



# Child Care Licensing

**T**he agency's Child Care Licensing Division (CCL) is responsible for protecting the health, safety and well-being of Texas children who attend or reside in regulated child-care facilities. CCL regulates 22,639 child care centers and family home day cares, which together have the capacity to care for 809,968 children. CCL also regulates 24-hour residential child care, such as residential treatment centers, emergency shelters, child placing agencies and foster homes, and their child care administrators. An estimated 23,458 children reside in these settings.

## CCL Automation System

The 76th Texas Legislature provided \$8.4 million dollars in funding to help support services to vulnerable children through the development of a new automation system for CCL. The system was recommended by the State Auditor's Office and will provide accessible, user friendly information for parents and providers of child care. The system will also help CCL improve safety of children in these facilities in many ways, including providing a faster turnaround on background checks of child-care workers, encouraging quicker and more thorough monitoring of compliance with regulations and improving the data shared between CCL and Child Protective Services. CCL expects to begin implementation of the new system by late fall of 2001.

## Background checks

One way CCL works to ensure the safety of Texas children in out-of-home care is by conducting criminal background checks of directors, owners, staff, and anyone who is regularly or frequently present in a child-care facility or family home while children are in care. CCL also checks these individuals against its central registry database of people who have abused or neglected children. Background checks are conducted upon an individual's initial application for employment at a facility or upon a facility's application for license through the state. CCL repeats the background checks on these individuals every 24 months. CCL also conducts criminal background checks on potential foster and adoptive parents. In 1999, CCL conducted 233,749 background checks in Texas.

## Alternative Accreditation

As a result of an initiative in the 1997 Legislative Session, Texas created the Alternative Accreditation Program, which allows child-care facilities and child-

placing agencies to operate without a license if they are accredited by an approved organization. The accreditation organization must require compliance with standards that meet or exceed state minimum standards. PRS approves these accreditation organizations, which in turn, accredit and monitor child-care facilities. PRS approved the first accreditation organization in March 1999. That organization accredited one facility during 1999.

### Inspections

In 1999, licensing staff conducted inspections to determine if facilities met minimum standards. Those failing to meet standards may be placed on evaluation or probation status, which increases the number of inspections and level of assistance they receive. If the risk to children is substantial, the license or registration may be suspended for a period, or it may be revoked. Once a license is revoked, operators may not reapply for two years. In addition to routine inspections, the agency also investigates complaints and serious incidents involving child care. Of the 40,872 inspections, there were 1,588 investigations of alleged abuse or neglect and 12,547 investigations of alleged standards violations in 1999.

### Child Care Information

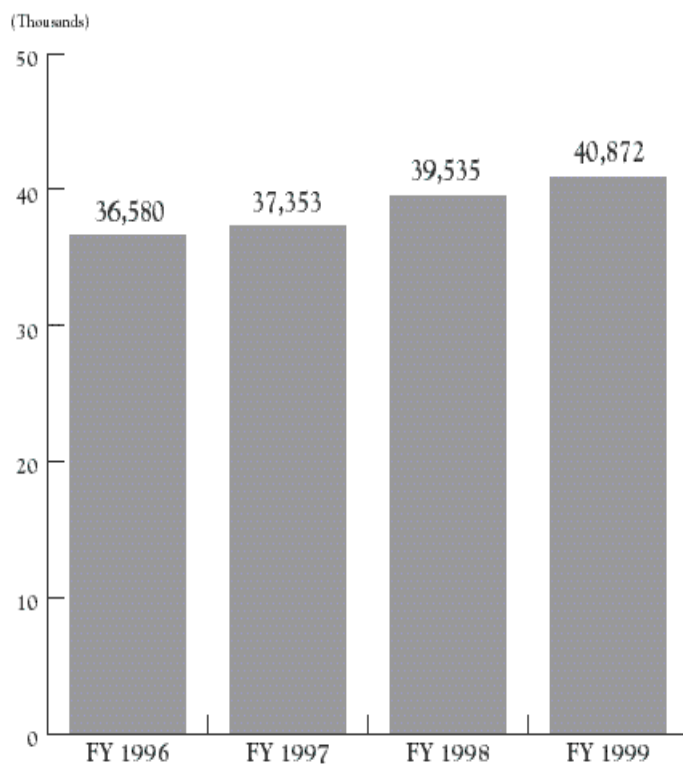
Parents can receive information about child care, and new providers can learn about the licensing process by calling their local PRS office. The agency also offers a toll-free child care information hotline at 1-800-862-5252 to answer questions. In 1999, the hotline responded to 8,767 calls from the public. The public can also find information about minimum standards and guidelines for day-care centers, registered family homes and listed family homes on the PRS website at [www.tdprs.state.tx.us](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us) under "Child Care."

### Training

Licensing staff provided 701 training and professional development sessions for staff of licensed and registered facilities in 1999. Examples of topics that were offered are child-care minimum standards, record keeping, child health and safety, nutrition, age-appropriate activities, child guidance, and discipline. Licensing staff also began training providers who care for infants about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Shaken Baby Syndrome in response to legislation passed by Texas lawmakers in the 76th Legislative Session.

