

NOTE ABOUT THIS PREPRINT PLAN: This is the working draft of the 2019-2021 CCDF Plan based upon the preprint that was released in December 2017. Responses are indicated by red text (and where possible a different font) throughout the document. Additional content will be added, and further edits will be made in the coming weeks as we meet with other partners and receive comment through the public hearing process. Once the Office of Child Care makes the final Plan available, further adjustments to the responses will be needed to address any changes in the final version.

The effective date of the CCDF Plan is October 1, 2018. Therefore, responses to questions within this draft have been written to reflect items that have already been implemented or items that will be implemented by September 30, 2018, even if those items are not already in place at this moment.

OMB Control No: 0970-0114
Expiration date: XXXX

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Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan

for

Tennessee

FFY 2019–2021

This Plan describes the Child Care and Development Fund program to be administered by the State or Territory for the period from 10/1/2018 to 9/30/2021, as provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations. The Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including amending the options selected or described. For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

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1 Introduction and How to Approach Plan Development

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program provides resources to state, territory, and tribal grantees that enable low-income parents to work or pursue education and training so that they can better support their families while at the same time promoting the learning and development of their children. The CCDF program also provides funding to enhance the quality of child care for all children. On November 19, 2014, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 was signed into law (Pub. L. 113-186). The law reauthorizes and significantly revises the purposes of the CCDF program and requirements for state and territory grantees. In September 2016, the final rule was released. The final rule makes regulatory changes to the CCDF program based on the CCDBG Act of 2014. These changes strengthen requirements to protect the health and safety of children in child care; help parents make informed consumer choices and access information to support child development; provide equal access to stable, child care for low-income children; and enhance the quality of child care and the early childhood workforce.

The Plan is the primary mechanism that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) uses to determine state and territory compliance with the requirements of the law and rule. The Preprint provides a tool for states and territories to describe to ACF their progress on the following sections:

1. Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination With Relevant Systems
2. Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education
3. Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families
4. Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Families
5. Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes To Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings
6. Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce
7. Support Continuous Quality Improvement
8. Ensure Grantee Accountability

These organizational categories reflect key functions of an integrated system of child care for low-income working families. Although the Plan is divided into sections for reporting and accountability purposes, ACF encourages Lead Agencies to approach the Plan in a cross-cutting, integrated manner. The intention is that grantees and the federal government will be able to use this information to track and assess progress, determine the need for technical assistance (TA), and determine compliance with specific requirements and deadlines.

CCDF Plan Submission

States and territories will submit their Plans electronically through the ACF-118 electronic submission site. The ACF-118 site will include all language and questions included in the final CCDF Plan Preprint template approved by the Office of Management and Budget. Please note that the format of the questions on the ACF-118 site could be modified from the Word version of the document to ensure compliance with

Section 508 policies regarding accessibility to electronic and information technology for individuals with disabilities. (See <http://www.section508.gov/> for more information.)

In responding to questions, states and territories are asked to provide brief, specific summaries and/or bullet points only with specific language that responds to the question. Do not use tables or copy and paste charts, add attachments, or paste manuals into the Plan. All information and materials developed to support CCDF implementation and information reported in the CCDF Plan are subject to review by ACF as part of ongoing oversight and monitoring efforts.

Draft

1 Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination With Relevant Systems

This section identifies the leadership for the CCDF program in each Lead Agency and the entities and individuals who will participate in the implementation of the program. It also identifies the stakeholders that were consulted to develop the Plan and who the Lead Agency collaborates with to implement services. In this section respondents are asked to identify how match and maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds are identified. Coordination with child care resource and referral (CCR&R) systems are explained, and Lead Agencies outline the work they have done on their disaster preparedness and response plans.

1.1 CCDF Leadership

The Governor of a state or territory must designate an agency (which may be an appropriate collaborative agency) or establish a joint interagency office to represent the state or territory as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto (658D; 658E(c)(1)).

1.1.1 Which Lead Agency is designated to administer the CCDF program?

Identify the Lead Agency or joint interagency office designated by the state or territory. ACF will send official grant correspondence, such as grant awards, grant adjustments, Plan approvals, and disallowance notifications, to the designated contact identified here (658D(a)).

a) Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Office Information:

Name of Lead Agency: Tennessee Department of Human Services

Street Address: 400 Deaderick Street

City: Nashville

State: TN

ZIP Code: 37243

Web Address for Lead Agency:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/humanservices.html>

b) Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Official Contact Information:

Lead Agency Official First Name: Danielle

Lead Agency Official Last Name: Barnes

Title: Commissioner

Phone Number: 615-313-4700

Email Address: Danielle.W.Barnes@tn.gov

1.1.2 Who is the CCDF Administrator?

Identify the CCDF Administrator designated by the Lead Agency, the day-to-day contact, or the person with responsibility for administering the state's or territory's CCDF program. ACF will send programmatic communications, such as program announcements, program instructions, and data collection instructions, to the designated contact identified here. If there is more than one designated contact with equal or shared responsibility for administering the CCDF program, please identify the Co-Administrator or the person with administrative responsibilities and include his or her contact information.

a) CCDF Administrator Contact Information:

CCDF Administrator First Name: Tasha

CCDF Administrator Last Name: Owens-Green

Title of the CCDF Administrator: Director of Child Care Services

Address for the CCDF Administrator (if different from the Lead Agency):

Street Address:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

Phone Number: 615-313-5485

Email Address: Tasha.Owens-Green@tn.gov

b) CCDF Co-Administrator Contact Information (if applicable):

CCDF Co-Administrator First Name: Gwen

CCDF Co-Administrator Last Name: Laaser

Title of the CCDF Co-Administrator:

Address of the CCDF Co-Administrator (if different from the Lead Agency):

Street Address:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

Phone Number: 615-313-3893

Email Address: Gwen.Laaser@tn.gov

Description of the role of the Co-Administrator: The Co-Administrator is the Director of the Child Care Certificate Program.

1.2 CCDF Policy Decision Authority

The Lead Agency has broad authority to administer (i.e., establish rules) and operate (i.e., implement activities) the CCDF program through other governmental, non-governmental, or public or private local agencies as long as it retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program (658D(b)). Administrative and implementation responsibilities undertaken by agencies other than the Lead Agency must be governed by written agreements that specify the mutual roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency and other agencies in meeting the program requirements.

- 1.2.1 Which of the following CCDF program rules and policies are administered (i.e., set or established) at the state or territory level or local level? Identify whether CCDF program rules and policies are established by the state or territory (even if operated locally) or whether the CCDF policies or rules are established by local entities, such as counties or workforce boards (98.16(i)(3)). Check one.

- ☐ All program rules and policies are set or established at the state or territory level.
- ☐ Some or all program rules and policies are set or established by local entities. If checked, indicate which entities establish the following policies. Check all that apply.
 1. Eligibility rules and policies (e.g., income limits) are set by the:
 - ☐ State or territory
 - ☐ Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set.
 - ☐ Other. Describe: .
 2. Sliding-fee scale is set by the:
 - ☐ State or territory
 - ☐ Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set.
 - ☐ Other. Describe: .
 3. Payment rates are set by the:
 - ☐ State or territory
 - ☐ Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set.
 - ☐ Other. Describe: .
 4. Other. List other program rules and policies and describe (e.g., quality rating and improvement systems [QRIS], payment practices): QRIS rules are administered at the Lead Agency and apply to all licensed child care centers, family child care homes, and group child care homes.

1.2.2 How is the CCDF program operated? In other words, which entity(ies) implement or perform these CCDF services? Check all that apply.

a) Who conducts eligibility determinations?

- ☐ CCDF Lead Agency
- ☐ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agency
- ☐ Other state or territory agency
- ☐ Local government agencies, such as county welfare or social services departments
- ☐ Child care resource and referral agencies
- ☐ Community-based organizations
- ☐ Other.

b) Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?

- ☐ CCDF Lead Agency
- ☐ TANF agency
- ☐ Other state or territory agency
- ☐ Local government agencies, such as county welfare or social services departments
- ☐ Child care resource and referral agencies
- ☐ Community-based organizations
- ☐ Other.

c) Who issues payments?

- ☐ CCDF Lead Agency
- ☐ TANF agency.
- ☐ Other state or territory agency.
- ☐ Local government agencies, such as county welfare or social services departments.
- ☐ Child care resource and referral agencies.
- ☐ Community-based organizations.
- ☐ Other.

1.2.3 What processes will the Lead Agency use to monitor administrative and implementation responsibilities performed by agencies other than the Lead Agency as indicated above,

such as through written agreements or monitoring and auditing processes (98.11(a)(3))? Describe those processes and any indicators or measures used to assess performance.

The following methods are used to monitor administrative and implementation responsibilities:

- Memoranda of Understanding;
- Contract partners and agencies;
- Monitoring by the Lead Agency of child care agencies participating in the Child Care Certificate Program; and
- Development of a compliance and quality assurance support unit within the Child Care Certificate Program to provide targeted technical assistance, monitor allowable expenses, and manage corrective actions as may be necessary for agencies participating in the Child Care Certificate Program.

- 1.2.4 Lead Agencies must assure that, to the extent practicable and appropriate, any code or software for child care information systems or information technology for which a Lead Agency or other agency expends CCDF funds to develop must be made available on request to other public agencies, including public agencies in other States, for their use in administering child care or related programs (98.15(a)(11)). Assure by describing how the Lead Agency makes child care information systems available to public agencies in other states to the extent practicable and appropriate.

The Lead Agency would follow federal guidelines for including language in RFPs that support system transferability and address intellectual property rights to comply with the provisions of 98.15 (a) (11).

- 1.2.5 Lead Agencies must have in effect policies to govern the use and disclosure of confidential and personally-identifiable information about children and families receiving CCDF assistance and child care providers receiving CCDF funds (98.15(b)(13)). Certify by describing the Lead Agency's policies related to the use and disclosure of confidential and personally-identifiable information.

The Lead Agency works with the Office of General Counsel and the State of Tennessee Central Procurement Office on rules prohibiting disclosure of information that is:

- Protected as confidential or privileged pursuant to any state or federal law, regulation, court order or court rule; or
- Protected as privileged under any statutory or common law privilege; or
- Protected as any attorney work product; or
- Protected by the attorney/client or any other professional privilege; or

- Reasonably expected by its disclosure to reveal the name or location of a source that is protected by state or federal law or regulation as part of any statutory or regulatory requirements for reporting of abuse, neglect or harm, or that is protected by state or federal law or regulation as part of any statutory or regulatory requirement for the purpose of protecting any person from the threat of domestic violence.

1.3 Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan

The Lead Agency is responsible for developing the CCDF plan, which serves as the application for a 3-year implementation period. As part of the Plan development process, Lead Agencies must consult with the following:

- (1) Appropriate representatives of units of general purpose local government—(658D(b)(2); 98.10(c); 98.12(b); 98.14(b)). General purpose local governments are defined by the U.S. Census at https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/govts/20120301_cspan_govts_def_3.pdf.
- (2) The State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care (pursuant to 642B(b)(I)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act) (658E(c)(2)(R); 98.15(b)(1)) or similar coordinating body pursuant to 98.14(a)(1)(vii).
- (3) Indian tribe(s) or tribal organization(s) within the state. This consultation should be done in a timely manner and at the option of the Indian tribe(s) or tribal organization(s) (658D(b)(1)(E)).

Consultation involves meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the state or territory CCDF Plan. Describe the partners engaged to provide services under the CCDF program in question 1.4.1.

1.3.1 Describe the Lead Agency's consultation in the development of the CCDF plan.

- a) Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with appropriate representatives of general purpose local governments.

The Lead Agency facilitated eight (8) public focus group sessions statewide where a variety of local stakeholders including parents, child care agencies and providers, and Child Care Resource and Referral and other community partners, were presented with information and engaged by the director of child care services.

- b) Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the State Advisory Council.

The Lead Agency's director of child care services presented the proposed plan and consulted with the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council (TYCWC). Members from the TYCWC participated in the statewide Focus Groups. The director of child

care services is the TYCWC representative from the Lead Agency and participates as an active member of the council.

- c) Describe, if applicable, how the Lead Agency consulted with Indian tribes(s) or tribal organizations(s) within the state.

Not applicable.

- d) Describe any other entities, agencies, or organizations consulted on the development of the CCDF plan.

Lead Agency staff consulted with stakeholders that included early care and educators, Child Care Resource & Referral, higher education, Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Mental Health, Department of Children's Services, state and local child care associations, Child Care Certificate staff, families and the general public.

- 1.3.2 Describe the statewide or territory-wide public hearing process held to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan (658D(b)(1)(C); 98.16(f)). *Reminder:* Lead Agencies are required to hold at least one public hearing in the state or territory, with sufficient statewide or territory-wide distribution of notice prior to such a hearing to enable the public to comment on the provision of child care services under the CCDF Plan. At a minimum, this description must include:

- a) Date(s) of notice of a public hearing. *Reminder:* Must be at least 20 calendar days prior to the date of the public hearing.

May 17, 2018

- b) How was the public notified about the public hearing, including how notice was accessible for people with disabilities? Please include specific website links if used to provide notice.

DHS Public Information and Legislation Office posted the Public Hearing notice and media advisory sent directly to licensed child care agencies and partners via email. Media advisory distributed to news outlets statewide and posted on Lead Agency website.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html>

- c) Date(s) of the public hearing(s). *Reminder:* Must be no earlier than January 1, 2018, which is 9 months prior to the October 1, 2018, effective date of the Plan.

The Lead Agency is conducting statewide public hearings on June 07, 2018 in Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga.

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- d) Hearing site(s) or method(s), including how geographic regions of the state or territory were addressed.

Hearings are scheduled for Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville, allowing for participation across the entire state.

- e) How the content of the Plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s).

A draft of the Plan was posted on the Lead Agency website and a link to the Plan was included in the public hearing advisory issued on May 17, 2018

- f) How was the information provided by the public taken into consideration regarding the provision of child care services under this Plan?

Information collected during statewide focus group meetings and public hearings was reviewed and considered in developing the content of the plan.

- 1.3.3 Lead Agencies are required to make the submitted and final Plan, any Plan amendments, and any approved requests for temporary relief (i.e., waivers) publicly available on a website (98.14(d)).

- a) Provide the website link to where the plan, any plan amendments, and/or waivers are available.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html>

- b) Describe any other strategies that the Lead Agency uses to make the CCDF Plan and Plan amendments available to the public (98.14(d)). Check all that apply and describe the strategies below, including any relevant website links as examples.

☐ Working with advisory committees. Describe: Invitations were sent to statewide community and local partners to participate in the statewide focus groups. In addition, the CCDF Plan was sent for review to the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council, which operates as the State Advisory Council, to solicit feedback into the draft Plan. Further input as regards to the development of the CCDF Plan was available via email, website, face to face meetings, and Public Hearings.

☐ Working with child care resource and referral agencies. Describe: Invitation to participate in the statewide focus groups was extended to Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R). In addition, the CCDF Plan was sent to solicit feedback from the Director of CCR&R. Further input in regards to the development of the CCDF Plan was available via email, website, face to face meetings, and Public Hearings.

☐ Providing translation in other languages. Describe: Translations of the CCDF Plan will be hosted at the website of the Lead Agency and may also be shared through social media, i.e. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc. Describe: Translations of the

final CCDF Plan approved by the ACF will be made available in Spanish, Arabic, and Somali to increase public access to the CCDF Plan.

- ☐ **Providing notification to stakeholders** (e.g., provider groups, parent groups).
Describe: The CCDF Plan will be posted on the website of the Lead Agency and child care agencies will be alerted by email to share the availability of the CCDF Plan with the families they serve.
- ☐ Other. Describe:

1.4 Coordination With Partners To Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care

Lead Agencies are required to describe how the state or territory will efficiently, and to the extent practicable, coordinate child care services supported by CCDF with programs operating at the federal, state/territory, and local levels for children in the programs listed below. This includes programs for the benefit of Indian children, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care (98.14(a)(1)).

- 1.4.1 Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates the provision of child care services with the following programs to expand accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services that meet the needs of working families (658E(c)(2)(O); 98.12(a); 98.14(a)).

This list includes entities required by law or rule, along with a list of optional partners that Lead Agencies potentially would coordinate with over the next 3 years to expand accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services.

Include in the descriptions the goals of this coordination, such as extending the day or year of services for families; smoothing transitions for children between programs or as they age into school; enhancing and aligning the quality of services; linking comprehensive services to children in child care settings; or developing the supply of quality care for vulnerable populations. Check who you will coordinate with and describe all that apply.

- ☐ (REQUIRED) Appropriate representatives of the general purpose local government, which can include counties, municipalities, or townships/towns. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency has representation serving on the Governor's Children's Cabinet which is charged with coordinating, streamlining, and enhancing the State's efforts to provide needed resources and services to Tennessee's children.

The Lead Agency facilitates quarterly partner agency meetings that include the Department of Health, Department of Education and the State Higher Education to

coordinate statewide CCDF early care and education services. These meetings provide a platform for coordination of Quality Contracts, and assessment of current and new resources and services needed to support children's early learning and development and the implementation of the 2 Generation approach to family supports.

- ☐ (REQUIRED) State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (or similar coordinating body) (pursuant to 642B(b)(I)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act). Describe the coordination goals and process:

The director of Child Care Services is the Lead Agency representative on the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council and attends regularly occurring council meetings to coordinate statewide CCDF early care and education services. These meetings provide a platform for coordination, brainstorming, and assessment of current and new services needed to support children's early learning and development and the implementation of the 2 Generation approach to family supports.

- ☐ Does the Lead Agency have official representation and a decision-making role in the State Advisory Council (or similar coordinating body)?
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Yes
- ☐ (REQUIRED) Indian tribe(s) and/or tribal organization(s), at the option of individual tribes. Describe the coordination goals and process, including which tribe(s) was consulted:
 - ☐ N/A—There are no Indian tribes and/or tribal organizations in the State.
- ☐ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency(ies) responsible for programs for children with special needs, including early intervention programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part C for infants and toddlers and Section 619 for preschool). Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency meets with representatives from the agency responsible for IDEA (Department of Education) on a regular basis. These meetings provide a platform for coordination, brainstorming, and assessment of current and new services needed to support children's early learning and development and the implementation of the 2 Generation approaches to family supports.
- ☐ (REQUIRED) State/territory office/director for Head Start state collaboration. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency maintains an ongoing working relationship with the Head Start state collaboration office. Regular meetings and contacts provide a platform for coordination, brainstorming, and assessment of current and new services needed to support children's early learning and development and the implementation of the 2 Generation approach to family supports.

- (REQUIRED) State agency responsible for public health, including the agency responsible for immunizations. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency maintains a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) and six regional metropolitan public health departments which have responsibility for immunizations in Tennessee. Additionally, TDH and the Lead Agency actively participate in regularly scheduled and recurring meetings that provide a platform for coordination, brainstorming, and assessment of current and new services needed to support children's early learning and development as well as the implementation of the 2 Generation approach to family supports.

- (REQUIRED) State agency responsible for employment services/workforce development. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency maintains a working relationship with the local and state entities responsible for employment services and workforce development.

Tennessee will fully integrate child care services for low-income families enrolled and in and in compliance with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training program. This collaboration will include Child Care Services, SNAP, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development along with their subcontractors. These partners will design and manage a plan to maximize the delivery and availability of safe and stable child care services that will assist families seeking to become independent from public assistance while parent(s) are either working or attending job training or educational programs in order to become self-sufficient. This two generation change initiative will work to redesign child care service delivery to better meet the needs of families and children. This will help participants and their children to access opportunities that will increase their financial security, education and skills, social capital, and health and well-being.

Families First, the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, is a workforce development and employment program under the Lead Agency. It is temporary and has a primary focus on gaining self-sufficiency through employment. The Families First program helps participants reach this goal by providing transportation, child care assistance, education, job training, employment activities, and other support services. Temporary cash assistance is also provided to

families with dependent children when at least one parent is incapacitated, unemployed, deceased, or absent from the home, and the family is unable to pay for essential living expenses.

Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance Program was established to provide Child Care support to working families and those pursuing post-secondary educational goals. It allows TDHS to apply two-generational approaches in alignment with the commitment to creating cycles of success. This supports eligible families with Child Care financial assistance to foster self-sufficiency and promote children's learning and development in quality early care and educational programs.

- (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for public education, including prekindergarten (preK). Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency engages in ongoing collaboration and partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Education to:

- Support children and families;
- Align early learning standards in child care programs with Pre-K and Kindergarten;
- Improve the transition from child care programs to early education;
- Help early educators understand the connection between quality child care programs, school readiness, and positive outcomes;
- Develop a system that promotes effective communication and connections between child care educators and Pre-K and Kindergarten; and
- Promote the 2 Generation approaches to family engagement and support services through several targeted program initiatives.

A partnership with the Governor's Books From Birth Foundation was launched in January 2016 to register age-eligible children of families receiving child care payment assistance so they may receive the gift of free books through the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. This literacy initiative promotes both reading and family engagement.

The Read to Be Ready Summer Literacy grant program was launched with the Tennessee Department of Education in 2016 to support educator-led and literacy-based summer camps to assist school-age students improve reading skills.

Early Literacy Matters, a pilot program with Tennessee Department of Education begun in 2016, provides literacy training and coaching as well as activities to early childhood professionals serving children from birth to five years of age.

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- ❑ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for child care licensing. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency is responsible for licensing child care agencies.

- ❑ (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and other relevant nutrition programs. Describe the coordination goals and process:

Lead Agency administers the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Lead Agency partners with CACFP and SFSP to provide a bridge for these programs that offer afterschool snack and supper options for children from at-risk environments. Continued promotion of good nutrition and physical activity in child care agencies enrolled in CACFP and to facilitate participation of eligible child care centers and homes.

Tennessee will fully integrate child care services for low-income families enrolled and in compliance with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training program. This collaboration will include Child Care Services, SNAP, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development along with their subcontractors. These partners will design and manage a plan to maximize the delivery and availability of safe and stable child care services that will assist families seeking to become independent from public assistance while parent(s) are either working or attending job training or educational programs in order to become self-sufficient. This 2 Generation change initiative will work to redesign child care service delivery to better meet the needs of families and children. This will help participants and their children to access opportunities that will increase their financial security, education and skills, social capital, and health and well-being.

- ❑ (REQUIRED) McKinney-Vento state coordinators for homeless education and other agencies providing services for children experiencing homelessness and, to the extent practicable, local McKinney-Vento liaisons. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency established relationships with the Tennessee Association of Community Action (TACA) through a partnership with the DHS Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) program to collect data on children (ages 0 to 5) statewide experiencing homelessness and the Tennessee liaison to the National Center for Homeless Education to share information and coordinate activities associated with services for homeless children and families.

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are private nonprofit and public organizations created out of Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to combat poverty. CAAs assess community needs and resources, establish priorities, determine strategies to address local poverty issues, and in partnership with community organizations, deliver a broad range of comprehensive services to create economic opportunity and have a measurable impact in the lives of those in our communities.

The Lead Agency is also establishing a partnership to liaison with the National Center for Homeless Education as well as with other community agencies, such as the United Way of Middle Tennessee, to provide resources for students experiencing homelessness.

- (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for employment services and workforce development. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency maintains a working relationship with the local and state entities responsible for employment services and workforce development.

Tennessee will fully integrate child care services for low-income families enrolled and in and in compliance with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training program. This collaboration will include Child Care Services, SNAP, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development along with their subcontractors. These partners will design and manage a plan to maximize the delivery and availability of safe and stable child care services that will assist families seeking to become independent from public assistance while parent(s) are either working or attending job training or educational programs in order to become self-sufficient. This two generational change initiative will work to redesign child care service delivery to better meet the needs of families and children. This will help participants and their children to access opportunities that will increase their financial security, education and skills, social capital, and health and well-being.

Families First, the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, is a workforce development and employment program under the Lead Agency. It is temporary and has a primary focus on gaining self-sufficiency through employment. The Families First program helps participants reach this goal by providing transportation, child care assistance, education, job training, employment activities, and other support services. Temporary cash assistance is also provided to families with dependent children when at least one parent is incapacitated, unemployed, deceased, or absent from the home, and the family is unable to pay for essential living expenses.

Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance Program was established to provide Child Care support to working families and those pursuing post-secondary educational goals. It allows TDHS to apply two-generational approaches in alignment with the commitment to creating cycles of success. This supports eligible families with Child Care financial assistance to foster self-sufficiency and promote children's learning and development in quality early care and educational programs.

- (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency also administers TANF. The overall goal is to improve service delivery and provide consumer education to TANF recipients. Child Care Certificate Program staff and Family Assistance staff of the Lead Agency working in local Tennessee Department of Human Services offices administer child care services for eligible families.

- (REQUIRED) Agency responsible for Medicaid and the state Children's Health Insurance Program. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency coordinates information about the child care health insurance program (CoverKids) for CCDF families and children receiving child care services through consumer education services provided by the Lead Agency and its partners, including Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and through consumer education publications and websites.

- (REQUIRED) State/territory agency responsible for mental health. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency is among collaborative participants with Team Tennessee Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) State Partnership facilitated by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. This collaborative partnership strives to promote the social and emotional development of children, birth-early elementary age, through a cross agency collaborative professional development system, including community based training, continuing education and higher education, which fosters and sustains the state-wide, high-fidelity use of the Pyramid Model, integrated with other relevant Tennessee efforts.

- (REQUIRED) Child care resource and referral agencies, child care consumer education organizations, and providers of early childhood education training and professional development. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency coordinates early care and education services statewide in collaboration with Child Care Resource and Referral and the Tennessee Early

Childhood Training Alliance to improve the quality of child care services for children, families, and the child care workforce. Services delivered to children and families are consistent with the two generational approach adopted by the Lead Agency.

- ☐ (REQUIRED) Statewide afterschool network or other coordinating entity for out-of-school time care (if applicable). Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency coordinates early care and education services statewide for school-age children in collaboration with the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Tennessee Afterschool Network to improve the quality of child care service for children, families, and the child care workforce.

- ☐ (REQUIRED) Agency responsible for emergency management and response. Describe the coordination goals and process:

The Lead Agency coordinates statewide responses for early care and education in collaboration with the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) in support of the Tennessee Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

The Lead Agency actively participates with a statewide task force, including TEMA, Tennessee Department of Health, Tennessee Department of Education, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), and other public agency, nonprofit, and institutional partners to provide emergency preparedness training and awareness for child care agencies statewide.

The following are examples of optional partners a state might coordinate with to provide services. Check all that apply.

- ☐ State/territory/local agencies with Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grants. Describe:

The Lead Agency coordinates early care and education services through multiple Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships statewide.

Per the Early Head Start Child Care partnership grant guidelines, the Lead Agency provides support to assist in maintaining 25% subsidized slots for each approved Early Head Start classroom. The rate is paid based upon child care agency payment rate determined by the agency's quality star rating.

- ☐ State/territory institutions for higher education, including community colleges. Describe:

The Lead Agency maintains extensive partnerships with Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee to support early care and education services for

children and families statewide. The Lead Agency provides financial assistance for students enrolled in higher education early childhood education programs pairing with state initiatives, such as TNReconnect and TNPromise. All Child Care Services staff receive training on TNReconnect to better understand the initiative to share with families and the child care workforce.

The Lead Agency additionally collaborates through its partnerships with universities, community colleges, and/or colleges of applied technology as institutions of higher education coordinated by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to facilitate the development of articulation and accreditation planning to support the early childhood education workforce.

- ☐ Other federal, state, local, and/or private agencies providing early childhood and school-age/youth-serving developmental services. Describe:
- ☐ State/territory agency responsible for implementing the Maternal and Child Home Visitation programs grant. Describe:
- ☐ Agency responsible for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment. Describe:

The Lead Agency maintains multiple partnerships with the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH), the state agency responsible for Early and Periodic Screening. TDH staff participate in regularly scheduled recurring meetings that provide a platform for coordination, brainstorming, and assessment of current and new services needed to support children's early learning and development and the implementation of 2 Generation approach to family supports.

- ☐ State/territory agency responsible for child welfare. Describe:

The Lead Agency maintains a regular working relationship with the Department of Children's Services (DCS) to facilitate child care opportunities for children in foster care or state custody. The Lead Agency also established an automated process with the agency to check prospective child care educators against the child abuse and neglect registry maintained by DCS. Additionally, the Lead Agency and DCS works collaboratively to investigate reports of imminent risk or allegations of child abuse and/or neglect which may include injuries and/or fatalities.

- ☐ State/territory liaison for military child care programs. Describe:
- ☐ Provider groups or associations. Describe:

The Lead Agency maintains working relationships with provider groups to coordinate services to support children and families. These working relationships include groups such as the Governor's Children's Cabinet, Tennessee Family Child

Care Alliance, Tennessee Association for Children's Early Education, and ChildCareNashville.com.

- ☐ Parent groups or organizations. Describe:
- ☐ Other. Describe:

The Lead Agency meets quarterly to discuss strategies and outcomes with the Governor's Children's Cabinet, co-chaired by the Governor and First Lady of Tennessee, and including representation from the Departments of Health, Education, Labor and Workforce Development, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and Children's Services as well as the Division of TennCare.

1.5 Optional Use of Combined Funds, CCDF Matching and Maintenance-of-Effort Funds

Optional Use of Combined Funds: States and territories have the option to combine funding for CCDF child care services with funding for any of the required programs listed in 1.4.1. These programs include those operating at the federal, state, and local levels for children in preschool programs, tribal early childhood programs, and other early childhood programs, including those serving infants and toddlers with disabilities, homeless children, and children in foster care (658E(c)(2)(O)(ii)). Combining funds could include blending multiple funding streams, pooling funds, or layering funds together from multiple funding streams to expand and/or enhance services for children and families to allow for the delivery of comprehensive quality care that meets the needs of children and families. For example, state/territory agencies may use multiple funding sources to offer grants or contracts to programs to deliver services; a state/territory may allow a county/local government to use coordinated funding streams; or policies may be in place that allow local programs to layer CCDF funds with additional funding sources to pay for full-day, full-year child care that meets Early Head Start/Head Start or state/territory prekindergarten requirements in addition to state/territory child care licensing requirements.

