



A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter network

Regulated Provider Handbook

**Child Care Services
1702 Hampton Rd
Texarkana, TX
75503**

(903) 794-8999

or

(800) 874-3226

www.netxworkforce.org

ccs@netxworks.org

Equal Opportunity Employer/Programs
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
Relay Texas TDD/TTY: 800.735.2989 Relay Texas Voice: 800.735.2988
Serving Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar,
Morris, Red River and Titus Counties

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	3
Addresses, Phone Numbers and Resources	3
Purpose	3
Eligible Regulated Child Care Providers	4
Independent Contractor.....	4
Arrangements for Child Care	4
Prohibition from Denying Referrals Based on Parent’s Status	5
Reimbursement Terms.....	5
Reimbursement Rates	6
Basis for Reimbursement of Services	10
Changes that must be reported to Workforce Solutions	10
Parent Share of Cost (PSOC)	11
Record Keeping Requirements	12
Required Reporting to DFPS	12
Providers Placed on Corrective or Adverse Action by DFPS	12
Suspected Fraud & Action to Prevent or Correct Suspected Fraud	13
Taking Corrective Adverse Actions with Providers.....	14
Complaints/Grievances	14
Improving Quality of Care.....	14
Child Care Automated Attendance	16
Requesting Reimbursement	18

FOREWORD

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas has developed this *Regulated Provider Handbook* to inform the provider about its child care services and to explain their financial role as a regulated child care provider.

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas provides child care services and may be referred to as Workforce Solutions throughout this handbook. All rules, policies and procedures in this *Regulated Provider Handbook* are based on federal or state laws and Workforce Solutions policies and procedures.

Please read this handbook carefully. Keep it handy as a reference for any questions that may come up later.

ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS AND RESOURCES

Feel free to contact Child Care Services at:
Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas
1702 Hampton Rd
Texarkana, TX 75503

For answers to **Billing and Provider** questions, call: (903) 794-8999 or (800) 874-3226;
Or email: ccs@netxworks.org

For Billing and Providers, fax: (903) 794-8004 or (877) 329-6772

All programs and employers under the auspices of the Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas are equal opportunity entities. Auxiliary aids and services are available, upon request, to those with disabilities. (800) 735-2988 VOICE, (800) 735-2989 TDD

PURPOSE

This handbook is for regulated providers offering child care services to families receiving assistance through Workforce Solutions. It will provide:

- A reference guide the provider can keep,
- Information about their role in providing child care to families,
- An explanation of the conditions on which child care services are based,
- Information about reimbursement for providing child care services, and
- Information about the consequences for obtaining or attempting to obtain, by fraudulent means, services to which s/he is not entitled.

ELIGIBLE REGULATED CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

A child care provider must meet the following criteria to be eligible to receive Child Care Services funds for providing child care services:

- Have a current license from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) as a Licensed Child Care Center (LCCC), Licensed Child Care Home (LCCH) or a Registered Child Care Home (RCCH), or
- Be operated and monitored by the United States military services.

“Listed” providers are not eligible to receive funds to provide child care with the exception of listed relatives.

Note: Workforce Solutions cannot provide reimbursement for child care services to a child care provider if the provider is debarred from any other state or federal program (such as the Child Care Food Program) unless and until the debarment is removed.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

The provider shall at all times be an independent contractor and not an agent or employee of Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas. Workforce Solutions does not have the right or power to control how a provider selects its employees, hires or fires, or otherwise provides child care services; nor does Workforce Solutions have the right to direct the provider’s action in any way. The provider is not entitled to wages or benefits from Workforce Solutions, and the provider is fully responsible for the payment of all federal, state and local taxes or contributions imposed or required under unemployment insurance, Social Security and employment tax laws.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILD CARE

Federal law requires parents be given a choice of where they want their children to go for care. Workforce Solutions staff cannot tell parents where they must take their children for care. Child Protective Services decides care for their clients. Arrangements for child care are made between the parent and child care provider according to the parent’s child care needs and the provider’s policies.