Child Care Licensing representatives, investigators, and their supervisors received more than 17,261 hours of training in such areas as interviewing child victims of abuse/neglect, cultural diversity, facility minimum standards, and program policy and procedure. The

### Inspection of Child Care Facilities



clerical and support staff participated in 987 hours of training that included customer service and the use of automated systems.

## Day-Care Licensing

All day-care providers care for children less than 24 hours a day.

- *Day-care centers* provide care for seven to 12 children who are younger than age 14.
- *Group day-care homes* provide care in the caregiver's home for up to six children who are younger than age 14, in addition to the caregiver's own children. They may also care for up to six more school-age children after school.
- *Listed family homes* provide regular care in a caregiver's home for one to three children who are not related to them. Unlike other facilities, listed family homes do not have minimum standards and are not inspected.
- *Kindergartens and nursery schools* provide care to children age 2 to 6 for up to four hours a day.
- *Drop-in care centers* provide occasional care for short time periods.
- *Schools*—grades kindergarten and above—provide educational programs for children ages 5 to 13 during the same hours as public schools. *Only schools meeting certain criteria are regulated by CCL.*

## Residential Licensing

Residential child care facilities care for children 24 hours a day.

- *Foster family homes* provide care for up to six children
- *Foster group homes* provide care for seven to 12 children.
- *Emergency shelters* provide short-term residential care, including any necessary medical care, for children.
- *Residential treatment centers* provide care and treatment for emotionally disturbed children and adolescents in an institutional setting.
- *Basic child care institutions* provide 24-hour care but



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Courtesy of Tyler Morning Telegraph.

### Generations Together:

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church is taking a unique approach to daycare with Generations Together. Above, "Miss Ruby" and Stephanie look at pictures together. The intergenerational day care allows educational opportunities for children and responsibility for seniors. On this day, Stephanie said, "I feel cranky." Together, Stephanie and Miss Ruby relax and continue to learn. "She said she was cranky," Miss Ruby said. "That was the cutest thing I'd ever heard."

# Child Care Facilities in Texas

## End of FY 1999

	<b>FACILITIES</b>	<b>CAPACITY</b>
<b>Day Care Licensing</b>		
<b>Licensed / Certified Facilities:</b>		
Drop in Centers	19	763
Day Care Centers	7,947	695,485
Kindergartens/Nursery Schools	253	15,926
Schools/Kindergartens and Above	64	6,111
Group Day Care Homes	1,926	23,337
<b>Subtotal Licensed/Certified Facilities</b>	<b>10,209</b>	<b>741,622</b>
Registered Family Homes	10,352	62,112
Listed Homes	2,078	6,234
<b>Total Day Care Facilities and Homes</b>	<b>22,639</b>	<b>809,968</b>
<b>Residential Licensing</b>		
<b>Residential Child Care Facilities:</b>		
Independent Foster Group Homes	33	456
Independent Foster Family Homes	67	213
Institutions Providing Basic Care	76	4,737
Institutions Serving Mentally Retarded Children	7	263
Emergency Shelters	66	1,611
Halfway Houses	2	42
Residential Treatment Centers	85	3,769
Therapeutic Camps	10	510
<b>Subtotal Residential Child Care Facilities</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>11,601</b>
<b>Child Placing Agencies *</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Agency Foster Homes	2,710	9,030
Agency Foster Group Homes	306	2,827
CPS Approved Foster Homes**	3,551	10,461
CPS Foster Group Homes**	85	549
CPS Approved Adoptive Homes**	2,717	N/A
<b>Subtotal Agency Foster and Adoptive Homes</b>	<b>9,369</b>	<b>22,867</b>
<b>Maternity Homes</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Total Residential Facilities and Child Placing Agencies</b>	<b>9,934</b>	<b>34,468</b>
<b>Child Care Administrators Licensed</b>	<b>1,093</b>	<b>N/A</b>

\* Child placing agencies validate and assure that agency homes meet standards.

\*\* CPS is a licensed child placing agency.



do not offer specialized programs such as those at emergency shelters and residential treatment centers.

- *Institutions serving mentally retarded children* care for children or adolescents with deficits in intellectual function or adaptive behavior.
- *Halfway houses* serve as transitional living facilities for no more than 24 children who are 15 years or older. They provide therapeutic group living to help children make the transition to living in the community.
- *Therapeutic camps* provide special outdoor experience programs for children older than 6 with behavioral problems.

Residential Licensing also regulates the following:

- *Child-placing agencies* which arrange for placement of children in adoptive or foster care. Agencies are responsible for assuring that their foster homes meet minimum standards;
- *Maternity homes* which provide residential care for four or more pregnant women or women who have given birth within two weeks prior to the date of admission; and
- *Child Care Administrators* are people who supervise and exercise direct administrative control over a 24-hour child care institution.

