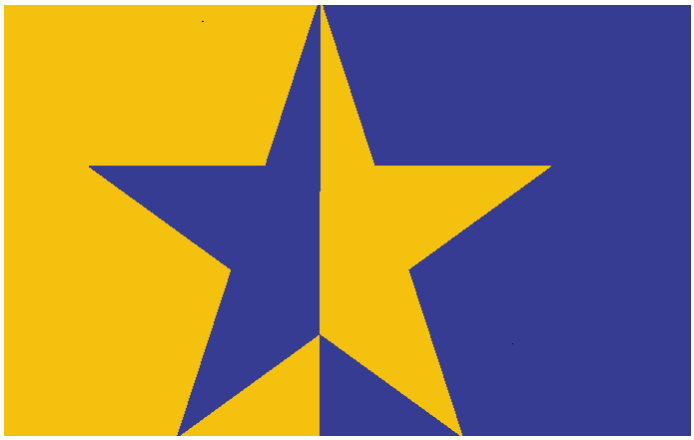
TEXAS RISING STAR PROVIDER



INTRODUCTION

What is a "Texas Rising Star Provider?"

A Texas Rising Star (TRS) Provider is a child care provider that has an agreement with a Local Workforce Development Board's (Board's) child care contractor to serve Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)-subsidized children and that voluntarily meets requirements that exceed the State's Minimum Child Care Licensing (CCL) Standards. TRS Certification is available to Licensed Center, and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-Star level.

The Texas Rising Star Provider in the Child Care Delivery System

The lack of affordable child care has traditionally been a barrier to employment and to education and training for parents who are dependent on, or at risk of becoming dependent on, public assistance. The purpose of TWC-funded child care services is twofold: (1) to assist low-income families maintain or transition toward self-sufficiency by providing child care subsidies to eligible parents who are working or participating in education or training, and (2) to promote early physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children who are the state's future workforce.

Those providers that voluntarily achieve TRS Provider certification, offering quality care that exceeds the State's Minimum CCL Standards for health and safety, group size, child/staff ratios, caregiver training, and age-appropriate curricula and activities, are the providers that contribute most significantly to the early development of children. As providers progress through the levels of TRS Provider certification, they contribute progressively more to the development of the children they serve on a daily basis.

Summary of the Certification Criteria

I. **Licensing Compliance** - Child Care Programs must stay in compliance with the Minimum Child Care Licensing Standards.

II. **Director Qualifications** - For each licensed center, the director must meet the qualifications outlined in the minimum standards and have three years' experience or a combination of experience and college hours in the early childhood field. This criterion does not apply to registered or licensed child care homes.

III. **Caregiver Staff Qualifications** - Caregivers must have an educational background and experience in providing developmentally appropriate programs for the age range served. In addition, for licensed centers only, at least 30% of the staff working directly with the children must have education and experience in child development or early childhood education.

IV. **Staff Orientation** - All caregivers in licensed centers and licensed child care homes must receive orientation on certain items before beginning duties as a caregiver. This criterion does not apply to registered child care homes.

V. **Staff Training** - The child care provider must develop a training plan that is based on Child Development Associate competencies. The training plan must be developed around staff needs and be approved by the Child Care Contractor or Board staff. The training plan must include at least 30 hours of training annually for each caregiver and 36 hours annually for the director.

VI. **Group Size** - This criterion sets maximum group sizes for various age groupings, group sizes intended to foster more positive interactions between staff and children and among the children themselves.

VII. **Curriculum/Activities** - The curriculum and activities offered must be developmentally appropriate for each child served.

VIII. **Caregiver-Child Interaction** - This criterion emphasizes provider staff behaviors that enhance each child's self-esteem and that model and promote respect for individual differences and positive social interaction among the children.

IX. **Indoor and Outdoor Environment** – This criterion looks at indoor/outdoor equipment and materials to ensure that the quality and quantity support children's activities. Parts of this criterion address age and child-specific needs.

X. **Health and Safety** - The items in this criterion represent health and safety standards over and above those in licensing minimum standards, and focus on actions that caregivers take to keep children safe and healthy.

XI. **Nutrition and Meal Time** - The emphasis in this criterion is the integration of social and self-help skills development into all experiences in the children's day.

XII. **Parental Involvement** - This criterion focuses on parent participation in the program and communication with the parents about what goes on during the child's day when the parent is not present. The emphasis is on effective partnerships between the provider's staff and parents in promoting the well-being of each child.