

# Child Care NEWS BRIEF



## Child Care Services Newsletter

### Greetings from your partners at the TN Department of Human Services, Child Care Services Team!

We are now in the waning days of summer with school starting soon, if not already in your area. The Child Care Services team hopes that you have been enjoying summer as we share our late summer edition of the Child Care Services Newsletter. These newsletters are a method of providing on-going communication to further enhance our growing partnership.

In this newsletter edition you'll find:

- A reminder on resources to support job recruitment
- Information on the Child Care Certificate Program and background check
- Information and resources to assist you in your work

## Resources to Support Job Recruitment Reminder

We are working to provide you with resources that help support you in attracting and retaining a qualified workforce. This all starts with posting your job opening to reach a wide audience. Our partners at the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development have tools available for employers to post jobs to reach potential applicants.

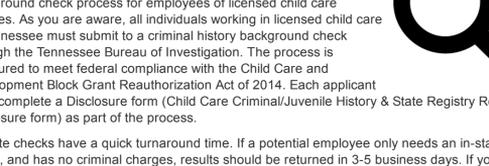
### Post A Job

**Post a Job** - If you are an employer and wish to list a job opening, take a few minutes to register at [www.jobs4tn.gov](http://www.jobs4tn.gov). The system will guide you through simple steps to post your position. From the home page [www.jobs4tn.gov](http://www.jobs4tn.gov), choose "Looking for Employees" under Business Solutions. Select "Manage Jobs" on the left side of the screen, then "Add New Job Order" at the bottom of the next screen. The following items are needed to post a job:

- Job title, location and contact person
- Skill sets for the job (employer can select from a list) and specific software or certification requirements
- Job order details, such as number of positions, number to refer, dates to display the job, whether full-time or part-time
- Job description, including hiring requirements, e.g., drug testing, background checks
- Minimum education and experience required
- Whether driver's license is required
- Salary specifications
- Benefits
- Job application methods employer will accept, such as resume and/or application online; mail, phone, or in-person application

### Searching for Employees

**Let the Virtual Recruiter send you Candidates** - The virtual recruiter feature can refer applicants to you automatically. From the home page [www.jobs4tn.gov](http://www.jobs4tn.gov), the employer selects "Looking for Employees" under Business Solutions, then "Candidate Search." After the employer chooses criteria, the system displays candidates that match. At that point the employer can view résumés, and the system asks if they want to save the résumé search; doing so triggers the Virtual Recruiter feature. The employer specifies how often they wish to be contacted – e.g., once a day, once a week – and they will be sent résumés that match their job search at those intervals. Give it a try!



**One Mission TO NUTRITION**

Child and Adult Care Food Program  
**At Risk/After School Summit**

**AUG 12**  
9 A.M. - Noon

TN Department of Human Services

## Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk After School Program Summit

Please join us for the first annual Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk After School Program summit.

At this virtual event you will learn more about:

- The benefits of serving afterschool snacks and suppers to children
- Program eligibility
- Meal reimbursement rates
- How partnerships can lead to a successful program
- How to apply

For more information on the CACFP please call (615) 313-3769 or go to <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/children/dhs-nutrition-programs/child-and-adult-care-food-program.html>

## Background Checks

The Department has received several questions pertaining to the background check process for employees of licensed child care facilities. As you are aware, all individuals working in licensed child care in Tennessee must submit to a criminal history background check through the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. The process is structured to meet federal compliance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Reauthorization Act of 2014. Each applicant must complete a Disclosure form (Child Care Criminal/Juvenile History & State Registry Review Disclosure form) as part of the process.

In-state checks have a quick turnaround time. If a potential employee only needs an in-state check, and has no criminal charges, results should be returned in 3-5 business days. If you do not receive results in 3-5 business days, you should contact [cbbackground.dhs@tn.gov](mailto:cbbackground.dhs@tn.gov)

For potential employees that have lived out of state within the last five years, an out-of-state check is required. Out-of-state checks may take longer to complete due to the turn-around time from other states. While we wait on out-of-state results, our system is set up to allow for conditional approval, so that the child care employee may be onboarded in a shorter period as long as the required federal/in-state checks have cleared. The conditional approval will allow for an employee to onboard and begin working as long as the employee remains under direct supervision of a cleared employee until the final okay to work unsupervised is issued.

