on the 5th day of non-attendance. This will ensure that the provider is paid for the 5 days in which the child was absent. Workforce Solutions staff will then follow up with the client to determine whether the care should be suspended or terminated.

Suspensions of care

In the event that a child must be absent for an extended period of time, Workforce Solutions staff will notify the provider of a suspension of care. This happens when:

- A child must attend a court-ordered visit as part of a custody agreement
- A client has a break in employment or school
- A client is on medical leave

Suspensions must be requested by the client. Suspensions can only be effective for a future date. Suspensions will allow the child to NOT accumulate absences. The provider will not be paid for the period of time the child is on suspension and the provider has the right to enroll another child in that space. The provider does not have to “hold” a child’s space during a suspension. When the suspension is over, the client may re-enroll the child at the same provider IF the provider has an available slot, otherwise the client will need to enroll the child at a different child care facility.

Consequences of Failing to Report Attendance

If 40 or more absences are accumulated during a child’s 12-month eligibility period, care will terminate at the time that the limit is reached. **Workforce Solutions Child Care North Texas will not reimburse a provider for more than 40 absences.** There is a mandatory waiting period of 60 days before the client can reapply for services. As a courtesy, clients are notified and contacted when a child has reached 15 absent days and again at 30 absent days.

Provider Holidays

Workforce Solutions pays up to 9 holidays each year for all contracted child care providers. Texas Rising Star providers will receive extra paid holidays based on star level status.

- TRS 2-star=10 paid holidays
- TRS 3-star=11 paid holidays
- TRS 4-star=12 paid holidays

All providers are required to return a completed holiday calendar by December 15th for the upcoming year to Workforce Solutions. If not returned by the due date, all federal holidays will be marked as UNPAID until a completed calendar is received.

The Provider must notify Workforce Solutions in writing at least 2 weeks in advance of any changes in holidays.

- Once a holiday date has passed it cannot be changed or deleted in our system.
- If Workforce Solutions is informed of a closure that was not reported by the Provider timely, the days of closure will be unpaid OR payment will be recouped from the Provider if payment has already been issued.
- The Provider agrees to give holiday closure information to parents at the time of enrollment and notify parents to holiday changes 2 weeks prior to the change.

Please Note: Holidays that are entered in the database incorrectly cause clients to have absences that could negatively affect their eligibility at the end of their 12 months. It is imperative that Providers communicate changes of holidays in advance to ensure proper attendance is reported and accurate payment is made to the Provider.

Providers will not be paid for holidays if:

- A child's care ends the day before a holiday
- A child's care starts the day after a holiday
- The holiday falls on a day the child is not authorized to use care
- Nine (9) holidays have already been paid
- Workforce Solutions is not notified in advance of the closure

Inclement Weather/Emergency Closures

Providers must report closures due to bad weather or emergencies. The provider will be reimbursed up to 3 days per year for closures due to inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies. Workforce Solutions staff will adjust a child's number of absences as necessary due to the Weather or Emergency closures that are reported within 48 hours of the closure.

During the school year, Workforce Solutions follows the Wichita Falls ISD closures and/or delays. When school is not in session, Workforce Solutions will follow Sheppard Air Force Base non-essential personnel closures and/or delays.

Chapter 6: Parent Share of Cost (PSOC)

When a client is receiving assistance from Workforce Solutions, the Parent Share of Cost (PSOC) is the portion of cost that the client is required to pay according to federal and state regulations. The PSOC is calculated based on the family's gross monthly income. Client Services staff will communicate the PSOC with providers upon enrollment of the child.

Collecting the PSOC

Providers must collect the clients' PSOC in advance of services. It is the provider's sole responsibility to collect these costs. Each provider should have a clear, written policy explaining payment collection, due dates of payments and the consequences for non-payment, including termination and disenrollment of children from the child care facility. This policy should be given to parents at the time of enrollment. Providers are to keep the PSOC's that are collected and understand that this amount is deducted from the Workforce Solutions reimbursement to the provider.

Providers must collect the PSOC according to their written policies. Collection of fees should be documented based on the provider's agreement.