As a reminder, CCDF funds may be used in collaborative efforts with Head Start programs to provide comprehensive child care and development services for children who are eligible for both programs. In fact, the coordination and collaboration between the Head Start and CCDF is strongly encouraged by sections 640(g)(1)(D) and (E); 640(h); 641(d)(2)(H)(v); and 642(e)(3) of the Head Start Act in the provision of full working day, full calendar year comprehensive services. To implement such collaborative programs, which share, for example, space, equipment, or materials, grantees may layer several funding streams so that seamless services are provided (Policy and Program Guidance for the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships:

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/acf_im_ohs_15_03.pdf).

1.5.1 Does the Lead Agency choose to combine funding for CCDF services for any required early childhood program (98.14(a)(3))?

☐ No.

☐ Yes. If yes, describe at a minimum:

a) How you define “combine”

We utilize funds from Department of Education for Pre-K Services.

b) Which funds you will combine

Maintenance of Effort (MOE) expenditures from the Tennessee Department of Education will be combined with funds from the Tennessee Department of Human Services to meet MOE requirements.

c) Your purpose and expected outcomes for combining funds, such as extending the day or year of services available (i.e., full-day, full-year programming for working families), smoothing transitions for children, enhancing and aligning quality of services, linking comprehensive services to children in child care or developing the supply of child care for vulnerable populations

To further care for Pre-K children and their families by providing wrap around child care support for working families.

d) How you will be combining multiple sets of funding, such as at the State/Territory level, local level, program level?

Funds are only combined at the state level.

e) How are the funds tracked and method of oversight

Funds are tracked in Edison (the state electronic online payment system).

Use of PreK for Maintenance of Effort: The CCDF final rule clarifies that public preK funds may also serve as maintenance-of-effort funds as long as the state/territory can describe how it will coordinate preK and child care services to expand the availability of child care while using public preK funds as no more than 20 percent of the state’s or territory’s maintenance of effort or 30 percent of its matching funds in a single fiscal year (FY) (98.55(h)). If expenditures for preK services are used to meet the maintenance-of-effort requirement, the state/territory must certify that it has not reduced its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services (98.55(h)(1); 98.15(a)(6)).

Use of Private Funds for Match or Maintenance of Effort: Donated funds do not need to be under the administrative control of the Lead Agency to qualify as an expenditure for federal match. However, Lead Agencies do need to identify and designate in the

state/territory Plan the donated funds given to public or private entities to implement the child care program (98.55(f)).

- 1.5.2 Which of the following funds does the Lead Agency intend to use to meet the CCDF matching and MOE requirements described in 98.55(e) and 98.55(h)? Check all that apply.

Note: The Lead Agency must check at least public and/or private funds as matching, even if preK funds also will be used.

- ☐ N/A—The territory is not required to meet CCDF matching and MOE requirements
- ☐ Public funds are used to meet the CCDF matching fund requirement. Public funds may include any general revenue funds, county or other local public funds, state/territory-specific funds (tobacco tax, lottery), or any other public funds.
 - ☐ If checked, identify the source of funds: State General Fund and lottery funds.
 - ☐ If known, identify the estimated amount of public funds that the Lead Agency will receive: Approximately \$18.9 million at this time.
- ☐ Private donated funds are used to meet the CCDF matching funds requirement. Only private funds received by the designated entities or by the Lead Agency may be counted for match purposes (98.53(f)).

If checked, are those funds:

- ☐ donated directly to the State?
- ☐ donated to a separate entity(ies) designated to receive private donated funds?

If checked, identify the name, address, contact, and type of entities designated to receive private donated funds:

If known, identify the estimated amount of private donated funds that the Lead Agency will receive: \$

- ☐ State expenditures for preK programs are used to meet the CCDF matching funds requirement. If checked, provide the estimated percentage of the matching fund requirement that will be met with preK expenditures (not to exceed 30 percent): 8% or approximately \$1 Million.
 - If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the matching fund requirement, describe how the State will coordinate its preK and child care services:
 - If known, identify the estimated amount of preK funds that the Lead Agency will receive for the matching funds requirement: Approximately \$1 Million (or 8%).

Describe the Lead Agency efforts to ensure that preK programs meet the needs of working parents: **The State Pre-K program is required to meet a minimum of 5.5 hours per day for a minimum of 180 days (school year). In collaborative programs between child care and State Pre-K, the Pre-K funds pay for the instructional day of 5.5 hours for a minimum of 180 days of the school year. Child care provides before care, after care, and summer child care services.**

- ☐ State expenditures for preK programs are used to meet the CCDF maintenance-of-effort requirements. If checked,

The Lead Agency assures that its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services has not been reduced, pursuant to 98.55(h)(1) and 98.15(6).

☐ No

☐ Yes

Describe the Lead Agency efforts to ensure that preK programs meet the needs of working parents: **The State Pre-K program is required to meet a minimum of 5.5 hours per day for a minimum of 180 days (school year). In collaborative programs between child care and State Pre-K, the Pre-K funds pay for the instructional day of 5.5 hours for a minimum of 180 days of the school year. Child care provides before care, after care, and summer child care services.**

Estimated percentage of the MOE Fund requirement that will be met with preK expenditures (not to exceed 20 percent): **20%**

- If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the MOE requirement, describe how the State will coordinate its preK and child care services to expand the availability of child care: **Collaboration is a cornerstone of the Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K program. Approximately 25% of Tennessee Pre-K classrooms are collaborative classes with for-profit and non-profit child care, faith-based child care and Head Start. The Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS) are required to be used in all programs serving children birth to age 5. In addition, both child care and Pre-K use similar instruments to monitor for health and safety of all classrooms, and they coordinate the professional development training on the social emotional foundations of early learning.**
- If known, identify the estimated amount of preK funds that the Lead Agency will receive for the MOE Fund requirement: **\$3.7 Million.**

1.6 Public-Private Partnerships

Lead Agencies are required to describe how they encourage public-private partnerships among other public agencies, tribal organizations, private entities, faith-based organizations, businesses or organizations that promote business involvement, and/or community-based organizations to leverage existing service delivery (i.e., cooperative agreement among providers to pool resources to pay for shared fixed costs and operation) (658E(c)(2)(P)). ACF expects these types of partnerships to leverage public and private resources to further the goals of the CCDBG Act. Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate how they encourage public-private partnerships to leverage existing child care and early education service-delivery systems and to increase the supply and quality of child care services for children younger than age 13, for example, by implementing voluntary shared service alliance models (98.14(a)(4)).

- 1.6.1 Identify and describe the entities with which and the levels at which the state/territory is partnering (level—state/territory, county/local, and/or programs), the goals of the partnerships, the ways that partnerships are expected to leverage existing service-delivery systems, the method of partnering, and examples of activities that have resulted from these partnerships (98.16(d)(2)).

The Lead Agency works with the Department of Children's Services (DCS) to allow DCS personnel to make direct arrangements with the Lead Agency for child care assistance for children in foster care or protective services.

The Lead Agency works with the Department of Education (DOE) to allow them limited access to the licensing database in order for DOE to enter data about the child care agencies that are regulated by DOE. This enables the information about these agencies to be available to parents and the general public through the “Find Child Care” feature on the Lead Agency's website.

The Lead Agency collaborations with DOE include the Read to Be Ready Summer Literacy Program which perfectly aligns with the 2 Generation framework approach. It is an example of intentional and collective impact in support of the future success of Tennessee children and families. The criteria used for participation in Read to be Ready Summer Literacy Program include children participating in the Child Care Certificate Program, free or reduced lunch, children and families experiencing homelessness and or children who live in economically disadvantage communities in Tennessee. Children who participate in before and after school programs, including children who enrolled in the Child Care Subsidy Program, also have the opportunity to experience a summer enriched program through the Read to be Ready Summer Literacy Program.

Read to Be Ready Camps strategically promote attendance by partnering with families. Camps ensure that all families and children have equitable access and intentionally and

responsively reach out when attendance is an issue. Home visits, translators, and supports are used to connect with and encourage families. Below outlines some of the Read to be Ready Summer Camp enriched activities:

- Critical reading skills and increased motivation to read;
- Literacy coaching;
- Enrichment experiences related to art and music, in a manner that connects to and supports literacy in thoughtful ways;
- Hands-on learning and an introduction to concepts, experiences, and books that expand their background knowledge; and
- The ability to self-select the texts they want to read and the writing topics they want to explore.

The Tennessee Department of Education (DOE) and the Lead Agency recruited non-public schools and childcare centers to participate in Early Literacy Matters, a pilot that focuses on integrating more literacy-based practices into birth to five classrooms. The pilot began in September 2017 and concluded in June 2018 in the following Tennessee counties: Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Claiborne, Davidson, Fayette, Greene, Hamblen, Knox, Sevier, Shelby, Sullivan, Unicoi, Union, and Washington.

Students begin learning to read and think before they enter the classroom. The state believes that providing training and support to those who work with our youngest children, as well as their families, will mean greater success for students as they continue to grow. Each classroom teacher, assistant, and site director of participating sites complete six (6) one-hour online learning modules during the 2017-2018 school year. The Lead Agency is exploring with DOE opportunities to strengthen and expand the Early Literacy Matters program to increase early literacy skills and training of early care educators to support the early literacy environments across Tennessee.

In addition, students receive learning guides and free books to place in their classrooms. Specifically, each classroom receives two sets of books composed of seven books each; one set is intended for classroom use and the other set is sent home with children to read with their families. Pilot participants are provided with varied levels of coaching support. Pre- and post- environmental assessments as well as provider awareness surveys are collected at the conclusion of the program, and the results will be shared with the participating providers to further improve their practice. The Lead Agency is also collaborating with other public and non-profit agencies, including DOE and United Way, to identify opportunities and partnerships with approximately 66 local Family Resource Centers across Tennessee to provide families with resources and information.

By 2025, 55 percent of the jobs available in Tennessee will require a postsecondary credential, and currently only 33 percent of Tennesseans qualify. Gov. Bill Haslam launched his Drive to 55 two years ago to increase the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or certificate.

The Lead Agency is partnering with parents by providing them with information about the program and assisting them in enrolling their child or children in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The partnership aligns with Lead Agency's 2 Generation approach to creating cycles of success and compliments both the Tennessee Department of Education's work in early literacy and First Lady Crissy Haslam's statewide READ20 Family Book Club campaign. The 2 Generation approach has a specific focus on partnering with parents and children together to support them in realizing a pathway toward self-sufficiency and a better quality of life.

As a part of Early Childhood Education, in an effort to assist the Governor's Children's Cabinet reach a goal of 75% of 3rd grade students being reading proficient by 2025, the Lead Agency is committed to enrolling 100% of age-eligible Child Care Certificate Program participants in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library through its partnership with the Governor's Books From Birth Foundation to encourage at home reading on a consistent basis.

"Introducing books to children beginning at birth is one of the most impactful ways to prepare them for Kindergarten," First Lady Haslam said. "I appreciate the Department of Human Services' efforts to encourage more families to read together and make education a priority. Collaborative partnerships that support early literacy can help children be more successful in school and in life."

The Governor's Books from Birth Foundation in tandem with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available to all children from birth to 5 years old living in Tennessee. Once children are enrolled in the program, a new book is mailed to the child every month until he or she turns five. The books are provided to children at no cost. More than 240,000 Tennessee children are currently receiving books. The program allows additional opportunities for parents to read to their children and engage in learning opportunities. Each book is age appropriate and includes reading comprehension activities and suggestions.

1.7 Coordination With Local or Regional Child Care Resource and Referral Systems

Lead Agencies may use CCDF funds to establish or support a system of local or regional child care resource and referral (CCR&R) organizations that is coordinated, to the extent determined by the state/territory, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based or regionally based, lead child care resource and referral organization (such as a statewide CCR&R network) (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii); 98.52).

- If Lead Agencies use CCDF funds for local CCR&R organizations, the local or regional CCR&R organizations supported by those funds must, at the direction of the Lead Agency, provide parents in the State with consumer education information concerning the full range of child care options (including faith-based and community-based child care providers), analyzed by provider, including child care provided during non-traditional hours and through emergency child care centers, in their area.
- To the extent practicable, work directly with families who receive assistance to offer the families support and assistance to make an informed decision about which child care providers they will use to ensure that the families are enrolling their children in the most appropriate child care setting that suits their needs and one that is of high quality (as determined by the Lead Agency).
- Collect data and provide information on the coordination of services and supports, including services under Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- Collect data and provide information on the supply of and demand for child care services in areas of the state and submit the information to the State;
- Work to establish partnerships with public agencies and private entities, including faith-based and community-based child care providers, to increase the supply and quality of child care services in the state and, as appropriate, coordinate their activities with the activities of the state Lead Agency and local agencies that administer funds made available through CCDF (98.52(b)).

Nothing in the statute or rule prohibits States from using CCR&R agencies to conduct or provide additional services beyond those required by statute or rule.

Note: Use section 7.6 to address how quality set-aside funds, if applicable, are used to support a statewide CCR&R system.

1.7.1 Does the Lead Agency fund a system of local or regional CCR&R organizations?

☐ No. The state/territory does not fund a CCR&R system and has no plans to establish one.

☐ **Yes.** The state/territory funds a CCR&R system. If yes, describe the following:

a) What services are provided through the CCR&R system?

The Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network is a managed network Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) serving eight (8) geographic areas across Tennessee and offer services to families, child care agencies, and the child care workforce statewide.

CCR&R staff offers families consumer information to identify and better understand the components of high-quality child care as well as answer questions about child care agencies in their geographic areas.

For child care agencies, CCR&R staff provides coaching and technical assistance, training, consultation, and supporting materials and resources on such topics that include developmentally appropriate practices, health and safety issues, parent engagement, social/emotional and behavioral health, and best practices across related themes. CCR&R staff also provides child care agencies assistance with program inclusion for children having special needs or on-site consultation problem-solving child care and other health issues. Additionally, the Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network CCR&Rs identify unmet training needs of providers and deliver or facilitate the delivery of resources and training content.

The Lead Agency maintains a contract with Signals Centers, Inc. to provide and administer the Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Services. The contract includes such provisions and activities that support children, families, and child care agencies as:

- Supporting a system of high-quality early care and education for children in Tennessee through the management of the Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and providing quality resources, consistent practices, and support for child care agencies that include expertise, training, and technical assistance.
- Maintaining consistency in services to the network in the following areas: health and safety; infant/toddler best practices; family and group child care; center-based child care; and school-age child care. Services must reflect developmentally appropriate practices around core areas such as: supervision, child guidance, parent engagement/child care consumer education information, child outcomes and kindergarten readiness. Continuous Quality Improvement Plans form the framework for technical assistance to agencies requiring identification of agency needs, resources needed, assignment of CCR&R staff and other resources within a timeline and required support from the administration of the child care agency.
- Providing prioritized targeted technical assistance in response to referrals from the Lead Agency and partner agencies, and supporting the development of agency continuous quality improvement plans.
- Supporting developmental monitoring and knowledge of development milestones among child care agencies, teachers, and families.

- Ensuring child care agencies receive the most accurate and up-to-date information about the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) and how they are scored.
- Assisting families, especially among vulnerable populations, with accessing local services.
- Collaborating with local community-based organizations to engage with and support the education of families and the general community regarding high-quality child care.
- Developing a statewide initiative to increase outreach and services benefiting homeless populations.
- Promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of children utilizing models developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).
- Conducting outreach and awareness campaigns in collaboration with the Lead Agency and other partners on such topics as quality child care, accessibility, etc.
- Working with families who receive child care assistance to make an informed decision when choosing a child care agency.
- Coordinating with the Lead Agency and other partners to strengthen and improve data to ensure adequate supply of child care exists to sufficiently satisfy demand.
- Assisting the State in responding to state or national requirements to improve child care quality.

- b) How the CCR&R system is operated, including how many agencies and if there is a statewide network and how the system is coordinated.

The Lead Agency contracts with Signal Centers, Inc. to manage the Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Signal Centers, Inc. is funded through a variety of federal, state, and local agencies including the United Way of Greater Chattanooga, Tennessee's Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Hamilton County Social Services, State of Tennessee Social Services Block Grant (Title XX), local service and community organizations, various fund-raising activities, fees for service, and charitable donations.

Signal Centers, Inc. contracts with community-based nonprofit agencies or public institutions to operate five (5) CCR&R agencies and serve eight (8)

regional service delivery areas offering free services to families and any child care agencies licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. These CCR&R sites fulfill scopes of services that improve the overall quality of child care, strengthen the training and technical assistance system for the state, and assure quality and consistent practices throughout the Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

Signal Centers, Inc. strengthens and further enhances the Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network through the provision of quality coaches who directly support families and child care agencies through Infant-Toddler, Family Engagement, and Health, Safety, and Well-Being specializations.

1.8 Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan

Lead Agencies are required to establish a Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan (658E(c)(2)(U)). They must demonstrate how they will address the needs of children—including the need for safe child care, before, during, and after a state of emergency declared by the Governor or a major disaster or emergency (as defined by Section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5122)—through a Statewide Disaster Plan that, for a State, is developed in collaboration with the State human services agency, the State emergency management agency, the State licensing agency, the State health department or public health department, local and State child care resource and referral agencies, and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (designated or established pursuant to section 642B(b)(I)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)(1)(A)(i))) or similar coordinating body (98.16(aa)).

- 1.8.1 Describe how the Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan was developed in collaboration with the State human services agency, the State emergency management agency, the State licensing agency, the State health department or public health department, local and State child care resource and referral agencies, and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body:

The Child Care Services Emergency Preparedness Plan is reviewed annually and is informed, in part, by the active participation of the Lead Agency in a statewide task force that includes Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA), Tennessee Department of Health, Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and other agencies and institutions. This further informs the plan of the Lead Agency as part of the Tennessee Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

- 1.8.2 Describe how the Statewide Disaster Plan includes the Lead Agency’s guidelines for the continuation of child care subsidies and child care services, which may include the

provision of emergency and temporary child care services during a disaster and temporary operating standards for child care after a disaster:

The Lead Agency will utilize internal emergency preparedness teams to coordinate a response, including:

- Executive Team - oversees the Department's response, maintains communication with the Governor's office, and implements any special response initiatives through the Central Office Director Team.
- Central Office Director Team - manages emergency preparedness communications between the Executive Team and central office/field staff and coordinates the response for each of their respective areas in conjunction with the responses of the other team members.

If the Subsidized Child Care Reimbursement System is down throughout the state and it is not anticipated that the system can be reestablished within two weeks, the disaster function team identifies procedures for counties to follow in the interim. Subsidy Services staff members contact the appropriate offices to make them aware of new procedures. In the event that phone, fax, and email communications are disrupted, Subsidy Services staff will make contact on-site if it is possible to travel.

Child Care Services' Director and the team decides whether temporary child care arrangements are needed to supplement existing capacity or make child care more easily accessible to families affected by the disaster or assisting with the relief effort. If temporary child care arrangements are needed, the Director determines the appropriate scope of Child Care Services involvement.

Using information on family needs gathered with the help of Child Care Services representatives, the Director works with Subsidy Services, Regulatory Services, and others as needed to determine what kind of temporary child care arrangements may be allowed and encouraged. Examples might include:

- ad hoc child care arrangements set up at such locations as utility offices, police departments, or hospitals for the children of these employees who must work during or just after disasters, when licensed child care facilities may still be closed
- child care in emergency shelters if shelters are expected to be open for an extended amount of time (e.g., longer than a week)
- child care at Disaster Application Centers to provide safe supervision of children while parents work with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Small Business Administration (SBA), and other disaster relief representatives

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- child care offered at temporary housing sites if no existing child care providers in the area can accommodate extra demand (or if transportation obstacles prevent access)
 - use of child care arrangements that are license-exempt and would not normally serve children receiving subsidy services

1.8.3 Describe Lead Agency procedures for the coordination of post-disaster recovery of child care services:

The Lead Agency provides technical assistance to licensed providers who sustain damages through its Child Care Services Emergency Preparedness Teams and partner agencies to evaluate and determine conditions for continuing operations or other alternatives that may include, but are not limited to, temporary closure, enrollment reduction, or relocation. If a licensed provider decides to relocate, the Child Care Services Emergency Preparedness Teams and partner agencies assist the provider to reestablish licensed care on a temporary basis at the new location.

If a local child care supply is significantly impacted by a disaster, and the team decides that it is necessary to expand capacity, Child Care Services will coordinate the provision of technical assistance to any of the largely-unaffected providers who are willing to provide care for additional children.

To facilitate recovery during a natural disaster or other emergencies, the Lead Agency will consider the need for temporary licensing policies in consultation with the Office of General Counsel.

1.8.4 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that providers who receive CCDF funds have the following procedures in place—evacuation; relocation; shelter-in-place; lockdown; communications with and reunification of families; continuity of operations; and accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions:

All licensed child care centers, family homes, and group homes are required by law to develop a written multi-hazard plan based upon Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 71-3-517:

Development of a written multi-hazard plan to protect children in emergencies:

(a) All persons or entities operating a child care agency as defined in this part, excluding drop-in child care centers and those programs and facilities exempt from licensing as provided in § 71-3-503, shall, in consultation with appropriate local authorities and local emergency management, develop a written multi-hazard plan to protect children in the event of emergencies, including, but not limited to, fires, tornados, earthquakes, chemical spills, and floods. Such persons or entities shall also inform parents and guardians of children attending the child care agency of the plan.

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- (b) The written plan required pursuant to this section shall include:
- (1) Procedures for child care agency staff to notify parents in an emergency;
 - (2) The development of designated relocation sites and evacuation routes to those sites;
 - (3) Reunification plans for children and families; and
 - (4) Written individualized plans for accommodating a child's special needs in an emergency situation.
- (c) The child care agency shall maintain documentation that the emergency plan is reviewed monthly.
- (d) All child care agency staff persons shall be trained on the plan annually.
- (e) The child care agency shall implement these emergency procedures through timely practice drills to meet local regulations and local emergency services plans and shall maintain documentation of drills for one (1) year. Such drills shall involve the following:
- (1) At least one (1) fire drill shall be conducted monthly;
 - (2) Child care agencies shall alternate drills each month to cover each shift while children are present, including extended care hours;
 - (3) At least one (1) drill other than fire shall be conducted every six (6) months; and
 - (4) All drills shall be conducted in such a way as to simulate, as closely as is practical, conditions of a real emergency, with alarms to be utilized and evacuation plans to be practiced.
- (f) (1) Emergency telephone numbers for the following entities shall be posted next to all child care agency telephones and shall be readily available to all child care agency staff members:
- (A) Fire department;
 - (B) Police department and sheriff's office;
 - (C) Nearest hospital emergency room;
 - (D) Department of children's services child abuse hotline;
 - (E) Local emergency management agency;
 - (F) Ambulance or rescue squad;
 - (G) Poison control center; and
 - (H) Department of human services child care complaint hotline.

(2) If a generic emergency number, including, but not limited to, 911 service, is operable in the community, it shall also be posted in the manner prescribed in this subsection (f).

(g) All contact information for parents, guardians, and emergency personnel shall be readily available to all child care agency staff, including work, home and cell phone numbers.

The health and safety checklists used to monitor non-licensed agencies that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program include requirements for documented Emergency/Disaster preparedness procedures, practice drills, and training.

Program Evaluators monitor licensed agencies, and non-licensed participants in the Child Care Certificate Program, for compliance with the emergency preparedness requirements.

1.8.5 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that providers who receive CCDF funds have the following procedures in place for child care staff and volunteers—emergency preparedness training and practice drills as required in 98.41(a)(1)(vii):

Child care educators in licensed centers, family homes, and group homes are required to receive annual training on their emergency preparedness plan. Documentation of practice drills that include monthly fire drills and one drill other than fire must be conducted every six months. Lead Agency Program Evaluators monitor licensed agencies annually for compliance with the emergency preparedness requirements.

The health and safety checklists used to monitor non-licensed agencies (including Boys & Girls Clubs, Department of Education-approved, and Authorized Professionals) that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program include requirements for documented emergency/disaster preparedness procedures, practice drills, and training. Program Evaluators monitor licensed agencies for compliance with the emergency preparedness requirements.

1.8.6 Provide the link to the website where the statewide child care disaster plan is available:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services>

2 Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education

Lead Agencies are required to support the role of parents as child care consumers who need information to make informed choices regarding the services that best suit their needs. A key purpose of the CCDBG Act is to “promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings” (658A(b)). Lead Agencies have the opportunity to consider how information can be provided to parents through the child care assistance system, partner agencies, and child care consumer education websites.

The target audience for the consumer education information includes three groups: parents receiving CCDF assistance, the general public, and when appropriate, child care providers. In this section, Lead Agencies will address how information is made available to families to assist them in accessing high-quality child care and how information is shared on other financial assistance programs or supports for which a family might be eligible. In addition, Lead Agencies will certify that information on developmental screenings is provided and will describe how research and best practices concerning children’s development, including their social-emotional development, is shared.

In this section, Lead Agencies will delineate the consumer and provider education information related to child care, as well as other services, including developmental screenings, that is made available to parents, providers, and the general public and the ways that it is made available. This section also covers the parental complaint process and the consumer education website that has been developed by the Lead Agency and the manner in which it links to the national website and hotline. Finally, this section addresses the consumer statement that is provided to parents supported with CCDF funds.

2.1 Outreach to Families With Limited English Proficiency and Persons With Disabilities

The Lead Agency is required to describe how it provides outreach and services to eligible families with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities and to facilitate the participation of child care providers with limited English proficiency and disabilities in the CCDF program (98.16(dd)). Lead Agencies are required to develop policies and procedures to clearly communicate program information, such as requirements, consumer education information, and eligibility information, to families and child care providers of all backgrounds (81 FR 67456).

2.1.1 Describe how the Lead Agency or partners provide outreach and services to eligible families for whom English is not their first language:

The Lead Agency takes reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in its

services, activities, programs and other benefits. The policy of Lead Agency is to ensure meaningful communication with persons that experience LEP and their authorized representatives. This policy also provides for communication of information contained in vital documents, including but not limited to, applications for benefits, client release forms, and civil rights complaint forms. Lead Agency contracts with the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute, a public state agency, and other language services to provide interpretation, translation, and other services needed to comply with this policy without cost to the person being served.

Language assistance is provided through use of competent bilingual staff, contracts or formal arrangements with organizations providing interpretation or translation services, or technology and telephonic interpretation services. All employees receive notice of this LEP policy and procedure, and staff who may have direct contact with LEP persons are provided effective communication techniques, including the effective use of an interpreter and how to engage such services.

2.1.2 Describe how the Lead Agency or partners provide outreach and services to eligible families with a person(s) with a disability:

The Lead Agency makes reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the modification would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services is housed in the Lead Agency and coordinates to support the needs of families and children with disabilities. The Lead Agency, through the Division of Rehabilitation Services, takes appropriate steps to ensure that communication with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services furnishes appropriate auxiliary aids and services upon request and where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and receive, a service, program, or activity conducted by the Department.

2.2 Parental Complaint Process

The Lead Agency must certify that the state/territory maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request (658E(c)(2)(C); 98.15(b)(3)). Lead Agencies must also provide a detailed description of the hotline or similar reporting process for parents to submit complaints about child care providers; the process for substantiating complaints; the manner in which the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints; and ways that the Lead Agency makes information on such parental complaints available to the public on request (98.16; 98.32).

- 2.2.1 Describe the Lead Agency's hotline or similar reporting process through which parents can submit complaints about child care providers, including a link if it is a Web-based process:

Parents as well as the general public may report violations and/or submit complaints regarding child care agencies through the Tennessee Child Care Complaint Hotline at (800) 462-8261 or a planned web-based option for submitting complaints that is not yet implemented.

Complaints are typically received via dedicated sources, such as the Child Care Complaint Hotline, the Department of Children's Services, and the Comptroller's Hotline. However, the department will accept complaints from other sources. Complaints can be made via telephone, in person or in writing.

The complainant will be asked for their name and contact information in case additional information is needed. However, complainants may also remain anonymous. The person receiving the complaint will collect as much information as is available. The following information is desired, at a minimum: a) The name and address of the agency; b) specific circumstances of the complaint; c) date and time of the alleged incident; d) full names of all staff and children involved; and e) the location of the alleged incident.

- 2.2.2 Describe the Lead Agency's process for screening, substantiating and responding to complaints regarding CCDF providers, including whether the process includes monitoring:

A substantiated complaint is defined as a complaint that is investigated and found to be valid.

Lead Agency Licensing Program Evaluators responsible for monitoring an agency conduct the complaint investigation to determine if it is valid. The exception is a complaint alleging child abuse which is investigated jointly by the Lead Agency and the Department of Children's Services (DCS). In such cases of alleged child abuse, Lead Agency Licensing Program Evaluators also investigate the complaint to see if the agency

violated any licensing rules but would not determine whether or not abuse occurred.

Complaints are maintained indefinitely in the Lead Agency's Tennessee Licensed Care System (TLCS) database. The format includes a description of the agency that is the subject of the complaint and a narrative description of the complaint issue. The investigation of complaints by the Lead Agency is detailed in Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 13.03, Investigating Complaints at Child Care Agencies.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the assigned Program Evaluator shall consult with his/her supervisor to determine if additional information is needed and develop an appropriate investigative strategy, including timeframes for an investigation, and utilize Tennessee Department of Human Services Form HS-3038 Investigative Work Plan for this analysis.

