

Child Care Licensing (CCL)

Child Care Licensing

Responsibilities

- ◆ Regulate all child-care facilities and child-placing agencies to protect the health, safety and well-being of children in care by reducing the risk of injury, abuse and communicable disease.
- ◆ Inform parents and the public about child care in general and minimum standards compliance histories on specific facilities or homes.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to providers in areas covered in the minimum standards of care.

Advances

CCL Training

The CCL staff conducted 508 orientations on minimum standards for 6,158 potential or new day-care-center and registered family home providers. In addition, they presented almost 270 training sessions on health and safety issues and other areas covered in the minimum standards to more than 10,000 child-care providers.

Community Partnerships Training

CCL staff, in conjunction with community partners, teach at hundreds of conferences and workshops for providers and parents. The child-care resource consultants worked with resource and referral agencies, workforce development boards, child-care providers, businesses, and other community groups to enhance collaborative efforts, train providers, and educate parents and licensing staff.

These community partners assessed child-care needs and developed ways to improve the quality of resources available to child-care providers and parents in the community. Several common needs were identified throughout the state: training for providers in health and safety practices and making materials available for providers and parents in languages other than English.

Beyond the common needs, results were as varied as the communities across Texas. For example, mentoring programs in two regions paired experienced providers with new ones in formal and informal training situations.

Five regions partnered with the Texas Department of Health to certify child-care providers as vision and hearing screeners for preschoolers in child care.

Information Automation

After two years of development, the Child-care Licensing Automation Support System (CLASS) went live, improving the information available at the touch of a button. Now, anyone searching for child care can visit www.txchildcaresearch.org for a list by name, address, ZIP code, and even specialized services provided. That is only the public face of a comprehensive system that allows CCL staff to keep their records in one centralized location. The system is designed with tools to aid staff in their inspection and investigation duties for all child-care facilities and homes.

The 77th Texas Legislature provided almost \$6.2 million for further CLASS development.

Behavior Intervention

CCL developed and implemented rules to protect children from unsafe restraining and seclusion practices. At the time CCL was conducting workgroups and developing its behavior intervention rule proposal, restraint and seclusion practices were receiving national attention. A Connecticut newspaper, *The Hartford Current*, ran a week-long investigative report on restraint related deaths in October 1998, followed by *Prime Time Live* and a *60 Minutes II* television reports in 1999. The PRS Board passed the rules effective Sept. 1, 2000.

Work in Progress

Child-care solutions are within reach now at www.txchildcaresearch.org. The system provides accessible, user-friendly information for parents, providers of child-care and other state agencies that deal with child-care issues. Parents can now search for child-care in their area by the services they provide, such as special-needs services, subsidized child-care; and type of care, such as after-school, half-day, etc. Beginning in 2002, how well a child-care provider meets minimum standards will be posted to the enhanced site once the results of inspections and investigations are finalized. Corrections made by the child-care facilities to citations will also be posted.



Significant Legislation

The 77th Session of the Texas Legislature enacted a number of bills of interest to CCL, including the following:

- ◆ SB 664 changes the definitions of abuse and neglect in a child-care environment. The law mirrors the definitions of abuse and neglect for adult facilities, instead of those for children living at home.
- ◆ SB 52 requires child-care operations to post information on preventable childhood accidents, diseases and deaths.
- ◆ SB 833 adds at least six hours of training in child growth and development, guidance and discipline, age-appropriate curriculum, or teacher-child interaction to the annual requirements for day-care providers. The bill also provides tax incentives for child-care providers.

