

Child Care Licensing

Child Care Licensing (CCL) Responsibilities

- ◆ Regulate all child-care facilities as required by law to reduce the risk of serious injury, abuse and communicable disease to children in these facilities.
- ◆ Inform parents and the public about child care in general and minimum standards compliance histories on specific facilities or homes.

Completed Initiatives

PRS hired 11 PRS regional child-care consultants to provide technical assistance to child-care providers regarding their compliance with the minimum standards for child-care. These staff work with local workforce development boards and other community groups to assess and improve the quantity and quality of resources available to child-care providers in the community.

Progress Continues

The 11 PRS regional child-care consultants hired by PRS in 2000 continue to work within their communities to enhance collaborative efforts, train providers, educate parents and licensing staff, and communicate with local officials.

The collaborative and quality improvements are as varied as the communities across Texas. The consultants worked with other child-care professionals, local workforce boards, local resource and referral agencies, and child-care providers. Numerous conferences and training sessions for child-care providers have been presented throughout the state as a result of these collaborative efforts.

One of the major quality improvement activities presented by all of the resource consultants has been training for child-care providers using the *Lone Star Guide, Keeping Kids Healthy* provided through Healthy Child Care America funding. Other quality improvement activities include mentoring programs, pairing experienced providers with new ones and adding child development resource materials to local libraries.

One resource consultant received special funding through a local collaborative effort to attend the National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants at the University of North Carolina. This consultant is now training other resource consultants to become trainers. This follows the national trend of using health consultants in the community to work with providers and parents to improve health, safety and nutrition practices.

Contents

Responsibilities

Completed Initiatives

Progress Continues

The CCL Program

Inspections

Background Checks

Child-Care Information

Day-Care Licensing

Residential Licensing

Child Care



CCL Automation System

The 76th Texas Legislature provided \$8.4 million dollars for the development of a new automation system for CCL. When completed, the Child Care Licensing Automation Support System (CLASS) will be a comprehensive, automated, licensing program. The system will provide accessible, user friendly information for parents, providers of child-care and other state agencies that deal with child-care issues. The new system will provide CCL staff with information on caregiver backgrounds and gather compliance data for all facility types. Phase I of the contract, design of the automation system, has been successfully completed. The Internet-based system will be built, tested

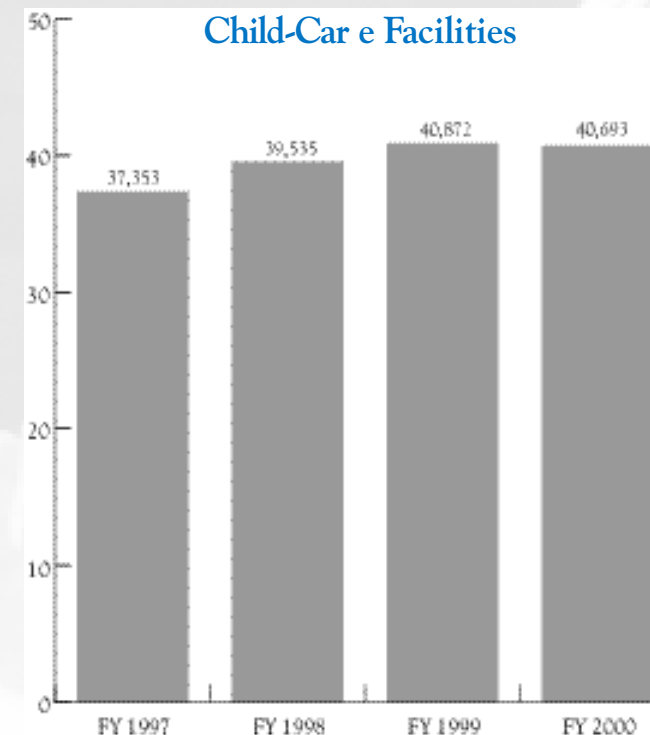
and implemented during Phase II. Completion is planned by Aug. 31, 2001.

The CCL Program

Child Care Licensing is responsible for protecting the health, safety and well-being of Texas children who attend or reside in regulated child-care facilities. These facilities include day-care centers, family day homes, residential treatment centers, emergency shelters, child-placing agencies and foster homes. CCL also licenses child-care administrators.

