

**TEXAS RISING STAR PROVIDER CERTIFICATION CRITERIA  
FOR  
LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS**

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**TEXAS RISING STAR PROVIDER  
CERTIFICATION CRITERIA**  
**For**  
**Licensed Child Care Centers**

**CRITERION I. LICENSING COMPLIANCE**

Licensed centers meet and maintain compliance with applicable child care licensing standards, and alternatively accredited facilities meet and maintain all licensing standards except governance.

**MEASURES**

**Provider Responsibilities: TDPRS Licensed**

1. The provider has a current permanent license.
2. The provider corrects, within the designated timeframe, any noncompliance(s) cited by Licensing since the provider agreement date or the date of the last Texas Rising Star Provider review, whichever is most recent.
3. The provider complies with all conditions placed on the facility during a probationary period since the provider agreement date or the date of the last Texas Rising Star Provider site review, whichever is more recent.

**Provider Responsibilities: Non-TDPRS Licensed**

Alternatively accredited centers, even though not licensed, are registered with TDRS and are eligible to apply for Texas Rising Star Provider status if they meet all licensing standards except governance. This means they would have to meet the licensing standards for curriculum to be eligible to apply for Texas Rising Star Provider status even though they do not have to meet the licensing standards for curriculum to be alternatively accredited.

**Information Source:** TDPRS license, Health Department certificate or license, or letter from the Health

Department certifying that the applicable standards are met.

## CRITERION II. DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

The facility Director possesses the education and experience to provide a developmentally appropriate program for the ages served, and the ability to support caregiver staff in implementing the program goals and activities.

### MEASURES Provider Responsibilities All Ages

1. The center director must meet TDPRS licensing minimum standards qualifications for On-Site Director,  
**without licensing waivers.**

### Provider Responsibilities School-Age Only

1. For **child care centers serving school-age children**, the director or at least one person on staff must have:
  - A. A minimum of six months paid experience with school aged children;
  - B. A minimum of six hours training within the past 12 months in providing developmentally appropriate activities for school-age children; and
  - C. Must be available to help with planning for the facility's school age groups.
2. For **school-age child care programs**, the director must have a minimum of one year of experience working with school-age children (ages 6 through 12) in an educational or child care setting.

**Information Source:** Personnel folder of director, transcripts, job applications, provider's documentation or verification of education and/or experience.

### **CRITERION III. CAREGIVER STAFF QUALIFICATIONS**

Caregivers have educational backgrounds for and experience in providing developmentally appropriate programs for the age range served.

#### **MEASURES** **Provider Responsibilities** **All Ages**

1. Not counting the center director, at least 30% of full-time caregiver staff, but no less than one caregiver in a child care facility, must meet one of the following measures:
  - A. Have a Child Development Associate credential, a Child Care Professional (CCP) credential, or other TWC-approved child development credential, or an associate or higher degree in child development or early childhood education; or
  - B. Have twelve completed semester hours in child development or early childhood education and one year full-time paid experience as a caregiver working with children in a licensed or registered facility; or
  - C. Have two years full-time paid experience working with children as a caregiver in a licensed or registered child care facility while working toward a Child Development Associate credential, a CCP, or other TWC-approved child development credential; or
  - D. Have two years full-time paid experience working with children as a caregiver in a licensed or registered child care facility while under supervision of a staff person who has either:
    - (1) a Child Development Associate credential, a CCP, or other TWC-approved child development

- credential; or
- (2) an associate or higher degree in child development; or
- (3) a degree in early childhood education or a related field.

2. In addition to the 30% requirement, providers must sign an assurance that they recognize the value of well-trained staff and will work to achieve a goal of having 75% of their full-time caregivers meeting the Texas Rising Star Provider criteria for staff qualification. (This is one of the assurances signed by the provider at the time of application.)

**Information Source:** Personnel folders of staff, transcripts, job applications, provider's documentation or verification of education and/or experience.

#### **CRITERION IV. STAFF ORIENTATION**

Orientation is provided for staff and volunteers to improve their knowledge of the child care operations and specific job responsibilities.

#### **MEASURES** **Provider Responsibilities** **All Ages**

1. Before beginning child care duties all caregiver staff receive documented orientation as specified in the Minimum Licensing Standards, and in the following:
  - A. Personnel policies and specific job functions.
  - B. Policies of the facility.