A parent who works for a child care center and whose child is enrolled at the center may qualify for the program unless the parent or step-parent (or his or her spouse) is the director, assistant director, or has an ownership interest in the facility. They may qualify if the child was enrolled at another facility.

Children enrolled at a licensed or registered child care home where the parent also works during the hours his/ her child is in care do not qualify for the program.

Workforce Solutions will call the provider to place the child. The provider will also receive paperwork for each referral that lists a beginning date and/or an end date for eligibility. This allows the provider to track when care will end. Care will end on the eligibility end date unless the provider receives a call from Workforce Solutions to terminate care prior to the date or to continue care. These calls will be followed by authorization forms to start, update, or discontinue care. The provider should enter each call from Workforce Solutions on their Contact Log. There are occasions when a child's enrollment is terminated immediately and Workforce Solutions is unable to let the provider know ahead of time. These cases have eligibility determined by TWC or Child Protective Services. Child care benefits may be terminated immediately by the TWC or DFPS caseworker, and Workforce Solutions is not given advance notice that the child care benefits will be terminated.

PROHIBITION FROM DENYING REFERRALS BASED ON PARENT STATUS

TWC rules prohibit providers from denying a child care referral based on:

- The parent's income status;
- Receipt of public assistance;
- The child's Texas Department of Family and Protective Services protective Services (CPS) status.

Providers can choose to limit the number of subsidized children they accept. For example, providers can choose to accept no more than 10 subsidized children, but they cannot choose to limit those they do accept to exclusively children of at-risk parents in the categories listed above.

This rule does not require providers to accept referrals that interrupt their business practices applied to the general public. For example, if a provider has a policy that it does not accept part-week or part-time enrollments and this policy is applied to the general public, then the rule will not require the provider to accept part-week or part-time referrals.

REIMBURSEMENT TERMS

Workforce Solutions will reimburse the child care provider after services are rendered. The provider must sign and have on file with Workforce Solutions a signed *Regulated Provider Financial Agreement* (Form RP-2430), a signed Child Care Automated Attendance Responsibilities, Reporting, and Security Requirements form, a current copy of their Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) license or registration, a *W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification*, and a signed copy of their Social Security card or proof of EIN and name recognized by the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) in order to be reimbursed for child care. Also, Workforce Solutions will need a signed request form and voided check for the reimbursement payment to be directly deposited for the provider. All persons allowed to sign documents must be listed on the *Assignment of Authorized Representative* form. The provider will be responsible for keeping all information requested up-to-date by submitting any changes to Workforce Solutions.

ABSENCES:

Workforce Solutions will pay the provider based on enrollment, not attendance.

- Providers must encourage parents to use their automated attendance card daily.
- Nonuse of the automated attendance care could result in fact finding for possible fraud.
- Call Workforce Solutions the same day to report a parent withdrawing their child from care for any reason. Care will end.
- Children are allowed up to forty (40) days of absences during their 12 month eligibility period. Workforce Solutions tracks this and will inform the provider if an issue occurs. Care will end if a child reaches forty (40) unexplained absences. This will result in a finding of program violation for At-Risk, Choices, SNAP E&T and former DFPS child care cases. Care will end and the child will have a penalty of sixty (60) days before they can reapply for the program.

HOLIDAYS:

Workforce Solutions will reimburse the child care provider for each child currently enrolled with the provider during the nine (9) specific holidays chosen by Workforce Solutions. Holidays may vary year to year. Any other holidays or closing chosen by the provider will not be reimbursed.

REIMBURSEMENT RATES

Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas sets maximum reimbursement rates that providers can be reimbursed for child care services based on the following:

- The type of child care provided,
- The age of the child receiving child care services, and
- Whether full-time or part-time care is authorized.