For example:

- If weekly payments are required, clients should be paying for the upcoming week
- If monthly payments are required, clients should be paying at the beginning of the month for that month

Clients must pay their PSOC even when:

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

Reduction of PSOC

PSOC may be lowered temporarily when clients have extenuating circumstances. Only Workforce Solutions staff can determine if the PSOC can be temporarily reduced. Providers MAY NOT lower PSOCs, however, they can recommend that a client contact Workforce Solutions for a reduction if the provider becomes aware of an unusual hardship the family is facing.

Client Services staff will notify the provider in regard to reductions in PSOC. Only one PSOC reduction is allowed in a client's 12-month eligibility period.

When Clients Do Not Pay their PSOC

Collection of the PSOC is the responsibility of the provider and Workforce Solutions does not reimburse the provider for any uncollected costs. If the parent refuses to pay the assigned PSOC, the provider should notify Workforce Solutions within 3 days of the PSOC due date. Upon notification, Workforce Solutions will contact the client to evaluate if the family is experiencing any extenuating circumstances that would affect the affordability of the PSOC for the family. Unless Workforce Solutions can determine a reason that the family is unable to pay, child care will terminate 15 days from the date of the non-payment report.

The Provider has two options when reporting families that do not pay their required PSOC.

- **Option 1:** The Provider has the option to end care immediately instead of allowing the parent to remain in care for the 15 days before termination. The Provider must inform Workforce Solutions that they would like to disenroll the child or children for failure to pay. Workforce Solutions will stop payment for that child on the day the provider reports the non-payment.
- **Option 2:** The Provider has the option to allow the family to remain in care until the 15 days expire. The Provider assumes the risk that additional non-payments could accrue during the 15-day timeframe.

Once child care services terminate, the client will be required to wait 60 days AND will be required to have a \$0.00 balance with the provider before the client will be able to reapply for child care services. Workforce Solutions Child Care staff will verify a paid balance with the provider if the client chooses to reapply for services.

Chapter 7: Determining Provider Reimbursement Rates & Processing Payment

Maximum Reimbursement Rates

Workforce Solutions North Texas sets the maximum reimbursement rates that the provider is paid for Workforce Solutions Child Care referred children based on:

- Federal and State laws and regulations
- Availability of funding
- Market Rate Surveys
- Performance Measures
- Parent Share of Cost factors

Maximum rates are established as follows:

- For each facility type- LCCC, LCCH, RCCH
- For the type of care provided- Full-time, part-time, blended
- For the age of the child- Infant, Toddler, Preschool, School Age
- For any accreditation the provider has- Texas Rising Star Certification*, Texas School Ready! Certification**

* Texas Rising Star Providers have higher maximum reimbursement rates based on their star-level certification of a 2-star, 3-star or 4-star status.

** Texas School Ready! Certified providers are paid a higher maximum reimbursement rate for preschool aged children.

How Your Provider Payment Rate is Calculated

Payment rates for individual child care centers vary. The payment rate set for the child care center is based upon you published (private) rates, or what is charged to the general public. The Provider Services Specialist will complete a published rates worksheet with each newly contracted facility to be able to complete the Provider Agreement with Workforce Solutions North Texas. At this point the full-time and part-time rates will be established for each age category that the center serves.

Published rates are calculated by taking the weekly rate and dividing by the number of days the facility operates per week. Effective June 1, 2020, the child care provider must provide written documentation showing the facility's published (general public) rates. The provider must also provide written documentation regarding any other mandatory fees that the child care center charges (i.e. transportation fees, registration fees, supply fees, etc.). These extra fees will be built into the WSCC rate and cannot be charged separately to the parent.

Daily rates are calculated for full-time and part-time for the ages specified below:

- Infant-0-17 months
- Toddler- 18-35 months
- Preschool- 3-5 years
- School Age- 6-12 years

If there are multiple rates per age group, effective June 1, 2020, all applicable rates will be averaged to obtain the published rate for the age category, then the daily rate will be determined by the method described above.

Please Note: Providers will not be paid more than the Workforce Solutions maximum reimbursement rate for child care. Providers cannot require Workforce Solutions-referred parents to make up the difference between the providers' published rates and the Workforce Solutions maximum reimbursement rates. The provider cannot charge Workforce Solutions a higher rate than what is charged to the public.