- C. TWC Texas Rising Star Provider Certification Criteria.
  - D. An overview of the developmental needs of assigned children.
  - E. The planned daily activities of the facility, which reflect the ethnic background, gender, abilities and  
makeup of families of the children, as well as the diversity of cultures represented in the community.
2. Before beginning child care duties, all volunteers and substitute caregivers are provided orientation that defines  
the task to which they are assigned.

**Information Source:** Written training plan, training certificates,  
and orientation plans.

### **CRITERION V. STAFF TRAINING**

Caregiver staff and the director have access to ongoing staff development to enhance their knowledge of child development and improve their skills in working with other caregivers, children and families.

### **MEASURES**

**Provider Responsibilities**

**All Ages**

1. The provider develops an approved written annual staff training plan based on Child Development Associate competencies.
2. The plan provides for a minimum of 20 clock hours of child care related training, not including CPR and first aid, for all child care staff. Three of the 20 hours may be independent reading of TWC approved self-instruction materials.
3. Directors must have a minimum of 25 clock hours of training, not including CPR and first aid, at least 6 of which must be in program administration and management, staff supervision and skills in training adults.
4. All staff are provided training on acceptance of diversity.

**Provider Responsibilities**

**School-Age**

1. For school-age child care programs, full-time staff must have a minimum of 20 clock hours of training with 12 hours related to school-age care; part-time staff must have a minimum of 15 clock hours of training, with 10 clock hours related to school-age care.
2. For centers serving school-age children, the plan must include specific training in school-age care for staff working with school-age children.

**Caregiver Responsibility**

**All Ages**

1. All child care staff participate in the training according to the approved plan, through activities arranged or provided by the provider.

**Information Source:** Written training plan, training certificates, orientation plans, interviews with staff, bulletin board postings of training opportunities, other documentation maintained by the provider



**CRITERION VI. GROUP SIZE\***

The group size is small enough that every child has an adequate opportunity for individualized activities for growth and development.

**MEASURES**  
**Provider Responsibilities**

1. Child care centers maintain the following maximum age-related group sizes (based on attendance) for children in care. Licensing Minimum Standard for child-staff ratio must be met, and group size may not exceed that listed below.

<b><u>AGE</u></b>	<b><u>GROUP SIZE</u></b>
0 through 12 months	10
13 through 17 months	12
18 through 23 months	14
24 through 35 months	14
3 year olds	18
4 year olds	21
5 year olds	25
6 through 8 years	25
9 through 12 years	30

<b><u>MIXED AGES</u></b>	<b><u>GROUP SIZE**</u></b>
0 through 17 months	10
13 through 23 months	12
2 and 3 year olds	16
3 and 4 year olds	18
3, 4 and 5 year olds	18
4 and 5 year olds	21
5 through 8 year olds	25
9 through 12 year olds	30

**Caregiver Responsibilities**  
**All Ages**

Caregivers are responsible for knowing group sizes required by Texas Rising Star Provider measures and for knowing staff-child ratios in Licensing Minimum Standards.

*Group Sizes, cont.*

**Information Source:** Observation, documentation of attendance, and children's records to determine ages.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES:

\* A group is the number of children assigned to a caregiver or team of caregivers (including designated caregivers), occupying an individual classroom or well-defined physical space within a larger room. Groups of children may be age-determined or multi-age. Designated caregivers have the responsibility of knowing where all of their assigned children are at all times, including when those children are not in their direct care.

For school-age children only (ages 6 years and older), group composition may change or be combined as long as each child is assigned to a designated caregiver who knows where each child is at all times, and as long as child-staff ratio required by Licensing Minimum Standards is not exceeded.

\*\* For mixed age groups, the size of the group is determined by the age of the youngest child in the group. If it is necessary to mix groups in a wider range than the age categories listed, and the youngest child in the group is younger than 18 months, the oldest child in the group must not be more than 18 months older than the youngest child unless there are fewer than 12 children at the center. All minimum standards must be met.

## **CRITERION VII. CURRICULUM/ACTIVITIES**

An overall curriculum is provided which is developmentally appropriate for the age range served and provides activities planned to meet the individual interests and developmental needs of each enrolled child, as well as activities that present various cultures, ethnicities, genders and levels of ability in a positive manner.

### **MEASURES** **Provider Responsibilities** **All Ages**

1. The provider has a written overall curriculum plan which includes goals and objectives related to the following:
  - A. Creative expression
  - B. Positive self-esteem
  - C. Social skills
  - D. Cognitive skills
  - E. Communication skills
  - F. Health/safety habits
  - G. Physical development
  - H. Acceptance of diversity
2. The provider supports the curriculum by providing developmentally appropriate materials that encourage hands-on manipulation of real objects.
3. The provider provides daily scheduling that includes planning for transitions and use of space by groups.