	Infant 0-17 mos		Toddler 18-35 mos		Preschool 3-5 years		School Age 6 yrs and up	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
Licensed Centers	\$21.44	\$18.82	\$20.04	\$17.24	\$18.96	\$13.87	\$17.23	\$12.63
Licensed Homes	\$18.75	\$16.83	\$17.83	\$15.89	\$17.25	\$14.24	\$15.21	\$12.74
Registered Homes	\$18.22	\$15.75	\$17.29	\$14.62	\$15.97	\$12.71	\$13.98	\$11.05

Providers participating in the Texas Rising Star and Texas School Ready!™ Certification Programs are eligible for enhanced reimbursement rates seen on the following charts. These providers do not qualify for the enhanced reimbursement rates until the certification process is completed by Workforce Solutions and will continue to be eligible for these enhanced rates as long as they continue to participate in one of these programs.

Texas Rising Star - 2 Star

	Infant 0-17 mos		Toddler 18-35 mos		Preschool 3-5 years		School Age 6 yrs and up	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
Licensed Centers	\$22.61	\$20.27	\$21.05	\$18.80	\$19.91	\$15.61	\$18.79	\$14.42
Licensed Homes	\$20.21	\$18.41	\$19.36	\$17.53	\$18.47	\$15.96	\$16.89	\$14.53
Registered Homes	\$19.71	\$17.39	\$18.84	\$16.32	\$17.60	\$14.50	\$15.70	\$12.89

Texas Rising Star - 3 Star

	Infant 0-17 mos		Toddler 18-35 mos		Preschool 3-5 years		School Age 6 yrs and up	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
Licensed Centers	\$25.12	\$22.52	\$23.38	\$20.88	\$21.92	\$17.34	\$20.88	\$16.02
Licensed Homes	\$22.46	\$20.45	\$21.51	\$19.47	\$20.52	\$17.73	\$18.76	\$16.14
Registered Homes	\$21.90	\$19.32	\$20.93	\$18.13	\$19.55	\$16.11	\$17.45	\$14.32

Texas Rising Star - 4 Star

	Infant 0-17 mos		Toddler 18-35 mos		Preschool 3-5 years		School Age 6 yrs and up	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
Licensed Centers	\$27.91	\$25.02	\$25.97	\$23.20	\$24.35	\$19.26	\$23.19	\$17.80
Licensed Homes	\$24.95	\$22.72	\$23.89	\$21.63	\$22.80	\$19.70	\$20.84	\$17.93
Registered Homes	\$24.33	\$21.46	\$23.25	\$20.14	\$21.72	\$17.89	\$19.38	\$15.91

Texas School Ready!

	Infant 0-17 mos		Toddler 18-35 mos		Preschool 3-5 years		School Age 6 yrs and up	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
	Licensed Centers	\$21.44	\$18.82	\$20.04	\$17.24	\$19.91	\$14.57	\$17.23
Licensed Homes	\$18.75	\$16.83	\$17.83	\$15.89	\$18.12	\$14.96	\$15.21	\$12.74
Registered Homes	\$18.22	\$15.75	\$17.29	\$14.62	\$16.77	\$13.35	\$13.98	\$11.05

Note: The parent’s share of cost (commonly referred to as a “parent fee” or “co-pay”) will be deducted from the provider’s reimbursement. It is the provider’s responsibility to collect any assigned parent share of cost before care is given.

A child care provider cannot charge the difference between their published rate and the amount of Workforce Solutions’ reimbursement rate. The provider will make no additional charges to Workforce Solutions referred parents for any differences between the published rate and the reimbursement rate. This does not include charges to parents for picking children up late or for special activities not included in the published rate that the parents elect to pay for on their own.

DETERMINING THE PROVIDER’S PUBLISHED DAILY RATE:

Actual payment rates for individual providers are set when the financial agreement is signed and are based upon the documentation of rates given to Workforce Solutions by the provider. The financial agreement shows the actual rate the provider will receive for each authorized day of care for each age group.