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 optional 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 the Parent Share of Cost (PSOC). Providers are responsible for collecting these fees.

Reporting a Change of Rates

If the Provider changes their published rates, they must notify Workforce Solutions by sending written documentation showing the new rates to their Provider Services Specialist. A new "TRS/Regulated Provider Agreement" (*form 2430*) will be prepared to reflect the new published rates. The new rates will be effective the first of the month *after* the Agreement with the new rates has been signed. Providers should send new rate information to Provider Services at least two weeks prior to the change to ensure that the updates are made and the new "TRS/Regulated Provider Agreement" is completed and signed.

School-Age Care and Blended Rates

School-age children who need child care Monday-Friday before and/or after school and full-time days on summer and school holidays, will have a single referral for the entire year and will be paid for by a blended rate for each day of care. The blended reimbursement rate combines the full-time rate and the part-time rate as follows:

$$(\text{part-time rate} \times 175) + (\text{full-time rate} \times 30) / 205 (\# \text{ of school days})$$

The blended reimbursement rate will be paid to the provider starting the first day of school through the last day of school. Child care will be paid at a full-time rate starting the day after the last day of school through the day before school starts.

[Please see North Texas Board Maximum Rates on the following page](#)

Workforce Solutions Child Care – Board Maximum Reimbursement Rates - Effective 10-1-2020

Board Maximum Rates Eff. 10/1/2020 Texas Rising Star ratings * ** 2-Star *** 3-Star **** 4-Star Texas School Ready-TSR (preschool rates only)	LCCC	LCCC	LCCH	LCCH	RCCH	RCCH	SACC	SACC
	Licensed Child Care Center	Licensed Child Care Center	Licensed Child Care Home	Licensed Child Care Home	Registered Child Care Home	Registered Child Care Home	Unregulated Relative Care	Unregulated Relative Care
	FULL	PART	FULL	PART	FULL	PART	FULL	PART
INFANTS 0-17 MONTHS	23.81	20.70	20.35	17.67	19.46	16.65	9.95	8.65
	26.49**	23.52**	23.18**	20.60**	22.32**	19.61**		
	29.43***	26.13***	25.75***	22.88***	24.80***	21.78***		
	32.69****	29.03****	28.61****	25.42****	27.55****	24.19****		
TODDLERS 18-35 MONTHS	21.67	18.78	18.66	16.53	18.24	15.51	9.95	7.68
	24.45**	21.67**	21.55**	19.49**	21.15**	18.48**		
	27.16***	24.07***	23.94***	21.65***	23.49***	20.53***		
	30.17****	26.74****	26.60****	24.05****	26.10****	22.81****		
PRE-SCHOOL 36 MONTHS – 5 YRS	19.77	14.32	17.60	14.30	16.86	12.63	8.42	6.92
	22.62**	17.20**	20.52**	17.29**	19.80**	15.64**		
	25.13***	19.11***	22.80***	19.21***	22.00***	17.37***		
	27.92****	21.23****	25.33****	21.34****	24.44****	19.29****		
	20.76 TSR	15.04 TSR	18.48 TSR	15.02 TSR	17.71 TSR	13.27 TSR		
SCHOOL AGE 6 YRS & UP	18.44	12.68	15.93	12.54	14.36	12.26	8.42	6.75
	21.33**	15.66**	18.90**	15.28**	17.35**	13.70**		
	23.70***	17.39***	20.99***	16.97***	19.27***	15.22***		
	26.33****	19.32****	23.32****	18.85****	21.41****	16.91****		

Texas Rising Star child care providers offer quality child care that exceeds Child Care licensing minimum standards. Those Child Care providers are compensated above the board's standard maximum reimbursement rate based on the facilities star-level rating.

Chapter 8- Corrective/Adverse Actions for Providers

Complying with the Regulated Provider Agreement

Providers must comply with all terms of the Regulated Provider Agreement and follow all procedures outlined in this Provider Handbook. Workforce Solutions North Texas will take corrective or adverse action against any provider who does not comply as required. A copy of the Regulated Provider Agreement is given to all providers upon completion of initial agreement paperwork.