- All complaints alleging health and safety violations must be investigated by an unannounced visit.
- Complaints that do not allege health and safety violations will be addressed by telephone or during the next monitoring visit.

The goal of Child Care Services complaint inquiries are to determine if a violation of rules or statute has occurred. The primary factors used to make this determination are:

- Review and analysis of the evidence gathered;
- Witness statements;
- Observations;
- Documentation or lack of required documentation; and/or
- Professional judgment.

Complaints may be made directly to a Licensing staff person in a local county office or made via the centralized Complaint Hotline. Complaints may be made by telephone, in person, electronically, or by mail. The Program Evaluator completes an investigation of the complaint and enters the results into TLCS. Complaints involving abuse, improper supervision, inappropriate discipline, or injury to a child are also sent to Department of Children's Services and may require a safety plan. All complaints are encoded in the Tennessee Licensed Care System (TLCS) database and maintained indefinitely. Parental complaints about unregulated providers are managed on the local level through the county offices of the Lead Agency.

2.2.3 Describe the Lead Agency's process for screening, substantiating and responding to complaints for non-CCDF providers, including whether the process includes monitoring:

The complaint investigation process is the same for CCDF and Non-CCDF entities. See response to previous question.

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- 2.2.4 Certify by describing how the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints:

Complaints received against licensed agencies are automatically assigned through the Child Care Licensing case management system or directly by the supervisor when the assigned Program Evaluator (PE) is not available.

Complaints are maintained in the Lead Agency's child care database (Tennessee Licensed Care System). The format includes a description of the agency that is the subject of the complaint and a narrative description of the complaint issue. The information is maintained indefinitely.

- 2.2.5 Certify by describing how the Lead Agency makes information about substantiated parental complaints available to the public; this information can include the consumer education website discussed in section 2.3:

Persons inquiring about complaints on agencies are referred directly to the Program Evaluator who is responsible for monitoring the agency. Normally, the Program Evaluator verbally gives an account of the electronic record that includes the number of complaints, the type of complaint, and whether or not the complaint was validated. If requested, the Program Evaluator may provide a copy of the complaint information from the electronic record. Extensive public records requests are routed through the office of Public Information and Legislative Office (PILO).

2.3 Consumer Education Website

States and Territories are required to provide information to parents, the general public, and when applicable, child care providers through a State website, which is consumer-friendly and easily accessible (658E(c)(2)(E)(i)(III)). The website must include information to assist families in understanding the policies and procedures for licensing child care providers. The website information must also include provider-specific information, monitoring and inspection reports for the provider, the quality of each provider (if such information is available for the provider), and the availability of the provider (658E(c)(2)(D); 98.33(a)). The website should also provide access to a yearly statewide report on deaths, serious injuries, and the number of cases of substantiated child abuse that have occurred in child care settings. To assist families with any additional questions, the website should provide contact information for local child care resource and referral organizations and any other agencies that can assist families in better understanding the information on the website.

To certify, respond to questions 2.3.1 through 2.3.10 by describing how the Lead Agency meets these requirements and provide the link in 2.3.11. Please note that any changes made to the web links provided below in this section after the CCDF Plan is approved are considered substantial changes and CCDF Plan Amendments will be required.

2.3.1 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that its website is consumer-friendly and easily accessible:

The website is designed with most programs accessible from the homepage, or within 3-clicks from the homepage. The Child Care Services section has a left navigation menu which lists child care related rules, regulations and resources in detail. Within that menu all other child care related topics are included.

2.3.2 Describe how the website ensures the widest possible access to services for families that speak languages other than English (98.33(a)):

On the bottom right corner of each web page is a translate button, which allows the web page to be translated across several dozen languages, powered by Google Translate.

2.3.3 Describe how the website ensures the widest possible access to services for persons with disabilities:

The site is designed to be 508 compliant. We attempt to use alt-tags on relevant photos, embed readable PDF documents, and spell out statements that open as a hyperlink so that screen readers and other tools can easily convey what the person with the disability is attempting to open. More information can be found here: <https://www.tn.gov/web-policies/accessibility.html>

2.3.4 Lead Agency processes related to child care.

A required component of the consumer education website is a description of Lead Agency policies and procedures relating to child care (98.33(a) (1)). This information includes a description of how the state/territory licenses child care, a rationale for exempting providers from licensing requirements, the procedure for conducting monitoring and inspections of providers, and the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks.

- a) Provide the link to how the Lead Agency licenses child care providers, including the rationale for exempting certain providers from licensing requirements, as described in section 5.3.6:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/how-to-become-a-licensed-child-care-provider.html>

Tennessee statute includes provisions for exempting a number of programs/facilities from licensure. Entities within this group include the following:

- Entities licensed or regulated by other agencies
- Preschool/school-age, Title I program, school-administered regulated by the Department of Education

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- Private or parochial kindergartens
 - Centers operated by church-related schools regulated by the Department of Education
 - Educational programs
 - Parents Day Out
 - Recreational programs
 - Camp programs
 - Casual Care
 - Boys and Girls Clubs
 - Individuals providing care for up to four children who are not related to the educator

Link to Exempt Statute:

[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Exempt -
Child_Care_Services.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Exempt_-_Child_Care_Services.pdf)

Among the exemptions allowed by statute, only the three categories below are allowed to participate in the Child Care Certificate Program (CCCP):

- Centers regulated by the Department of Education
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Authorized Professionals (individuals that care for up to four children who are not related to the educator)

In order to participate in CCCP these entities enter into a contract with the Lead Agency that includes compliance with all CCDBG requirements including monitoring for health and safety.

- b) Provide the link to the procedure for conducting monitoring and inspections of child care providers, as described in section 5.3.2:

Child Care Program Evaluators monitor licensed child care agencies for compliance with licensure rules and statutes and to provide technical assistance to ensure the health and safety of children in licensed child care agencies.

All licensed child care facilities must receive a minimum of one (1) announced evaluation visit during the licensing year. Announced re-evaluation visits must cover all areas of the child care licensing rules.

Unannounced agency visits are conducted based on the agency's licensing year and the numbers of unannounced visits are determined by an agency's star rating as follow:

Unannounced Visit Schedule*	
Full Year Programs	
Zero star, new agencies and agencies declining to participate in the star rating	Six (6) unannounced visits
One (1) star agencies	Five (5) unannounced visits
Two (2) star and three (3) star agencies	Four (4) unannounced visits
Nine (9) and ten (10) month programs	
Zero star, new agencies and agencies declining to participate in star rating	Four (4) unannounced visits
One (1) star agencies	Four (4) unannounced visits
Two (2) star and three (3) star agencies	Three (3) unannounced visits

*Any agency that provides transportation will receive an additional unannounced agency visit;

*Any agency on a Safety Plan will receive weekly unannounced agency visits until the Safety Plan is lifted. (It is at the discretion of the Program Supervisor to alter this schedule);

*An agency may receive additional visits based on complaints, legal enforcement actions and follow-up visits related to violations.

During each unannounced agency visit, Program Evaluators must, at a minimum, review all of the major high-risk areas and be observant for safety hazards. The high areas include –

- i. Failure to follow any rule related to the proper transportation of children by employees, substitutes, volunteers, agents or contractors of the agency;
- ii. Adult: Child Ratios;
- iii. Failure to complete required background checks on staff;
- iv. Corporal punishment/inappropriate discipline;
- v. Lack of Insurance;

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- vi. Failure to report suspicion of abuse or neglect;
 - vii. Falsification of documents required by the Department;
 - viii. Failure to have CPR/First Aid certification as required by the Department;]
 - ix. Lack of proper supervision of children;
 - x. Failure to properly dispense or store medications;
 - xi. Failure to remove persons from access to children following notification of a prohibited criminal background or pending criminal charge or following notification of the person's validated status as a perpetrator of child abuse;
 - xii. Failure to properly store hazardous items such as, but not limited to, cleaning products, pesticides, hazardous chemicals, or other poisonous items; and
 - xiii. Failure to properly remove or secure firearms within the child care agency area which are under the ownership or control of the agency, or its staff substitutes or other persons permitted access to the children, or failure to prevent exposure of children in the agency's care to firearms which are under the control of the agency, or its staff, substitutes or other persons who have been permitted by the agency to have access to the children.

If violations are observed during any agency visit, the Program Evaluator will assist the child care agency staff in completing a Plan of Corrective Action.

Any major high-risk violations that are not corrected during the visit require a five (5) day follow-up visit.

Add the info above (monitoring and inspection procedures) to the following page:
<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/how-to-become-a-licensed-child-care-provider.html>

- c) Provide the link to the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks for staff members of child care providers and the offenses that prevent individuals from being employed by a child care provider or receiving CCDF funds, as described in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.6:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/child-care-resources-for-providers/background-checks-for-child-care-employees.html>

2.3.5 List of providers

The consumer education website must include a list of all licensed providers and, at the discretion of the Lead Agency, all providers eligible to deliver CCDF services, identified as either licensed or license-exempt. Providers caring for children to whom they are related do not need to be included. The list of providers should be searchable by ZIP Code.

- a) Provide the website link to the searchable list of child care providers:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/find-child-care.html>

- b) Which providers are included in the searchable list of child care providers:

- ☐ Licensed CCDF providers
- ☐ Licensed non-CCDF providers
- ☐ License-exempt center-based CCDF providers
- ☐ License-exempt family child care (FCC) CCDF providers
- ☐ License-exempt non-CCDF providers
- ☐ Relative CCDF child care providers
- ☐ Other. Describe: Programs approved under the Tennessee Department of Education.

- c) Describe what information is available in the search results. Specify if the information is different for different types of providers:

Provider information available on the Lead Agency's website may be accessed through a downloadable spreadsheet as well as basic and interactive search functions, including searches by address, county, and zip code. The information shared is the same for all providers.

The information available includes provider name, physical address, mailing address, county, telephone number, provider type, provider star rating, minimum and maximum ages served, capacity, open and close times, date opened, regulatory agency, and regulatory Program Evaluator name and telephone number. Additional information detailing program, environmental, or accessibility includes:

- Offers scholarships (Y/N)
- Offers sliding fee scale (Y/N)
- Offers multi-child discount (Y/N)
- Wheelchair Accessible (Y/N)

- Near public transportation (Y/N)
- Approved for transportation (Y/N)
- Charges a fee for transportation (Y/N)
- Participant in Child and Adult Care Food Program (Y/N)
- Non-Smoking (Y/N)
- No Dogs/Cats/Pets (Y/N)

Compliance history of providers, including monitoring and inspection reports, are also available using interactive searches at the website.

2.3.6 Lead Agencies must also identify specific quality information on each child care provider for whom they have this information. The type of information provided is determined by the Lead Agency, and it should help families easily understand whether a provider offers services that meet Lead Agency-specific best practices and standards or a nationally recognized, research-based set of criteria. Provider-specific quality information must only be posted on the consumer website if it is available for the individual provider.

a) How does the Lead Agency determine quality ratings or other quality information to include on the website?

- ☐ Quality Rating and Improvement System
- ☐ National accreditation
- ☐ Enhanced licensing system
- ☐ Meeting Head Start/Early Head Start requirements
- ☐ Meeting prekindergarten quality requirements
- ☐ Other. Describe:

b) For what types of providers are quality ratings or other indicators of quality available?

- ☐ Licensed CCDF providers. Describe the quality information: Licensed child care agencies (centers, family homes, and group homes) voluntarily participate in the Child Care Report Card and Star Quality Rating system.

The primary considerations that determine a center-based child care provider's Star Quality rating are:

- Director Qualifications
- Professional Development
- Parent/Family Involvement

- Ratio and Group Size
- Staff Compensation
- Program Assessment
- Developmental Learning

The primary considerations that determine a family or group home child care provider's Star Quality rating are:

- Professional Development
- Parent/Family Involvement
- Business Management
- Program Assessment
- Developmental Learning
- ☐ Licensed non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
- ☐ License-exempt center-based CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
- ☐ License-exempt FCC CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
- ☐ License-exempt non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
- ☐ Relative child care providers. Describe the quality information:
- ☐ Other. Describe: A limited number of child care centers regulated by the Department of Education (DOE) are assessed using the Environment Rating Scales[®]. Approximately 25 DOE centers are assessed annually.

2.3.7 Lead Agencies are required to post monitoring and inspection reports on the consumer education website for each licensed provider and for each non-relative provider eligible to provide CCDF services on the consumer education website. These reports must include results of required annual monitoring visits and visits due to major substantiated complaints about a provider's failure to comply with health and safety requirements and child care policies. The reports must be in plain language and be timely to ensure that the results of the reports are available and easily understood by parents when they are deciding on a child care provider. Lead Agencies must post at least 3 years of reports when available.

Certify by describing:

- a) How monitoring and inspection reports are in plain language. Include a website link to a sample monitoring report, or if reports are not in plain language, describe how

plain-language summaries are used to meet the regulatory requirements. Include a link to a sample report and summary.

The Lead Agency maintains monitoring and inspection reports at its website as a component of its Find Child Care function at the following website link: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/find-child-care.html>. Results of a monitoring and inspection report are accessible by viewing the compliance history associated with a unique child care provider.

- b) How monitoring and inspection reports and/or their plain-language summaries prominently display any health and safety violations, including any fatalities or serious injuries.

Website monitoring and inspection reports include date of visit, visit type, violation corrected date, violations, and corrective actions. Additional visit types were added to the system to specifically identify fatalities or serious injuries. All violations are prominently displayed.

- c) The process for correcting inaccuracies in reports.

Providers may contact the Child Care Licensing by phone, email, or in writing to identify report errors that are reviewed by Child Care Licensing field management who will make any needed corrections.

- d) The process for providers to appeal the findings in the reports, including the time requirements.

Providers may appeal enforcement actions by submitting a request in writing within ten (10) days. Appeals of enforcement actions are heard by a Child Care Board of Review, as required by T.C.A. § 71-3-510 was established to hear the appeals of the denial, revocation or the restriction or limitation of other than summary suspensions of child care agencies licensed by the lead agency. Inaccuracies may be corrected at any time by contacting Child Care Licensing by phone, email, or in writing to identify report errors.

- e) How reports are posted in a timely manner. Specifically, provide the Lead Agency's definition of "timely" and describe how it ensures that reports are posted within its timeframe.

Visit reports must be completed and encoded in the Tennessee Licensed Care System (TLCS) database within five (5) business days as required by Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 13 and Child and Adult Care Licensing Policy and Procedures Manual (Feb 2013). Child Care Licensing field management monitor this process through a review of visit information encoded by assigned staff that ensures information is encoded accurately and timely.

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- f) How many years of reports that the state/territory posts on its website, if any, beyond the required minimum of 3 years, where available (98.33(a)(4)(iv)).

Violations are available at the Lead Agency website from July 01, 2013. Corrective action and visit type information were added in 2017.

- g) The policy for removing reports after a certain amount of time has passed (e.g., after 7 years).

Violations are available at the Lead Agency website from July 01, 2013. There is no policy for removing reports after a certain amount of time has passed.

- h) Any additional providers on which the Lead Agency chooses to include reports. Note - Licensed providers and CCDF providers must have monitoring and inspection reports posted on their consumer education website.

☐ License-exempt non-CCDF providers

☐ Relative child care providers

☐ Other. Describe: Child Care Centers regulated by the Department of Education and exempt Boys and Girls Clubs that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program.

- 2.3.8 Aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of child abuse that have occurred in child care settings each year must be posted on the consumer education website. The information on serious injuries and deaths should be organized by category of care and licensing status, however, Lead Agencies are not required to breakdown the instances of substantiated child abuse by category of care and licensing status.

Certify by providing:

- a) The designated entity to which child care providers must submit reports of any serious injuries or deaths of children occurring in child care (98.16 (ff)) and describe how the Lead Agency obtains the aggregate data from the entity.

Licensure rules require child care facilities to notify the Lead Agency of all serious incidents the same day of the incident, by contacting the Complaint Hotline. Once received, this information is entered into the Tennessee Licensed Care System (TLCS) database.

Cases of child abuse and neglect are substantiated by the Department of Children's Services (DCS). The Lead Agency receives an investigation summary from DCS related to any allegations of abuse or neglect in licensed child care settings. Any documentation received from DCS that indicate cases of substantiated abuse are aggregated and verified with DCS annually and posted to the Lead Agency website.

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- b) The definition of “substantiated child abuse” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement.

Rules of the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services Child Protective Services Chapter 0250-07-09-.01:

(1) “Abuse” exists when a child victim is suffering from, has sustained, or may be in immediate danger of suffering from or sustaining a wound, injury, disability or physical or mental condition caused by brutality, neglect or other actions or inactions of a parent, relative, guardian or caregiver.

(10) “Neglect” means the actions or omissions of a parent, relative, guardian, or caregiver which subject a child victim to actual or threatened harm, including, but not limited to, conduct which leads to a child suffering from any of the conditions listed in the definition of “dependent and neglected child” set out at T.C.A. § 37-1-102(b)(13) (2016 and as amended).

(13) “Substantiated” means the classification assigned to an individual determined to be a perpetrator of abuse, severe child abuse, child sexual abuse, or neglect. The term substantiated also encompasses synonymous terms set out in rules, policy, and statute, including, but not limited to, “indicated”, “founded”, or other terms signifying the individual was determined to be the perpetrator of child abuse or neglect.

- c) The definition of “serious injury” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement.

The department defines injuries where treatment by a medical professional was necessary. If a medical professional determines that no injury occurred, or treatment is unnecessary, the incident is not counted as a serious injury.

- d) The website link to the page where the aggregate number of serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated instances of child abuse are posted.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html>

- 2.3.9 The consumer education website should include contact information on referrals to local child care resource and referral organizations. How does the Lead Agency provide referrals to local CCR&R agencies through the consumer education website? Describe and include a website link to this information:

The Lead Agency website includes a page dedicated to CCR&R. Information about how to contact CCR&R is also included in the Consumer Education Statement discussed in section 2.7.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/child-care-resource-referral-centers.html>

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- 2.3.10 The consumer education website should include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency, or its designee, or other programs that can help the parent understand information included on the website. Describe and include a website link to this information:

Contact information for the Child Care assistance and Child Care Licensing offices are maintained on the website and included in the Consumer Education Statement materials:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/child-care-assistance-office-locator.html>

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Child%20Care%20Staff%20Directory%20January%202018.pdf>

- 2.3.11 Provide the website link to the Lead Agency's consumer education website.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html>

2.4 National Website and Hotline

The CCDBG Act of 2014 required the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish a national website at ChildCare.gov, which includes a ZIP Code-based search of available child care providers, provider-specific information about the quality of care and health and safety compliance, referrals to local CCR&R organizations, and information about child care subsidy programs and other financial supports available to families (658L(b)). Lead Agencies must also provide a description of how they will respond to complaints submitted through the national website and hotline (98.16(hh)).

- 2.4.1 Describe how the Lead Agency responds to complaints submitted through the national website and hotline regarding both licensed and license-exempt child care providers.

Complaints on licensed or license-exempt agencies inspected by the Lead Agency are encoded and referred to the licensing field office for further follow-up. Complaints on agencies regulated by the Department of Education are referred to the appropriate staff within the Department of Education for further follow-up.

- 2.4.2 Identify the designee responsible for receiving and responding to complaints submitted through the national website and hotline.

Complaints from the national website hotline can be called into the Tennessee Child Care Complaint Hotline at (800) 462-8261 or emailed to: ChildCareServices.DHS@tn.gov

The Customer Service Main Line receives a call or e-mail from a person who wishes to file a Child Care complaint, the call or e-mail is then forwarded to the appropriate regional Program Supervisor for follow up.

2.5 Additional Consumer and Provider Education

Lead Agencies are required to certify that they will collect and disseminate information about the full diversity of child care services to promote parental choice to parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers. In addition to the consumer education website, the consumer education information can be provided through CCR&R organizations or through direct conversations with eligibility case workers and child care providers. Outreach and counseling can also be effectively provided via information sessions or intake processes for families (658E(c)(2)(E); 98.15(b)(4); 98.33(b)).

In questions 2.5.1 through 2.5.4, certify by describing:

- 2.5.1 How the Lead Agency shares information with eligible parents, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers about the availability of child care services provided through CCDF and other programs for which the family may be eligible, such as state preK, as well as the availability of financial assistance to obtain child care services. At a minimum, describe what is provided (e.g., such methods as written materials, the website, and direct communications) and how information is tailored for these audiences.

The majority of information for parents, the general public, and child care providers is shared through the Lead Agency website and partner websites to include but not limited to the following:

- <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/humanservices.html>
- <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html>
- <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/>

Information is also made available through written materials or direct communication for individuals without internet access. Website resources are often grouped under a heading that identifies the targeted audience.

- 2.5.2 The partnerships formed to make information about the availability of child care services available to families.

The Lead Agency maintains a contract to provide statewide Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) services. The contract includes provisions for assisting families in identifying and understanding high quality care and for updating their website to include additional resources for families. The Lead Agency also partners with other state agencies to utilize Geographic Informational System (GIS) data to provide an interactive search for child care by typing in an address on the “Find Child Care” page.

2.5.3 How the Lead Agency provides the required information about the following programs and benefits to the parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, providers. In the description, include at a minimum what information is provided, how the information is provided, and how the information is tailored to a variety of audiences and include any partners who assist in providing this information.

- ☐ **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program:**
- ☐ **Head Start and Early Head Start programs:**
- ☐ **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):**
- ☐ **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP)Program:**
- ☐ **Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)program:**
- ☐ **Child and Adult Care Food Program(CACFP):**
- ☐ **Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP):**
- ☐ **Programs carried out under Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) :**

The Lead Agency provides the required information about the following programs and benefits to the parents of eligible children, the general public, and to providers as needed in the following manner:

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** Parents are informed about the website and TANF eligibility by Child Care Certificate Specialists during child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the TANF requirements, services and contact information. Brochures are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information on TANF to families. <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/families/families>
- **Head Start / Early Head Start:** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child Care Certificate Specialists, during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families. <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/head-start>
<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/program/early-head-start-ehs>
- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program:** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child Care Certificate Specialists during their child care

eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families. <https://thda.org/business-partners/liheap>

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs:** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child Care Certificate Specialists during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families. <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap.html>
- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program:** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child care Certificate Specialists during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families. <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/wic.html>; <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/women-infants-and-children-wic>.
- **Child and Adult Care Food Program:** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child care Certificate Specialists during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families. <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/children/dhs-nutrition-programs/child-and-adult-care-food-program.html>; <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/humanservices/children/dhs-nutrition-programs/learn-about-the-summer-food-service-program.html>
- **TennCare Medicaid:** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child care Certificate Specialists during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families.

<https://www.tn.gov/tenncare/members-applicants/eligibility/tenncare-medicaid.html>

- **Children’s Health Insurance Program (CoverKids):** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child care Certificate Specialists during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families. <https://www.tn.gov/coverkids.html>
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child care Certificate Specialists during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families. <https://www.tn.gov/education/finance-and-monitoring/idea.html>
- **Voluntary Pre-K Program:** Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child care Certificate Specialists during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information. Brochures and resources are available in English and Spanish. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families. <https://www.tn.gov/education/early-learning/voluntary-pre-k.html>; <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/voluntary-pre-k-program>

- 2.5.4 Describe how the Lead Agency makes available to parents, providers, and the general public information on research and best practices concerning children’s development, including physical health and development, particularly healthy eating and physical activity. Information about successful parent and family engagement should also be shared. At a minimum, include what information is provided, how the information is provided, and how the information is tailored to a variety of audiences and include any partners in providing this information.

The Kidcentraltn website serves as a clearing house for information on child health, education, development, and support for families, providers, and the public.

<http://www.kidcentraltn.com/>

- 2.5.5 Describe how information on the Lead Agency’s policies regarding the social-emotional and behavioral issues and early childhood mental health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models for those from birth to school age, are shared with families, providers, and the general public. At a minimum, include what

information is provided, how the information is provided, and how information is tailored to a variety of audiences and include any partners in providing this information.

Families:

- Through web materials such as those on kidcentraltn.com
- The Kidcentraltn.com website includes a number of resources regarding the social-emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health of young children.
- Positive Action - The Positive Action Prevention Program is an evidence-based substance abuse prevention program. The program addresses social, behavioral and academic performance, and core risk factors related to self-esteem, self-efficacy and overall risk-related behaviors of children and adolescents. The program is provided in schools and other community settings.
- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health – <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/program/positive-action>
- Early Connections Network - The Early Connections Network (ECN) is a System of Care (SOC) for children from birth - 5 years of age with social, emotional and behavioral needs and for their families. ECN brings together families, caregivers, teachers, providers, governmental agencies and supports to improve access to quality care for those with mental health challenges and to prepare children for school and for life. ECN has a special focus on working with the children and families of military service members and veterans. <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/program/early-connections-network>

Agencies:

- The Keeping Kids Safe Curriculum was designed to assist agencies in providing the most effective program possible - one that children will enjoy and understand. Research has established that children can be given the tools and knowledge to be safer. Because of this, the purpose of this safety curriculum is to improve the knowledge, self-confidence and assertiveness skills of children thereby:
 - Promoting disclosure of victimization
 - Enhancing communication between parents and children about personal safety
 - Reinforcing adult supervision and protection
 - Assisting children in learning to identify adults they can trust who can help them with problems too big for them to handle alone.

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/keeping_kids_safe_content_updated_wdraft_cover.pdf.

General Public:

- Through web materials such as those on kidcentraltn.com. The kidcentraltn.com website includes a number of resources regarding the social- emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health of young children.
- Positive Action - The Positive Action Prevention Program is an evidence-based substance abuse prevention program. The program addresses social, behavioral and academic performance, and core risk factors related to self-esteem, self-efficacy and overall risk-related behaviors of children and adolescents. The program is provided in schools and other community settings.
- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health – <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/program/positive-action>
- Early Connections Network - The Early Connections Network (ECN) is a System of Care (SOC) for children from birth - 5 years of age with social, emotional and behavioral needs and for their families. ECN brings together families, caregivers, teachers, providers, governmental agencies and supports to improve access to quality care for those with mental health challenges and to prepare children for school and for life. ECN has a special focus on working with the children and families of military service members and veterans. <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/program/early-connections-network>

Partners:

- Tennessee Voices for Children, Inc. (TVC) is a statewide and national source of referral, support, and advocacy for families and the systems that serve them. Through the Statewide Family Network and its other ten main programs, the organization informs, supports, and assists parents and providers statewide. The Lead Agency partners with TVC along with other public and nonprofit agencies under Team TN to support early childhood mental health services and programs for early care and child care agencies about social, emotional, and behavioral health and well-being. <http://www.tnvoices.org>

- 2.5.6 Describe the Lead Agency’s policies to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children from birth to age 5 in child care and other early childhood programs receiving CCDF funds (98.16(ee)), including how those policies are shared with families, providers, and the general public.

The child care licensing rules for licensed child care centers, group homes, and family homes includes requirements for having a written expulsion policy.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01:

(13) The agency shall have a written expulsion policy.

(a) The policy shall be:

- Clearly articulated to staff and parents;
- Developmentally appropriate and consistent; and
- Non-discriminatory.

(b) Other options shall be considered prior to expulsion, such as but not limited to reducing the number of days or amount of time the child may attend, or if applicable, referrals to the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), Early Intervention System, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

(c) Procedures shall be developed to allow for a planned transition of a child to another program if expulsion must occur.

(d) Aggregate data that includes reasons for expulsions shall be maintained and reported to the Department annually.

In addition, the Tennessee Department of Human Services Early Childhood Expulsion and Suspension Policy Statement was developed as a resource for all licensed agencies and non-licensed agencies (that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program):

Purpose

The Tennessee Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion policy statement is a requirement of the CCDBG Reauthorization Act of 2014 that aims to prevent, reduce, and eliminate suspension and expulsion in early care and educational settings.

High quality child care and early learning programs are important to preventing suspensions and expulsions in the early learning setting. It is recommended that programs focus on fostering the social and emotional health of children. Early childhood education programs are responsible for creating positive learning environments that focus on preventing expulsions and suspensions, encouraging partnerships between programs and families to support healthy development, and ensuring fairness, equity and continuous improvement to support children's social, emotional and behavioral health.

Definitions

- **Expulsion** – The permanent dismissal of a child from the assigned early childhood setting for disciplinary purposes.
- **Suspension**- The temporary removal of a child from the assigned early childhood setting for disciplinary purposes.

-
- **Social Emotional and Behavioral Health** – The child’s developing capacity to form secure relationships, experience and regulate emotions and explore and learn.
 - **Challenging Behavior** – Any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults.

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement policies that promote social emotional health to prevent, limit and eliminate suspensions and expulsions in early learning childcare settings.
2. Invest in professional development, training and education to prepare and develop educators so that they are equipped to support children’s social and emotional health.
3. Identify and adopt specific strategies to include positive behavior interventions and discipline and guidance practices to effectively manage challenging behaviors in the early learning setting.
4. Research best practices on classroom management techniques in order to assist educators in developing and implementing effective and intentional techniques.
5. Provide opportunities for family engagement activities such as but not limited to parent teacher conferences, parent meetings and developmental monitoring and screenings to allow educators, parents, and partners to develop strong partnerships and healthy support systems.
6. Provide parent resources to give parents additional information about community supports such as, but not limited to brochures, handouts and websites, on a variety of topics such as child development, social and emotional health, early mental health counselors, developmentally appropriate behavior management, support groups, family activities, etc.
7. Develop and implement a means of documenting efforts to reduce and prevent challenging behaviors; examples include teacher observations, teacher and classroom modifications, daily progress reports, parent conferences, consults with early mental health professionals.
8. Written policies should be communicated to parents and classroom expectations for positive behavior and consequences should be communicated to children and parents.