Provider reimbursement rates are based on the provider’s published rates, or what is charged to the public, and prorated to a daily rate. A copy of the provider’s published rates must be provided to Workforce Solutions in order to establish reimbursement rates. The provider will also submit any other fees normally required to be paid by parents (registration, uniforms, activities). The information is used to determine a single rate for full-day care and a single rate for part-day care for each of the four age categories (0-17 months, 18-35 months, 3-5 years, 6-12 years) and blended rates for two age categories (3-5 years, 6-12 years), for a total of ten rates.

In addition to these enrollment and activities fees charged to the general public and included in the reimbursement rate calculation, providers shall not charge fees to a parent receiving child care subsidies that are not charged to a parent who is not receiving subsidies.

The method for determining reimbursement rates is a “calculated rate” method:

1. Weekly rates are divided by 5; monthly rates are divided by 4.33 to get a weekly amount, then by 5 to get a daily rate.

2. All other fees that are required to be paid by parents as part of the regular program will also be prorated to a daily rate. This includes fees for registration/enrollment, supplies, uniforms/t-shirts, and insurance. All amounts are totaled for the year, then divided by 260 to get a daily rate.
3. The daily rate for other fees is then added to the daily rate for care to get one daily rate for each age group.
4. If the provider has more than one rate for any of the four age groups listed above, the provider's rates for care will be averaged to come up with one rate.

Reimbursement for Children in School:

All school calendar children will be paid at a special blended rate during the school year and a full-time rate during summer break. Workforce Solutions will select the dates the blended rate will be paid to accommodate all school districts schedule as close as possible on a year-by-year basis.

TWC has determined that the school year is approximately 175 school days in session and 30 days not in session during the school year with a total of 205 days during the school year. For those approximate 205 days, the blended rate will be used whether the school age child(ren) attends part time or full time.

When figuring the blended rate, as usual, the lower rate between the maximum rate paid and the provider's rate will be used. To figure the blended school calendar rate, the following formula is used:

$$[(\text{Part time rate} \times 175) + (\text{Full time rate} \times 30)] / 205 = \text{blended rate}$$

In addition, Workforce Solutions automatically stops paying for a child's care if one of the following occurs:

- Forty (40) absences within the client's 12 month eligibility period,
- Non-payment of parent share of cost, or
- Child is withdrawn from care.

When Providers Change Their Rates

If providers change their published rates they must send written documentation of the new rates to Workforce Solutions. A new financial agreement will be prepared that shows the new rates. The new rates will be effective the first of the month *after* the financial agreement with the new rates has been signed. Providers should send new rate information to Workforce Solutions at least two weeks prior to the change if possible to ensure that updates are made and the financial agreement is completed and signed as needed.

Providers will be reimbursed for child care services rendered at the provider's published rate up to the maximum reimbursement rate established by Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas. Providers will not be reimbursed at a rate higher than their published rate for the age of the child receiving child care services.

BASIS FOR REIMBURSEMENT FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES

Full-Time vs. Part-Time Care:

- Full-time care is from six (6) to twelve (12) hours a day,
- Part-time care is less than six (6) hours a day,
- School-age care:
 - During the school year, approximately 205 days, is part-time care reimbursed with the blended rate,
 - During the summer vacation, approximately 55 days, is full-time care.

Workforce Solutions will not pay providers less when a child enrolled full time occasionally attends part time or more when a child enrolled part time occasionally attends for a full day.

CHANGES THAT MUST BE REPORTED TO WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

- A change in the facility name,
- A change in the governing body or corporate status,
- A change in the facility rates or fees,
- A change in hours of operation,
- A change in the holiday schedule,
- A change in the ages of children served,
- A change in the facility owner's address,
- Any change in facility license or registration, and
- A change in the contact person or director.

Changes that cause immediate termination:

- A change in facility ownership,
- A move to a different location,
- A change in EIN or Tax ID, and
- Loss of DFPS license, registration, or certification status.