Service Improvement Agreements

Workforce Solutions North Texas may negotiate a *Service Improvement Agreement (SIA)* with a Provider who does not follow procedures and comply with the terms of the *Regulated/TRS Provider Agreement (form 2430)*, Provider Handbook and TWC rules.

The SIA will:

- State the problem(s),
- Explain the steps required to reach compliance,
- List any required technical assistance,
- Set time limits for making improvements, and
- Specify the consequences of non-compliance with the SIA.

Corrective actions for Providers may include but are not limited to:

- Closing intake
- Moving children to another Provider selected by the parent
- Withholding Provider payments or reimbursement of costs incurred
- Recoupment of funds

Provider Services staff will discuss the SIA with the provider and will offer any assistance needed for providers to correct the problems or make improvements. The SIA must be signed by the provider and the Provider Services staff. If a serious problem occurs, Workforce Solutions North Texas reserves the right to take immediate action and bypass the implementation of an SIA.

Adverse Actions

Consequences for serious problems (in which immediate action is taken by Workforce Solutions North Texas), non-compliance with policy or failure to make needed improvements as defined by a SIA could include the following:

Providers can choose to limit the number of subsidized children they accept. For example, Providers can choose to accept no more than 10 subsidized children, but they cannot choose to limit those they do accept according to the family status of Workforce Solutions.

Reporting Changes

It is the Provider's responsibility to report changes to Workforce Solutions Child Care. The chart below will help to identify what changes need to be reported and the required timeframes for reporting those changes.

Type of Change	Recommended Timeframe for Reporting
ANY change in facility license, permit or registration by DFPS, including loss of license/permit	Within 48 hours of notification from DFPS (prior to the effective date) or earlier
Change in EIN or TAX ID number	One week prior to the effective date
ANY 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 (i.e. food program)	Within 24 hours after notification is received
Facility name, ownership, governing body or corporate status	Within 48 hours of the change
New director or contact person	Within 48 hours of the change
New temporary location or the addition of a location	One week prior to the closing/opening date
Change in hours of operation	One week prior to the effective date for hours of operation.
Reporting inclement weather and emergency days	Any time prior to or up to 48 business hours following the day of the closing for inclement weather or emergency days.
Change in the ages of children served	One week prior to the effective date
Change in facility's published/private rates	One week prior to the effective date
Change in phone number/email address	Within 48 hours of the change

Note: All changes must be reported in writing via email/fax or the Provider must speak with a TRS/Provider Services Specialist.

Changes that cause immediate termination of the Regulated Provider Agreement are changes in:

- facility ownership change
- location change
- DFPS facility type or permit number change

According to the Regulated Provider Agreement, referrals of children and payment do not automatically transfer to another location or owner. An updated Regulated Provider Agreement packet must be completed before referrals can be transferred to the new license number and before payments can be received from Workforce Solutions Child Care.

Attendance reporting and payment for care may be continued under the existing license/permit number and Regulated Provider Agreement until:

- A permit to operate has been issued by Child Care Licensing for the new location or owner, and
- The owner or authorized designee completes the new Regulated Provider Agreement packet,
- All signatures have been obtained
- New permit/license information is verified through the TXDFPS website or by copy of the new permit.

Payment for existing child care referrals will be made through the date of sale if it changes ownership or the end date listed on the DFPS ineligible report.

While DFPS does allow a facility to operate after moving to a new location or changing ownership, Workforce Solutions cannot pay for care provided until the permit process has been completed. This includes the application phase for new owners. Therefore, it is critical that Providers notify Workforce Solutions *before* moving or selling so that Provider Services staff can assist with a smooth transition. All paperwork, including an updated Regulated Provider Agreement packet, can be completed in advance but cannot be made effective until all steps above are completed.