Children with Unique Needs and Challenging Behaviors

Early childhood programs are responsible for creating environments that promote children’s social, emotional, and behavioral health. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services early childhood prevention and discipline practices should be used as learning opportunities to guide children’s appropriate behavioral development.

The following outlines developmentally appropriate social, emotional, and behavioral health promotion practices in the early childhood and child care environment.

1. Forming strong, supporting and nurturing relationships with children and families including valuing of cultural diversity.
2. Reinforcing children's desired behaviors and implementing logical, non-punitive consequences that is consistent and developmentally appropriate for challenging behaviors.
3. 3. Paying distinct attention to the developmental appropriateness of both behavioral expectations and consequences for challenging behavior, given the substantial developmental and experiential differences among children birth through five years of age.

Resources

- https://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/social-emotional/mod1_0.html
- <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/2.2.0.8>
- <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/2.2.0.6>
- <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/training.htm>
- <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/program/regional-intervention-program-rip-centerstone>
- https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/research/pro/about_peabody_research/funded_projects/center_on_social_and_emotional_foundations_project_home.php
- <https://www.tn.gov/education/early-learning/tennessee-early-intervention-system-teis.html>
- <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/states.html#tennessee>

The Lead Agency also provides an Early Childhood Expulsion and Suspension Policy template to assist agencies in creating their personal document:

Sample Policy

The Tennessee Early Childhood Expulsion and Suspension policy statement is a requirement of the CCDBG Reauthorization Act of 2014 that aims to prevent, reduce, and eliminate expulsion and suspension in early care and educational settings.

It is recommended that early childhood programs focus on fostering social-emotional development, appropriately responding to challenging behaviors by incorporating preventive guidance, discipline practices and policies before ever considering expulsion or suspension from early childhood programs

Guidance for Prevention of Expulsion and Suspension and Expulsion

- ✓ Developmentally appropriate practices provide for stimulating and interactive learning environments, diversity, age appropriate expectations, small group activities, teachable moments and a knowledge of research-based evidence and best practices in child development and early learning and education.
- ✓ Invest in professional development, training and education to ensure educators have the competencies to support children's social and emotional health.
- ✓ Develop and implement classroom schedules that meet the needs of the children.
- ✓ Adapt learning environments to promote healthy social interactions with others.
- ✓ Develop healthy and nurturing relationships with children.
- ✓ Develop strong partnerships and relationships with parents.
- ✓ Develop and implement classroom expectations that are developmentally appropriate, clear and consistent.
- ✓ Provide opportunities family engagement.

Other Options Prior to Expulsion and Suspension

Prior to the expulsion or suspension of any child from this child care facility, the staff and Director will:

- ✓ Refer child to the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), Early Intervention System, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, etc.
- ✓ Reduce the number of days in care for a specified amount of time.
- ✓ Reduce the amount of time the child may attend for a specified amount of time.
- ✓ Conference with parents to discuss positive behavior interventions and development of goals.
- ✓ Document efforts to prevent and reduce expulsion.
- ✓ Identify and engage mental health consultants and community resources after obtaining parent permission.
- ✓ Provide reasonable accommodations.

Transition Procedures

If an expulsion must occur and the child care facility has exhausted all other options, the child care agency will assist the child and family in transitioning to another program by identifying and engaging mental health consultants and community resources to assist in

determining the most appropriate placement for the child. This child care facility will collaborate with parents / guardians to utilize appropriate referrals and community resources to assist in securing an appropriate placement for the child.

Resources

Regional Intervention Program (615) 963-1177
Tennessee Early Intervention System 1-800-852-7157
Tennessee Voices for Children (615) 269-7751
Centerstone (615) 460-4100
Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations For Early Learning (CSEFEL) (615) 322-8150
STEP, Inc. (423) 639-0125

Web Resources- Parent

www.parentcenterhub.org
www.teis.org
www.tnstep.org
www.parenttoolkit.com
www.cdc.gov/parents
<https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu>
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea>

Web Resources- Facility

www.ecmhc.org
www.pyramidmodel.org
<https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu>
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea>
www.challengingbehavior.org
www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/

Communication

Employees - The Expulsion and Suspension Policy will be incorporated into the employee / staff handbook and training practices. The agency Director will explain suspension and expulsion policies to all current staff and any new staff. All existing staff and any new staff are required to be knowledgeable of the policy and will sign a statement acknowledging they have received and read the agency's Expulsion and Suspension Policy.

Parents / Guardians – The Expulsion and Suspension policy will be incorporated into the parent handbook. Within thirty (30) days of adopting the policy, the Director shall disseminate and review the policy with parents / guardians of all currently enrolled

children. A copy of the policy will be disseminated and reviewed with newly enrolled children upon enrollment. All parents / guardians will sign a statement acknowledging they have received and read the agency's Expulsion and Suspension policy.

The agency will post a copy of the Expulsion and Suspension Policy within each classroom.

Parent Acknowledgement

I, the parent / guardian of _____

Child's Name

acknowledge that the ***Expulsion and Suspension Policy*** was explained to me and I have read and received a copy of the ***Expulsion and Suspension Policy***.

Parent Signature

Date

The Lead Agency will train all field staff on the expulsion policy by June 30, 2018.

The information has been shared with child care providers via email, presentations, and face to face meetings. The CCR&R will support child care providers in the implementation of these policies.

2.6 Procedures for Providing Information on Developmental Screenings

Lead Agencies are required to provide information on developmental screenings, including information on resources and services that the State can deploy, such as the use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program carried out under title XIX of the Social Security Act and developmental screening services available under Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in conducting those developmental screenings and in providing referrals to services for children who receive subsidies. Lead Agencies must also include a description of how a family or child care provider can use these resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive subsidies and who might be at risk of cognitive or other developmental delays, which can include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays (658E(c)(2)(E)(ii)). Lead Agencies are required to provide this information to eligible families during CCDF intake and to child care providers through training and education (98.33(c)).

2.6.1 Certify by describing:

-
- a) How the Lead Agency collects and disseminates information on existing resources and services available for conducting developmental screenings to CCDF parents, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers (98.15(b)(3)).

The Lead Agency collects information about existing resources and services available for conducting developmental screenings from the Tennessee Department of Health through monthly informational meetings and disseminates this information to all licensed agencies and non-licensed agencies that serve applicable populations and participate in the Child Care Certificate Program, as a resource to share with families. This information is also shared with CCDF parents through our Child Care Certificate Program Specialists during intake eligibility and redetermination. The information is also made available in Spanish, Somali, and Arabic.

Parents are also informed that if they have concerns or questions about a child's development and are interested in developmental screening, they can contact their child's pediatrician, local Health Department, <https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/localdepartments.html>, or their local TEIS (Tennessee Early Intervention System) <https://www.tn.gov/education/early-learning/tennessee-early-intervention-system-teis.html>, and for children 3 years and older, they can contact the School-Based Support Services, <https://www.tn.gov/education/early-learning/school-based-support-centers.html> of the local school system. Information about Developmental Monitoring and Screening, for providers and parents can be accessed through the following links shared with all potential families and providers:

- Milestone Moments - Learn the Signs. Act Early
https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/milestonemomentseng508.pdf
- Developmental Milestones Checklist
https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/all_checklists.pdf
- Learn More About Your Child's Development: Developmental Monitoring and Screening
https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/developmentalscreening.pdf

The following additional resources are shared with Parents and are available at kidcentral.com and TennCare:

Detailed information on developmental screening services is available at:
<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/screenings-newborns-and-infants-birth-12-months>
<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/screenings-beyond-12-months>

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- b) The procedures for providing information on and referring families and child care providers to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program—carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)—and developmental screening services available under Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.).

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/resources-for-parents.html>

- c) How the Lead Agency gives information on developmental screenings to parents receiving a subsidy as part of the intake process. Include the information provided, ways it is provided, and any partners in this work.

A Resource list is given to parents during the intake process. Parents are informed about the website and eligibility by Child Care Certificate Specialists during their child care eligibility and redetermination visits. Families are also given brochures that provide information on the requirements, services and contact information for accessing developmental screenings. Brochures and resources are also made available in languages other than English. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Family Engagement Quality Coaches also provide resources and information to families.)

- d) How CCDF families or child care providers receiving CCDF can use the available resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for CCDF children at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays.

The information provided to parents upon intake and renewal includes contact information that parents can use to schedule screenings.

- e) How child care providers receive this information through training and professional development.

Child care providers will receive training and technical assistance on developmental monitoring and screening by CCR&R Statewide Infant Toddler Specialist. The available dates for training and professional development will be made available to all providers through the CCR&R professional Development training calendar.

- f) Provide the citation for this policy and procedure related to providing information on developmental screenings.

The Benefits of Developmental Monitoring and Screening for Young Children is available at the Lead Agency website: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/resources-for-parents.html>

2.7 Consumer Statement for Parents Receiving CCDF Funds

Lead Agencies must provide CCDF parents with a consumer statement in hard copy or electronically (such as referral to a consumer education website) that contains specific information about the child care provider they select. This information about the child care provider selected by the parent includes health and safety requirements met by the provider, any licensing or regulatory requirements met by the provider, the date the provider was last inspected, any history of violations of these requirements, and any voluntary quality standards met by the provider. It must also describe how CCDF subsidies are designed to promote equal access, how to submit a complaint through a hotline, and how to contact local resource and referral agencies or other community-based supports that assist parents in finding and enrolling in quality child care (98.33(d)). Please note that if the consumer statement is provided electronically, Lead Agencies should consider how to ensure that the statement is accessible to parents and that parents have a way to contact someone to address questions they have.

2.7.1 Certify by describing:

- a) How the Lead Agency provides parents receiving CCDF funds with a consumer statement.

The Lead Agency created a consumer education statement that is accessible via the website. A companion handout was created for the Child Care Certificate Program to distribute to families that outlines information on the website and includes phone contact details for the Child Care Resource & Referral, Child Care Licensing, and Child Care Certificate Program offices. The handout is designed to enable the parent to locate the information on the website or contact the applicable office to get the information by phone if they do not have internet access.

- b) What is included in the statement, including when the consumer statement is provided to families.

The statement contains tools to help the parent choose the child care setting that best suits their family's needs and information about how to find specific information about the full range of eligible child care settings including:

- Health and safety requirements
- How to download a list of providers or search for agencies by zip code, county, or the parent's address
- Compliance history
- Provider quality rating

-
- Contact information for CCR&R, the Child Care Certificate Program, and Child Care Licensing office
 - Information on developmental monitoring and screening
 - Information about how to submit a complaint or report violations
- c) Provide a link to a sample consumer statement or a description if a link is not available.

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/resources-for-parents.html>

3 Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families

In providing child care assistance to families, Lead Agencies are required to implement these policies and procedures: a minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination periods, a process to account for irregular fluctuations in earnings, a policy ensuring that families' work schedules are not disrupted by program requirements, policies to provide for a job search of not fewer than 3 months if the Lead Agency exercises the option to discontinue assistance, and policies for the graduated phase-out of assistance. Also, procedures for the enrollment of homeless children and children in foster care, if served, pending the completion of documentation, are required.

Note: Lead Agencies are not prohibited from establishing policies that extend eligibility beyond 12 months to align program requirements. For example, Lead Agencies can allow children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start, state or local prekindergarten, and other collaborative programs to finish the program year. This type of policy promotes continuity for families receiving services through multiple benefit programs.

In this section, Lead Agencies will identify how they define eligible children and families and how the Lead Agency improves access for vulnerable children and families. This section also addresses the policies that protect working families and determine a family's contribution to the child care payment.

3.1 Eligible Children and Families

At the time when eligibility is determined, children must (1) be younger than age 13; (2) reside family of the same size and whose family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (as certified by a member of said family); and (3)(a) reside with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program or (b) receives, or needs to receive, protective services and resides with a parent or parents not described in (3)(a.) (658P(4)).

3.1.1 Eligibility criteria based on a child's age

-
- a) The CCDF program serves children from 6 (weeks/months/years) to 12 years (through age 12). *Note:* Do not include children incapable of self-care or under court supervision, who are reported below in (b) and (c).
- b) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care (658E(c)(3)(B); 658P(3))?

☐ No

☐ Yes, and the upper age is 18 (may not equal or exceed age 19). If yes, provide the Lead Agency definition of physical or mental incapacity:

The Lead Agency policy definition is “Physical or mental fitness means that an individual is fit for employment and does not suffer from any disability which would prevent his/her being gainfully employed.”

- c) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are under court supervision (658P(3); 658E(c)(3)(B))?

☐ No

☐ Yes, and the upper age is 18 (may not equal or exceed age 19).

- d) How does the Lead Agency define the following eligibility terms?

“residing with”:

The Lead Agency uses the TANF definition which is to be eligible to receive child care benefits, a child must live in a place of residence maintained by a specified relative (within the 5th degree) as his or her home and the home of the child. This same individual must have care and control of the child. A relative is considered to have care and control of child when he/she has the major responsibility for parental obligations of day-to-day care, support, supervision and guidance for the child.

The Lead Agency also utilizes the non-TANF definition, which provides as follows: In order for a child to be eligible to receive child care benefits they must be residing with a parent/guardian that meets the following criteria:

A biological or adoptive parent, relative or individual with legal custody to the child who:

- Provides a home for the child, and
- Exercises primary responsibility for care/control, and
- Is responsible for providing financial support, and
- Is included in the household (HH) unit.

“in loco parentis”:

The Lead Agency TANF definition of *in loco parenti* is a caretaker within the 5th degree of relationship to be eligible for assistance.

3.1.2 Eligibility criteria based on reason for care

- a) How does the Lead Agency define “working or attending a job training and educational program” for the purposes of CCDF eligibility at the time of determination? Provide the definitions below for:

“Working”:

The Tennessee program aligns its definition with the TANF program. For individuals receiving TANF cash assistance, any TANF-countable activity per the State's Work Verification Plan qualifies as "work" for the purposes of receiving child care assistance. Thirty hours of paid work per week, including self-employment and/or education and training hours, must be met to receive post-TANF cash child care assistance. Work that does not meet the federal minimum wage requirement is allowed, but the "countable" hours per week are determined by dividing the gross weekly income by the federal minimum wage.

Non-TANF Child Care:

To be eligible for Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance program, the parent/guardian must comply with the following work and/or education requirements:

1. The Parent/Guardian must be employed no less than thirty (30) hours per week, enrolled in a post-secondary education activity combined with employment or enrolled in a full-time post-secondary education program.
 - a. Parent/Guardian enrolled in post-secondary education programs must maintain full-time student status based on the definition of full-time status by the institution.
 - b. Parent/Guardian enrolled in graduate programs may count up to six (6) hours toward the work requirement with verification from the institution. An additional hour for each course up to two (2) hours can be counted as study time for a combined maximum of eight (8) hours.
2. In a two-parent household, both parents must meet one of the following criteria:
 - a. Both parents employed at least thirty (30) hours per week.
 - b. One parent employed at least thirty (30) hours per week with the second parent attending a post-secondary education program either full-time or part-time.

-
- c. Both parents enrolled in post-secondary education; one must be attending full-time as defined by the institution.
 - d. One parent is meeting the thirty (30) hour per week work requirement and the second parent is disabled and cannot meet the needs of the child. The parent with the disability may qualify with verification of the disability.

“Job training”:

“Attending job training or education” (e.g. number of hours, travel time):

For individuals receiving TANF cash assistance, any TANF-countable activity per the State's Work Verification Plan qualifies as "work" for the purposes of receiving child care assistance. For the post-TANF population, the following education and training hours can be counted: Class hours in any public school, Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) school (including Internet courses), or accredited private institution; Non-paid work performed in college service learning or volunteer programs; Internship hours; Laboratory hours; Tutoring hours received or provided by the participant; and Clients participating in educational activities will be allowed to count supervised homework/study time and one hour of unsupervised homework/study time for each hour of class time. Supervised homework/study time must be verified and documented to be countable toward educational training hours. The total countable homework/study time may not exceed the hours required or advised by the educational program.

- b) Does the Lead Agency allow parents to qualify for CCDF assistance on the basis of education and training participation alone (without additional minimum work requirements)?

☐ No. If no, describe the additional work requirements:

☐ **Yes.** If yes, define the job-search time limit, keeping in mind a minimum of 3 months is required to be provided when a parent experiences a non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity:

Post-secondary education is an allowable activity. There is no time-limit as long as the parent meets the criteria below:

Parent/Guardian enrolled in post-secondary education programs must maintain full-time student status based on the definition of full-time status by the institution.

For Two Parent Household: Both parents enrolled in post-secondary education; one must be attending full-time as defined by the institution.

-
- c) Does the Lead Agency consider engaging in a job search or seeking employment an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination (at application) and at the 12-month eligibility redetermination (must provide a minimum of 3 months)?

☐ No.

☐ **Yes.** If yes, describe the policy or procedure.

For TANF Child Care Eligibility:

Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance

a) This activity is time-limited to four (4) consecutive weeks or twelve (12) weeks total within a calendar year beginning with the date of engagement with ECMS.

b) Following the four (4) consecutive weeks, a one (1) week break is required prior to resuming Job Search and Job Readiness.

- d) Does the Lead Agency provide child care to children in protective services?

☐ No.

☐ **Yes.** If yes:

- i. Please provide the Lead Agency's definition of "protective services":

The child welfare agency (Department of Children's Services) determines eligibility for this category of assistance, and the Lead Agency functions as the point of entry for children in protective services to receive child care services.

Note: Federal requirements allow other vulnerable children identified by the Lead Agency not formally in child protection to be included in the Lead Agency's definition of protective services for CCDF purposes. A Lead Agency may elect to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care when foster care parents are *not* working or are *not* in education/training activities, but this provision should be included in the protective services definition above.

- ii. Are children in foster care considered to be in protective services for the purposes of eligibility at determination?

☐ No

☐ **Yes**

- iii. Does the Lead Agency waive the income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis (658E(c)(5))?

☐ No

☐ Yes

iv. Does the Lead Agency provide respite care to custodial parents of children in protective services?

☐ No

☐ Yes

3.1.3 Eligibility criteria based on family income

a) How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility at the point of determination?

The State Agency defines the following sources as countable income:

- Gross Wages or Salary
- Net Income from Non-Farm Self-Employment
- Net Income from Farm Self-Employment
- Social Security
- Dividends, Interest, Income from Estates or Trusts, from Net Rental Income or Royalties Public Assistance or Welfare Payments, Pensions and Annuities, Unemployment Compensation, Worker's Compensation, Alimony, Child Support, Veterans Pension, Education and Training Stipends received directly by the student or to cover living expenses.

b) Provide the CCDF income eligibility limits in the table below. Complete columns (a) and (b) based on maximum eligibility at initial entry into CCDF. Complete columns (c) and (d) only if the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85 percent of the current state median income (SMI) at the initial eligibility determination point. Fill in the chart based on the most populous area of the state (the area serving the highest number of CCDF children).

c) If the income eligibility limits are not statewide, describe how many jurisdictions set their own income eligibility limits and provide the income limit ranges across the jurisdictions (e.g. range from [lowest limit] to [highest limit])(98.16(i)(3)).

Income eligibility limits are statewide

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
--	-----	-----	-----	-----

Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	85% of SMI (\$/Month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	(IF APPLICABLE) (\$/Month) Maximum "Entry" Income Level if Lower Than 85% of Current SMI	(IF APPLICABLE) (% of SMI) [Divide (c) by (a), multiply by 100] Income Level if Lower Than 85% of Current SMI
1	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	3844	3228	2306/3228	60%/85%
3	4691	3988	2848/3988	60%/85%
4	5653	4805	3392/4805	60%/85%
5	6557	5574	3934/5574	60%/85%

Reminder: Income limits must be established and reported in terms of current SMI based on the most recent data published by the Bureau of the Census (98.20(a)(2)(i)) even if the federal poverty level is used in implementing the program. SMI guidelines are available at: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/liheap-im2017-03>.

d) SMI source and year

ACF website LIHEAP Calculations FFY 2018.

e) What was the date that these eligibility limits in column (c) became effective?

FY 2017-2018.

f) Provide the citation or link, if available, for the income eligibility limits.

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Child_Care_Certificate_Program_Income_Eligibility_Limits_and_Parent_Co-Pay_Fee_Table_Fiscal_Year_2017-2018.pdf

3.1.4 Lead Agencies are required to ensure that children receiving CCDF funds do not have family assets that exceed \$1,000,000, as certified by a family member (98.20(a)(2)(ii)).

a) Describe how the family member certifies that family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (e.g., a checkoff on the CCDF application).

A declaration statement is included on the Tennessee Department of Human Services Form HS-2853 Parent Agreement Form.

b) Does the Lead Agency waive the asset limit on a case-by-case basis for families defined as receiving, or in need of, protective services?

☐ No.

☐ Yes. If yes, please identify the policy or procedure:

3.1.5 Describe any additional eligibility conditions or priority rules applied by the Lead Agency during eligibility determination or redetermination (98.20(b)).

The Lead Agency has a policy on prioritization of need in the event of a waiting list for child care services. The Lead Agency currently does not have a waiting list. The following groups will be given priority in the event of a waiting list:

- Homelessness
- Diagnosed Disability
- Military

3.1.6 Lead Agencies are required to take into consideration children's development and promote continuity of care when authorizing child care services (98.21(f); 98.16(h)(6)). Examples include partnering with Head Start, prekindergarten, or other high-quality programs to create a package of arrangements that accommodates parent's work schedules; providing more intensive case management for families with children with multiple risk factors; and including in the eligibility determination process a question about whether a child has an Individualized Education Program or Individual Family Service Plan. Describe the Lead Agency's policies and procedures that take into consideration children's development and learning and that promote continuity of care when authorizing child care services.

Authorization of child care services is based on parental choice. Parents who have selected Head Start or Pre-K programs are eligible for before and after care after making an allowance for core hours.

3.1.7 Graduated phase-out of assistance.

Lead Agencies are required to provide for a graduated phase-out of assistance for families whose income has increased above the state's initial income threshold at the time of redetermination but remains below the federal threshold of 85 percent of the state median income. Providing a graduated phase-out promotes continuity by allowing for wage growth, allows for a tapered transition out of the child care subsidy program as income increases, and supports long-term self-sufficiency for families.

Lead Agencies that establish initial family income eligibility below 85 percent of SMI must provide a graduated phase-out by implementing a two-tiered eligibility threshold, with the second tier of eligibility (used at the time of eligibility redetermination) to be set at:

- i. 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size
- ii. An amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold that:

(A) Takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family

(B) Provides justification that the second eligibility threshold is:

(1) Sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability

(2) Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption.

At redetermination, a child shall be considered eligible if his or her parents are working or attending a job training or educational program even if their income exceeds the Lead Agency's income limit to initially qualify for assistance as long as their income does not exceed the second tier of eligibility (98.21(a); 98.21(b)(1)).

A family eligible for services via the graduated phase-out of assistance is considered eligible under the same conditions as other eligible families with the exception of the copayment restrictions, which do not apply to a graduated phase-out. To help families transition off of child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust copay amounts for families whose children are determined eligible under a graduated phase-out and may require additional reporting on changes in family income. However, Lead Agencies must still ensure that any additional reporting requirements do not constitute an undue burden on families.

a) Check and describe the option that best identifies the Lead Agency's policies and procedures regarding the graduated phase-out of assistance.

☐ N/A—The Lead Agency sets its initial eligibility level at 85 percent of SMI and, therefore, is not required to provide a graduated phase-out period.

☐ **The Lead Agency sets the second eligibility threshold at 85 percent of SMI.**

- Describe the policies and procedures.

1. **A parent's/guardian's eligibility and child's enrollment will be phased out after a ninety (90) day period of continuity of care when any of the following situations exist:**

- a. **The gross monthly income for the family/household exceeds the income standard for that family size;**

- b. **The parent/guardian no longer meets the work or education requirement.**

- Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

**Tennessee Department of Human Services Administrative Policies and
Procedures 11.02, Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance**

- ☐ The Lead Agency sets the second eligibility threshold at an amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold.
 - Provide the second eligibility level for a family of three.
 - Describe how the second eligibility threshold:
 - i. Takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family:
 - ii. Is sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability:
 - iii. Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption:
 - iv. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure:
- b) Does the Lead Agency gradually adjust copays for families eligible under the graduated phase-out period?
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Yes
 - If yes, describe how the Lead Agency gradually adjusts copays for families under a graduated phase-out.
 - If yes, does the Lead Agency require additional reporting requirements during the graduated phase-out period? (*Note: Additional reporting requirements are also discussed in section 3.3.3 of the plan.*)
 - ☐ No.
 - ☐ Yes. Describe:

3.1.8 Fluctuation in earnings.

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate how their processes for initial determination and redetermination take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings (658E(c)(2)(N)(i)(II)). The Lead Agency must put in place policies that ensure that temporary increases in income, including temporary increases that can result in a monthly income exceeding 85 percent of SMI (calculated on a monthly basis) from seasonal employment or other temporary work schedules, do not affect eligibility or family copayments (98.21(c)).

Describe the Lead Agency's policy related to the fluctuation in earnings requirement, including how temporary increases that result in a monthly income exceeding 85 percent of SMI (calculated on a monthly basis) do not affect eligibility or family copayments.

Per Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.13, Income Eligibility Determination for Child Care under the authority of Rules of Tennessee Department of Human Services Family Assistance Division Chapter 1240-01-54, Child Care Families First Program:

Regular overtime or seasonal income

Regular income may fluctuate from month to month due to overtime occurring on a regular basis. To produce a representative income, the income statements for the previous two-month period (8 weeks) will be averaged. This is consistent with Family Assistance policy.

Income from farm and non-farm self-employment

This type of income is usually received on an annual basis. Determine hours worked per week then determine monthly wage: Take gross wage divided by \$7.25 (or the State's current minimum wage). Convert to weekly amount/countable unsubsidized hours of employment.

Example: Annual gross net= \$15,000/52 weeks/ 30hours = \$9.61per hour Regular income obtained during a portion of the year

Some individuals have regular employment during certain months of the year: schoolteachers, school cafeteria workers, maintenance personnel, and Head Start workers. Some school employees are paid nine months of the year, some are paid 10 months, and some receive pay 12 months. The caseworker must determine the pay arrangement a school employee has so that income can be considered in appropriate months. The average monthly income will be considered available during the month it is received for school employees.

For example, a school employee who is paid 10 months of the year would be considered to have income for 10 months and 0income for 2 months.

In cases where employment has just begun it may be necessary to estimate the income in order to determine eligibility and the parent fee amount.

The Lead Agency accepts an employer's typed statement on company letterhead with employers or human resources representative's signatures describing the client's position, wage and hours.

- 3.1.9 Lead Agencies are required to have procedures for documenting and verifying that children receiving CCDF funds meet eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination (98.68(c)). Check the information that the Lead

Agency documents and verifies and describe, at a minimum, what information is required and how often. Check all that apply.

- ☐ **Applicant identity.** Describe: At initial determination.
- ☐ **Applicant's relationship to the child.** Describe: At initial determination.
- ☐ **Child's information for determining eligibility** (e.g., identity, age, citizen/immigration status). Describe: Birth certificate is used to verify age, immunization records are used to verify identity.
- ☐ **Work.** Describe: Income verification based upon check stubs or employer statement or tax documents.
- ☐ **Job training or educational program.** Describe: The Lead Agency requires that job training or educational status be verified by a written statement from an educational or vocational institution.
- ☐ **Family income.** Describe: The Lead Agency requires that job training or educational status be verified by a written statement from an educational or vocational institution until TANF cash assistance ends. Then, income is verified every 12 months either with existing information from the Family Assistance eligibility system used for other programs, or with client-provided verification.
- ☐ **Household composition.** Describe: Criteria for this item is described in Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.12, Determining Family Household Size for Child Care Eligibility. The following family members must be included in the household unit:
 1. The natural or adoptive parent or parent/guardian.
 2. The married spouse of the parent or parent/guardian, if residing in the home.
 3. Should a Families First recipient marry during receipt of assistance and elects to exclude the spouse as a household member the following applies: a. The income and resources of the spouse are not included for the first three (3) months of marriage. b. Any children who moved into the home with the spouse at the time the marriage occurred must be considered for addition to the household unit c. If the household closes while the spouse is excluded, the excluded spouse will not be eligible for TCC. The income of the excluded spouse will be counted in the household unit. Any children of the spouse will be included in the household unit and will be eligible for child care assistance.
 4. A second (2nd) parent or alleged parent of the children needing care when he or she is residing in the home, even if unmarried to the parent/parent/guardian.

5. All children needing child care who are residing in the home and for whom the parent/guardian has primary responsibility for care and control and who are related within a specified degree relationship.
6. Any child needing child care residing in the home for whom the parent/guardian or married spouse has primary responsibility for care and control.
7. Any minor siblings to the child needing care, and those siblings over age 18 or under age 19 if the sibling is still attending high school.

- ☐ Applicant residence. Describe: Verified through lease, utility bill, or identification.
- ☐ Other. Describe:

3.1.10 Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to assure the timeliness of eligibility determinations upon receipt of applications?

- ☐ Time limit for making eligibility determinations. Describe length of time:
The Lead Agency notices for redetermination are sent to the family/guardian forty-five (45) days prior to end date. Applications are processed within 15 business days upon receipt.
- ☐ Track and monitor the eligibility determination process.
- ☐ Other. Describe
- ☐ None

3.1.11 Informing parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirement.

Lead Agencies are required to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child younger than age 6 (98.16(v); 98.33(f)).

Lead Agencies must coordinate with TANF programs to ensure that TANF families with young children will be informed of their right not to be sanctioned if they meet the criteria set forth by the state/territory TANF agency in accordance with Section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care.

Note: The TANF agency, not the CCDF Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record.

-
- a) Identify the TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions:

The TANF agency is under the direction of the Lead Agency-Tennessee Department of Human Services.