Sometimes the child care agency does not know that the applicant requires an out-of-state check. The Department has begun to send out a reminder letter to providers after an individual has been fingerprinted, if the individual needs to complete the out-of-state registry checks. This letter ensures that the provider is aware of the needs and includes links to the applicable forms needed to facilitate the processing of the check. The process can be delayed if the applicant does not submit the necessary form that allows us to contact the other state.

For more information, [Click Here to visit our Background Checks For Employees website.](#)

## New: Department of Children's Services Reporting Requirements

Recently, there was an amendment to T.C.A. 49-6-1601 that changed the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse. This change will affect schoolteachers, school officials, and other school personnel when reporting such abuse. The law defines "schools" to include childcare agencies licensed by the Department of Human Services under Title 71. The law will now require your agency to designate a lead child abuse coordinator and an alternate/back-up coordinator. If your agency only has one employee, you will not need to designate an alternate coordinator. Our licensing rules already require the agency to have written procedures for reporting suspected abuse or neglect, so the majority of these items should be in place.

**The law now requires that the following procedures be in place at your agency:**

1. Have access to an area providing privacy and access to a telephone for reporting suspected child abuse and child sexual abuse;
2. Receive training in regard to:
  - (A) Mandatory reporting;
  - (B) Multidisciplinary protocols;
  - (C) Advocacy centers;
  - (D) The importance of limited interviews; and
  - (E) Signs, symptoms, or suspicions of child abuse;

*Please Note: Existing rules require all agency staff to receive documented department-approved training annually regarding proper procedure to report child abuse and neglect.*

*TCCOTS has a training: Recognizing and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse (TN). Offered in English and Spanish*

*DCS training is available when you visit: <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/tpd/cw-resources/cwr/mandated-reporter-training.html>.*
3. Be available for school personnel to share information about suspected child abuse and child sexual abuse.
4. Assist school personnel in reporting suspected child abuse and child sexual abuse to law enforcement and to the department of children's services;
5. Serve as a liaison between the school, the department, and law enforcement in child abuse and child sexual abuse investigations;
6. Assist law enforcement and department personnel by sharing available information regarding suspected child abuse and child sexual abuse, and by providing a private area within the school for law enforcement and department personnel to meet with the child and the reporting school personnel as a group or individually if required.

*Please Note: Existing rules already note that agencies must fully cooperate with all agencies involved in the investigation, allow investigators to interview children, not interfere with the investigation.*

7. Maintain confidential files in accordance with §§ 37-5-107 and 37-1-612 regarding all reported suspicions of child abuse and child sexual abuse.

As a reminder, your role is vital in ensuring that all children remain safe and free from harm. We appreciate your willingness to accommodate the above change. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to your Licensing Consultant for technical support. Thank you for being a part of our child care community!

## Child Care Certificate Program (Child Care Payment Assistance) Update

The Child Care Certificate Program is the subsidy program funded through Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) dollars that provides reimbursement to child care agencies for child care payment support for eligible families. This major focus of CCDF funding is in direct support for families so they may have access to quality care for their children. Over the past several years, the Department has implemented major changes in the payment structure of this program to encourage child care agencies to participate.

In October 2019, the Department eliminated the five (5) day attendance policy and began paying for the child's enrollment to align more closely with private pay policies. In October 2020, we updated our payment practices and eliminated the procedure to pay the lesser amount should an agency charge less than the State Reimbursement Rates. The Department has established rates that support equal access to quality care regardless of the provider rates. We are continuing to develop automated solutions to minimize the administrative burden on agencies that create obstacles to participation.

The Attendance Tracking system that will roll out in early 2022, will eliminate the manual entry of attendance on the Enrollment Attendance Verification (EAV). Our new e-licensing system will offer a provider portal to manage and submit electronic attendance verifications and review payments in one location. All of these changes are the result of input we have received from you during focus groups, surveys, town halls and other interactions to build a better customer experience so that we are creating access for families and improve doing business with the state. We hope that you are enjoying the TDHS Child and Adult Care Evident Modernization Monthly Newsletter that shares the latest news on all modernization efforts.