Local Corrective Actions Matrix

Violation	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense
Failure to report child(ren) no longer attending	Written Warning signed by provider; recoupment of funds via TWIST claims; referral(s) ended on last day child(ren) attended	Implement 6-mo. SIA; recoupment of funds via TWIST claims; referral(s) ended on last day child(ren) attended	Terminate WSCC agreement with 6 mo. Waiting restriction before reinstatement of agreement allowed OR Close intake for 90 days for new child care referrals OR Transfer of all subsidized children to another provider of the parent's choice for a minimum of 90 days; Recoupment of funds via TWIST claims; referral(s) ended on last day child(ren) attended
Charging parents non-allowable fees/difference in rates	Written warning signed by provider	Implement SIA for 3-6 mo. Dependent upon scope and severity of violation	Terminate WSCC agreement with six-month waiting restriction before reinstatement of agreement allowed
Failure to report any change in license number or loss of license number	Written warning signed by provider	End all existing referrals and prohibit new referrals for 6 months	Termination of Workforce Solutions Agreement.
Failure to report change of facility name, governing body or ownership	Written warning signed by provider	End all existing referrals and prohibit new referrals for 6 months	Termination of Workforce Solutions Agreement.
Failure to report	Written warning	Prohibit new referrals	Prohibit new referrals for 90 days

change in Director	signed by provider	for 30 days	
Failure to report additional location or temporary location	Written warning signed by provider	Prohibit new referrals for 90 days	Termination of Workforce Solutions Agreement
Failure to report change in operational hours	Written warning signed by provider	Prohibit new referrals for 30 days	Prohibit new referrals for 90 days
Failure to report facility closures timely	Written warning signed by provider	Prohibit new referrals for 90 days	Termination of Workforce Solutions Agreement
Failure to report changes in ages of children served	Written warning signed by provider	Prohibit new referrals for 30 days	Prohibit new referrals for 90 days
Failure to report change in Private/published rates	Written warning signed by provider	2 nd Written warning signed by provider	Prohibit new referrals for 30 days
Failure to report phone number/email change	Written warning signed by provider	-	-

Suspected Fraud

A Provider may be suspected of fraud when:

- Submit a request for reimbursement in excess of the amount charged by the Provider for child care; or
- Submit a claim for child care services if evidence indicates that the Provider may have:
 - Known, or should have known, that child care services were not provided as claimed
 - Known, or should have known, that information provided is false or fraudulent
 - Received payment for child care services during a period in which the parent or child was not eligible for services
 - Known, or should have known, that Child Care Subsidies were provided to a person not eligible to be a Provider

Workforce Solutions may take the following actions if the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) finds that a Provider has committed fraud:

- Temporary withholding of payments to the Provider for child care services delivered
- Nonpayment of child care services delivered
- Recoupment of funds from the Provider
- Stop authorizing care at the Provider's facility or location
- Prohibiting future eligibility to Provider Commission-funded Child Care Services
- Any other action consistent with the intent of the governing statutes or regulations to investigate, prevent or stop suspected fraud

Child care providers should carefully review all documents that they sign and understand that their signature is confirmation of understanding all the information within that document. This includes information on the *TRS/Regulated Provider Agreement (form 2430)* and any other paperwork needed to complete the providers agreement.

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

Workforce Solutions Child Care is required to investigate all allegations of fraud and report the findings to Workforce Solutions North Texas Board. Workforce Solutions Child Care staff may make unannounced visits to provider facilities to investigate allegations, review documentation and verify attendance of Workforce Solutions children.

Chapter 9: Question and Complaint Resolution

Questions about program policies

When providers have questions about the *TRS/Regulated Provider Agreement (form 2430)* or about any of the terms outlined in the agreement or in this Provider Handbook, the provider should contact Workforce Solutions Child Care Provider Services Staff. The Provider Services staff will assist in answering the provider's questions or will contact the Workforce Solutions North Texas Board for additional information if necessary.

Client complaints regarding Child Care Providers

Clients are encouraged to communicate with the Provider Services or Client Services staff when concerns arise. Workforce Solutions Child Care staff can assist the client if needed, however, direct communication between the client and the provider is always encouraged first.

Clients may report complaints about the child care services they are receiving at the child care provider. If the complaint involves a possible non-compliance of DFPS minimum standards, Workforce Solutions staff is required to report the non-compliance to Child Care Licensing staff for follow-up. The client will also be given the contact information for Child Care Licensing to report the complaint as well.

Client complaints regarding Workforce Solutions Child Care

Clients may have complaints for many reasons.

If the client complaint is in regard to the child care services being terminated, the client will receive appeal information by mail to dispute the termination. The client must put the complaint in writing and submit it with all other required documentation listed on the appeal instructions. This process is time-sensitive, and the client must comply with the deadlines for the appeal to be considered.