- b) Provide the following definitions established by the TANF agency:

- “Appropriate child care”:

State licensed child care or approved unregulated (unlicensed) child care that meets the needs of the child.

- “Reasonable distance”:

Reasonable Distance - the distance range as determined on a case by case basis that is deemed to not cause any additional barrier/burden to the customer.

- “Unsuitability of informal child care”:

Informal child care or "unregulated" child care providers must comply with a health and safety check list and must provide information regarding their criminal background. Certain crimes such as those involving children, violence against another person, or those that are drug related will disqualify a prospective provider. Registers that can be accessed without a fee are checked, such as the Sex Offender Registry.

- “Affordable child care arrangements”:

Affordable arrangements are determined by the parent's ability to pay for child care available in their area. Parents/caretakers who are unable to locate and/or pay for care will not be penalized for their inability to perform required work activities due to lack of child care.

- c) How are parents who receive TANF benefits informed about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirements?

☐ In writing

☐ Verbally

☐ Other. Describe:

- d) Provide the citation for the TANF policy or procedure:

Tennessee Department of Human Services Form HS-2853 Parent Agreement Form.

3.2 Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families

Lead Agencies are required to give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, which can include vulnerable populations, in families with very low incomes and to children experiencing homelessness (658E(c)(3)(B); 98.46(a)). The prioritization of CCDF assistance services is not limited to eligibility determination (i.e., the establishment of a waiting list or the ranking of eligible families in priority order to be served).

Note: CCDF defines “child experiencing homelessness” as a child who is homeless, as defined in Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a) (98.2).

3.2.1 Describe how the Lead Agency will prioritize or target child care services for the following children and families.

- a) How does the Lead Agency define “children with special needs” and include a description of how services are prioritized:

Children with Special needs are defined as:

1. A child with a disability, as defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401);
2. A child who is eligible for early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20U.S.C. 1431 et seq.);
3. Child who is less than 13 years of age and who is eligible for services under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C 794); and
4. A child with a disability, as defined by the State.

Children with special needs are given the same priority status as non-disabled families with two notable exceptions; increased age limit for children with disabilities and priority status during a waiting list implementation by the Lead Agency.

- b) How does the Lead Agency define of “families with very low incomes” and include a description of how services are prioritized:

Families with very low incomes are defined below and may qualify for subsidy assistance in the order presented:

- i. Guaranteed subsidy eligible if receiving TANF and Gross income is tested against a Gross Income Standard which is 185% of the Consolidated Need Standard for the appropriate Assistance Unit size, as listed on the Family Assistance Standards Desk Guide.
- ii. Families transitioning from TANF benefits may be eligible for an eighteen (18)

month Transitional Child Care eligibility period and who meet the work requirement and have income that does not exceed 60% of the State Median Income guidelines. (Tennessee Code § Title 71-3-104).

- iii. Child-only guardians who have care and control of a relative child receiving TANF benefits may qualify for child care payment assistance and who meet the work requirement as defined by the state and income that does not exceed 60% of the State Median Income guidelines. (Tennessee Rules & Regulations 1240-01-54-.01).
- iv. Teen parents who are enrolled in and attending middle or high school and have income for mandatory household members that does not exceed 85% of the State Median Income guidelines. (Tennessee Rules & Regulations 1240-01-54-.01).
- v. Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance provides child care support to working families and those pursuing post-secondary education goals and income does not exceed 85% of the State Median Income guidelines.

- c) Describe how services are prioritized for children experiencing homelessness, as defined by the CCDF:

Children experiencing homelessness are given priority for receiving child care services and given a sixty (60) day grace period for submitting immunization records to child care programs.

- d) Describe how services are prioritized, if applicable, for families receiving TANF program funds, those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF (98.16(i)(4)):

Priority is solely based on income limits. Certain child-only cases are eligible for At-Risk Child Only Child Care, if funding is available. Former Families First recipients who are working at least 30 hours a week can receive up to 18 months of Transitional Child Care (TCC) after their cases are closed. There is a co-pay for At-Risk Child Only Child Care and Transitional Child Care. Benefits are time-limited to 60 months in a participant's lifetime for TANF (except transitional and non-working).

- 3.2.2 Lead Agencies are required to expend CCDF funds to (1) permit the enrollment (after an initial eligibility determination) of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained, (2) provide training and TA to child care providers and the appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving homeless children and families (addressed in section 6), and (3) conduct specific outreach to homeless families (658E(c)(3); 98.51).

-
- a) Describe the procedures to permit the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained.

The following exceptions were added to Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01:

The agency shall not admit a child into care until the parent/guardian has supplied the agency with a completed application, valid Tennessee Department of Health Official Immunization Certificates record (for children over two (2) months of age), and a health history. After an initial eligibility determination, children who are homeless and/or children in state custody may receive care prior to providing all required documentation as determined by the Department. Care without documentation of immunizations shall not exceed sixty days.

The agency shall maintain written documentation that the parent/guardian performed an on-site visit to the agency prior to the child being enrolled into care and that the agency provided and reviewed parent engagement strategies recognized by the Department with the parent during the required pre-placement visit. Exception: A pre- placement visit is not required for children of homeless families.

All children, including related children younger than age nine (9), shall have required records on file before care is provided. Exception: After an initial eligibility determination, children of homeless families and/or children in state custody may receive care prior to providing required documentation as determined by the Department.

Exceptions to this immunization record requirement may be made only if:

Care for children of homeless families and/or children in state custody is needed before documentation of immunizations can be confirmed. Care without documentation of immunizations for such children shall not exceed thirty days.

- b) Describe the procedures to conduct outreach for children experiencing homelessness (as defined by the CCDF) and their families.

Child Care Resource and Referral Family Engagement Quality Coaches will conduct outreach to families at shelters, identified by child care agencies and coordination services with the McKinney Vento homeless liaison at the Department of Education to provide resources and information about child care.

Note: The Lead Agency shall pay any amount owed to a child care provider for services provided as a result of the initial eligibility determination, and any CCDF payment made prior to the final eligibility determination shall not be considered an error or improper payment (98.51(a)(1)(ii)).

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- 3.2.3 Lead Agencies must establish a grace period that allows homeless children and children in foster care to receive CCDF assistance while providing their families with a reasonable time to take any necessary actions to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements (as described in section 5). The length of such a grace period shall be established in consultation with the state, territorial, or tribal health agency (658E(c)(2)(I)(i)(I); 98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)).

Note: Any payment for such a child during the grace period shall not be considered an error or improper payment (98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)(2)).

- a) Describe procedures to provide a grace period to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements, including how the length of the grace period was established in consultation with the state, territorial, or tribal health agency for:

- ☐ Children experiencing homelessness (as defined by CCDF).

Families may receive care for up to 60 days without documentation of immunization requirements.

Provide the citation for this policy and procedure.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- ☐ Children who are in foster care.

Families may receive care for up to 60 days without documentation of immunization requirements.

Provide the citation for this policy and procedure.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- b) Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates with licensing agencies and other relevant state, territorial, tribal, and local agencies to provide referrals and support to help families with children receiving services during a grace period comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements (98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)(4)).

The Lead Agency is the licensing authority. Exceptions were added to the child care rules to allow a grace period for immunizations.

- c) Does the Lead Agency establish grace periods for other children who are not experiencing homelessness or in foster care?

- ☐ No.

- ☐ Yes. Describe:

3.3 Protection for Working Families

3.3.1 12-Month eligibility.

The Lead Agency is required to establish a minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination period, regardless of changes in income (as long as the income does not exceed the federal threshold of 85 percent of the state median income) or temporary changes in participation in work, training, or educational activities (658E(c)(2)(N)(i) and (ii)).

This change means that a Lead Agency may not terminate CCDF assistance during the 12-month period if a family has an increase in income that exceeds the state's income eligibility threshold, but not the federal threshold of 85 percent of SMI. The Lead Agency may not terminate assistance prior to the end of the 12-month period if a family experiences a temporary job loss or a temporary change in participation in a training or educational activity. A temporary change in eligible activity includes, at a minimum, any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness; any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working; any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program; any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program; any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program that does not exceed 3 months or a longer period of time established by the Lead Agency; any changes in age, including turning 13 years old during the 12-month eligibility period; and any changes in residency within the state, territory, or tribal service area.

- a) Describe the Lead Agency's policies and procedures in implementing the minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination requirements, including when a family experiences a temporary change in activity.

The Child Care Certificate Program will conduct a redetermination for continued eligibility every twelve (12) months from date of application, or when family circumstances indicate a change, (e.g., a change in monthly income, wages, work hours, family size, etc.) that may affect eligibility.

- b) How does the Lead Agency define "temporary change?"

The Lead Agency defines temporary change as up to a 90 day approved change in employment or attendance at a job training or educational program or if parent or child has a prolonged illness.

1. Parent/Guardian is required to notify and provide any change in household income or size within ten (10) calendar days of the change.
2. TDHS may also become aware of changes upon receipt of information from a child care agency, change in status from SNAP, Family Assistance Service Center, etc.

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3. In cases where the change affects eligibility, the child care agency and parent/guardian will receive a ten (10) calendar day notice that their eligibility will phase out in ninety (90) days.

c) Provide the citation for this policy and/or procedure.

Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.02, Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance; Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.12, Determining Family Household Size for Child Care Eligibility; and Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 110.13, Income Eligibility Determination for Child Care.

3.3.2 Option to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period.

Lead Agencies have the option, but are not required, to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent's *non-temporary* loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program, otherwise known as a parent's eligible activity (i.e., if the parent experiences a temporary change in his or her status as working or participating in a training or educational program, as described in section 3.3.1 of the plan).

If the Lead Agency chooses the option to discontinue assistance due to a parent's non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity, it must continue assistance at least at the same level for a period of not fewer than 3 months after each such loss or cessation for the parent to engage in a job search and to resume work or resume attendance in a job training or educational program. At the end of the minimum 3-month period of continued assistance, if the parent has engaged in a qualifying work, training, or educational program activity with an income below 85 percent of SMI, assistance cannot be terminated, and the child must continue receiving assistance until the next scheduled redetermination or, at the Lead Agency option, for an additional minimum 12-month eligibility period.

- a) Does the Lead Agency choose to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent's non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity and offer a minimum 3-month period to allow parents to engage in a job search and to resume participation in an eligible activity?
- ☐ No, the state/territory does not allow this option to discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent's *non-temporary* loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program.
 - ☐ Yes, the Lead Agency discontinues assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent's non-temporary loss of work or cessation of eligible activity and provides a minimum 3-month period of job search. If yes:

- iii. Provide a summary describing the Lead Agency's policies and procedures for discontinuing assistance due to a parent's non-temporary change:

Parent/guardian may have up to ninety (90) calendar days of continued eligibility and Child Care Payment Assistance to "bridge" coverage during periods of non-compliance with the program work or education participation requirements for illness, reduction in work hours or unemployment.

- iv. Describe what specific actions/changes trigger the job-search period.

The job-search period is affected by non-compliance, i.e. a parent's refusal to participate in TANF requirements related to work, education, or job training, is reported or becomes known.

- v. How long is the job-search period (must be at least 3 months)?

90 days.

- vi. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.02, Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance Administrative.

- b) Lead Agency may discontinue assistance prior to the next 12-month redetermination in the following limited circumstances. Check and describe any circumstances in which the Lead Agency chooses to discontinue assistance prior to the next 12-month redetermination. Check all that apply.

☐ Not applicable.

- ☐ Excessive unexplained absences despite multiple attempts by the Lead Agency or designated entity to contact the family and provider, including the prior notification of a possible discontinuation of assistance.

- i. Define the number of unexplained absences identified as excessive:

The Lead Agency does not terminate eligibility. The child's enrollment with a child care provider may be terminated based upon the request of the child care provider due to excessive absences.

- ii. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure:

Tennessee Department of Human Services Form HS-2853 Child Care Certificate Program Parent Agreement.

- ☐ A change in residency outside of the state, territory, or tribal service area.
Provide the citation for this policy or procedure:

Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.02, Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance.

- ☐ Substantiated fraud or intentional program violations that invalidate prior determinations of eligibility. Describe the violations that lead to discontinued assistance and provide the citation for this policy or procedure. **NA**

3.3.3 Change reporting during the 12-month eligibility period.

The Lead Agency must describe the requirements for parents to report changes in circumstances during the 12-month eligibility period and describe efforts to ensure that such requirements do not place an undue burden on eligible families, which could impact the continuity of care for children and stability for families receiving CCDF services (98.16(h)(1)).

Note: Responses should exclude reporting requirements for a graduated phase-out, which were described in question 3.1.7(b).

Families are required to report a change to the Lead Agency at any time during the 12-month eligibility period if the family's income exceeds 85 percent of the state median income, taking into account irregular fluctuations in income (98.21(e)(1)). If the Lead Agency chooses the option to terminate assistance, as described in section 3.3.2 of the plan, they may require families to report a non-temporary change (as described in section 3.3.3 of the plan) in work, training or educational activities (otherwise known as a parent's eligible activity).

- a) Does the Lead Agency require families to report a non-temporary change in a parent's eligible activity?
 - ☐ No
 - ☒ **Yes**
- b) Any additional reporting requirements during the 12-month eligibility period must be limited to items that impact a family's eligibility (e.g., income changes over 85 percent of SMI or that impact the Lead Agency's ability to contact the family or pay the child care providers (e.g., a family's change of address, a change in the parent's choice of child care provider).

Check and describe any additional reporting requirements required by the Lead Agency during the 12-month eligibility period. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Additional changes that may impact a family's eligibility during the 12-month period. Describe:

The Lead Agency requires a parent/guardian to notify and provide any change in household income or size within ten (10) calendar days of the change. In cases

where the change affects eligibility, the child care agency and parent/guardian will receive a ten (10) calendar day notice that their eligibility will phase out in ninety (90) days. See Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.12, Determining Family Household Size for Child Care Eligibility and Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.13, Income Eligibility Determination for Child Care.

- ☐ Changes that impact the Lead Agency's ability to contact the family. Describe:

Families are required to report changes in home address or phone contact information as required by Tennessee Department of Human Services Form HS-2853 Child Care Certificate Program Parent Agreement.

- ☐ Changes that impact the Lead Agency's ability to pay child care providers. Describe:

The provider contract includes a clause that states that funds are subject to availability.

Any additional reporting requirements that the Lead Agency chooses, as its option to require from parents during the 12-month eligibility period, shall not require an office visit. In addition, the Lead Agency must offer a range of notification options to accommodate families.

- c) How does the Lead Agency allow for families to report changes to ensure that reporting requirements are not burdensome and to avoid an impact on continued eligibility between redeterminations? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Online forms
- ☐ Extended submission hours
- ☐ Other. Describe:

- d) Families must have the option to voluntarily report changes on an ongoing basis during the 12-month eligibility period.

Lead Agencies are required to act on information reported by the family if it will reduce the family's co-payment or increase the family's subsidy. Lead Agencies are prohibited from acting on information reported by the family that would reduce the family's subsidy unless the information reported indicates that the family's income exceeds 85 percent of SMI after considering irregular fluctuations in income or, at the

option of the Lead Agency, the family has experienced a non-temporary change in eligible activity.

- i. Describe any other changes that the Lead Agency allows families to report.

The Lead Agency allows the voluntary reporting of changes in income and employment as well as residency details, including changes in household size and composition which may result in an adjustment to the parent co-payment based upon the newly reported income and/or program eligibility.

- ii. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11, Child Care Certificate Program.

3.3.4 Prevent the disruption of employment, education, or job training activities.

Lead Agencies are required to have procedures and policies in place to ensure that parents (especially parents in families receiving assistance under the TANF program) are not required to unduly disrupt their employment, education, or job training activities to comply with the Lead Agency's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility for assistance (658E(c)(2)(N)(ii); 98.21(d)).

Examples include developing strategies to inform families and their providers of an upcoming redetermination and that information required of the family, pre-populating subsidy renewal forms, having parents affirm that the information is accurate, and/or asking only for the information necessary to make an eligibility redetermination. In addition, states and territories can offer a variety of family-friendly methods for submitting documentation for eligibility redetermination.

- a) Describe the Lead Agency's procedures and policies to ensure that parents (especially parents receiving TANF program funds) do not have their employment, education, or job training unduly disrupted to comply with the state/territory's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility. List relevant policy citations.

The Lead Agency allows parents to submit applications and verification via mail, fax or in person. However, a face to face meeting is not required. Telephone interview based upon parent availability are conducted.

Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.23, Redetermination Procedures for Child Care Eligibility and Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.19, Child Care Certificate Application Process.

b) How are families allowed to submit documentation for redetermination? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Mail
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Online forms
- ☐ Fax
- ☐ In-person
- ☐ Extended submission hours
- ☐ Other. Describe:

3.4 Family Contribution to Payments

Lead Agencies are required to establish and periodically revise a sliding-fee scale for CCDF families that varies based on income and the size of the family to determine each family's contribution (i.e., co-payment) that is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF funds (658E(c)(5)). In addition to income and the size of the family, the Lead Agency may use other factors when determining family contributions/co-payments. Lead Agencies, however, may NOT use cost of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining copayments (98.45(k)(2)).

Note: To help families transition off of child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust co-pay amounts for families determined to be eligible under a graduated phase-out. However, section 3.4 applies *only* to families in their initial/entry eligibility period. See section 3.1.4 Graduated Phase-Out regarding co-pays during the graduated phase-out period.

3.4.1 Provide the CCDF co-payments in the chart below according to family size for one child in care.

a) Fill in the chart based on the most populous area of the State (area serving highest number of CCDF children).

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Family Size	Lowest “Entry” Income Level Where Family Is First Charged Co-Pay (Greater Than \$0)	What Is the Monthly Co-Payment for a Family of This Size Based on the Income Level in (a)?	The Co-Payment in Column (b) is What Percentage of the Income in Column (a)?	Highest “Entry” Income Level Before a Family Is No Longer Eligible	What Is the Monthly Co-Payment for a Family of This Size Based on the Income Level in (d)?	The Co-Payment in Column (e) is What Percentage of the Income in Column (d)?
1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	1-380	3	<1%	3228	34	<1%
3	1-469	4	<1%	3988	42	<1%
4	1-565	5	<1%	4805	50	<1%
5	1-656	5	<1%	5574	58	<1%

b) What is the effective date of the sliding-fee scale(s)?

The Income Eligibility Limits and Parent Co-Pay Fee Tables are updated each Federal Fiscal Year and are implemented on October 1st for each corresponding year.

c) Provide the link to the sliding-fee scale:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Child_Care_Certificate_Program_Income_Eligibility_Limits_and_Parent_Co-Pay_Fee_Table_Fiscal_Year_2017-2018.pdf

d) If the sliding-fee scale is not statewide, describe how many jurisdictions set their own sliding-fee scale (98.16(i)(3)).

The sliding-fee scale is statewide.

3.4.2 How will the family’s contribution be calculated, and to whom will it be applied? Check all that apply.

☐ The fee is a dollar amount and:

☐ The fee is per child, with the same fee for each child.

-
- ☐ The fee is per child and is discounted for two or more children.
 - ☐ The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.
 - ☐ No additional fee is charged after certain number of children.
 - ☐ The fee is per family.
 - ☐ The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe:
 - ☐ Other. Describe:
 - ☐ The fee is a percent of income and:
 - ☐ The fee is per child, with the same percentage applied for each child.
 - ☐ The fee is per child, and a discounted percentage is applied for two or more children.
 - ☐ The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.
 - ☐ No additional percentage is charged after certain number of children.
 - ☐ The fee is per family.
 - ☐ The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe:
 - ☐ Other. Describe:
- 3.4.3 Does the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine each family's co-payment (658E(c)(3)(B))? Reminder – Lead Agencies may NOT use cost of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining copayments (98.45(k)(2)).
- ☐ No.
 - ☐ Yes, check and describe those additional factors below.
 - ☐ Number of hours the child is in care. Describe:
 - ☐ Lower co-payments for a higher quality of care, as defined by the state/territory. Describe:
 - ☐ Other. Describe:
- 3.4.4 The Lead Agency may waive contributions/co-payments from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size (98.45(k)) or for families who are receiving or needing to receive protective services, as determined for purposes of CCDF eligibility, or who meet other criteria established by the Lead Agency

(98.45(k)(4)). Does the Lead Agency waive family contributions/co-payments for any of the following? Check all that apply.

- ☐ No, the Lead Agency does not waive family contributions/co-payments.
- ☐ **Yes**, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments for families with an income at or below the poverty level for families of the same size. The poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family size of 3 is \$1,066.
- ☐ **Yes**, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments for families who are receiving or needing to receive protective services, as determined by the Lead Agency for purposes of CCDF eligibility. Describe the policy and provide the policy citation.

Child care assistance for families receiving protective services is paid with SSBG funds.

- ☐ Yes, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments for other criteria established by the Lead Agency. Describe the policy and provide the policy citation.

3.4.5 Does the Lead Agency allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment in instances where the provider's price exceeds the subsidy payment (98.45(b)(5))?

☐ No.

☐ **Yes**. If yes:

- a) Provide the rationale for the Lead Agency's policy to allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment, including a demonstration of how the policy promotes affordability and access for families?

The provider contract allows the child care provider the flexibility to charge the parent the cost difference between the state maximum rate and the provider public rate. This is allowed because the cost of quality care currently may exceed the Lead Agency's current rates for reimbursement.

- b) Provide data (including data on the size and frequency of such amounts) on the extent to which CCDF providers charge additional amounts to families.

Data on the extent to which providers charge additional amounts to families is currently not available.

- c) Describe the Lead Agency's analysis of the interaction between the additional amounts charged to families with the required family co-payment, and the ability of current subsidy payment rates to provide access to care without additional fees.

The Lead Agency has developed a recommendation to increase the reimbursement rates. However, any recommended increase is subject to approval by the Tennessee Legislature.

3.4.6 How will the Lead Agency ensure that the family contribution/co-payment, based on a sliding-fee scale, is affordable and is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF funds? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Limit the maximum co-payment per family. Describe:
- ☐ Limit the combined amount of co-payment for all children to a percentage of family income. List the percentage of the co-payment limit and describe.

The current co-pay fees are calculated so that a family receiving subsidized child care pays between 1-8% of their income toward that expense (not applicable if more than one child is receiving assistance).

- ☐ Minimize the abrupt termination of assistance before a family can afford the full cost of care (“the cliff effect”) as part of the graduated phase-out of assistance discussed in 3.1.5. Describe:
- ☐ Other. Describe:

4 Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children

A core purpose of CCDF is to promote parental choice and to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suit their family’s needs. Parents have the option to choose from center-based care, family child care or care provided in the child’s own home. In supporting parental choice, the Lead Agencies must ensure that families receiving CCDF funding have the opportunity to choose from the full range of eligible child care settings and must provide families with equal access to child care that is comparable to that of non-CCDF families. Lead Agencies must employ strategies to increase the supply and to improve the quality of child care services, especially in underserved areas. This section addresses strategies that the Lead Agency uses to promote parental choice, ensure equal access, and increase the supply of child care.

4.1 Parental Choice in Relation to Certificates, Grants, or Contracts

The parent(s) of each eligible child who receive(s) or is offered financial assistance for child care services has the option of either receiving a child care certificate or, if available, enrolling his or her child with a provider that has a grant or contract for providing child care services (658E(c)(2)(A); 98.30(a)). Even if a parent chooses to enroll his or her child with a provider who has a grant or contract, the parent will select the provider, to the extent practicable. If a parent chooses to use a certificate, the Lead

Agency shall provide information to the parent on the range of provider options, including care by sectarian providers and relatives. Lead Agencies must require providers chosen by families to meet health and safety standards and has the option to require higher standards of quality. Lead agencies are reminded that any policies and procedures should not restrict parental access to any type of care or provider (e.g. center care, home care, in-home care, for-profit provider, non-profit provider or faith-based provider, etc.) (98.15 (a)(5)).

- 4.1.1 Describe the child care certificate, including when it is issued to parents (before or after the parent has selected a provider) and what information is included on the certificate (98.16 (q)).

The child care certificate contains demographic information for the parent and the child, the parent work activity, the name and address of the provider, the funding eligibility category, and the amount of co-pay, if applicable.

- 4.1.2 Describe how the parent is informed that the child certificate allows the option to choose from a variety of child care categories, such as private, not-for-profit, faith-based providers; centers; FCC homes; or in-home providers (658E(c)(2)(A)(i); 658P(2); 658Q). Check all that apply.

- ☐ Certificate that provides information about the choice of providers
- ☐ Certificate that provides information about the quality of providers
- ☐ Certificate not linked to a specific provider, so parents can choose any provider
- ☐ Consumer education materials on choosing child care
- ☐ Referral to child care resource and referral agencies
- ☐ Co-located resource and referral in eligibility offices
- ☐ Verbal communication at the time of the application
- ☐ Community outreach, workshops, or other in-person activities
- ☐ Other. Describe:

Lead Agency provides consumer education and explains parent's rights and responsibilities on choosing child care. If necessary, the parent is referred to CCR&R for additional assistance. Once the parent makes a selection of a provider, the Lead Agency directly issues a certificate to the child care provider of choice.

- 4.1.3 Child care services available through grants or contracts.
- a) In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency provide child care services through grants or contracts for child care slots (658A(b)(1))? *Note: Do not check*

“yes” if every provider is simply required to sign an agreement to be paid in the certificate program.

☐ **No.** If no, skip to 4.1.4.

☐ **Yes.** If yes, describe:

How the Lead Agency ensures that parents who enroll with a provider who has a grant or contract have choices when selecting a provider:

The type(s) of child care services available through grants or contracts:

The entities that receive contracts (e.g., shared services alliances, CCR&R agencies, FCC networks, community-based agencies, child care providers):

The process for accessing grants or contracts:

How rates for contracted slots are set through grants and contracts:

How the Lead Agency determines which entities to contract with for increasing supply and/or improving quality:

If contracts are offered statewide and/or locally:

b) Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for child care services to increase the supply and/or quality of specific types of care? Check all that apply.

☐ Programs to serve children with disabilities

☐ Programs to serve infants and toddlers

☐ Programs to serve school-age children

☐ Programs to serve children needing non-traditional hour care

☐ Programs to serve homeless children

☐ Programs to serve children in underserved areas

☐ Programs that serve children with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds

☐ Programs that serve specific geographic areas

☐ Urban

☐ Rural

4.1.4 Certify by describing the Lead Agency’s procedures for ensuring that parents have unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds (658E(c)(2)(B); 98.16(t)).

The Lead Agency requires licensed or approved child care agencies to permit parents/guardians immediate access to their children, unless an Order of Protection or other legal document otherwise restricts or prohibits such access. The Lead Agency requires authorized child care professionals afford parents/guardians unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in care, unless an Order of Protection or other legal document otherwise restricts or prohibits such access.

4.1.5 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care (i.e., care provided in the child's own home) but may limit its use (98.16(i)(2)). Will the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

☐ No.

☐ **Yes.** If checked, what limits will the Lead Agency set on the use of in-home care? Check all that apply.

☐ Restricted based on minimum the number of children in the care of the provider to meet the Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage) requirements. Describe:

☐ Restricted based on the provider meeting a minimum age requirement. (A relative provider must be at least 18 years of age based on the definition of eligible child care provider (98.2). Describe:

☐ Restricted based on the hours of care (i.e., certain number of hours, non-traditional work hours). Describe:

☐ **Restricted to care by relatives.** Describe:

The Lead Agency only permits relative care in circumstances when the child in care resides in the provider's home, i.e. a child or grandchild.

☐ Restricted to care for children with special needs or a medical condition. Describe:

☐ Restricted to in-home providers that meet additional health and safety requirements beyond those required by CCDF. Describe:

☐ Other. Describe:

4.2 Assessing Market Rates and Child Care Costs

Lead Agencies have the option to conduct a statistically valid and reliable (1) market rate survey (MRS) reflecting variations in the price to parents of child care services by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child and/or (2) an alternative methodology, such as a cost estimation model (658E(c)(4)(B)). A cost estimation model estimates the cost of care by incorporating both data and assumptions to model what expected costs would be incurred by child care providers and parents under different cost scenarios.

Another approach would be a cost study that collects cost data at the facility or program level to measure the costs (or inputs used) to deliver child care services. The MRS or alternative methodology must be developed and conducted no earlier than 2 years before the date of submission of the Plan.

Note – Any Lead Agency considering using an alternative methodology, instead of a market rate survey, is required to submit a description of its proposed approach to its ACF Regional Child Care Program Office for pre-approval in advance of the Plan submittal (see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/ccdf-acf-pi-2016-08>). Advance approval is not required if the Lead Agency plans to implement both a market rate survey and an alternative methodology. In its request for ACF pre-approval, a Lead Agency must:

- Provide an overview of the Lead Agency’s proposed approach (e.g., cost estimation model, cost study/survey, etc.), including a description of data sources.
- Describe how the Lead Agency will consult with the State's Early Childhood Advisory Council or similar coordinating body, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, organizations representing child care caregivers, teachers and directors, and other appropriate entities prior to conducting the identified alternative methodology.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will use methods that are statistically valid and reliable and will yield accurate results. For example, if using a survey, describe how the Lead Agency will ensure a representative sample and promote an adequate response rate. If using a cost estimation model, describe how the Lead Agency will validate the assumptions in the model.
- If the proposed alternative methodology includes an analysis of costs (e.g., cost estimation model or cost study/survey), describe how the alternative methodology will account for key factors that impact the cost of providing care—such as: staff salaries and benefits, training and professional development, curricula and supplies, group size and ratios, enrollment levels, licensing requirements, quality level, facility size, and other factors.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will provide complete information that captures the universe of providers in the child care market.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will reflect variations by provider type, age of children, geographic location and quality.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will use current, up-to-date data.
- Describe the estimated reporting burden and cost to conduct the approach.