Licensing

Inspections of
Child-Care Facilities



Inspections

Monitoring compliance with minimum standards protects children in out-of-home care. CCL staff conducted inspections and investigations of child-care centers to determine if facilities met minimum standards, the base-level health and safety requirements that no facility should fall below. Facilities failing to meet minimum standards may be placed on evaluation or probation status, which increases the number of inspections and the level of technical 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.

Background Checks

Background checks are conducted on 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 checks these individuals against its central reg-

istry database of people who have abused or neglected children and the Texas Department of Public Safety's criminal records. Background checks are conducted on all individuals in the licensed facility or registered, listed or licensed home who are 14 years of age or older. Children in care are not checked. CCL repeats the background checks every 24 months. CCL also conducts criminal background and central registry checks on potential foster and adoptive parents.

Child-Care Information

Child Care Licensing continued to make improvements in information available to parents and providers about child-care. Parents and providers can now receive information about regulated child care by calling the local licensing office, visiting the PRS Web site at www.tdprs.state.tx.us under "Child Care," or contacting the toll-free hotline at 1-800-862-5252. Parents and providers can obtain information about choosing child care; obtain a list of child-care facilities located by age of the child, city or zip code; view minimum standards and guidelines for child care; and have CCL staff answer questions about child care.

Day Care Licensing

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

- ◆ *Day-care centers* provide care for 13 or more children who are younger than age 14.
- ◆ *Registered family homes* provide care in the caregiver's home for up to six children who are younger than age 14. They may also care for up to six more school-age children after school. The total number may not exceed 12, including the caregiver's own children.
- ◆ *Group day-care homes* provide care in the caregiver's home for seven to 12 children who are younger than age 14, including the caregiver's own children.
- ◆ *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.

Child Care Licensing

- ◆ *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

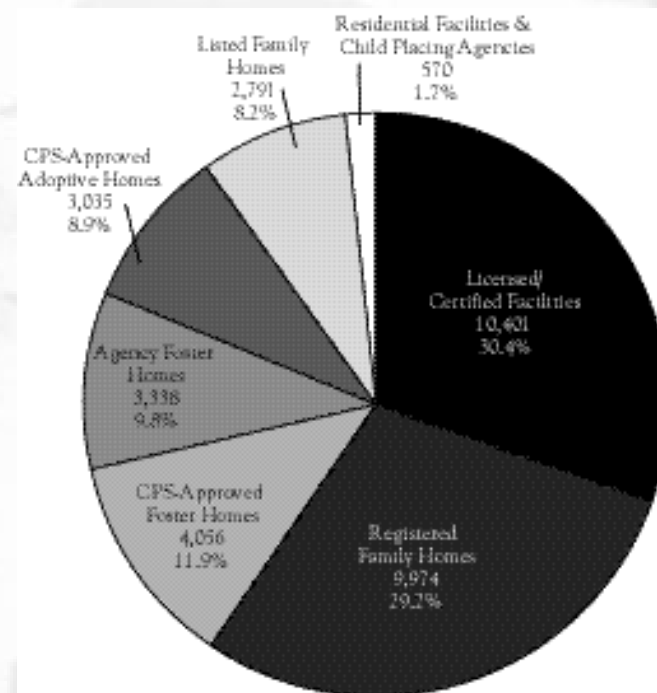
Residential child-care facilities care for children 24 hours a day.

- ◆ *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 more than 12 children.
- ◆ *Residential treatment centers* provide care and treatment for emotionally disturbed children and adolescents for more than 12 children.
- ◆ *Basic child-care institutions* provide 24-hour care but 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 age 6 with behavioral problems.

Residential Licensing also regulates the following:

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

Child Care Facilities in Texas
by Type of Facility
End of FY 2000



Denise Hall, a licensing resource consultant for CCL, received the Texas Professional Home Child Care Association's (TPHCCA) Libby Linebarger Award for her outstanding work and dedication to the safety and well being of Texas children. This is the first time in the award's history that a PRS employee has been honored.

TPHCCA President Lisa Stocker stated that Hall deserves the award because "her heart is in home child care." Stocker said that Hall's strong advocacy for children and providers, and her efforts to improve the quality of child care statewide made her a logical choice to receive the award.

Hall has worked for CCL since 1984. In 1990, she was named Licensing Representative of the Year. In January 2000, she became the Austin region's first licensing resource consultant. No longer involved in direct regulation, she now works with community organizations and local workforce boards to improve the quality of child care, including collaborations to provide more training to child-care providers.