The financial agreement, referrals of children and payment do not automatically transfer to another location or owner. Payment for care will be made through the last day at the location listed on the financial agreement and DFPS permit to operate if a facility changes location and through the date of sale of the facility if it changes ownership.

Payment for care will not resume until:

- A permit to operate has been issued by DFPS for the new location or owner, and
- The owner or responsible party completes required Workforce Solutions paperwork, and

- A new financial agreement is signed, and
- The new permit information is verified by phone with DFPS staff, via the DFPS public website, or by copy of the new permit.

While DFPS does allow a facility to operate after moving to a new location or changing ownership as long as proper notification was made, Workforce Solutions cannot pay for care provided until the permit process has been completed. This includes the application phase for new owners. Therefore, it is critical that providers notify Workforce Solutions *before* moving or selling so that Provider Services staff can assist with a smooth transition. Paperwork and an updated financial agreement can be completed in advance, but not made effective until all steps above are completed.

A new financial agreement will be implemented, and a new provider number established in cases where the facility:

- Changes location
- Changes ownership
- Is issued a new EIN/tax ID number
- Changes facility type (licensed center, licensed home, registered home)

PARENT SHARE OF COST (PSOC)

Most parents receiving care will be assigned a monthly parent share of cost (PSOC). It is the provider's responsibility to make arrangements with the parent to receive the monthly parent share of cost prior to caring for the child or children.

If the parent refuses to pay the assigned parent share of cost, the provider should notify Workforce Solutions immediately. Upon the provider's notifying Workforce Solutions of the unpaid parent share of cost, Workforce Solutions will contact the parent to discuss and get the PSOC paid or set up a payment arrangement. The parent will be responsible for paying the PSOC to the provider. Failure to pay will result in a finding of a program violation for At-Risk child care. Failure to pay the PSOC or reduction of the PSOC will result in early termination due to nonpayment. A mandatory waiting period of sixty (60) calendar days must be observed before a parent can reapply or be placed on the waiting list for child care services.

The provider has two options when reporting families that do not pay their required parent share of cost. These options are:

- **Option 1:** The provider has the option to end care immediately instead of allowing the parent to remain in care. The provider may not bill Workforce Solutions for any more days of care for the family.
- **Option 2:** The provider has the option to allow the family to remain in care. The provider may bill Workforce Solutions for the children.
- The family will be responsible for repaying Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas for the reimbursement of the parent share of cost by the end of their eligibility period.

If the family fails to pay by the end of their eligibility period, they will not be redetermined and will not be able to reapply until it is repaid.

RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS

Providers must maintain financial records for each child receiving subsidized child care. Records must be available for review by Workforce Solutions upon request. At a minimum, the provider must keep the following for each child receiving subsidized care:

- Receipts for parent share of cost paid by the parent,
- Financial documents showing payment for child care services provided,
- Workforce Solutions *Authorization for Child Care Enrollment* (Form 2450) beginning, updating and discontinuing care, and
- Any other records pertaining to financial claims for a child receiving subsidized care.

In accordance with Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas policy, providers must keep financial records for five (5) years from the last day the child receives subsidized child care.

Workforce Solutions has the right to conduct an on-site fiscal monitoring on the above mentioned documents during operational hours.

REQUIRED REPORTING TO DFPS

Workforce Solutions staff is required to report any possible licensing violations to DFPS whether reported by a parent, other party or when Workforce Solutions staff observes a possible violation.

Providers Placed on Corrective or Adverse Action by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

When placed on evaluation or probationary status, Workforce Solutions must notify its parents with children currently enrolled at that provider in writing of the DFPS status. Parents are allowed to continue their child's enrollment if the parent returns to Workforce Solutions the signed Parent Notification of Child Care Provider Placed on Corrective Action Form within 10 business days of the notification's date. Parents may request a transfer to another eligible provider by contacting Workforce Solutions within 10 business days of the notification date.