4.2.1 Please identify the methodology(ies) used below to assess child care prices and costs.

☐ MRS

☐ Alternative methodology. Describe:

☐ Both. Describe:

4.2.2 Prior to developing and conducting the MRS or alternative methodology, the Lead Agency is required to consult with the (1) State Advisory Council or other state- or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities and (2) organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors prior to developing and conducting the MRS or alternative methodology.

Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the:

a) State Advisory Council or other state-designated cross-agency body:

A survey designed to collect feedback regarding the annual market rate survey was distributed to the Tennessee Young Child Wellness Council, licensed child care agencies, and partners. (same response for items b) through d) below)

b) Local child care program administrators:

c) Local child care resource and referral agencies:

d) Organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors:

e) Other. Describe:

4.2.3 Describe how the market rate survey is statistically valid and reliable. To be considered valid and reliable, the MRS must represent the child care market, provide complete and current data, use rigorous data collection procedures, reflect geographic variations, and analyze data in a manner that captures other relevant differences. For example, market rate surveys can use administrative data, such as child care resource and referral data, if they are representative of the market. If an alternative methodology, such as cost modeling, is used, demonstrate that the methodology used reliable methods.

The Daycare Market Rate Survey utilizes the Department of Human Services' exhaustive list of reported provider rates across care type and child age, as well as the proportion of providers' enrollment that is subsidized. In order to minimize the effect of subsidization on market rate calculations, providers with more than half of their enrollments receiving subsidies for childcare are excluded. Additionally, a lower bar is set on weekly rates in order to exclude reported part-time rates from analysis. Finally, if a provider does not report a weekly rate, it is calculated using, for example, the daily rate provided.

After these adjustments are made to the data, the average market rate and ranked

percentiles are calculated for two tiers of the market, as well as for the state as a whole. The Top Tier Market is comprised of Tennessee counties that are one of the top 20 highest in population, or have one of the top 20 highest per capital personal income averages. The Lower Tier Market includes all those counties not in the Top Tier Market. Separating the two markets based on population and personal income captures the different conditions faced in each market, and exclusion of heavily-subsidized providers minimizes the Lead Agency's influence on percentile and average calculations.

4.2.4 Describe how the market rate survey or alternative methodology reflects variations in the price or cost of child care services by:

a) Geographic area (e.g., statewide or local markets). Describe:

The Market Rate data are gathered from an Annual Reporting Survey that is required of all licensed child care agencies in the state of Tennessee.

b) Type of provider. Describe:

Rate data for all active child care providers across the state are collected and reported for three provider categories: Day Care Centers, Group Homes, and Family Homes.

c) Age of child. Describe:

Within each provider category, rates are further categorized by age of child (infant through school-age).

d) Describe any other key variations examined by the market rate survey or alternative methodology, such as quality level.

Percentiles are reported for two groups of counties, as well as the state as a whole. The method used to identify the counties in the first group (Tier I Market) includes those Tennessee counties that were either one of the top-20 highest 2013 population counties or one of the top-20 highest 2011-2013 average per capita personal income counties. This method is preferable to one that relies on a ranking of the average daycare rates charged by day care centers. Use of population and personal income rankings allows selection based on measures that are likely correlated with the conditions in each market for child care services, while at the same time it separates the selection criteria from the Lead Agency's influence on the market rates.

4.2.5 After conducting the market rate survey or alternative methodology, the Lead Agency must prepare a detailed report containing the results of the MRS or alternative methodology. The detailed report must also include the estimated cost of care (including any relevant variation by geographic location, category of provider, or age of child) necessary to support (1) child care providers' implementation of the health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements and (2) higher quality care, as defined by the Lead

Agency using a quality rating and improvement system or other system of quality indicators, at each level of quality. The Lead Agency must make the report with these results widely available no later than 30 days after completion of the report, including posting the results on the Lead Agency website. The Lead Agency must describe in the detailed report how the Lead Agency took into consideration the views and comments of the public.

Describe how the Lead Agency made the results of the market rate survey or alternative methodology report widely available to the public (98.45(f)(1)).

Results of the market rate survey were posted on the Lead Agency website. Information within this section will be updated once the next MRS is completed in May 2018.

- a) Date of completion of the market rate survey or alternative methodology (must be no earlier than July 1, 2016, and no later than July 1, 2018).

The most recent market rate survey was completed in October 2016 and approved by the Lead Agency on December 15, 2017.

- b) Date the report containing results was made widely available—no later than 30 days after the completion of the report.

The results of the market rate survey were posted on the Lead Agency website on December 28, 2017 (13 days after final approval).

- c) Describe how the Lead Agency made the detailed report containing results widely available and provide the link where the report is posted.

In addition to posting the results on the Lead Agency website, a communication was also sent to child care agencies and partners on February 5, 2018.

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/2016%20Market%20Rate%20Survey.pdf>

- d) Describe how the Lead Agency considered stakeholder views and comments in the detailed report.

Results of a survey designed to collect feedback regarding the annual market rate survey will be reviewed and where possible incorporated into the 2017-2018 MRS scheduled to be conducted in May 2018.

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/2016%20Market%20Rate%20Survey.pdf>

4.3 Setting Payment Rates

The Lead Agency must set CCDF subsidy payment rates, in accordance with the results of the current MRS or alternative methodology, at a level to ensure equal access for

eligible families to child care services that are comparable with those provided to families not receiving CCDF funds. The Lead Agency must re-evaluate its payment rates *at least* every 3 years.

- 4.3.1 Provide the base payment rates and percentiles (based on the most recent MRS) for the following categories below. If the Lead Agency conducted an MRS (only or in combination with an alternative methodology), also report the percentiles based on the most recent MRS. The ages and types of care listed below are meant to provide a snapshot of the categories on which rates can be based and are not intended to be comprehensive of all categories that might exist or to reflect the terms used by the Lead Agency for particular ages. Please use the most populous geographic region (area serving highest number of CCDF children).

Responses below are based upon the 2016 MRS. Results of the 2017-2018 MRS are scheduled to be available in May/June 2018. Responses below will be updated with the 2017-2018 results in June 2018.

- a) Infant (6 months), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region
Rate \$132 per week unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)
Percentile of most recent MRS: 16th-20th
- b) Infant (6 months), full-time licensed FCC home in the most populous geographic region
Rate: Group:\$115, Family: \$100 per week unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)
Percentile of most recent MRS: Group: 22nd-28th, Family:4th-18th
- c) Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region
Rate \$115 per week unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)
Percentile of most recent MRS: 12th-16th
- d) Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region
Rate Group:\$100, Family: \$95 per week unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)
Percentile of most recent MRS: Group: 14th-22nd, Family: 6th-17th
- e) Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region

-
- Rate \$99 per week unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)
- Percentile of most recent MRS: 18th
- f) Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region
- Rate Group: \$90, Family: \$85 per week unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)
- Percentile of most recent MRS: Group: 9th-12th, Family: 9th-15th
- g) School-age child (6 years), full-time licensed center care in most populous geographic region
- Rate \$In-School:50, Out-of-School:75 per Week unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)
- Percentile of most recent MRS: In-School: 33rd-38th, Out-of-School: 51st-55th
- h) School-age child (6 years), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region
- Rate \$Group/Family In-School: 50, Group/Family Out-of-School: 75 per Week unit of time (e.g., hourly, daily, weekly, monthly)
- Percentile of most recent MRS: Group In-School: 20th-31st, Group Out-of-School: 28th-39th, Family InSchool: 6th-11th, Family Out-of-School: 32nd-33rd
- i) Describe how part-time and full-time care were defined and calculated.
- Part-Time = less than 20 hours per week, Full-Time = 20 or more hours per week
- j) Provide the effective date of the current payment rates (i.e., date of last update based on most recent MRS).
- k) Provide the citation or link, if available, to the payment rates.
- https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Provider_Rate_Schedule_10-1-15.pdf
- l) If the payment rates are not set by the Lead Agency for the entire state/territory, describe how many jurisdictions set their own payment rates (98.16(i)(3)). NA
- 4.3.2 Lead Agencies can choose to establish tiered rates, differential rates, or add-ons on top of their base rates as a way to increase payment rates for targeted needs (i.e., a higher rate for special needs children as both an incentive for providers to serve children with special needs and as a way to cover the higher costs to the provider to provide care for special needs children).

Check and describe the types of tiered reimbursement or differential rates, if any, the Lead Agency has chosen to implement. In the description of any tiered rates or add-ons, at a minimum, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates, including if the rates were based on the MRS and/or an alternative methodology, and the amount of the rate. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Differential rate for *non-traditional hours*. Describe:
- ☐ Differential rate for *children with special needs*, as defined by the state/territory. Describe:
- ☐ Differential rate for *infants and toddlers*. Describe:
Tiered reimbursement rates based upon care levels (same response for others checked below)
- ☐ Differential rate for *school-age programs*. Describe:
- ☐ Differential rate for *higher quality*, as defined by the state/territory. Describe:
- ☐ Other differential rates or tiered rates. Describe:
- ☐ Tiered or differential rates are not implemented.

4.4 Summary of Facts Used To Determine That Payment Rates Are Sufficient To Ensure Equal Access

4.4.1 Lead Agencies must certify that CCDF payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services comparable to those provided by families not receiving CCDF assistance (98.16(a)). Certify that payment rates reported in 4.3.1 are sufficient to ensure equal access by providing the following summary of facts (98.45(b)):

- a) Describe how a choice of the full range of providers pursuant to 98.30(e)(1) is made available; the extent to which child care providers participate in the CCDF system; and any barriers to participation, including barriers related to payment rates and practices

The child care certificate can be used at any regulated, or authorized agency (exception – non-TANF can only be used at a licensed child care agency). Approximately, ninety-five percent of agencies that that care for children receiving child care assistance are regulated center, group, or family agencies. Approximately, sixty-eight percent of DHS licensed or Department of Education approved agencies participate in the child care certificate program.

- b) Describe how payment rates are adequate and have been established based on the most recent MRS or alternative methodology

Seventy percent of child enrollments are in agencies with a 1, 2, or 3 quality star rating. These agencies are eligible for bonus payments beyond the base rate per DHS policy.

- c) Describe how base payment rates enable providers to meet health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements under CCDF

Base payment rates are established through the market rate survey and enable providers to meet minimum health, safety, and staffing requirements. The quality bonus payments established through the tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) support standards that exceed minimum licensing requirements and promote demonstration by providers of higher-quality care.

- d) Describe how the Lead Agency took the cost of higher quality into account, including how payment rates for higher-quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a QRIS or other system of quality indicators, relate to the estimated cost of care at each level of quality

Bonus payments are available for agencies that earn One (5%), Two (15%), or Three (20%) Stars through the QRIS.

- e) How co-payments based on a sliding fee scale reported in 3.4.1 are affordable

See response provided in section 3.4.6

- f) Describe how Lead Agencies' payment practices described in 4.5 support equal access to a range of providers

The payment process described in 4.5 allows for flexibility in payment intervals to the provider based on their size and cash flow needs.

- g) Describe how and on what factors the Lead Agency differentiates payment rates. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Geographic area. Describe:

Payment rates are established for Top Tier and Lower Tier counties. The Top Tier Market is comprised of Tennessee counties that are one of the top 20 highest in population, or have one of the top 20 highest per capita personal income averages. The Lower Tier Market includes all those counties not in the Top Tier Market.

- ☐ Type of provider. Describe:

Payment rates are established for the following four agency types: Child Care Centers, Child Care Group Homes, Child Care Family Homes, and Authorized Professionals

- ☐ **Age of child.** Describe:

Payment rates are established for the following are levels: Infants (6 wks-12 mos), Toddlers (12 mos - 24 mos), PreSchool (24 mos - 5 yrs), School-Age In, School-Age Out.

- ☐ **Quality level.** Describe:

Bonus payments are available for agencies that earn One (5%), Two (15%), or Three (20%) Stars through the QRIS.

- ☐ **Other.**

- h) Describe any additional facts that the Lead Agency considered in determining its payment rates to ensure equal access:

- ☐ Payment rates are set at the 75th percentile or higher of the most recent survey. Describe:

- ☐ Feedback from parents, including parent surveys or parental complaints. Describe:

- ☐ Other. Describe:

4.5 Payment Practices and the Timeliness of Payments

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate that they have established payment practices applicable to all CCDF child care providers that include ensuring the timeliness of payments by either (1) paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services or (2) paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services. To the extent practicable, the

Lead Agency must also support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by (1) paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance, (2) providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time, (3) providing full payment if a child is absent for 5 or fewer days in a month, or (4) using an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency provides a justification in its Plan (658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(l)(2)).

Lead Agencies are required to use CCDF payment practices that reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers who serve children who do not receive CCDF-funded assistance. Unless a Lead Agency is able to demonstrate that the following policies are not generally accepted in its particular state, territory, or service area or among particular categories or types of providers, Lead Agencies must (1) pay providers based on established part-time or full-time rates rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time and (2) pay for reasonable, mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents (658E(c)(2)(S); 98.45(l)(3)).

In addition, there are certain other generally accepted payment practices that are required. Lead Agencies are required to ensure that child care providers receive payment for any services in accordance with a payment agreement or an authorization for services, ensure that child care providers receive prompt notice of changes to a family's eligibility status that could impact payment, and establish timely appeal and resolution processes for any payment inaccuracies and disputes (98.45(l)(4) through (6); 658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(l)(4); 98.45(l)(5); 98.45(l)(6)).

- 4.5.1 Certify by describing the payment practices that the Lead Agency has implemented for all CCDF child care providers,
- a) Ensure the timeliness of payments by either (Lead Agency to implement at least one of the following):
 - ☐ Paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services. If implemented describe the policy or procedure.
 - ☐ **Paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services.** If implemented describe the policy or procedure.
Payment within 10 business days
 - b) To the extent practicable, support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by:
 - ☐ Paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance. If implemented describe the policy or procedure.
 - ☐ Providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time. If implemented describe the policy or procedure.
 - ☐ **Providing full payment if a child is absent for 5 or fewer days in a month.** If implemented describe the policy or procedure.
 - ☐ Use an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency provides a justification in its Plan. If chosen, please describe the policy or procedure and the Lead Agency's justification for this approach.
 - c) Reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers who serve children who do not receive CCDF subsidies, which must include the following two practices unless the Lead Agency provides evidence that such practices are not generally accepted in its state (658E(c)(2)(S); 98.45(l)(3)).
 - ☐ **Paying on a part-time or full-time basis (rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time).** Describe the policy or procedure and include a definition of the time increments (e.g., part time, full-time).

Part-Time = 1 - 19 hours

Full-Time = 20 or more hours

- ☐ Paying for reasonable mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents. Describe the policy or procedure.

The Lead Agency collects information on registration and application fees through the annual report process for all licensed providers. However, the Lead Agency does not pay or mandate that these fees be accessed.

- d) The Lead Agency ensures that providers are paid in accordance with a written payment agreement or an authorization for services that includes, at a minimum, information regarding provider payment policies, including rates, schedules, any fees charged to providers, and the dispute-resolution process. Describe:

The Lead Agency maintains a contract with each provider that participates in the Child Care Certificate Program. The contract includes provisions regarding Payment Terms and Conditions (payment methodology, payment rates, payment and attendance, payment reductions, deductions, methods of collection of overpayments).

- e) The Lead Agency provides prompt notice to providers regarding any changes to the family's eligibility status that could impact payments, and such a notice is sent no later than the day that the Lead Agency becomes aware that such a change will occur. Describe:

The Lead Agency issues a 10 day advance notice to the provider.

- f) The Lead Agency has a timely appeal and resolution process for payment inaccuracies and disputes. Describe:

The contract provides that the Lead Agency is the final decision maker of any payment disputes and can deny payments. No appeal process is provided in the contract terms.

If audit identifies questioned costs, a letter outlining the findings is sent to the provider. If the provider concurs with the findings, they have the option to repay the money in a lump sum or to establish a payment process that may include deductions from future payments. If the Lead Agency owes the provider money, program authorizes the payment and payments are made as soon as possible by whatever method the provider has established for payments, i.e. by check or direct deposit.

4.5.2 Do payment practices vary across regions, counties, and/or geographic areas?

- ☐ No, the practices do not vary across areas.
- ☐ Yes, the practices vary across areas. Describe:

4.6 Supply-Building Strategies To Meet the Needs of Certain Populations

Lead Agencies are required to develop and implement strategies to increase the supply of and to improve the quality of child care services for children in underserved areas; infants and toddlers; children with disabilities, as defined by the Lead Agency; and children who receive care during non-traditional hours (658 E(c)(2)(M); 98.16 (x)).

4.6.1 For each of the following types of providers, identify any shortages in the supply of quality child care providers, the data sources used to identify shortages, and the method of tracking progress to support equal access and parental choice.

a) Children in underserved areas:

The Lead Agency is developing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen data collection and analysis in collaboration with its partners to better identify and quantify underserved populations statewide. Currently, the Lead Agency reviews child care certificate program data to determine the needs for children in underserved areas.

b) Infants and toddlers:

The Lead Agency implements an annual survey of child care agencies licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services to collect data related to agencies service of children and families. As of September 30, 2017, aggregated data indicates that approximately 5,800 children identified as infants and toddlers were in the care of child care agencies licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

The Lead Agency is developing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen data collection and analysis in collaboration with its partners to better identify and quantify infant and toddler children, and any shortages in the supply of quality child care providers.

c) Children with disabilities (include the Lead Agency definition in the description):

The Lead Agency implements an annual survey of child care agencies licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services to collect data related to agencies service of children and families. As of September 30, 2017, aggregated data indicates that approximately 1,600 children identified as having special needs were in the care of child care agencies licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services.

The Lead Agency is developing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen data collection and analysis in collaboration with its partners to better identify and quantify children with disabilities, and any shortages in the supply of quality child care providers.

d) Children who received care during non-traditional hours:

The Lead Agency implements an annual survey of child care agencies licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services to collect data related to agencies service of children and families. The Lead Agency is developing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen data collection and analysis in collaboration with its partners to better children and families utilizing or in need of child care during nontraditional hours, and any shortages in the supply of quality child care providers.

e) Other. Please describe any other shortages in the supply of high-quality providers.

4.6.2 Based on the analysis in 4.6.1, describe what method(s) is used to increase supply and to improve quality for the following.

a) Infants and toddlers. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☐ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2)
- ☐ Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, shared services, and leveraging
- ☐ Other. Describe:

The Lead Agency was selected to participate in the ACF's strengthening family child care quality peer learning groups.

b) Children with disabilities. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☐ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2)
- ☐ Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, shared services, and leveraging
- ☐ Other. Describe:

c) Children who receive care during non-traditional hours. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3)
- ☐ Family child care networks
- ☐ Start-up funding
- ☐ Technical assistance support
- ☐ Recruitment of providers
- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2)
- ☐ Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, shared services, and leveraging
- ☐ Other. Describe:

Through participation in ACF's strengthening family child care quality peer learning groups, the Lead Agency is developing strategies for increasing the supply of care during non-traditional hours.

d) Other. Check and describe:

- ☐ Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3). Describe:
- ☐ Family child care networks. Describe:
- ☐ Start-up funding. Describe:
- ☐ Technical assistance support. Describe:
- ☐ Recruitment of providers. Describe:
- ☐ Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2)
- ☐ Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, shared services, and leveraging. Describe:
- ☐ Other. Describe:

4.6.3 Lead Agencies must prioritize investments for increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and do not currently have sufficient numbers of such programs.

a) How does the Lead Agency define areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment?

Concentrations of poverty and unemployment are identified based upon U.S. Census Bureau data on county poverty rates to determine the percentage of persons below the

poverty level and Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development data on unemployment by county.

The Lead Agency also utilizes a GIS application to map distribution of child care agencies statewide by Star Quality rating. Example of data sources:

<https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/united-states/quick-facts/tennessee/percent-of-people-of-all-ages-in-poverty#table>

<https://www.tn.gov/workforce/general-resources/news/2018/3/15/tennessee-begins-2018-with-county-unemployment--rates-lower-than-january-2017.html>

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/workforce/documents/LaborForceEstimates,Jan18.pdf>

<https://ccaoa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=536b03860f1f4da8815206b336f16eaa>

- b) Describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and that do not have high-quality programs.

The Lead Agency in collaboration with CCR&R is developing an outreach plan in areas of significant poverty and unemployment to encourage more opportunities and training for potential high quality child care providers. These providers will receive pre-licensing training and technical assistance and coaching until they reach and maintain the two or three star quality level.

5 Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes To Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings

Lead Agencies are required to certify that there are in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services in the state/territory. States and territories may allow licensing exemptions, but they must describe how such exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of CCDF children in license-exempt care. Lead Agencies also must certify that there are in effect health and safety requirements applicable to providers serving CCDF children. These health and safety requirements must be appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served, must include specific topics and training on those topics, and are subject to monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that providers are complying with the health and safety requirements.

This section covers licensing requirements, health and safety requirements and training, and monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that child care providers comply

with licensing and health and safety requirements (98.16(n)) as well as exemptions (98.16(l)). This section also addresses group size limits; child-staff ratios; and required qualifications for caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.16(m)). Criminal background check requirements are included in this section (98.16(o)).

5.1 Licensing Requirements

Each state/territory must certify it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to all child care services provided within the state/territory (not restricted to providers receiving CCDF funds) and provide a detailed description of these requirements and how the requirements are effectively enforced (658E(c)(2)(F)). If any types of CCDF providers are exempt from licensing requirements, the state/territory must describe those exemptions and describe how these exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, or development of children. The descriptions must also include any exemptions based on provider category, type, or setting; length of day; and providers not subject to licensing because the number of children served falls below a Lead Agency-defined threshold and any other exemption to licensing requirements (658E(c)(2)(F); 98.16(u); 98.409(a)(2)(iv)).

- 5.1.1 To certify, describe the licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided within the state/territory and note if providers are exempted from licensing requirements and how such exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children (658E (c)(2)(F); 98.40(a)(2)).

In Tennessee, an entity that provides care for three (3) or more hours per day for at least five (5) children not related to the primary caregiver must be licensed/regulated by the Lead Agency.

Department of Human Services (Licensed Agencies)

In Tennessee, approximately 2,311 agencies are licensed by the Department of Human Services and receive regular monitoring visits to determine compliance with a defined set of standards (see links to standards in 5.1.2 below):

- Child Care Centers (1,699);
- Group Child Care Homes (359);
- Family Child Care Homes (253): The requirements for the above categories seek to maintain adequate health, safety and supervision of children in a group setting and to promote developmentally appropriate care. Requirements include standards for equipment, ratios, staffing, program, health and safety, transportation, food, physical facilities, and care of children with disabilities/special needs.

- **Drop-In Child Care Centers (9):** Although the requirements for Drop-in Centers also seek to maintain adequate health, safety and supervision of children in a group setting, these centers are designed to provide short-term care. Attendance for any given child may be short and erratic. Therefore, there is no expectation that this type of care makes a significant contribution to the overall development of the child. This type of care is more like a regulated version of casual care than standard child care. As a result, this type of care is not eligible to participate in the Child Care Certificate Program.

Department of Education (Approved Agencies)

In addition, there are approximately 1,928 agencies regulated by the Department of Education. These programs receive a certificate of approval rather than a license. In accordance with T.C.A. §§49-1-1101-1109, the Department of Education is mandated to inspect and approve all programs subject to the State Board's jurisdiction pursuant to T.C.A. §49-1-302(l).

All public and private school-administered infant/toddler, preschool, before and after school programs, as well as, approved Montessori programs, TEIS early intervention programs, school-based and community-based Lottery Education Afterschool Programs and 21st Century Community Learning Centers must be in compliance with Standards for Infant/Toddler, Preschool, and School-Age Extended Care Programs, Rules of the State Board of Education Office of the Commissioner Chapter 0520-12-01 Standards for School Administered Child Care Programs, adopted by the State Board of Education as defined in T.C.A. § 49-1-302(l) and certified by the Department of Education and verified through inspection by the Department's child care program evaluators.

Approximately 300 of these agencies participate in the Child Care Certificate Program.

- 5.1.2 Which providers in your state/territory are subject to licensing under this CCDF category? Check all that apply and provide a citation to the licensing rule.
- ☐ **Center-based child care.** Provide a citation: **Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01**
 - ☐ **Family child care.** Provide a citation: **Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01**
 - ☐ **In-home care.** Provide a citation:
- 5.1.3 Are any providers in your state/territory that fall under this CCDF category exempt from licensing (98.40(2)(i) through (iv))? If so, describe exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption.

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- ☐ **Center-based child care.** If checked, describe the exemptions. **Boys and Girls Clubs**
Tenn. Code Ann. § 71-3-503. Program and facilities exempt from licensing, provides:

(A) Any program or facility operated by, or in affiliation with, any Boys and Girls Club that provides care for school-aged children and that holds membership in good standing with Boys and Girls Clubs of America and that is certified as being in compliance with the purposes, procedures, voluntary standards and mandatory requirements of Boys and Girls Clubs of America;

(B) Any such Boys and Girls Club that applies to participate in state or federally funded programs that require child care licensing by the state as a term of eligibility may elect to apply to the department for child care licensing and regulation. Upon meeting departmental standards, the Boys and Girls Club may be licensed as a child care center/provider;

(C) The department is hereby authorized to grant a waiver from any rule concerning grouping of children and adult/child ratios for child care centers to any Boys and Girls Club that falls within both subdivisions (a)(11)(A) and (a)(10)(A) and (B), and that is providing after-school child care to mixed groups of school-aged children;

Approximately fifteen exempt Boys and Girls Clubs provide care for children participating in the Child Care Certificate Program.

- ☐ **Family child care.** If checked, describe the exemptions.

Authorized Professionals

There are approximately 80 individuals who do not meet the threshold for licensing (i.e. care for less than five children related to the primary educator) that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program due to parental choice. Although not specifically licensed, these individuals are monitored by the Department of Human Services for compliance with CCDBG requirements.

- ☐ **In-home care.** If checked, describe the exemptions.

- 5.1.4 Describe how any exemptions identified above do not endanger the health, safety, or development of children in:

- a) Center-based child care if checked in 5.1.3.

Boys and Girls Clubs

By statute, the Boys and Girls Clubs are the only entity exempt that are eligible to participate in the Child Care Certificate Program. The Boys and Girls Clubs organization structure includes personnel dedicated to helping Clubs establish best practices that create and maintain safe settings for the children in their care. Care is

also limited to older school-age children. Clubs generally have ratio guidelines in the 1:15 to 1:20 range. The Department has developed a health and safety checklist to monitor Boys and Girls Clubs that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program for compliance with CCDBG requirements.

b) Family child care if checked in 5.1.3e.

Authorized Professionals

There are approximately 80 individuals who do not meet the threshold for licensing (i.e. care for less than five children related to the primary educator) that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program due to parental choice. Although not specifically licensed, these individuals are monitored by the Department of Human Services for compliance with CCDBG requirements. The Lead Agency uses a health and safety checklist to complete inspections on these entities annually.

c) In-home care if checked in 5.1.3.

5.2 Health and Safety Standards and Requirements for CCDF Providers

5.2.1 Standards on ratios, group sizes, and qualifications for CCDF providers.

Lead Agencies are required to establish child care standards for providers receiving CCDF funds, appropriate to the type of child care setting involved, that address appropriate ratios between the number of children and number of providers in terms of the age of the children, group size limits for specific age populations, and the required qualifications for providers (658E(c)(2)(H); 98.41(d); 98.16(m)). For ease of responding, this section is organized by CCDF categories of care, licensing status, and age categories.

a) Licensed CCDF center-based care

1. Infant

- How does the State/territory define infant (age range):

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01 defines an infant as: “A child who is six (6) weeks through twelve (12) months of age.

- Ratio: 1:4.
- Group size: 8
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications: Each group shall have at least one (1) educator present who has a high school diploma or equivalent educational credential as recognized by the Department. Per Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01:

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee shall receive orientation in, and have a working knowledge of the following items:

- Program philosophy and policies;
- Job description;
- Emergency health and safety procedures;
- Behavior management procedures;
- Detection, reporting, and prevention of child abuse;
- Procedures for receiving and releasing children;
- Safe sleep procedures;
- Meal service and safe food preparation policies;
- Supervision during high risk activities such as eating and outdoor play;
- Food allergies;
- Expectations for communications with parent/guardian;
- Disease control and health promotion, including childhood obesity and the beneficial health impacts of physical activity;
- An overview of licensing requirements; and
- Information on risks of Cytomegalovirus (CMV) to female employees of childbearing age.

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee shall complete training in the following areas:

- Shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma; and
- A minimum of two (2) hours pre-service training as recognized by the Department.

The child care agency shall provide orientation on safe sleep practices before allowing any educator to assume infant-caregiving duties;

An Educator must be at least 18 years of age. Exception: Sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year-old students currently enrolled in a Department-recognized career and technical child care educational program may be used as floaters or assistant teachers provided, however, that they shall always be under the direct supervision of an adult educator and shall not be left alone with a group of children.

2. Toddler

- How does the State/territory define toddler (age range): **Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01** defines a toddler as: “A child who is thirteen (13) months through thirty (30) months of age.
- Ratio: **1:6**
- Group size: **12**
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications: Each group shall have at least one (1) educator present who has a high school diploma or equivalent educational credential as recognized by the Department. Per **Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01**:

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee shall receive orientation in, and have a working knowledge of the following items:

- Program philosophy and policies;
- Job description;
- Emergency health and safety procedures;
- Behavior management procedures;
- Detection, reporting, and prevention of child abuse;
- Procedures for receiving and releasing children;
- Safe sleep procedures;
- Meal service and safe food preparation policies;
- Supervision during high risk activities such as eating and outdoor play;
- Food allergies;
- Expectations for communications with parent/guardian;
- Disease control and health promotion, including childhood obesity and the beneficial health impacts of physical activity;
- An overview of licensing requirements; and
- Information on risks of Cytomegalovirus (CMV) to female employees of childbearing age.