*Curriculum/Activities, cont.*

**Caregiver Responsibilities**  
**All Ages**

1. Caregivers plan and implement daily activities based on the overall curriculum goals for the age group enrolled and the specific needs of individual children
2. Caregivers design developmentally appropriate daily activities that include direct involvement by the children and are planned to achieve each of the following:
  - A. Creative expression
  - B. Positive self-esteem
  - C. Social skills
  - D. Cognitive skills
  - E. Communication skills
  - F. Health/safety habits
  - G. Physical development
  - H. Appreciation of diverse cultures, families, ethnicities, genders and levels of ability
3. Caregivers plan and implement daily schedules that include a consistent routine and reflect a balance among the following types of activities:
  - A. Indoor/outdoor

- B. Quiet/active
  - C. Individual/small group/large group
  - D. Large muscle/small muscle
  - E. Child initiated/caregiver initiated
4. Caregivers use routine and transition times throughout the day, such as preparing for lunch, as opportunities for incidental learning.
  5. Caregivers plan transitions times to avoid frequent disruption of children's activities and long waits between activities.

**Information Source:** Caregiver's daily plans, schedule of activities, observations, and/or Individual Development Plan for each child with disabilities.

### **CRITERION VIII. CAREGIVER-CHILD INTERACTION**

The child's understanding of self and others is fostered through frequent positive interactions characterized by warmth, respect, acceptance of differences, and responsiveness to the individual child.

#### **MEASURES** **Caregiver Responsibilities** **All Ages**

1. Caregivers interact frequently during the day with each child individually.
2. All staff respond to each child in a positive manner appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.

3. Caregivers use positive guidance techniques.
4. Caregivers encourage developmentally appropriate social behavior.
5. Caregivers recognize and accept each child's feelings and help the child deal with those feelings.
6. Children of all ethnicities, religions, cultures, genders and levels of ability are treated equally, with respect and consideration, by all caregivers.

**Information Source:** Observation.

### **CRITERION IX. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

The provider ensures that the indoor and outdoor environment: contain a sufficient quantity and variety of developmentally appropriate equipment and materials for the number and age range of children served.

### **MEASURES** **Provider Responsibilities** **All Ages**

1. The provider provides indoor and outdoor equipment and materials for each group, including infants, which are:
  - A. Complete
  - B. Clean
  - C. In good repair
  - D. Appropriately sized for the children in care
  - E. Sufficient to sustain play in each age group
  - F. Culturally diverse
  - G. Appropriate to the individual abilities of each child in care
2. The provider and caregivers arrange indoor and outdoor equipment, materials and interest areas for each group that provide for:
  - A. Accessibility to equipment and materials so that all children in the group may select and return items easily
  - B. An orderly, uncluttered atmosphere
  - C. Visual and/or auditory supervision of all children in all areas
  - D. Separation of active and quiet play areas
  - E. Traffic patterns that avoid disruption of activities/interest areas and that allow all children in the group to move easily from one area to another
3. The provider has a plan for rotating equipment and materials regularly.
4. The provider provides an outdoor play area for use by each group that is developmentally appropriate for all ages served and provides at least five of the following:
  - A. A variety of surfaces.
  - B. An arrangement designed for appropriate flow of activities
  - C. Climbing and other active play items and structures
  - D. Open areas for running and games
  - E. Opportunities for dramatic play
  - F. Adequate storage for equipment and materials
  - G. Partial shade
  - H. Quiet, private spaces

*Physical Environment, cont.*

### **Provider Responsibilities**

#### **Infants Only**

1. For each group of infants 0 through 17 months, the provider makes sufficient equipment accessible to accommodate sleeping, diapering, and feeding.
2. For groups of infants 0 through 17 months, the provider must provide at least 100 square feet of open space free of any type of furniture.

#### **Preschool Only**

1. For each group of children 18 months through 5 years, the provider provides a minimum of 30 square feet of classroom space for each child in the group.

### **Caregiver Responsibilities**

#### **All Ages**

1. The caregiver for each group rotates equipment and materials regularly or as the children show lessening interest.
2. The caregiver uses developmentally appropriate materials and equipment that portray children and adults of all abilities and ethnic origins engaged in nonstereotypical activities.