When placed on probationary or adverse action status, Workforce Solutions must stop new enrollments at that provider.

When placed on adverse action status, Workforce Solutions must notify its parents with children currently enrolled at that provider in writing or by telephone of the DFPS status. Workforce Solutions children must be transferred to another eligible provider no later than five business days after the notification date. Texas Rising Star or Texas School Ready!™ providers are not reimbursed at the enhanced reimbursement rates while on evaluation, probationary or adverse action status with DFPS.

The following table summarizes the actions Workforce Solutions must take when a provider has been placed on corrective or adverse action with DFPS.

DFPS Status	Required Notification Of Parents	Required to Stop New Enrollments	Required to Remove Currently Enrolled Children	Provider Eligible to Receive Enhanced Rates
Evaluation	Yes	No	No	No
Probationary	Yes	Yes	No	No
Adverse Action	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Suspected Fraud and Action to Prevent or Correct Suspected Fraud

A provider may be suspected of fraud when a provider:

A request for reimbursement in excess of the amount charged by the provider for the child care; or a claim for child care services if evidence indicates that the provider may have:

- Known, or should have known, that child care services were not provided as claimed;
- Known, or should have known, that information provided is false or fraudulent;
- Received child care services during a period in which the parent or child was not eligible for services;
- Known, or should have known, that child care subsidies were provided to a person not eligible to be a provider.

Workforce Solutions may take the following actions if the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) finds that a provider has committed fraud:

- Temporary withholding of payments to the provider for child care services delivered;
- Nonpayment of child care services delivered;
- Recoupment of funds from the provider;
- Stop authorizing care at the provider’s facility or location;

- Prohibiting future eligibility to provider Commission-funded child care services; or
- Any other action consistent with the intent of the governing statutes or regulations to investigate, prevent or stop suspected fraud.

Taking Corrective Adverse Actions with Providers

Workforce Solutions may negotiate a Service Improvement Agreement (SIA) with a provider who does not follow procedures and comply with the terms of the Provider Agreement, Regulated Provider Handbook and TWC rules. The SIA will state the problem(s), the steps required to reach compliance, including any technical assistance, time limits for making improvements and the consequences of non-compliance with the SIA.

Corrective actions for providers may include, but are not limited to:

- Closing intake;
- Moving children to another provider selected by the parent;
- Withholding provider payments or reimbursement of costs incurred; and
- Recoupment of funds.

COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES

Providers have the right to have complaints or grievances heard without the threat of losing child care reimbursements. Providers should begin by explaining the problem or complaint to Workforce Solutions staff. If this is unsuccessful, ask to speak with a supervisor and explain the problem. If both of these attempts fail to resolve the issue, providers may contact the Child Care Project Manager or the Executive Director.

Improving Quality of Care

Texas Rising Star Certification

The Texas Rising Star (TRS) program offers providers the opportunity to participate in a voluntary plan to improve the quality of child care by meeting program criteria that exceed the Minimum Standards for DFPS Child Care Licensing.

Texas Rising Star Criteria cover:

- DFPS licensing compliance,
- Director/ Caregiver staff qualifications and training,
- Caregiver-child interaction,
- Nutrition and Indoor and Outdoor activities,
- Parent involvement and education.

Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has funding for child care that is managed through the Child Care Services program. DFPS requires that DFPS children be placed only in Texas Rising Star facilities. If no TRS facilities are available, or if available TRS facilities do not have space, DFPS may place a child with a non-TRS provider.

Every parent in the Child Care Services program or on the waiting list will receive a Consumer Guide, which gives information about the Texas Rising Star program, as well as national accreditation.