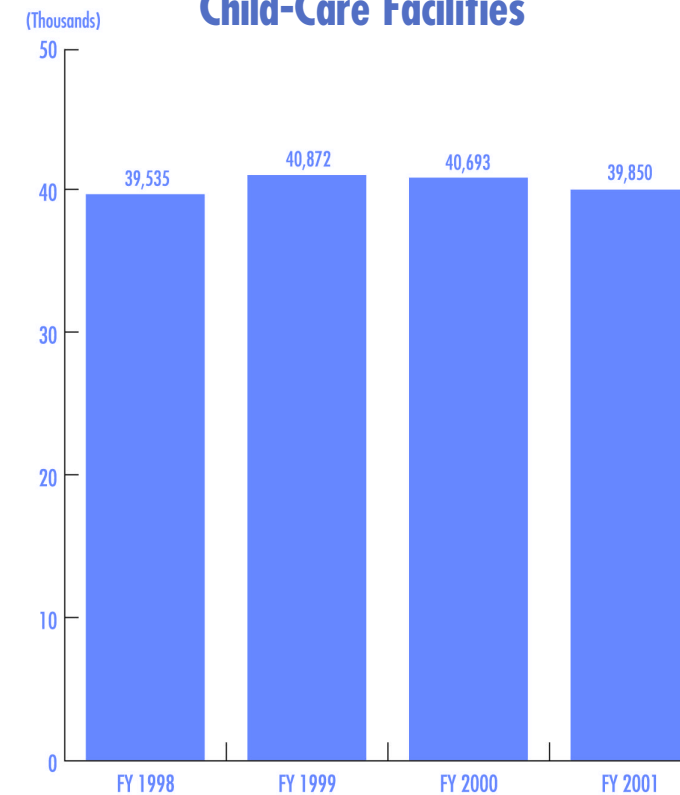
What CCL Does

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.

Inspections

Monitoring compliance with minimum standards protects children in out-of-home care. CCL staff conducts inspections and investigations of child-care operations to determine if facilities meet 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, which increases the

Inspections of Child-Care Facilities



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 re-apply 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 registry 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, who are at least 14 years old, in the licensed facility or registered, listed, or licensed home. 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.



Heather's Touch

Heather Bradley was a licensing representative in Houston who passed away in October 2000 after a courageous battle with ovarian cancer. Heather was truly a child's advocate in every sense of the word.

"I have looked into the eyes of children and know my purpose in this life," said Heather.

In honor of Heather, the Houston region developed a new day-care mentoring program. "Heather's Touch" pairs experienced day-care directors with new directors to help them get off to the best start possible. A new director is faced with so many challenges that it sometimes feels overwhelming. They may not want to call their licensing representative for every issue that develops. Having a seasoned mentor in the business available to answer questions seems to have made all the difference.

Even though Heather is no longer with us, "Heather's Touch" continues to improve children's lives.

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 for 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.

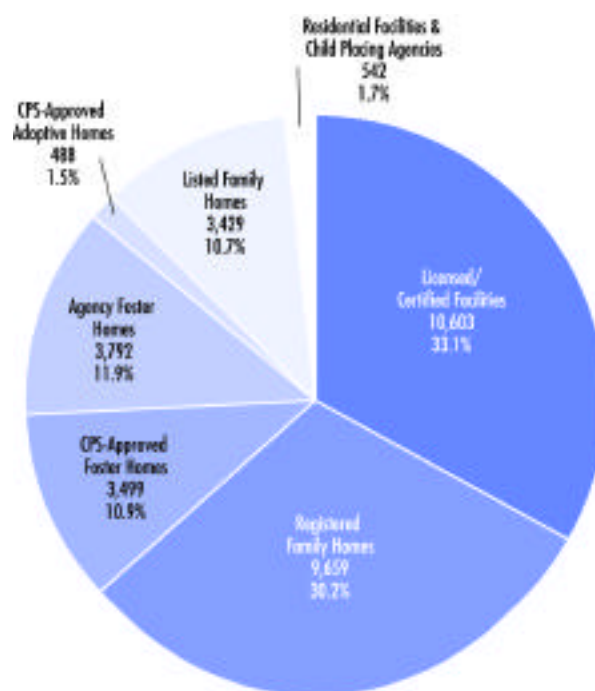
- ◆ *Foster family homes* provide care for up to six children.
- ◆ *Foster group homes* provide care for seven to 12 children.
- ◆ *Emergency shelters* provide short-term residential care, including any necessary medical care, for more than 12 children.
- ◆ *Residential treatment centers* provide care 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.

Type of Child-Care Facilities in Texas
End of FY 2001



Champions for Children

The Smith County Champions for Children is a model employer dependent care coalition. In 18 months, they have taught more than 3,000 parents with newborns at Mother Frances Hospital about child care, child development and child-care licensing. They sponsor a total of 17 programs, including:

- ◆ The highly successful Red Bear behavior management project has trained and certified more than 200 child-care staff members in 15 facilities. Red Bear certified facilities work with children, ages 18 months to 4 years, who have severe behavior problems.
- ◆ The Winners Wagon loans and delivers developmentally and age-appropriate curricula to registered family homes and non-profit, rural child-care facilities.
- ◆ A collaborative project with the Salvation Army provides child-care scholarships to children of homeless families and technical support to help facilities provide better child care.

In addition, Smith County Champions for Children has partnered with CCL to develop champions groups in Anderson, Harrison, Cherokee and Gregg counties. Thanks to this productive partnership, the Tyler region has more champions groups than any other region in the state.

