





Child Care Licensing (CCL)

Responsibilities

- ◆ Regulate all child-care operations and child-placing agencies to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children in care, largely by reducing the risk of injury, abuse, and communicable disease.
- ◆ Establish and monitor operations and agencies for compliance with minimum standards of care.
- ◆ Inform parents and the public about child care and about the histories of specific homes, child care operations, and child-placing operations in complying with minimum standards of care.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to providers on meeting minimum standards of care.

Accomplishments

- ◆ During the first six months of 2005, there were a number of Texas children drowned. Unfortunately as the summer progressed, the number of drowning victims rose. In response, the Child Care Licensing division took the lead in launching a statewide public awareness campaign to remind parents and caregivers to be vigilant when it comes to children and water safety. The campaign, called "See and Save" (www.seeandsave.org), included billboards, paid radio advertisements, and news conferences. CCL worked with Child Protective Services, Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI), and the DFPS Office of Communications to hold events across the state with child care providers, law enforcement, emergency medical staff, and others.
- ◆ During the 2005 session of the Texas Legislature, the Child Care Licensing program worked with elected officials to revise Chapters 42 and 43 of the Texas Human Resources Code. Chapter 42 is the major enabling statute that oversees the regulation of child care operations and child-placing agencies. Chapter 43 is the law enabling the regulation of

child care and child-placing agency administrators. Changes to the law, which went into effect at the beginning of fiscal year 2006, include drug testing for residential child care providers, random inspections of agency foster homes, and increased enforcement tools such as administrative penalties.

- ◆ Staff across the state continued to implement the "See The Overall Picture (STOP)" project. Through STOP, Licensing staff are trained on how to better assess child care operations and take a more holistic approach in evaluating child care providers based not only on what they find, but also on the history of each provider.
- ◆ All Licensing staff received joint training with the DFPS Abuse Hotline on how to better recognize signs of sexual child abuse. The training was provided by Lieutenant Bill Walsh, a 17-year veteran of the Dallas Police Department and co-founder of the Dallas Children's Advocacy Center.
- ◆ Licensing staff worked with the department's Information Technology department to plan an improved version of the Texas Child Care Search at www.txchildcaresearch.org. This web-based tool allows the public to search for facilities by type of care and by ZIP code in order to learn about a facility's compliance record with the state's minimum standards. The improved version of Texas Child Care Search is expected to be operational in fiscal year 2006.
- ◆ In 2005, Child Care Licensing continued the department's statewide "Look Before You Leave" campaign to raise public awareness about the dangers of leaving unattended children in hot cars. Licensing staff worked with staff in Child Protective Services, Prevention and Early Intervention, and the Office of Communications to hold events across the state. For more information, visit www.lookbeforeyouleave.org.

CCL Services

Child Care Licensing is responsible for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of Texas children who attend or reside in regulated child care operations. These operations include child care centers, licensed and registered child care homes, residential care operations, emergency shelters, child-placing agencies, foster homes, adoptive



homes, and maternity homes. CCL also licenses child care administrators and now child-placing agency administrators.

Regulating Child Care Operations

Child Care Licensing regulates three categories of child care operations. They are Listed Family Homes, Registered Operations, and Licensed Operations.

Listed Family Homes

Listed Family Homes provide child care on a regular basis (at least four hours per day, three or more days a week, for more than nine consecutive weeks) in the providers' own homes for one to three unrelated children. Providers are required to go through an application process that includes a criminal background check and issuance of a certificate. Listed Family Home providers must be at least age 18; however, there are no minimum standards, orientation, or training requirements. Listed Family Homes are not inspected unless DFPS receives a report alleging child abuse or neglect. CCL would also investigate any facility that is reportedly not properly listed or registered.

Registered Operations

Registered Child Care Homes provide care in the providers' own homes for as many as six children younger than age 14. They may also take in as many as six additional school-age children. The number of children allowed in a home is determined by the ages of the children. No more than 12 children can be in care at any time, including the provider's children. Providers are required to go through an application process that includes completion of an orientation class and criminal background checks. DFPS issues a registration certificate after Licensing inspectors complete an on-site inspection to ensure providers are meeting the minimum standards. Registered homes are inspected every one to three years. DFPS will also inspect them if we receive a report related to child abuse or neglect or standards violations.