Child Care Payment Assistance is a tremendous support for families and their children. Your participation in the Child Care Certificate Program promotes spaces that are safe, healthy and educationally rich so that every child has an opportunity to thrive and succeed not only in school, but in life. Thank you for your participation and we encourage you to continue so that all families have increased access to quality care.

On August 31, 2021, the Pandemic/Essential Employee Child Care Payment Assistance relief program will reach its conclusion. This temporary program offered child care payment relief to parents working in fields such as grocery, emergency, healthcare, food services, or other "essential" industries. If your agency joined the Certificate Program in order to serve these families, we hope you will stay on board and continue supporting access to quality child care for all families.

## Updated CDC Guidance for Child Care

The Tennessee Department of Human Services is sharing updated Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance received from our partners at the Administration of Children and Families, Office of Child Care.

This update can be viewed on the CDC website when you visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/child-care-guidance.html>.



**UPDATE**

Given new evidence on the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant, CDC has updated the [guidance for fully vaccinated people](#). CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.

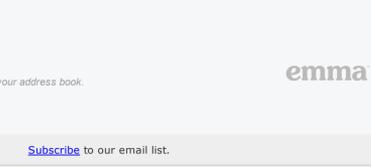
For more detailed [CDC guidance for operating child care programs](#), [Click Here](#).

It is important that we all remain vigilant in the protection of children in care, staff, and families that we are in contact with each day. This additional guidance aids in preparing and maintaining safe and healthy spaces for all. Thank you for your attention regarding this information. Should you have any additional questions, please reach out to your Licensing Consultant or to our centralized mailbox at [ChildCareServices.DHS@tn.gov](mailto:ChildCareServices.DHS@tn.gov).

For information and resources specific to Tennessee visit: <https://covid19.tn.gov>

## TNPAL Reminder

The Tennessee Professional Archive of Learning (TNPAL), recently launched by the Tennessee Department of Human Services as free



online resource to better support professional development for early childhood professionals working in TDHS-licensed child care agencies, is waiting for you! Visit [www.tnpal.org](http://www.tnpal.org).

This single web-based portal is designed to collect and preserve completed trainings, accomplishments, credentials, education, certifications, and awards. These features and functions empower not only early childhood professionals but also support verification by directors and TDHS. Child care agency directors are encouraged to support TNPAL registration for all program employees.

CCR&R has released an episode on Lean Into You highlighting TNPAL. Below are the links to review this podcast specific to the benefits of utilizing TNPAL titled "Level Up Your Professional Development with TNPAL". This is a great resource to share with your staff and educators.

CLICK HERE: [Level Up Your Professional Development With TNPAL](#)

In this episode of *Lean Into You*, Lisa Walsh, the Registry and Training Manager for TECTA engages in conversation about how educators can really take ownership of their professional development with the Tennessee Professional Archive of Learning. This podcast includes:

- 1) What TNPAL is and how it works
- 2) Why TNPAL is an invaluable tool in a child care setting
- 3) How TNPAL makes fulfilling licensing requirements easier for directors
- 4) How TNPAL empowers educators to view their work with young children as a career

If you would like to find out more about the TNPAL system, or to register today, visit [www.tnpal.org](http://www.tnpal.org).

Signing up is easy! Early childhood professionals may create a TNPAL account using a web browser on any computer, phone, or tablet. Follow the steps below to set up your account today.

### SIGNUP FOR TNPAL IN SIX EASY STEPS

**Step 1**—Navigate to [www.tnpal.org](http://www.tnpal.org), then click "Start Now" on the homepage.

**Step 2**—Fill out your information:

Name

Email – If you have an email you use for training, such as TECTA, TCCOTS, or TN CCR&R, be sure to use the same one.

Password

**Step 3**—Confirm your email address using the confirmation link sent to your email.

**Step 4**—Using the information you entered to login. On the congratulations page, be sure to write down or save your TNPAL ID for future use when registering for trainings. (Don't worry, you can always find it in your personal profile.) Visit a quick and helpful [TNPAL Video](#) to learn more.