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee shall complete training in the following areas:

- Shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma; and
- A minimum of two (2) hours pre-service training as recognized by the Department.

An Educator must be at least 18 years of age. Exception: Sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year-old students currently enrolled in a Department-recognized career and technical child care educational program may be used as floaters or assistant teachers provided, however, that they shall always be under the direct supervision of an adult educator and shall not be left alone with a group of children.

3. Preschool

- How does the State/territory define preschool (age range): Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01 defines a pre-school child as: “A child who is thirty-one (31) months of age and who has not entered kindergarten to school-age”.
- Ratio: 1:7, 1:9, 1:13, 1:16
- Group size: 14, 18, 20, 20
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications: Each group shall have at least one (1) educator present who has a high school diploma or equivalent educational credential as recognized by the Department. Per Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01:

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee shall receive orientation in, and have a working knowledge of the following items:

- Program philosophy and policies;
- Job description;
- Emergency health and safety procedures;
- Behavior management procedures;
- Detection, reporting, and prevention of child abuse;
- Procedures for receiving and releasing children;
- Safe sleep procedures;
- Meal service and safe food preparation policies;
- Supervision during high risk activities such as eating and outdoor play;
- Food allergies;

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- Expectations for communications with parent/guardian;
 - Disease control and health promotion, including childhood obesity and the beneficial health impacts of physical activity;
 - An overview of licensing requirements; and
 - Information on risks of Cytomegalovirus (CMV) to female employees of childbearing age.

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee shall complete training in the following areas:

- Shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma; and
- A minimum of two (2) hours pre-service training as recognized by the Department.

An Educator must be at least 18 years of age. Exception: Sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year-old students currently enrolled in a Department-recognized career and technical child care educational program may be used as floaters or assistant teachers provided, however, that they shall always be under the direct supervision of an adult educator and shall not be left alone with a group of children.

4. School-age

- How does the State/territory define school-age (age range): Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01 defines a school-age child as “a child who has entered kindergarten through seventeen (17) years of age.
- Ratio: 1:20
- Group size: No Max
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications: Each group shall have at least one (1) educator present who has a high school diploma or equivalent educational credential as recognized by the Department. Per Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01:

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee shall receive orientation in, and have a working knowledge of the following items:

- Program philosophy and policies;
- Job description;

- Emergency health and safety procedures;
- Behavior management procedures;
- Detection, reporting, and prevention of child abuse;
- Procedures for receiving and releasing children;
- Safe sleep procedures;
- Meal service and safe food preparation policies;
- Supervision during high risk activities such as eating and outdoor play;
- Food allergies;
- Expectations for communications with parent/guardian;
- Disease control and health promotion, including childhood obesity and the beneficial health impacts of physical activity;
- An overview of licensing requirements; and
- Information on risks of Cytomegalovirus (CMV) to female employees of childbearing age.

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee shall complete training in the following areas:

- Shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma; and
- A minimum of two (2) hours pre-service training as recognized by the Department.

An Educator must be at least 18 years of age. Exception: Sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) year-old students currently enrolled in a Department-recognized career and technical child care educational program may be used as floaters or assistant teachers provided, however, that they shall always be under the direct supervision of an adult educator and shall not be left alone with a group of children.

5. If any of the responses above are different for exempt child care centers, describe which requirements apply to exempt centers.

Boys & Girls Clubs:

Care in these facilities is limited to school-age children.

Describe, if applicable, ratios, group sizes, and qualifications for classrooms with mixed age groups.

Six (6) weeks - Thirty (30) months - Ratio: 1:5, Group Size: 10

Two (2) - Four (4) Years - Ratio: 1:4, Group Size: 16

Two and One-Half (2 1/2) - Three (3) Years - Ratio: 1:9, Group Size: 18

Two and One-Half (2 1/2) - Five (5) Years - Ratio: 1:11, Group Size: 20

Two and One-Half (2 1/2) - Twelve (12) Years - Ratio: 1:10, Group Size: 10

Three (3) – Five (5) Years - Ratio: 1:13, Group Size: 22

Four (4) – Five (5) Years - Ratio: 1:16, Group Size: 24

Five (5) – Twelve (12) Years - Ratio: 1:20, Group Size: No Max

Qualifications are the same as for regular classrooms described in item 1-4 above.

6. Describe the director qualifications for licensed CCDF center-based care.

Per Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01, director qualifications include the following requirements:

- High school diploma (or equivalent as recognized by state law), and Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) certificate for completing thirty (30) clock hours of the Administrator Orientation training or the equivalent as recognized by the Department. Four (4) years of full-time (paid or unpaid) experience with children in a group setting.
- The director of a single-site child care center shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- In lieu of education: Continuously employed as an on-site child care director or a child care agency owner since July 1, 2000.

b) Licensed CCDF family child care provider

1. Infant

- How does the State/territory define infant (age range):

As defined by Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01 Rules, an Infant is “A child who is six (6) weeks through twelve (12) months of age.”

- Ratio:

Ratio and Group Size Family Home (repeat for all care levels):

Maximum Number of Children and Ages (including children “related” to the primary educator	Educators Required
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under nine (9) years of age)	
Seven (7) or fewer children; and No more than four (4) under two (2) years	1
Seven (7) or fewer children; and Five (5) or more under two (2) years	2
More than seven (7) children; and No more than four (4) under two (2) years	2
More than seven (7) children; and Five (5) or more under two (2) years	3

Ratio and Group Size Group Home (repeat for all care levels):

Number of Children	Ages of Children	Educators Required
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	No more than twelve (12) children three (3) years of age or older	1
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	Up to nine (9) children under three (3) years of age; and No more than four (4) present under two (2) years of age	2
Twelve (12) – Fifteen (15) (any number over twelve (12) must be school-age)	Ten (10) or more under three (3) years of age	3

- Group size:
See chart above
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:
Family Home:

Primary educators that received an initial license on or after the effective date of these rules shall be required to have earned a high school diploma or equivalent educational credential as recognized by state law.

Family and Group Home:

Primary Educators must be at least 18 years of age. Exception: Educators/Assistants sixteen (16) through seventeen (17) years of age may assist an educator and be counted as an adult in the adult:child ratio if the individual is:

Never left alone with children; and Always under the direct supervision of a primary educator.

Group Home:

Primary educators shall have a high school diploma or equivalent educational credential as recognized by state law.

2. Toddler

- How does the State/territory define toddler (age range):

As defined by Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01, a Toddler is “A child who is thirteen (13) months through thirty (30) months of age.”

See item b. above for the responses to the three remaining bullets

- Ratio:
- Group size:
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:

3. Preschool

- How does the State/territory define preschool (age range):

As defined by Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01, a Pre-school Child is “A child who is thirty-one (31) months of age and who has not entered kindergarten to school-age.”

See item b. above for the responses to the three remaining bullets

- Ratio:
- Group size:
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:

4. School-age

- How does the State/territory define school-age (age range):

As defined by Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01, a School-Age Child is “A child who has entered kindergarten through seventeen (17) years of age.”

See item b above for the responses to the three remaining bullets

- Ratio:
- Group size:
- Teacher/caregiver qualifications:

5. If any of the responses above are different for exempt family child care homes, please describe which requirements apply to exempt homes.

Authorized Child Care Professionals are identified as individuals who may care for up to 6 children (four not related to the individual and up to two additional related children). There are no rules or restrictions regarding providing care for a maximum number of children under a particular age and no specific educational requirements for this category of provider.

c) In-home CCDF providers: Not Applicable.

1. Describe the ratios.
2. Describe the group size.
3. Describe the threshold for when licensing is required.
4. Describe the maximum number of children that are allowed in the home at any one time.
5. Describe if the state/territory requires related children to be included in the child-to-provider ratio or group size.
6. Describe any limits on infants and toddlers or additional school-age children that are allowed for part of the day.

5.2.2 Health and safety standards for CCDF providers.

States and territories must establish health and safety standards for programs (e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, etc.) serving children receiving CCDF assistance relating to the topics listed below, as appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served (98.41(a)). This requirement is applicable to all child care providers receiving CCDF funds regardless of licensing status (i.e., licensed or license-exempt).

The only exception to this requirement is for providers who are caring for their own

relatives because Lead Agencies have the option of exempting relatives from some or all CCDF health and safety requirements (98.42(c)).

To certify, describe how the following health and safety standards for programs serving children receiving CCDF assistance are defined and established on the required topics (98.16(l)). Note – This question is different from the health and safety training requirements, which are addressed in question 5.2.3.

1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunization)

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)

Handwashing shall occur at least at the following times but not limited to:

- After toileting and diapering.
- After handling bodily fluids.
- Prior to and after eating.
- Prior to and after food preparation.
- Routine cleaning and sanitizing of tables, chairs, high chairs and toys that children place in their mouth, dishes and utensils, and the floor.
- List the citation for these requirements.
Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - Infants should be placed on their backs for sleeping.
 - Infants should be touched every 15 minutes to check for breathing.
 - No soft bedding, blankets or pillows.
 - Infants shall only sleep in a safety approved crib or other equipment approved by CPSC and ASTM safety standards for infant sleep (play pens, cribs, play yards).

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- Infants shall not sleep in any other equipment, such as, but not limited to, a car safety seat, bouncy seat, highchair, swing or the floor.
 - Infants who arrive at the facility asleep or fall asleep in such equipment or on the floor shall be transferred to a safety approved crib or other equipment approved for infant sleep.
 - Staff training on prevention of SIDS and safe sleep practices prior to working with infants.
 - List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.

Safe-sleep practices are limited to children 0 through 12 months of age.

- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - Each agency shall develop written procedures regarding the administration, handling, and storage of medication.
 - Each agency shall obtain a written authorization to administer medication from medical provider and/ or parent / guardian. The authorization shall include the name of the medication, the dosage, the method of administration and the time when the medication is to be administered.
 - When medication is administered to a child, the designated person shall list the date, time, dosage, side effects and the administering party's signature on the medication log.
 - The medication log shall be reviewed with parent each day medication is administered and the parent shall sign.
 - Medication shall be kept in a locked container / area unless it is deemed emergency medication.
 - All staff members shall receive training regarding administration of medication.

- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

4. Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - A written plan of action or treatment plan shall include the name of medication, dosage of medication, method of administration of medication and specific symptoms that indicate the need for medications.
 - The file of any child with an allergy should contain written instructions from the parent / guardian or physician about special diets such as dietary restrictions or dietary modifications.
 - The agency should develop and implement written policy on response to emergencies due to food allergies.
- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards that can cause bodily injury, such as electrical hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - Identify safety hazards and concerns and immediately remove, repair or prohibit use to protect children.
 - Maintain records of inspections and repairs.

- Comply with building and fire codes.
- Unstable and heavy equipment, furniture and any items that could tip over or be pulled over should be securely anchored such as televisions, cubbies, shelves, etc.
- The outdoor play area shall be fenced to prevent children from wandering onto busy streets and highways.
- Hazardous materials such as cleaning supplies, poisonous materials, medicines, alcoholic beverages or hazardous personal care items shall be inaccessible to children.
- Hazardous materials shall not be stored with food and food related materials.
- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
 - Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
 - Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.
6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment.
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - Programs should implement practices to identify and prevent shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma.
 - All educators, directors, substitutes and volunteers should receive training on preventing shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma; recognition of potential signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma; strategies for coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child; and the development and vulnerabilities of the brain in infancy and early childhood.
 - List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.

Although Shaken Baby or Abusive Head Trauma are most applicable to infants, it can happen in children up to five years of age.

- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.
7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event (such as violence at a child care facility), within the meaning of those terms under section 602(a)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5195a(a)(1)). Emergency preparedness and response planning (at the child care provider level) must also include procedures for evacuation; relocation; shelter-in-place and lockdown; staff and volunteer training and practice drills; communications and reunification with families; continuity of operations; and accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions.
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - Each agency should have an emergency preparedness plan on file.
 - All staff shall receive training on the emergency preparedness plan so that they will know the proper procedures to take in the event of any disaster or emergency situation.
 - Evacuation routes posted and emergency drills conducted using evacuation routes.
 - Emergency numbers shall be posted in all classrooms.
 - Parents shall be made aware of emergency procedures and evacuation routes.
 - List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
 - Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
 - Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.
8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants
- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)

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- All toxic substances should be inaccessible to children and should not be used when children are present.
 - Toxic substances should be used as recommended by the manufacturer and stored in the original labeled containers.
 - The telephone number for the poison control center should be posted and readily accessible in emergency situations.
 - Wear disposable gloves when handling blood and body excretions or secretions and for diapering and toileting when blood is visible. Gloves should also be worn when assisting with oral care and whenever the care provider has open cuts or broken skin that drains.
 - Use bio hazard bags or plastic bags when handling blood, soiled diapers, vomit or any other type of bodily fluids other disposable articles soiled with body secretions and excretions.
 - Wash toys, furniture and any other articles soiled with blood and bodily excretions with a cleaning agent.
 - List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

9. Precautions in transporting children (if applicable)

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - The agency shall have a written plan on how to communicate emergencies during transportation.
- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

10. Pediatric first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - First aid and CPR should be current and on file.
 - At least one person shall be on the premises at all times with certification in CPR and First Aid.
 - All Staff shall be trained in CPR and First Aid requirements.
- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - Training.
 - Develop policy that is compliant with DCS.
 - Posting of hotline number.
 - Suspicions of child abuse / neglect should be reported directly to DCS or law enforcement.
 - Documentation of any injuries, bruises, scratches, etc. upon child's arrival at the child care facility
- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe any variations based on the age of the children in care.
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

a) The Lead Agency may also include optional standards related to the following:

12. Nutrition

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - All meals and snacks served by the child care agency should be in accordance with USDA Child and Adult Care Food program nutrition guidelines.
 - All staff should receive training on proper nutrition guidelines.
 - During meal time and snacks, educators should have discussions with children about nutrition and healthy eating.
- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

13. Access to physical activity

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
 - All educators/staff should receive training regarding the benefits of physical activity.
 - An opportunity for all children in care 3 hours or more for all children of all ages. Children should have indoor and outdoor physical activity on a daily basis and have opportunities to experience a variety of weather conditions between 32 degrees and 95 degrees Fahrenheit.
- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

14. Caring for children with special needs

- Provide a brief summary of how this standard is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)

- Agency staff should receive training that is relevant to the special needs of each child in care.
- Agency staff should consult with parents and the appropriate service providers regarding techniques used in the home to ensure the safety of any child identified with special needs.
- The file of each child should contain documentation relevant to special needs.
- All agency staff should receive training on special needs and inclusion.
- List the citation for these requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01.

- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

15. Any other areas determined necessary to promote child development or to protect children's health and safety (98.44(b)(1)(iii)). Describe:

- Provide a brief summary of how the standard(s) is defined (i.e., what is the standard, content covered, practices required, etc.)
- List the citation for these requirements.
- Describe any variations by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).
- Describe if relatives are exempt from this requirement.

5.2.3 Health and safety training for CCDF providers on required topics.

Lead Agencies are required to have minimum pre-service or orientation training requirements (to be completed within 3 months), as appropriate to the provider setting and the age of children served, that address the health and safety topics described in 5.2.2, and child development. Lead Agencies must also have ongoing training requirements on the health and safety topics for caregivers, teachers, and directors of children receiving CCDF funds (658E(c)(2)(I)(i); 98.44(b)(1)(iii)). The state/territory must describe its requirements for pre-service or orientation training and ongoing training. These trainings should be part of a broader systematic approach and progression of professional development (as described in section 6) within a state/territory. Lead Agencies have flexibility in determining the number of training hours to require, but they may consult with *Caring for our Children Basics* for best practices and the recommended time needed to address these training requirements.

Pre-Service or Orientation Training Requirements

- a) Provide the minimum number of pre-service or orientation training hours on health and safety topics for caregivers, teachers, and directors required for the following:

1. Licensed child care centers:

Prior to having contact with children, each new employee must complete training in Shaken Baby/Abusive Head Trauma and a minimum of two (2) hours of recognized preservice training and orientation in specific areas. The length of the available recognized preservice options varies and the Shaken Baby/Abusive Head Trauma training is only applicable to educators who care for children of less than school-age. Additional training on transportation requirements are mandated for drivers. Therefore, the total minimum numbers of hours of preservice training can range from approximately three (3) to approximately eight (8) hours depending upon the duties of an educator.

2. Licensed FCC homes:

Same as response for Centers above in Item 1.

3. In-home care:

4. Variations for exempt provider settings:

- b) Provide the length of time that providers have to complete trainings subsequent to being hired (must be 3 months or fewer)

Educators must complete orientation and preservice training, including Shaken Baby and Abusive Head Trauma, prior to having contact with children. Drivers must additionally complete training on transportation requirements prior to assuming duties as a driver.

- c) Identify below the pre-service or orientation training requirements for each topic (98.41(a)(1)(i through xi)).

1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations)

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(g)(12) and 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(g)(7) and 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. Prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(g)(8-10) and 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h)(1).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(g)(3) and 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio contaminants

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(g)(3) and 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h).

-
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. Appropriate precautions in transporting children (if applicable)

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h)(2) and 1240-04-01-.17(10)(f).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. Pediatric first aid and CPR certification

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h)(2) and 1240-04-01-.12(10-11).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

The preservice portion of this training is required before caregivers, teachers, or directors have contact with children. First Aid and CPR training must be completed within the first 90 days.

11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(g)(5) and 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h)(2).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12. Child development (98.44(b)(1)(iii))

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.06(3)(h)(2).

- Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

13. Describe other requirements

Additional requirements include three (3) hours on applicable developmental learning standards.

- Provide the citation for other training requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapters:

- Primary Educator Family Home: 1240-04-01-.20(2)(d)(1);
 - Educator Family Home: 1240-04-01-.20(3)(c)(1);
 - Primary Educator Group Home: 1240-04-01-.21(2)(d)(1);
 - Educator Group Home: 1240-04-01-.21(3)(b)(1);
 - Child Care Center Director: 1240-04-01-.22(3)(b)(4); and
 - Child Care Center Educator: 1240-04-01-.22 (5)(d)(1).
- Does the state/territory require that this training topic(s) be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☐ Yes

☐ No

This training must be completed within the first three (3) months.

Ongoing Training Requirements

- 5.2.4 Provide the minimum number of annual training hours on health and safety topics for caregivers, teachers, and directors required for the following.
- a) Licensed child care centers: A Director will receive at minimum six (6) training hours annually and Educators will receive at minimum six (6) training hours annually on health and safety topics per Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.22(3)(b)(4)(iii) and 1240-04-01-.22(5)(d)(1)(vi).
 - b) Licensed FCC homes: A Primary Educator will receive at minimum six (6) training hours annually and Educators will receive at minimum six (6) training hours annually on health and safety topics per Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01-.20(2)(d)(1)(i).
 - c) In-home care:
 - d) Variations for exempt provider settings:
Same standard as licensed programs.

- 5.2.5 Describe the ongoing health and safety training for CCDF providers by category of care (i.e., center, FCC, in-home) and licensing status (i.e., licensed, license-exempt).

1. Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations)

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapters:

- Primary Educator Family Home: 1240-04-01-.20(2)(d)(1)(i);
- Educator Family Home: 1240-04-01-.20(3)(c)(1)(i);
- Primary Educator Group Home: 1240-04-01-.21(2)(d)(1)(i);
- Educator Group Home: 1240-04-01-.21(3)(b)(1)(i);
- Child Care Center Director: 1240-04-01-.22(3)(b)(4)(iii); and
- Child Care Center Educator: 1240-04-01-.22(5)(d)(1)(vi).
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?
 - ☐ Annually.
 - ☐ Other. Describe

A minimum of six (6) hours of health and safety training is required annually for Primary Educators, Educators, Directors, etc. It is recommended that agency staff cycle through each topic every three (3) years.

2. Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ Other. Describe

See response in Item 1 above.

3. Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ Other. Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

4. Prevention and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ Other. Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

5. Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ **Other.** Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

6. Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ **Other.** Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

7. Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ **Other.** Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

8. Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ **Other.** Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

9. Appropriate precautions in transporting children (if applicable)

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

-
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ **Other.** Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

10. Pediatric first aid and CPR certification

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ **Other.** Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

11. Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ **Other.** Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

12. Child development (98.44(b)(1)(iii))

- Provide the citation for this training requirement.

See citations in Item 1 above.

- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?

☐ Annually.

☐ **Other.** Describe

See responses in Item 1 above.

13. Describe other requirements.

Additional trainings on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is required every five (5) years and three (3) hours annual training is required for pre-literacy skills, literacy skills, and education implementation.

- Provide the citation for other training requirements.

Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapters:

- Primary Educator Family Home: 1240-04-01-.20(2)(d)(1);
 - Educator Family Home: 1240-04-01-.20(3)(c)(1);
 - Primary Educator Group Home: 1240-04-01-.21(2)(d)(1);
 - Educator Group Home: 1240-04-01-.21(3)(b)(1);
 - Child Care Center Director: 1240-04-01-.22(3)(b)(4); and
 - Child Care Center Educator: 1240-04-01-.22(5)(d)(1).
- How often does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed?
 - ☐ Annually.
 - ☐ Other. Describe

Additional trainings on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is required every five (5) years and three (3) hours annual training is required for pre-literacy skills, literacy skills, and education implementation.

5.3 Monitoring and Enforcement Policies and Practices for CCDF Providers

5.3.1 Enforcement of licensing and health and safety requirements

Lead agencies must certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF services comply with all applicable State and local health and safety requirements, including those described in 98.41 (98.42(a)). This may include, but is not limited to, any systems used to ensure that providers complete health and safety trainings, any documentation required to be maintained by child care providers or any other monitoring procedures to ensure compliance. Note – Inspection requirements are described starting in 5.3.2. To certify, describe the procedures to ensure that CCDF providers comply with all applicable State and local health and safety requirements.

Child care centers, group homes, and family homes licensed by the Department of Human Services, centers regulated by the Department of Education, exempt Boys and Girls Clubs and Authorized Child Care Professionals are monitored annually for compliance with applicable state/local fire and environmental facility requirements, and completion of health and safety training requirements.

5.3.2 Inspections for licensed CCDF providers.

Lead agencies must require licensing inspectors to perform inspections—with no fewer than one pre-licensure inspection for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards—of each child care provider and facility in the state/territory. Licensing inspectors are required to perform no fewer than one annual, unannounced inspection of each licensed CCDF provider for compliance with all child care licensing standards; it shall include an inspection for compliance with health and safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41) and fire standards; inspectors may inspect for compliance with all three standards—health, safety, and fire—at the same time (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(II); 98.16 (n); 98.42(b)(2)(i)).

Certify by responding to the questions below to describe your state/territory's monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that licensed child care providers comply with licensing standards, including compliance with health and safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41) and fire standards.

a) Licensed CCDF center-based child care

1. Describe your state/territory's requirements for *pre-licensure inspections* of licensed child care center providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.

A temporary or an annual license shall not be issued unless all of the following requirements are met:

- An initial and annual inspection verifying compliance with all applicable state and local fire and environmental requirements which includes:
 - Inspection by the State Fire Marshal's Division of the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance and/or local fire authority; and
 - The General Environmental Division of the Tennessee Department of Health.
- The physical facilities (indoor and outdoor) present no apparent hazards; and
- The physical facilities are otherwise deemed appropriate by the Department for the safe care of children.
- The agency shall maintain documentation of required inspections and the approvals.

All agencies shall continue to maintain compliance with all applicable codes throughout the licensing year and any updated standards issued by the Department of Health and the State Fire Marshal.

The agency shall not be located in a building used for purposes which would be

hazardous to the children.

The agency shall not be located in a building that would prohibit outdoor play.

An inner city agency may request an exception from the Department pursuant to the requirements for “Outdoor Play” found in 1240-04-01-.15(3).

All licensed child care agencies shall ensure that the physical facilities are safe, clean, in good repair and free from hazards and clutter. Each agency shall have at least one working telephone available at the agency and the number shall be made available to parents.

Outdoor play areas shall have a minimum of fifty (50) square feet of usable play space per child, be properly maintained and be enclosed by a fence or barrier that is at least four (4) feet in height.

2. Describe your state/territory’s requirements for annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF child care center providers.

All licensed child care facilities must receive a minimum of one (1) announced evaluation visit during the licensing year. Announced re-evaluation visits must cover all areas of the child care licensing rules.

Unannounced agency visits are conducted based on the agency’s licensing year and the number of unannounced visits are determined by an agency’s star rating.

3. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:

- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ More than once a year. Describe

Unannounced agency visits are conducted based on the agency’s licensing year and the number of unannounced visits are determined by an agency’s star rating as follow:

Unannounced Visit Schedule*	
Full Year Progarms	
Zero star, new agencies and agencies declining to participate in the star rating	Six (6) unannounced visits
One (1) star agencies	Five (5) unannounced visits
Two (2) star and three (3) star agencies	Four (4) unannounced visits
Nine (9) and ten (10) month programs	
Zero star, new agencies and agencies	Four (4) unannounced visits

declining to participate in star rating	
One (1) star agencies	Four (4) unannounced visits
Two (2) star and three (3) star agencies	Three (3) unannounced visits

*Any agency that provides transportation will receive an additional unannounced agency visit.

*Any agency on a Safety Plan will receive weekly unannounced agency visits until the Safety Plan is lifted. (It is at the discretion of the Program Supervisor to alter this schedule)

*An agency may receive additional visits based on complaints, legal enforcement actions and follow-up visits related to violations.

4. Describe the monitoring procedures (including differential monitoring, if applicable) and how the inspections ensure that child care center providers comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.

Child Care Program Evaluators monitor licensed child care agencies for compliance with licensure rules and statutes and to provide technical assistance to ensure the health and safety of children in licensed child care agencies. All licensed child care facilities must receive a minimum of one (1) announced evaluation visit during the licensing year. Announced re-evaluation visits must cover all areas of the child care licensing rules.

Unannounced agency visits are conducted based on the agency's licensing year and the number of unannounced visits is determined by an agency's star rating. The frequency of visits is outlined in Item 3 above.

During each unannounced agency visit, Program Evaluators must, at a minimum, review all of the major high-risk areas and be observant for safety hazards. The high-risk areas include:

- (I) Failure to follow any rule related to the proper transportation of children by employees, substitutes, volunteers, agents or contractors of the agency;
- (II) Adult: Child Ratios;
- (III) Failure to complete required background checks on staff;
- (IV) Corporal punishment/inappropriate discipline;
- (V) Lack of Insurance;

-
- (VI) Failure to report suspicion of abuse or neglect;
 - (VII) Falsification of documents required by the Department;
 - (VIII) Failure to have CPR/First Aid certification as required by the Department;]
 - (IX) Lack of proper supervision of children;
 - (X) Failure to properly dispense or store medications;
 - (XI) Failure to remove persons from access to children following notification of a prohibited criminal background or pending criminal charge or following notification of the person's validated status as a perpetrator of child abuse;
 - (XII) Failure to properly store hazardous items such as, but not limited to, cleaning products, pesticides, hazardous chemicals, or other poisonous items; and
 - (XIII) Failure to properly remove or secure firearms within the child care agency area which are under the ownership or control of the agency, or its staff substitutes or other persons permitted access to the children, or failure to prevent exposure of children in the agency's care to firearms which are under the control of the agency, or its staff, substitutes or other persons who have been permitted by the agency to have access to the children.

If violations are observed during any agency visit, the Program Evaluator will assist the child care agency staff in completing a Plan of Corrective Action.

Any major high-risk violations that are not corrected during the visit require a five (5) day follow-up visit.

5. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF center providers

Tennessee Department of Human Services Administrative Policies and Procedures
13.02 Monitoring for Compliance.

- b) Licensed CCDF family child care home

Responses for this section are the same as described in a) above

6. Describe your state/territory's requirements for *pre-licensure inspections* of licensed family child care providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.
7. Describe your state/territory's requirements for at least annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF family child care providers.

-
8. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:
- ☐ Once a year
 - ☐ More than once a year. Describe
9. Describe the monitoring procedures (including differential monitoring, if applicable) and how the inspections ensure that CCDF family child care providers comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.
10. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF family child care providers
- c) Licensed in-home CCDF child care
- ☐ **N/A.** In-home CCDF child care (care in the child's own home) is not licensed in the State/Territory. Skip to
11. Describe your state/territory's requirements for *pre-licensure inspections* of licensed in-home child care providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.
12. Describe your state/territory's requirements for at least annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF in-home child care providers.
13. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:
- ☐ Once a year
 - ☐ More than once a year. Describe
14. Describe the monitoring procedures (including differential monitoring, if applicable) and how the inspections ensure that in-home CCDF child care providers comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.
15. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed in-home CCDF providers
- d) List the entity(ies) in your state/territory that are responsible for conducting pre-licensure inspections and unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF providers.
- Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (fire safety inspections)
 - Tennessee Department of Education (licensing/approval requirements)
 - Tennessee Department of Health (environmental inspections)
 - Tennessee Department of Human Services (licensing requirements)

5.3.3 Lead Agencies must have policies and practices that require licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) to perform an annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider for compliance with health, safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41), and fire standards (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(IV); 98.42(b)(2)(ii)). Lead Agencies have the option to exempt relative providers (as described in section (658P(6)(B)) from this requirement. To certify, respond to the questions below to describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of:

- a) License-exempt center-based CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

Child care centers regulated by the Department of Education that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program are subject to rules that are substantially the same as the rules for child care centers regulated by the Department of Human Services. Link to rules for school-based programs:

<http://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0520/0520-12/0520-12-01.20180201.pdf>

These agencies receive one announced and one unannounced visit annually. Additional unannounced visits are conducted in response to complaints and violations as needed.