If the client has concerns or complaints regarding the referral type (full time, part time, etc.) or the PSOC, the client should contact their Client Services Specialist as soon as possible,

If the client has a concern or complaint regarding Workforce Solutions Child Care staff, the client should contact Workforce Solutions Child Care at 940-723-8774 and request to speak to a supervisor or the program director. If the complaint cannot be resolved with the supervisor or program director, the client may request to speak to Workforce Solutions Board staff.

Provider complaints regarding Clients

If the Provider has a complaint regarding a client receiving child care services, the provider is always first encouraged to directly communicate with the client to attempt to resolve the concern. If the provider and the client cannot come to an agreement, and the provider wishes to terminate enrollment of the child at the child care center due to an unresolved conflict, the provider should call and speak with the Provider Services staff and discuss their options.

Provider complaints regarding Workforce Solutions Child Care

Provider complaints regarding payments, attendance, the TRS/Regulated Provider Agreement (form 2430) or Texas Rising Star should contact the Provider Services staff and report the concern. The Provider Services staff should assist the provider in problem-solving and offer help in working to find resolution regarding the issue. If Provider Services staff is unable to resolve the complaint, the provider should then speak to the program director. If the complaint remains unresolved, the provider may request to speak to Workforce Solutions Board staff.

If a provider wishes to appeal a corrective or adverse action taken against them by Workforce Solutions Child Care, they should put their concerns/issues in writing, including the reasons why they feel that the action was taken in error. The request should be faxed to (940) 723-1818 or mailed to:

Workforce Solutions Child Care
Program Director
4309 Jacksboro Hwy., Ste. 230
Wichita Falls, TX 76302

The program director will review the request and actions taken, research the provider file to validate the action taken was appropriate and follow-up with the provider once a decision has been made. The provider will be given additional options if they are not satisfied with the outcome and wish to further appeal the decision of the program director.

Please Note: *Continuity of Care is of the utmost importance for a Child's Success! If you or your staff is experiencing problems with a Parent or a Child, please alert your TRS/Provider Services Specialist as soon as possible. While it is understandable that there are many challenges in this industry, a child's behavior may be something that can be handled with the proper support. We offer Technical Assistance as well as Resource Information to help Providers with difficult behaviors. Please do not wait until the situation warrants removal of a child before this phone call is made!*

Chapter 10: How Workforce Solutions Child Care Can Assist Providers

Workforce Solutions Child Care maintains more than 75 agreements with child care facilities throughout our 11-county service area. The Child Care program and the Provider Services team is dedicated to:

- Helping the provider to understand the *TRS/Regulated Provider Agreement (form 2430)* and this Provider Handbook,
- Assisting the provider to improve the quality of child care services in their facility,
- Providing on-site or off-site training to the child care center staff,
- Continuing the education of the child care center staff through our partnership with Vernon College,
- Providing on-site, technical assistance to child care center staff, and
- Providing resources for the facility classrooms.

Providers who are under a Service Improvement Agreement will receive technical assistance from the Provider Services staff to correct problems.

Possible Visits to the Provider's Facility

Workforce Solutions Child Care staff may visit the child care facility if:

- The provider has a Workforce Solutions child with a disability enrolled at their facility and the client has submitted paperwork requesting an inclusion assistance rate.
- The provider is a Texas Rising Star (TRS) provider who is renewing their accreditation, completing annual monitoring or receiving technical assistance/mentoring services.
- If the provider has accepted materials and/or equipment awarded through Workforce Solutions Child Care, North Texas.
- The provider has agreed to allow Workforce Solutions Child Care staff tour the facility.
- If the local, state or federal child care program auditors are conducting program or fiscal monitorin or if local staff are required to visit due to a possible program violation.

Mary E. Hardin Resource Room

Workforce Solutions Child Care office proudly serves our area with accessibility to the Mary E. Hardin Resource room located within the child care office. Free materials and resources are made readily available to those Providers contracted with Workforce Solutions in an effort to minimize out-of-pocket costs for child care facilities.