**Step 5**—Fill in your employment, education, certifications, credentials, and community service info.

**Step 6**—Click on "My Profile" and under the "Employment" tab, click the three vertical dots under the action section on the right side of the page. Choose "Request Staff Role" and confirm your request. An orange hourglass indicates you are waiting to be verified. You are now registered for TNPAL!

**Important Note for Directors: You will be able to associate educators registered for TNPAL to your agency.** It is important that once educators request a role to connect to your agency, you approve the request. Follow the steps below to manage the approvals for the educators in your agency.

### HOW TO MANAGE TNPAL AS A DIRECTOR

**Step 1**—Navigate to [www.tnpal.org](http://www.tnpal.org) and login to your account.

**Step 2**—Make sure that you have been approved as a director for your center. (You can request this role when adding your employment by navigating to "My Profile" from the sidebar and selecting the Employment tab.)

**Step 3**—Educators who sign up to TNPAL need to specify and request their role as an Educator for your agency/center/home on this same tab when adding their employment.

**Step 4**—Once approved, a director may navigate to the Director Dashboard by clicking the "Silhouette icon" in the top right of the screen and selecting "Director" from the dropdown menu.

**Step 5**—From the Director Dashboard, you may click on the "Requests" button to approve or deny role requests from educators. You may also manage existing roles by selecting the "Staff management" button. For a video on this process, click this [link](#).

Our partners at CCR&R and TECTA have started reaching out to each TDHS-licensed child care center. Both the CCR&R and TECTA will continue to contact you over the next several months to provide guided registration support and assist directors with registering your staff.

Additional TNPAL tutorial videos can be found [here](#).

## TrainTN Update

A few months ago, we introduced you to TrainTN, the official clearinghouse for trainings recognized as approved by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. TrainTN is a companion to TNPAL and is designed for training professionals who wish to offer trainings to child care agency staff in order to meet Tennessee License Rules for Child Care Agencies (1240-04-01) as well as Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) training and professional development requirements. There has been feedback received from some of our child care agency partners with concerns about the deadline for becoming a registered trainer. We want to remain sensitive to your needs and will be extending the deadline to a time later this Fall 2021 for you to register in the system for in-service trainings provided so these are recorded electronically. The target date for registration will be moved from **August 1, 2021 to November 1, 2021** to allow for a longer transition period. The Department is moving to more automated processes that will strengthen interactions, reduce administrative burden and improve your customer experience.

### External Non-Agency Based Training

Beginning in the Fall of 2021, TDHS will recognize only external or non-agency-based training sources approved through TrainTN, e.g. training obtained from sources other than training resources developed within the agency itself. All prior approvals granted to external training sources that are not TrainTN approved will expire later this fall and will no longer be recognized by TDHS.

### Internal Agency-Based Training

Recent upgrades to TrainTN now enable child care agency directors to record agency-based training or in-service delivered to its team of child care professionals. Directors who are registered with TNPAL will receive an email invitation this week with instructions for how to use TrainTN to record training attendance not only for in-service but conference attendance. Directors are encouraged to register with TNPAL and take advantage of these new tools.

We invite you to visit [www.TrainTN.org](http://www.TrainTN.org) and learn more about the TrainTN process. Through TrainTN, external trainers may apply to be a recognized trainer or training organization through an official review. Once approved, TrainTN recognition is granted for a period of five (5) years.

TrainTN is among our many initiatives that further strengthen and empower the early care and education workforce in Tennessee by assuring access to high quality professional development and continuing education opportunities benefiting the children and families of Tennessee. Additionally, the Department is working with organizations such as Head Start to credit in-service hours and with recognized Child and Early Care conferences that offer training hours.

TDHS is committed to promoting early childhood environments that are safe, healthy, and educationally rich. Please join us in that commitment by offering TrainTN approved training and professional development to Tennessee's early care and education workforce.

*TDHS is committed to promoting early childhood environments that are safe, healthy, and educationally rich. Thank you for offering Tennessee families learning opportunities and environments that will help their children thrive.*

Find helpful videos and news when you follow

@TNHumanServices.