How to Apply for the Texas Rising Star Program

Providers who are interested in being certified as TRS will need to go to www.texasrisingstar.com and complete an Interest Form, print, complete and send in the TRS Application, Document Checklists, Facility Self-Assessment (one per facility), Classroom Self-Assessment (one per classroom) and the Licensing Screening form to Workforce Solutions. The provider should use the criteria to review their program themselves and identify any areas in need of improvement to meet the TRS criteria. Once the completed application and required documentation have been received, staff will review documentation for completion. If any areas need work, a mentor will be contacted to set up a schedule with the center to go out to assist. This will be an opportunity to discuss areas of the criteria already being met and identify any areas that need improvement. Together they can develop a plan to get the facility ready for the formal assessment. Workforce Solutions work closely with the facility in helping them implement changes to meet the criteria, and can provide technical assistance and training for staff on appropriate practices and how to meet the criteria.

Levels of Certification

Providers can work toward three levels of certification:

- Four-Star certification is the highest level of certification awarded. The provider with this certification represents the highest quality in the TRS system.
- Three-Star certification represents a high quality program that meets many of the quality standards in the TRS program.
- Two-Star certification is issued temporarily to a provider who does not yet meet enough of the quality standards for the Three-Star certification. The Two-Star provider has the potential for reaching Three-Star certification within six months.

Some providers apply to become a Texas Rising Star provider but do not meet enough of the quality standards to be certified at any level. These providers are on a deferred status and are not certified, but they are in the TRS track. Providers on deferred status have one year to reach a level of quality to be certified.

TRS providers are eligible for enhanced reimbursement rates from Workforce Solutions. The maximum rates for TRS providers are higher than for other providers, however Workforce Solutions cannot reimburse at rates higher than the provider's published rates.

Texas School Ready!™

A regulated child care provider may be a Texas School Ready!™ provider designed by the State Center at University of Texas Health Science Center. Texas School Ready!™ encourages school readiness programs to share certified teachers and to integrate facility space; professional development; and funding from Child Care, Head Start, and prekindergarten sources. The critical instructional components of Texas School Ready!™ include: research-based curriculum; ongoing professional development with in-classroom mentoring; and personal digital assistant progress monitoring. For information about Texas School Ready!™, visit: <http://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/our-programs/program-overview/TX-school-ready/default.html>. For additional information visit: <http://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/our-programs/program-overview/TX-state-center/default.html>.

Texas School Ready!™ providers are paid an enhanced reimbursement rate on preschool age children only. Since the Texas School Ready!™ providers are set up through another organization, a list of these providers is sent to each Board from TWC each November. Once this list is received, the enhanced rates will begin the following month.

CHILD CARE AUTOMATED ATTENDANCE (CCAA)

Note: Providers will continue to keep a contact log but will not turn it in to Workforce Solutions at each billing cycle. However, contact logs may be requested if the provider needs corrections made to attendance.

Child Care Automated Attendance (CCAA) is a method of reporting child care attendance. Parents are issued a card to report attendance by using a Point of Service (POS) device at a child care center or using the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system by calling the number on their card from the provider's telephone if they are enrolled at a licensed or registered child care home.

Parent Responsibilities:

All clients receiving child care assistance through Workforce Solutions will be issued an automated attendance card and can request up to three (3) additional cards for others who would be dropping off or picking up the child(ren). The secondary cardholder must be at least 16 years old, unless the individual is the child's parent. When the child(ren) are dropped off, they must be checked in using the card. The only person allowed to use the card is the card holder. If anyone else uses the card it could be considered fraud.

The parents will either swipe their card through the POS machines or use the IVR system by calling the toll free number on the back of their card and follow the prompts for checking in. If a child is absent, the parent will call it in to the toll free number on the back of their card from any phone. Absences may also be reported using the POS machine. Absences can be reported up to three (3) days in advance.

The parent has six (6) days plus the current day to go back to report an absence or complete a previous check in for the child(ren). In most cases, if the parent does not report the child(ren)'s attendance and absences, these days will be counted as a paid absence.

Provider Responsibilities:

Providers are required to use the CCAA system for parents to report attendance. The provider must make sure the parents are checking the child(ren) in and reporting absences. Each provider will either receive a POS machine or will be required to have the parent call the IVR system from the phone number submitted to Workforce Solutions. All attendance can be monitored on the CCAA portal.