The Mary E. Hardin Resource Room allows Providers access to:

1. staff training materials/professional development books to check-out
2. dye cuts machine and more than 60 die cuts
3. a large variety of colored construction paper
4. lamination machine
5. a large variety of butcher paper
6. spine-binding machine

The Resource Room is available to Providers Monday-Friday 11am to 4pm. The Resource room is located at 4309 Jacksboro Hwy. Ste 230, Wichita Falls, TX 76302.

Please be aware that the Child Care office staff use this room for meetings and scheduled Provider trainings, and Providers should call in advance to ensure the Resource Room is available and open

Scheduling a Rural Resource Delivery

Workforce Solutions North Texas' service area is largely rural. Many of our Providers cannot travel to Wichita Falls to take advantage of the resources and materials available. Workforce Solutions Child Care now offers a regularly scheduled, Rural Resource Delivery route to accommodate rural Providers that need supplies or materials from the Resource Room. The four routes cover all 11 counties and rotate on a bi-weekly schedule. For more information or to be added to the schedule, please contact our Provider Services Liaison at (940) 723-8774.

Chapter II: Improving Quality of Care

Texas School Ready!™

Providers may become a Texas School ready!™ Provider designated by the State Center at University of Texas Health Science Center. Texas School Ready!™ is a comprehensive early education model that works with early childhood teachers to improve their instructional practices in the classroom, helping children be better prepared for kindergarten. Since 2003, TSR!™ has positively impacted the school readiness of more than 350,000 at-risk children in Texas.

The critical instructional components of Texas School Ready!™ include:

1. In-classroom coaching
2. Personal digital assistant progress monitoring

For information about Texas School Ready!™, please contact the North Texas Area United Way (NTAUW) in Wichita Falls at 940-322-8639.

TSR!™ Providers are paid an enhanced reimbursement rate for preschool age children only. Since the TSR!™ Providers are set up through the North Texas Area United Way, we are in communication with the NTAUW to regularly update our list of TSR!™ Providers. Once a Provider is placed on this list, the enhanced rates will go into effect the following month.

Texas Rising Star Certification

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program offers Providers the opportunity to participate in a voluntary plan to improve the quality of child care by meeting program criteria that exceed the Minimum Standards for DFPS Child Care Licensing.

Texas Rising Star Criteria cover:

- DFPS Licensing Compliance
- Director/Teacher Staff Qualifications and Training
- Teacher-Child Interaction
- Lesson Plans and Curriculum
- Nutrition and Indoor and Outdoor Activities
- Parent Involvement and Education

Benefits of Becoming TRS

Providers who have earned Texas Rising Star certification in the North Texas Board area will be reimbursed at an enhanced rate that increases in increments depending on star level:

2 star = an increased rate and one extra paid holiday

3 star = an increased rate and two extra paid holidays

4 star = an increased rate and three extra paid holidays

Please see the Maximum Rate Chart provided on page 18 for enhanced rates. Workforce Solutions cannot reimburse at rates higher than the Provider's published rates. Enhanced rates go into effect the following month after a Provider has been certified.

A Provider List is compiled with names of every Provider contracted with Workforce Solutions. TRS Providers are listed at the top of the front page of the list followed by TSR!™ Providers. This list is given to parents in the Child Care Services program.

Every parent in the Child Care Services program or on the waiting list will receive a Workforce Solutions Brochure, which gives information about the Texas Rising Star program.

How to Apply for the Texas Rising Star Program

Providers who are interested in being certified as TRS will need to go to www.texasrisingstar.org and complete an Interest Form, print, complete and send in the TRS Application, Document Checklists, Facility Self-Assessment (one per facility), Classroom Self-Assessment (one per classroom) and the Licensing Screening form to Workforce Solutions.

The Provider should use the criteria to review their program themselves and identify areas in need of improvement to meet TRS. Once the application and required documentation have been received, our staff will review documentation for completion. A mentor will be assigned to the Provider to go over the application and assist where needed. This will be an opportunity to discuss areas of the criteria already being met and identify any areas that need improvement. Together they can develop a plan to get the facility ready for the formal assessment. Workforce Solutions work closely with the facility in helping them implement changes to meet the criteria, and can provide technical assistance and training for staff on Developmentally Appropriate Practice and how to meet the criteria.