Licensed Operations

All licensed operations must follow published standards and are routinely monitored and inspected. To become a licensed operation, a prospective provider must complete an application process that includes

completion of an orientation class and criminal background checks. DFPS issues a license after our staff completes on-site inspections to ensure providers are meeting minimum standards. Licensed Operations are inspected every 5 to 12 months or more often if there are reports of alleged child abuse or neglect or violations of state standards. Licensed Operations include Day Care and 24-Hour Care.

Day Care

- ◆ Child Care Centers care for 13 or more children younger than age 14 for less than 24 hours.
- ◆ Licensed Child Care Homes provide care for less than 24 hours per day for 7 to 12 children younger than age 14.

24-Hour Care

- ◆ Foster Family Homes provide 24-hour care for 6 or fewer children younger than age 18.
- ◆ Foster Group Homes provide 24-hour care for 7 to 12 children younger than age 18.
- ◆ Child Care Institutions provide 24-hour care for 13 or more children younger than age 18 and for the mentally fragile. These institutions include emergency shelters, residential treatment centers, halfway houses, maternity homes, and therapeutic camps.

Child Placing Agencies

A Child Placing Agency (CPA) is a person, agency, or organization, other than the natural parents or guardian of a child, which places or plans for the placement of a child in a child-care facility, agency foster home, agency foster group home, or adoptive home. CPAs recruit and verify foster family homes, foster group homes, and/or adoptive homes. A child-placing agency is also responsible for managing its verified homes and ensuring that they comply with all applicable laws and minimum standards.

Child Placing Agencies licensed by DFPS range in both size and the scope of their operations. Some are very small agencies that offer only private adoption services. Others are multi-office organizations that offer adoptions services, manage networks of foster parents, and provide treatment services to children placed in foster care.



A large collection of licensed child placing agencies serve as the states foster care system, including privately licensed CPAs and Child Protective Services which is itself licensed as a CPA. These CPAs screen, approve, and manage foster homes as well as match children in the state's custody with foster homes and manage their care in those homes. Privately licensed CPA's will continue to play a critical and expanded role in the care of foster children as Texas moves to outsource foster care and case management services.

Training

District CCL representatives, investigators, supervisors, directors, and clerical staff received more than 30 hours of training and professional development on work-related issues like child development, using automation support, regulation and inspection of operations, and health and safety. CCL staff also provided more than 100 training events for more than 5,000 child care providers and caregivers. The topics included minimum standards, health and safety, infant and toddler needs, guidance, discipline, staff/child ratios, and child development. The training was provided through conferences, licensing meetings and orientations, and technical assistance to centers. CCL workers provide training and collaborate with local associations to provide training for providers on a regular basis.

Child Care Facilities in Texas

Number of homes:		
Registered Child Care Homes	7,808	23.9%
Listed Family Homes (LFH)	4,132	12.6%
CPS-Approved Foster Homes	3,176	9.7%
Private Agency Foster Homes	6,494	19.8%
Number of Child Care centers:		
Licensed/Certified Facilities	10,545	32.2%
Number of 24-hour care:		
Residential Facilities & Child Placing Agencies	587	1.8%
Totals	32,742	100.0%



As the summer heat builds, Texans spend a lot of time in and around swimming pools, rivers and lakes.

Unfortunately, a few minutes are all it takes for a child to drown if parents or caregivers aren't paying close attention. By early August of 2005, more than 50 children had drowned in Texas.

DFPS' Child Care Licensing division took the initiative by finding federal grants to pay for a public awareness campaign. Called "See & Save," the campaign involved statewide billboards, radio public announcements, and distribution of thousands of public awareness materials to day care operations and foster homes across Texas.

"The message is simple but terribly important," said Diana Spiser, DFPS Assistant Commissioner for Child Care Licensing. "Never leave children around water unsupervised, not even for a minute. If you can't see them, you can't save them."

Eight out of ten drowning deaths occur between May and September and drowning is the second leading cause of accidental injury deaths for children younger than 14 years old. Toddlers are especially vulnerable because they are fascinated by water and usually have not learned to swim.

"It only takes a few minutes for a child to drown and even a small amount of water is enough," said Spiser. "Children have been known to drown in ponds, ditches, buckets, aquariums, and even toilets. It's critical that parents and caregivers remain vigilant in this dangerous period. Always stay with children in water. Please remember that you are the lifeguard."

You can find more information on the new "See & Save" web site at www.seeandsave.org.