Quality Indicators for Child Care Homes

Collaborative for Children's Quality Indicators rate child care homes in various ways:

Texas Rising Star

The Texas Rising Star program is a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for child care programs. Texas Rising Star certification is available to licensed centers and licensed and registered child care home facilities that meet the certification criteria.

The Texas Rising Star program organizes measures into four categories. Learn more about each of these categories below.

- Category 1: Director and Staff Qualifications and Training
- Category 2: Teacher-Child Interactions
- Category 3: Program Administration
- Category 4: Indoor/Outdoor Learning Environments

Only providers that participate in the State's Workforce Solutions subsidy system are eligible for TRS. The Star Ratings are posted as the TRS assessments are done. Here is what the Star Ratings mean:

- 4 Star level–meets highest standards in all five categories
- 3 Star level–meets high-quality standards in all five categories
- 2 Star level–exceeds minimum licensing requirements in all five categories

The new Star Rating will make it easier for parents to choose a child care provider with advance level of certification.

For more information about Texas Rising Stat, visit www.texasrisingstar.org

Accreditation

Accreditation means that the licensed or registered child care home provider voluntarily meets higher quality standards, established by a national accrediting organization, that exceed the Texas Minimum Standard Rules for licensed or registered child care home providers. Accreditation standards address many key child care components, including a safe and healthy environment, child care provider education and training, programming and activities planned according to the child's developmental level.

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Quality Indicators

The Quality Indicator web-based system rates Houston area child care and education facilities as Excellent, Good or Minimal in the following characteristics, and based on the following criteria.

Education

Excellent: To receive an Excellent Quality Indicator rating for Education, a licensed or registered child care home provider must have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, Certified Child Care Professional (CCP) credential, Montessori certification or an Associate or Baccalaureate degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development.

Good: To receive a Good Quality Indicator rating for Education, a licensed or registered child care home provider must have six hours of completed college credits in courses related to early childhood education and child development or a certification such as Director's credential.

Minimal: A Minimal Quality Indicator rating for Education indicates a licensed or registered child care home provider is meeting the requirements for Education in the Texas Minimum Standard Rules established by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (currently a High School diploma or equivalent and 20 clock hours of training annually).

Experience

Excellent: To receive an Excellent Quality Indicator rating for Experience, a licensed or registered child care home provider must have ten or more years of experience caring for children in a regulated child care program (licensed child care center, licensed or registered home or church-regulated child care setting, i.e., Mother's Day Out program).

Good: To receive a Good Quality Indicator rating for Experience, a licensed or registered child care home provider must have more than five but less than ten years of experience caring for children in a regulated child care program.

Minimal: A Minimal Quality Indicator rating for Experience indicates that the licensed or registered child care home provider has less than five years of experience caring for children in a regulated child care program.

Business Practice

Excellent: To receive an Excellent Quality Indicator rating for Business Practices, a licensed or registered child care home provider must provide seven or more of the following: Family Child Care Home Association membership; Parent Handbook; Parent Conferences; Written Daily Reports; Family Events; Newsletters; Nutrition program participation; Professional Early Education organization membership; participation in an Early Care and Education Quality Improvement project.

Good: To receive a Good Quality Indicator rating for Business Practices, a licensed or registered child care home provider must provide four to six of the following: Family Child Care Home Association membership; Parent Handbook; Parent Conferences; Written Daily Reports; Family Events; Newsletters; Nutrition program participation; Professional Early Education organization membership; participation in an Early Care and Education Quality Improvement project.

Minimal: A Minimal Quality Indicator rating for Business Practices indicates that the licensed or registered child care home provider offers three or fewer of the following: Family Child Care Home Association membership; Parent Handbook; Parent Conferences; Written Daily Reports; Family Events; Newsletters; Nutrition program participation; Professional Early Education organization membership; participation in an Early Care and Education Quality Improvement project.

Other Important Factors to Consider (When Selecting a Child Care Home Provider):

Total Number of Children in Care:

Fewer children in care enables the licensed or registered child care provider to offer more individualized care and attention.

Health and Safety Practices:

Texas Minimum Standard Rules require licensed and registered child care home providers to ensure the following:

- Healthy and clean environment
- CPR & First Aid certification
- Indoor and outdoor active play space and equipment
- Swimming pools and wading/splashing pool safety
- Safety of children from other people in the child care home
- Safety practices related to firearms in the child care home
- Safe Administration of medications to children in the child care home
- Animal safety in the child care home
- Availability of a first aid kit in child care home
- Procedures for the release of children
- Transportation safety

Fire Safety and Emergency Practices: Texas Minimum Standard Rules require licensed and registered child care home providers to offer the following:

- Emergency preparedness plan
- Emergency evacuation and relocation diagram
- Fire extinguisher and smoke detection system must be available in the child care home
- Carbon Monoxide detection system must be available in the child care home

Learning Environment: Texas Minimum Standard Rules required licensed or registered child care home providers to offer specific learning opportunities for infants through school-age children. The following are some of the requirements:

- Planned program of activities designed to meet the individual needs and developmental levels of all children in care
- Planned activities that support thinking skills, physical development, language development and social development for all children
- Planned program that includes opportunities for active and quiet play, including group and individual activities for toddlers and older children

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- Planned program that provides opportunities for infants to safely explore outside the crib or other confining equipment multiple times during the day
- Opportunities for infants to experience grasping, pulling up, crawling and walking in safe environment
- Easy access of all children to a variety of material and equipment throughout the day. Examples: containers, baskets or low shelving so children can safely access learning materials
- Daily opportunities for outdoor play for all children in care, including infants
- Pleasant environment, not over-stimulating and arranged to allow freedom of movement for all children in care

For more information about Collaborative for Children, visit www.collabforchildren.org.