#### **Infants**

1. For each group of infants 0 through 17 months, caregivers will use developmentally appropriate equipment and materials to encourage the following types of play activities:
  - A. Experiencing environment through all five senses
  - B. Interaction with real objects
  - C. Social responsiveness
  - D. Music/movement

#### **Preschool**

1. For each group of children 18 months and older, caregivers will use developmentally appropriate equipment and materials to accommodate sustained play in each group of the following interest areas:
  - A. Blocks
  - B. Dramatic play
  - C. Manipulatives
  - D. Stories/language
  - E. Music



- F. Art
- G. Discovery/Science

*Physical Environment, cont.*

**Caregiver Responsibilities**  
**School-Age**

1. Caregivers in programs for children age 6 through 12 use developmentally appropriate materials and supplies in sufficient quantity to provide choices and opportunities for children to engage in activities based on the interest areas listed below:
  - A. Blocks/construction toys/woodworking
  - B. Dramatic play/theater
  - C. Manipulatives/table games/puzzles
  - D. Stories/language/creative writing
  - E. Music/listening
  - F. Arts/crafts/creative expression
  - G. Discovery/science/computer science
2. Caregivers have written plans for outdoor play available if outdoor play equipment is not available or is designed for preschool children.
3. When outdoor play areas are accessible to the public, caregivers provide clear boundaries that are identified and maintained for children and staff.

**Information Source:** Observation.

## **CRITERION X. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The caregiver and/or provider staff ensure that children are not exposed to health and safety hazards or allowed to create them.

### **MEASURES**

#### **Provider Responsibilities**

##### **Preschool**

1. Areas for diapering are separate from food storage, preparation and service areas.

#### **Provider Responsibilities** **School-Age Programs Only**

1. Written procedures must be in place to check the status of a child when the child is expected to arrive after school but fails to show up.
2. A program must have a telephone accessible to staff at all times.
3. One or both of the following is in place: (a) A system that requires parents or guardians to sign children out at the end of the program day; or (b) if parents allow children to leave the program alone at the end of the program day, there must be a written agreement between parents and the provider, including the time the child may be released from care.

#### **Caregiver Responsibilities**

##### **All Ages**

1. Children are checked upon arrival for any signs of illness or injury and evidence of possible abuse or neglect.
2. The caregiver stops children who are engaged in unsafe activities.
3. Caregivers suggest and demonstrate ways for children to help maintain a safe environment.
4. Caregivers conduct daily health and safety hazard inspections of the indoor and outdoor environments before they are used by the children.

**Information Source:** Provider's facility documentation, interview, and observation.

### **CRITERION XI. NUTRITION/MEAL TIME**

Meals and snack times are pleasant experiences that contribute to children's acceptance of a variety of food, conversational skills, proficiency in feeding themselves and general dining etiquette.

#### **MEASURES**

#### **Caregiver Responsibilities**

##### **Infants**

1. Infants are held and talked to while bottle fed.

##### **All Ages**

1. Meals are served to children seated in small groupings with their regularly assigned caregivers modeling positive social behavior and good eating habits.
2. The following features are characteristic of all meals served:
  - A. Initial servings are small.
  - B. Drinks are offered with food.
  - C. Seconds are available
3. Children are not hurried to finish eating.
4. Children are allowed and encouraged to engage in conversation during meal time.

5. Children are given the opportunity to feed and serve themselves consistent with their developmental levels.
6. Children are offered food that represents a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

### **School-Age**

1. Snack and meal time plans must allow for the schedules, needs, and abilities of school-age children.

**Information Source:** Observation and menus.

## **CRITERION XII. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are encouraged to participate in the program, and staff regularly communicate to parents information about their child's adjustment/development.

### **MEASURES** **Provider Responsibilities** **All Ages**

1. The provider supports appropriate staff communication with parents.
2. The provider maintains a designated area where daily schedules, menus and other important notices are available to parents.

3. The provider invites parents to visit the program and to participate through one of more of the following ways:
  - A. Periodic invitations for special occasions or events.
  - B. Parent meeting or support groups.
  - C. Parent work groups.
  - D. Invitations to parents to share their own culture-specific information and objects.
  - E. Other
4. Providers, where more than 30% of their licensed capacity is purchased by TWC, establish and maintain a parent advisory group that meets at least twice a year.
5. The provider has a method for communicating with all parents with special needs such as limited ability to understand English or hearing/visual impairments.

**Caregiver Responsibilities**  
**All Ages**

1. The caregiver shares each child's development with the parent on an ongoing basis and documents each child's progress semiannually.
2. The caregiver has a method for communicating with all parents with special needs, such as limited ability to understand English or hearing/visual impairments.

**Information Source:** Bulletin board, observation, interview.