POS Machine: Providers with the POS machines must be a licensed child care center. These providers are not allowed to use the automated phone system. The POS machine requires thermal paper to print out the reports. The first two rolls are supplied by ACS and the remaining rolls must be provided by the providers. Reports may be printed from the POS machine to keep up with the parents' process.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System: Providers required to use the automated phone system are licensed or registered child care homes. These providers will not receive a POS machine.

CCAA Portal: The CCAA portal is available to all providers accessed through www.workforcesolutionschildcare.com. This will allow providers to view the attendance and transactions to make sure the parents are checking in correctly. Workforce Solutions also has access to this portal and can look at the providers' information with the providers if there are any questions.

Providers must review the CCAA system attendance and absence reports, at a minimum, once a week. Workforce Solutions strongly recommends that providers review the CCAA system attendance and absence reports more frequently. If the child(ren) are not checked in, the CCAA portal will show "No Report." These days will be considered as absences and will be paid except under special circumstances. These circumstances include:

- New parents who have not yet received their card,
- Current parents who have lost their card and reported it to Workforce Solutions child care services and their provider and a replacement card is being issued, and
- CPS children, since there are often extenuating circumstances regarding their cards and their attendance

Providers must report to Workforce Solutions any authorized days that do not match the referral in the CCAA portal within five days of receiving the authorization. Failure to report the discrepancy may result in withholding payment.

Providers must comply with the regulations and security requirements of CCAA listed below. Provider must be aware that failing to do so may warrant corrective or adverse actions, such as a Service Improvement Agreement (SIA), investigation and prosecution of fraud, closing intake, moving children to another provider selected by the parent, withholding provider payments or reimbursement of costs incurred, termination of child care services and recoupment of funds from the child care provider. As a child care provider, you must report any misuse of the CCAA cards and PINs to Workforce Solutions.

The Provider understands and agrees with the following CCAA regulations and security requirements:

- No employee of the child care facility is allowed to possess, accept, or use a parent's or secondary cardholder's CCAA card or personal identification numbers (PINs).
- No employee is allowed to perform the attendance/absence reporting function on behalf of a parent. (Owners, Directors, or Assistant Directors of the child care facility cannot be designated as the secondary cardholder by a parent with a child enrolled at the facility).

Z's are paid as absences. When the child reaches 40 days of absences in their 12 month eligibility period, their child care assistance will end and the child will have to wait 60 days before being eligible for the program.

- Providers cannot collect double reimbursements, i.e., from parents as well as from Workforce Solutions, for non-reported attendance.
- Providers understand that a representative of Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas may monitor the use of the CCAA system / CCAA cards at any given time and as often as deemed necessary.

REQUESTING REIMBURSEMENT

Workforce Solutions will reimburse the child care provider for services rendered every two weeks.

The reimbursement payment is directly deposited into the provider's specified checking or savings account. Due to varying procedures between financial institutions, Workforce Solutions cannot guarantee the date in which the funds deposited through electronic funds transfer will be available. Providers are strongly encouraged to verify with their financial institution that deposits have been posted and are available. Providers will be sent a payment proof detailing the services rendered following the transfer of funds.

SUBMITTING ACCURATE CLAIMS:

Providers must report to Workforce Solutions any authorized days that do not match the referral in the CCAA portal within five days of receiving the authorization. Failure to report the discrepancy may result in withholding payment.

Providers shall repay improper payments for child care received, including:

- Instances involving fraud;
- Payments made to ineligible providers;
- Provider was paid for the child care services from another source;
- Provider did not deliver the services;
- Referred children have been moved from one facility to another without authorization from Workforce Solutions;
- Other instances when repayment is deemed an appropriate action.

Failure by the provider to keep the required attendance records may result in withholding payment or stop authorizing care at the provider's facility or location.