Levels of Certification

Providers can work toward three levels of certification:

- Four-Star certification is the highest level of certification awarded. The Provider with this certification represents the highest quality in the TRS system and has met all required measures in all four categories.
- Three-Star certification represents a high-quality program that meets all required TRS program criteria.
- Two-Star certification is issued to a high-quality program that meets all required measures. TRS required measures go above and beyond Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards. Providers who wish to make improvements and request a new assessment may do so.

Some Providers apply to become a TRS Provider but do not yet meet enough of the quality standards to be certified at any level. These Providers are given the opportunity to participate in our Searching for the Stars program. Searching for the Stars Providers have one year to reach a level of quality to be certified.

For more information on Texas Rising Star, please visit www.texasrisingstar.org or contact our office (940) 723-8774 to speak with one of our TRS/Provider Services Specialists.

Additional Provider Responsibilities

There are additional responsibilities of the Provider when participating in any of the quality initiatives. These responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Reporting changes in TRS, TSR!® or nationally accredited status. Upon ending participation in these programs, enhanced rates would terminate as of the 1st of the following month.
2. Additional paperwork requirements

Chapter 12: Additional Information

Required Reporting - Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

Every Texas citizen 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 Licensing or a local or state law enforcement agency must be notified. If Workforce Solutions receives a complaint of possible abuse or neglect against a Provider, Workforce Solutions will encourage the caller to report possible abuse or neglect to DFPS Child Protective Services at (800) 252-5400.

Workforce Solutions staff is required to report possible child abuse, neglect, or possible licensing violations to DFPS whether reported by a parent, other party or when Workforce Solutions staff observes a possible violation.

Providers may not take any action against an employee for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

If a Provider suspects abuse or neglect of a child, the individual who suspects the abuse or neglect must immediately report to DFPS Child Protective Services at (800) 252-5400.

Use of Workforce Solutions/TRS Branding

The Provider may not use “Workforce Solutions”, or “Workforce Solutions North Texas,” or the Texas Rising Star, Workforce Solutions and Workforce Solutions North Texas logo or colors, or the name of any of Workforce Solutions’ corporate affiliates or contractors on signs, posters, websites, or other promotional materials unless issued through Workforce Solutions North Texas.

Record Keeping Requirements

Providers must maintain financial records for each child receiving subsidized child care. Records must be available for review by Workforce Solutions upon request. At a minimum, the Provider must keep the following for each child receiving subsidized care:

- Receipts for Parent Share of Cost paid by the parent
- Financial documents showing payment for child care services provided such as *Payment Proof forms*, and bank statements.
- Workforce Solutions *Authorization for Child Care Enrollment (Form 2450)*
- Any other records pertaining to financial claims for a child receiving subsidized care.

In accordance with Workforce Solutions North Texas policy, Providers must keep financial records for three (3) years and three (3) months from the last day the child receives subsidized child care.

Access to Records

Providers must allow reasonable access to their records and must provide copies on request to authorized representatives of Workforce Solutions, Texas Workforce Commission, the State Attorney General’s Office or representatives of the federal government. Any of the listed representatives reserve the right to conduct an on-site fiscal monitor/audit during operational hours

Important Contact Information

Workforce Solutions Child Care Office

Address: 4309 Jacksboro Hwy., Ste. 230, Wichita Falls, TX 76302

Office Phone: (940) 723-8774

Office Fax: (940) 723-1818

TDD: 800-735-2989

Toll Free: 800-232-8359

Website: www.ntxworksolutions.org

Workforce Solutions Child Care – Provider Services Team

TRS/Provider Services Specialist: Adela Sanjuan- Provider alpha: A-I

TRS/Provider Services Specialist: Mark Cisneros- Provider alpha: J-P

TRS Provider Services Specialist: Belinda Belmares- Provider alpha: Q-Z

Provider Services Liaison : Nannette Holmes



Provider Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I have received the Provider Handbook. My signature below acknowledges receipt and recognition of rules and guidelines. I accept responsibility for orienting all staff at my child care facility on the information in this handbook, and for contacting Workforce Solutions Child Care North Texas with 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.

I understand that Workforce Solutions Child Care staff will notify all providers in writing of any changes to the handbook.

License Number	Facility Name	Owner/Director Name
Owner/Director Signature	Date	