Fire and health inspections for these agencies are conducted according to the Department of Education requirements.

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Rules of the State Board of Education Office of the Commissioner Chapter 0520-12-01 Standards for School Administered Child Care Programs.

- b) License-exempt family child care CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

Authorized Professionals (individuals that care for up to four children who are not related to the educator)

In order to participate in Child Care Certificate Program these entities enter into a contract with the Lead Agency that includes compliance with all CCDF requirements including monitoring.

Authorized Professionals

There are approximately 80 individuals who do not meet the threshold for licensing (i.e. care for less than five (5) children related to the primary educator) that are currently participating in the Child Care Certificate Program. These individuals are either related or

unrelated to the child and are selected based on parental choice. Although not specifically licensed, these individuals are monitored by the Department of Human Services for compliance with CCDF requirements. The Lead Agency uses a health and safety checklist to complete inspections on these entities annually.

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Tennessee Department of Human Services Administrative Policies and Procedures
11.32 Authorized Child Care Professional Home Visits.

- c) License-exempt in-home CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, if relative care is exempt from monitoring, and if differential monitoring is used.

Not Applicable.

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Not Applicable.

- 5.3.4 The Lead Agency must have policies and practices that require licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) to perform an annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(IV); 98.42(b)(2)(ii)). The state/territory may determine if exempt relative providers (as described in section (658P(6)(B)) do not need to meet this requirement. At a minimum, the health and safety requirements to be inspected must address the standards listed in 5.1.4 (98.41(a)). To certify, describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of:

Exempt relative providers are not exempted from monitoring.

- a) License-exempt center-based CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

Centers regulated by the Tennessee Department of Education that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program are subject to rules that are substantially the same as the rules for licensed child care facilities. Link to rules for school-based programs:

<http://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0520/0520-12/0520-12-01.20180201.pdf>

These agencies receive one (1) announced and one (1) unannounced visit annually, and additional unannounced visits are conducted as needed in response to complaints and violations.

Fire and health inspections for these agencies are conducted according to Tennessee Department of Education requirements.

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Rules of the State Board of Education Office of the Commissioner Chapter 0520-12-01 Standards for School Administered Child Care Programs.

- b) License-exempt family child care CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

Authorized Professionals (individuals that care for up to four children who are not related to the educator)

In order to participate in Child Care Certificate Program these entities enter into a he Lead Agency that includes compliance with all CCDF requirements including monitoring.

Authorized Professionals

There are approximately 80 individuals who do not meet the threshold for licensing (i.e. care for less than five (5) children related to the primary educator) that are currently participating in the Child Care Certificate Program. These individuals are either related or unrelated to the child and are selected based on parental choice. Although not specifically licensed, these individuals are monitored by the Department of Human Services for compliance with CCDF requirements. The Lead Agency uses a health and safety checklist to complete inspections on these entities annually.

Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Tennessee Department of Human Services Policy 11.32 Authorized Child Care Professional Home Visits.

- c) License-exempt in-home CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, if relative care is exempt from monitoring, and if differential monitoring is used.

Not Applicable.

- d) Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Not Applicable.

5.3.5 Licensing inspectors.

Lead Agencies will have policies and practices that ensure that individuals who are hired as licensing inspectors are qualified to inspect child care providers and facilities and have received health and safety training appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served. Training shall include, but is not limited to, those requirements described

in 98.41(a)(1) and all aspects of the State’s licensure requirements (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(I); 98.42(b)(1)).

- a) To certify, describe how the Lead Agency ensures that licensing inspectors are qualified to inspect child care facilities and providers and that those inspectors have received training on health and safety requirements that are appropriate to the age of the children in care and the type of provider setting (98.42(b)(1)).

The Lead Agency’s Office of Talent Management-Learning and Development (Community and Social Services Division) is responsible for providing New Employee Training for new Child Care Services licensing staff, including Program Evaluators and Supervisors. New licensing employees are required to successfully complete a three week academy that covers the policies and procedures that Program Evaluators and Supervisors need be aware of in order to monitor child care agencies according to Departmental requirements.

This academy includes systems training on BacTrak and the Tennessee Licensed Care System (TLCS) as well as fundamental professional skills. Each employee is required to undergo assessments throughout training and a final comprehensive assessment at the conclusion of the academy to gauge knowledge retention. Child Care Services licensing staff must also complete a retention assessment approximately six months after the initial new employee training. The Office of Talent Management also provides ongoing and refresher trainings upon request.

Among the Child Care Services licensing policies included in the new employee academy are:

- Chapter 1—Legal Authority and the Organization of the Law
- Chapter 2—Ethics and Customer Service
- Chapter 3—The Licensing Process
- Chapter 4—Child Care Report Card & Star Quality Program
- Chapter 5 (13.02) —Monitoring for Compliance
- Chapter 6—Criminal Background Checks and State Registry Reviews
- Chapter 7 (13.03) —Investigation Complaints at Child Care Agencies
- Chapter 8—General Enforcement Tools and the Legal Enforcement Process
- Chapter 9—Clarifications
- Chapter 10—Case Record Documentation, Organization and Forms

- b) Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

**Tennessee Department of Human Services Administrative Policies and Procedures 13
and Child and Adult Care Licensing Policy and Procedures Manual (Feb 2013).**

5.3.6 The States and Territories shall have policies and practices that require the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers and facilities in the state/territory to be maintained at a level sufficient to enable the state/territory to conduct effective inspections of child care providers and facilities on a timely basis in accordance with federal, state, and local laws (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(III); 98.42(b)(3)).

- a) To certify, describe the state/territory policies and practices regarding the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers (i.e., number of providers per number of child care providers) and facilities in the state/territory and include how the ratio is sufficient to conduct effective inspections on a timely basis.

Licensing Program Evaluators maintain average caseloads of between 25 to 35 cases per evaluator. These caseload averages allow Program Evaluators to conduct sufficient number of annual visits ranging from 4-6 visits per year depending on the child care providers licensure type and star rating.

- b) Provide the policy citation and state/territory ratio of licensing inspectors.

The caseload ratios are based upon available staffing, coverage requirements, and goals as determined by management.

5.3.7 States and territories have the option to exempt relatives (defined in CCDF regulations as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings if living in a separate residence, aunts, and uncles *only* for relative children. Does the state/territory exempt relatives from the inspection requirements listed in 5.3.3?

- ☐ Yes, relatives are exempt from all inspection requirements. If the state/territory exempts relatives from all inspection requirements, describe how the state ensures the health and safety of children in relative care.
- ☐ Yes, relatives are exempt from some inspection requirements. If the state/territory exempts relatives from the inspection requirements, describe which inspection requirements do not apply to relative providers (including which relatives may be exempt) and how the State ensures the health and safety of children in relative care.
- ☐ **No, relatives are not exempt from inspection requirements.**

5.4 Criminal Background Checks

5.4.1 In recognition of the significant challenges to implementing the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) background check requirements, all States applied for and received extensions through September 30, 2018. The Office of Child Care (OCC)/Administration for Children and Families (ACF)/U. S. Department of Health and

Human Services (HHS) is committed to granting additional waivers of up to 2 years, in one year increments (i.e., potentially through September 30, 2020) if significant milestones for background check requirements are met. In order to receive these time-limited waivers, states and territories will demonstrate that the milestones are met and apply for the time-limited waiver by responding to questions 5.4.1a through 5.4.1h below.

As a reminder, the CCDBG Act requires States and territories to have in effect requirements, policies and procedures to conduct criminal background checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all child care providers that are 1) licensed, regulated, or registered under state/territory law; or, 2) all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers). Background check requirements apply to any staff member who is employed by a child care provider for compensation, including contract employees and self-employed individuals; whose activities involve the care or supervision of children; or who has unsupervised access to children. For FCC homes, this requirement includes the caregiver and any other adults residing in the family child care home who are age 18 or older. This requirement does not apply to individuals who are related to all children for whom child care services are provided.

A criminal background check must include 8 specific components, which encompass 3 in-state checks, 2 national checks, and 3 inter-state checks:

1. Criminal registry or repository using fingerprints in the current state of residency (in-state);
2. Sex offender registry or repository check in the current state of residency (in-state);
3. Child abuse and neglect registry and database check in the current state of residency (in-state);
4. FBI fingerprint check (national);
5. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) (national);
6. Criminal registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years, with the use of fingerprints being optional (inter-state);
7. Sex offender registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years (inter-state); and
8. Child abuse and neglect registry and database in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years (inter-state).

Milestone Prerequisites for Time-Limited Waivers

By September 30, 2018, states and territories must have requirements, policies and procedures for four specific background check components, and must be conducting those checks for all new (prospective) child care staff, in accordance with 45 CFR 98.43 and 98.16(o):

- The national FBI fingerprint check; and,
- The three in-state background check provisions for the current state of residency:
 - state criminal registry or repository using fingerprints;
 - state sex offender registry or repository check;
 - state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database .

All four components are required in order for the milestone to be considered met.

If the milestone prerequisites are met, then time-limited waivers may be requested for the components as outlined in the table below.

Background Check Components	If milestone is met, time-limited waiver allowed for:
1) In-state criminal w/fingerprints	Conducting background checks on backlog of current (existing) staff only
2) In-state sex offender registry	
3) In-state state-based child abuse and neglect registry	
4) FBI fingerprint check	
5) NCIC National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR)	Establishing requirements and procedures AND/OR
6) Inter-state state criminal registry	Conducting background checks on all new (prospective) child care staff
7) Inter-state state sex offender registry	AND/OR Conducting background checks on backlog of current (existing) staff
8) Inter-state child abuse and neglect registry	

States and Territories will apply for the initial waiver for a one-year period (starting October 1, 2018 and ending September 30, 2019) as part of the submission of this Plan. If approved, States and Territories will have the option to renew these waivers for one additional year as long as progress is demonstrated during the initial waiver period. Additional guidance will be issued later on the timeline and criteria for requesting the waiver renewal.

Overview of Background Check Implementation deadlines

- Original deadline for implementation (658H(j)(1) of CCDBG Act): September 30, 2017
- Initial one-year extension deadline (658H(j)(2) of CCDBG Act): September 30, 2018
- One-year waiver deadline (45 CFR 98.19(b)(1)(i)): September 30, 2019
- Waiver renewal deadline (45 CFR 98.19(b)(1)(ii)): September 30, 2020

Use questions 5.4.1a through 5.4.1d below to describe achievement of the milestone components, use questions 5.4.1e through 5.4.1h to provide the status for the remaining checks, and as applicable, use questions 5.4.1a through 5.4.1h to request a time-limited waiver for any allowable background check requirement.

- a) Briefly summarize the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state criminal registry or repository, with the use of fingerprints required in the state where the staff member resides.

All child care educators are required to complete an electronic fingerprint scan that is submitted to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). TBI checks the state criminal registry and forwards the results to the Lead Agency investigation unit.

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers includes provisions for checking the state criminal registry for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed through an arrangement with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation as part of a standard child care background check.

- ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for license-exempt child care providers includes provisions for checking the state criminal registry for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed through an arrangement

with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation as part of a standard child care background check.

- iii. Has the search of the state criminal registry or repository, with the use of fingerprints, been conducted for all current (existing) child care staff?

☐ Yes.

☐ No. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement

☐ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement.

Describe the status of conducting the search of the state criminal registry or repository, with the use of fingerprints for current (existing) child care staff. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

- iv. List the citation: **T.C.A. §71-3-507**

- b) Briefly summarize the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state sex offender registry or repository in the state where the staff member resides.

All child care educators are required to complete an electronic fingerprint scan that is submitted to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). TBI checks the state sex offender registry and forwards the results to the Lead Agency investigation unit.

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers includes provisions for checking the state sex offender registry for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed through an arrangement with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation as part of a standard child care background check.

- ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for license-exempt child care providers includes provisions for checking the state sex offender registry for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed through an

arrangement with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation as part of a standard child care background check.

- iii. Has the search of the state sex offender registry or repository been conducted for all current (existing) child care staff?

☐ Yes

☐ No. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☐ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. Describe the status of conducting the search of the state sex offender registry or repository for current (existing) child care staff. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

- iv. List the citation: T.C.A. §71-3-507.

- c) Briefly summarize the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database in the state where the staff member resides.

All child care educators are required to complete an electronic fingerprint scan that is submitted to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). TBI checks the state sex offender registry and forwards the results to the Lead Agency investigation unit. Receipt of background check results from TBI results prompts an automated process to check prospective child care educators against the child abuse and neglect registry maintained by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS).

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers includes an automated process for checking new (prospective) child care staff against the state-based child abuse and neglect registry maintained by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) as part of a standard child care background check.

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- ii. Describe how these requirements apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for license-exempt child care providers includes an automated process for checking new (prospective) child care staff against the state-based child abuse and neglect registry maintained by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS) as part of a standard child care background check.

- iii. Has the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database been conducted for all current (existing) child care staff?

☐ Yes

☐ No. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☐ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. Describe the status of conducting the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database for current (existing) child care staff. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

- iv. List the citation: T.C.A. §71-3-507.

- d) Briefly summarize the requirements, policies and procedures for the FBI fingerprint check using Next Generation Identification.

All child care educators are required to complete an electronic fingerprint scan that is submitted to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). TBI uses the fingerprint scan to check the FBI repository using the Next Generation Identification (NGI) system. TBI returns the results to the Lead Agency investigation unit along with the results of the state criminal registry and state sex offender registry results.

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers includes provisions for checking the FBI repository using the NGI system for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed

through an arrangement with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation as part of a standard child care background check.

- ii. Describe how these requirements apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for license-exempt child care providers includes provisions for checking the FBI repository using the NGI system for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed through an arrangement with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation as part of a standard child care background check.

- iii. Has the search of the FBI fingerprint check using Next Generation Identification been conducted for all current (existing) child care staff?

☐ Yes

☐ No. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirements. Describe the status of conducting the FBI fingerprint check using Next Generation Identification for current (existing) child care staff. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

- iv. List the citation: **T.C.A. §71-3-507.**

- e) Describe the status of the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the NCIC's National Sex Offender Registry.

☐ **Fully implemented** for all prospective and existing required child care providers (all licensed, regulated or registered; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers)). This means that the State/Territory has requirements and procedures in effect, and has conducted the search of the NCIC's NSOR check on all new and existing child care staff.

☐ Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers includes provisions for checking the FBI NCIC National Sex Offender registry for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed through an arrangement with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation as part of a standard child care background check.

Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for license-exempt child care providers includes provisions for checking the FBI NCIC National Sex Offender registry for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed through an arrangement with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation as part of a standard child care background check.

List the citation: T.C.A. §71-3-507.

- ☐ In progress. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement ☐ and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. Describe the status of implementation of requirements, policies and procedures for the NCIC's National Sex Offender Registry. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all prospective and existing licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:
- f) Describe the status of the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the criminal registries or repositories in other states where the child care staff member resided during the preceding 5 years, with the use of fingerprints being optional in those other states.
 - ☐ Fully implemented for all prospective and existing required child care providers (all licensed, regulated or registered; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers)). This means that the State/Territory has requirements and procedures in effect, and has conducted the inter-state state criminal registry check on all new and existing child care staff.
 - i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

- ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

- iii. List the citation:

- ☐ **In progress.** Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement **X** and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. September 30, 2019. Describe the status of implementation of requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the criminal registries or repositories in other states where the child care staff member resided during the preceding 5 years, with the use of fingerprints being optional in those other states. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all (prospective and existing) licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all providers eligible to provide care for children receiving CCDF; 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

The Lead Agency has secured the criminal registry contact information for other states, consulted with a neighboring state to understand how they attempt to conduct background checks, and drafted procedures for child care agencies to complete the process. Procedures for completing background checks along with a proposed effective date will be communicated to child care agencies and added to Lead Agency's website along with each state's contact information. Updating the existing BacTrak criminal background check system to effectively track and manage this process continues to present challenges. Moving forward, the Lead Agency will explore its capacity to update the BacTrak system to manage these checks and may also explore purchasing a system from another state if needed.

- g) Describe the status of the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state sex offender registry or repository in each state where the staff member resided during the previous five years.

- ☐ Fully implemented for all required child care providers (all licensed, regulated or registered; and all (prospective and existing) child care providers eligible to provide care for children receiving CCDF assistance). This means that the State/Territory has requirements and procedures in effect, and has conducted the inter-state state sex offender registry check on all new and existing child care staff.

- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
 - ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all providers eligible to care for children receiving CCDF, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).
 - iii. List the citation:
- ☐ **In progress.** Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement **X** and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. September 30, 2019 Describe the status of implementation of requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state sex offender registry or repository in each state where the staff member resided during the previous 5 years. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all (prospective and existing) licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all providers eligible to provide care for children receiving CCDF; 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

The Lead Agency has consulted with a neighboring state to understand best practices for conducting the checks and has reviewed available state contact information for state sex offender registries on the FBI. The Lead Agency will consult with the TBI to explore options for conducting the checks through the TBI organization. Updating the existing BacTrak criminal background check system to effectively track and manage this process continues to present challenges. Moving forward, the Lead Agency will explore its capacity to update the BacTrak system to manage these checks and may also explore purchasing a system from another state if needed.

- h) Describe the status of the requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database in each State where the staff member resided during the previous 5 years.
- ☐ **Fully implemented** for all prospective and existing required child care providers (all licensed, regulated or registered; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers)). This means that the State/Territory has requirements and procedures in effect, and has conducted the state-based child abuse and neglect registry check on all new and existing child care staff.

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- i. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers, in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers includes provisions for checking the child abuse and neglect registry for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed on a case-by-case basis with each respective state per applicant.

- ii. Describe how these requirements, policies and procedures apply to all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43 and 98.16(o).

The criminal background check process for licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers includes provisions for checking the child abuse and neglect registry for new (prospective) child care staff. The check is completed on a case-by-case basis with each respective state per applicant.

- iii. List the citation:

T.C.A. §71-3-507.

- ☐ In progress. Check here to indicate request for time-limited waiver for this requirement X and enter the expected date of full implementation of this requirement. Describe the status of implementation of requirements, policies and procedures for the search of the state-based child abuse and neglect registry and database in each State where the staff member resided during the previous 5 years. At a minimum, the description should briefly summarize: 1) efforts to date to implement the requirement for all (prospective and existing) licensed, regulated and registered providers; and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers); 2) key activities planned toward implementation of this requirement; 3) key challenges to implementing this requirement; and 4) strategies used to address challenges:

- 5.4.2 A child care provider must submit a request to the appropriate state/territory agency for a criminal background check for each child care staff member, including prospective child care staff members, prior to the date an individual becomes a child care staff member and at least once every 5 years thereafter. A prospective child care staff member may begin to work on a provisional basis for a child care provider after completing either a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint check or a search of the state/territory criminal registry or repository using fingerprints (in the state/territory where the staff member resides. However, the child care staff member must be supervised at all times pending completion of all the background check components (98.43(d)(4)).

5.4.3 Does the state/territory allow prospective staff members to begin work on a provisional basis (if supervised at all times) after completing the FBI fingerprint check or a fingerprint check of the state criminal registry or repository in the state where the child care staff member resides?

☐ No.

☐ Yes. Describe:

Technically, prospective staff members are allowed to begin work on a provisional basis under these circumstances. However, normal staffing patterns and cost structures within most facilities make it unlikely that a child care provider has sufficient qualified staff available to meet the supervision requirements. Therefore, this option remains a rare exception rather than a common practice.

5.4.4 The state/territory must conduct the background checks as quickly as possible and shall not exceed 45 days after the child care provider submitted the request. The state/territory shall provide the results of the background check in a statement that indicates whether the staff member is eligible or ineligible, without revealing specific disqualifying information. If the staff member is ineligible, the state/territory will provide information about each disqualifying crime to the staff member.

5.4.5 Describe the requirements, policies, and procedures in place to respond as expeditiously as possible to other states', territories', and tribes' requests for background check results to accommodate the 45-day timeframe, including any agencies/entities responsible for responding to requests from other states (98.43(a)(1)(iii)).

The Lead Agency does not maintain the child abuse and neglect registry in Tennessee. This registry is maintained by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS). States may submit requests to a DCS email mailbox to initiate this process. The Lead Agency attempts to facilitate this process as needed by verifying DCS contact information and periodically confirming the request process.

5.4.6 Child care staff members cannot be employed by a child care provider receiving CCDF subsidy funds if they refuse a background check, make materially false statements in connection with the background check, or are registered or required to be registered on the state or National Sex Offender Registry. Potential staff members also cannot be employed by a provider receiving CCDF funds if they have been convicted of: a felony consisting of murder, child abuse or neglect, crimes against children, spousal abuse, crimes involving rape or sexual assault, kidnapping, arson, physical assault or battery, or—subject to an individual review (at the state/territory's option)—a drug-related offense committed during the preceding 5 years; a violent misdemeanor committed as an adult against a child, including the following crimes—child abuse, child endangerment, or sexual assault; or a misdemeanor involving child pornography (98.43(c)(1)).

Note: The Lead Agency may not publicly release the results of individual background checks. It may release aggregated data by crime as long as the data do not include personally identifiable information (98.43(e)(2)(iii)).

5.4.7 Does the state/territory disqualify child care staff members based on their conviction for other crimes not specifically listed in 98.43(h)?

☐ No.

☐ **Yes.** Describe:

In addition to crimes listed in 98.43 (h), the Lead Agency also disqualifies child care educators for the following crimes:

- Aggravated cruelty to animals
- Aggravated robbery
- **Aggravated Arson**
- **Aggravated Burglary**
- **Aggravated Kidnapping**
- **Aggravated rape**
- **Arson**
- Carjacking
- **Criminal exposure to HIV**
- Cruelty to animals
- **Custodial Interference**
- **Exploitation of a minor by electronic means**
- **Incest**
- **Indecent exposure**
- **Involuntary labor servitude**
- **Kidnapping**
- **Reckless homicide**
- Robbery
- Solicitation of a minor
- Stalking

- Vehicular Homicide
- Weapon offenses
- Additional crimes may be added to this list at the discretion of the Lead Agency.

5.4.8 The state/territory has a process for a child care staff member to appeal the results of his or her background check to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the criminal background report, as detailed in 98.43(e)(3). Describe how the Lead Agency ensures the privacy of background checks and provides opportunities for applicants to appeal the results of background checks. In addition, describe whether the state/territory has a review process for individuals disqualified due to a felony drug offense to determine if that individual is still eligible for employment (98.43(e)(2–4)).

Applicants complete a disclosure form to initiate the criminal background check process. The form includes an area for explaining any extenuating circumstances that should be considered in determining whether or not the individual should be allowed to work in a child care agency. The form also includes a detailed statement about the applicant's privacy rights and information about challenging the accuracy or completeness of their criminal history record. The Lead Agency provides for a review process (waiver review committee) that utilizes an advisory group of law enforcement personnel, persons experienced in child protective services, persons experienced in child development issues, and child care providers to consider exemptions from exclusions not prohibited by CCDF requirements based upon extenuating circumstances. After hearing a case the waiver review committee presents its recommendations to the Lead Agency and the Lead Agency has final authority to grant an exemption. Applicants can appeal this decision and request to have a formal hearing before the division of Appeals and Hearings within the Department of Human Services.

5.4.9 The State/Territory may not charge fees that exceed the actual costs of processing applications and administering a criminal background check (98.43(f)). Describe how the state/territory ensures that fees charged for completing the background checks do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administration, regardless of whether they are conducted by the state/territory or a third-party vendor or contractor. Lead Agencies can report that no fees are charged if applicable (98.43(f)).

The Lead Agency assumes the costs of background checks for child care educators.

5.4.10 Federal requirements do not address background check requirements for relative providers who receive CCDF; therefore, States have the flexibility to decide which background check requirements relatives, as defined by CCDF, must meet. *Note:* This exception only applies if the individual cares *only* for relative children. Does the state/territory exempt relatives from background checks?

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- ☐ **No**, relatives are not exempt from background check requirements.
 - ☐ Yes, relatives are exempt from *all* background check requirements.
 - ☐ Yes, relatives are exempt from *some* background check requirements. If the state/territory exempts relatives from some background check requirements, describe which background check requirements do not apply to relative providers.

6 Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce

This section covers the state or territory framework for training, professional to strengthen the business practices of child care providers (98.16(z)); and addresses early learning and developmental guidelines.

States and territories are required to describe their framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for caregivers, teachers, and directors, including those working in school-age care (98.44(a)). States and territories must incorporate their knowledge and application of health and safety standards, early learning guidelines, responses to challenging behavior, and the engagement of families. States and territories are required to establish a progression of professional development opportunities to improve the knowledge and skills of CCDF providers (658E(c)(2)(G)). To the extent practicable, professional development should be appropriate to work with a population of children of different ages, English-language learners, children with disabilities, and Native Americans (98.44(b)(2)(iv)). Training and professional development is one of the options that states and territories have for investing their CCDF quality funds (658G(b)(1)).

6.1 Professional Development Framework

- 6.1.1 Describe how the state/territory developed its training and professional development
- Each State or Territory must describe their professional development framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education, which is developed in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. The framework should include these components: (1) professional standards and competencies, (2) career pathways, (3) advisory structures, (4) articulation, (5) workforce information, and (6) financing (98.44(a)(3)). Flexibility is provided on the strategies, breadth, and depth with which states and territories will develop and implement their framework. Describe how the state/territory's framework for training and professional development addresses the following required elements:

- State/territory professional standards and competencies. Describe:

Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA), as the proposed early care and education professional development hub for the state, has offered to utilize the standards set forth in the National Association for the Education of Young Children

(NAEYC) Standards for Professional Preparation Programs, which provide a common national framework for all early childhood professional development systems and programs, as the state framework. This builds upon the existing framework established by TECTA and aligns with the Council for Professional Recognition Child Development Associates (CDA) competency areas and NAEYC work with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. A core training and competency review team has been established between training delivery partners to begin analysis of current training and alignment with foundational and advanced knowledge to examine competency alignment with the framework. TECTA will build upon the professional development system in place comprised of eight regional sites to include the additional partnering and collaborating agency training. This progression of professional development system includes:

Tennessee Child Care Online Training System (TCCOTS), an online training portal, with capabilities to support adult learning methods of instruction cross-platformed and supported by most common web browsers to provide online work related training options. Within each module, activities and content quizzes require user demonstration of recognizing and recalling information included in content. The online training modules include specific early childhood area content, aligned with NAEYC national framework, and the expected competencies upon completion. Pre- and post-test scores are incorporated into some modules to measure learning outcomes. Training evaluations are collected for each module with some modules featuring additional questions to collect anticipated implementation of skills learned. Each module is designed to provide a minimum of two hours of training to meet state training hour requirements. TCCOTS is a freely accessible resource for early childhood educators as well as parents. Training certificates are issued to those who provide specific work place or higher education student information within Tennessee. TCCOTS includes a help desk feature to facilitate user navigation and success. The Tennessee Child Care Professional Training (TN-CCPT) system managed by CCR&R maintains a parallel face-to-face training system that also provides entry level and ongoing free training access to meet CCDF requirements including caregivers, teachers, and directors.

TECTA 30-clock hour Orientation training is designed to provide foundational knowledge across roles and settings for care and education professionals. Orientation trainings include such content areas as Administration, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Center-based Care, Family Child Care, Infant-Toddler Care, and School-Age Care, and skills related to the core competencies of the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential aligned with NAEYC:

1. Establishing and maintaining a safe, healthy, learning environment;

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2. Advancing physical and intellectual competence;
 3. Supporting social and emotional development and provide positive guidance;
 4. Establishing positive and productive partnerships with families;
 5. Ensuring a well-run, purposeful program responsive to participant needs; and
 6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism.

TECTA manages the Tennessee Early Childhood Administrator Credential (TECPAC) which uses NAEYC standards:

1. Promoting child development and learning;
2. Building Family and Community Relationships;
3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families;
4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families;
5. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum and
6. Maintaining a commitment to Professionalism.

These competencies are documented and measured as identified in the Program Administration Scale Measuring Early Childhood Leadership and Management or Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care from the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership specifically designed for directors. The TECTA management office is responsible for scheduling the TECPAC Academy which serves as the capstone requirement for earning the TECPAC credential. The TECPAC Academy is comprised of content-specific sessions related to early childhood program administration. Candidates receive information and assistance related to individual professional development and program improvement goals and objectives.

TECTA manages the Infant-Toddler Credential using the aforementioned NAEYC standards. This credential will include NAEYC standards:

1. Promoting child development and learning;
2. Building Family and Community Relationships;
3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families;
4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families;

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5. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum; and
 6. Maintaining a commitment to Professionalism.

A combination of formal education and coaching/mentoring provided by the CCR&R Infant-Toddler Quality Coaches with focus on core competencies related to the state QRIS will be documented and measured. A required capstone academy training will be developed for earning the credential.

- Career pathways. Describe:

The TECTA 30-clock hour Orientation training provides the gateway to accessing academic tuition support and career advancement from Associate degree through graduate degrees, including earning the Tennessee Early Childhood Administrator Credential for administrators and the new Tennessee Infant Toddler Credential.

The academic pathway for earning the CDA[®] is a key first stepping stone on the career advancement lattice and fully articulates into the Early Childhood Education Associate of Applied Science (AAS) or Associate of Science (AS) degree at 11 two-year Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) institutions statewide.

State credentials also include academic preparation that articulates into academic technical certificates and degrees statewide. The TBR Early Childhood Education AAS programs are accredited by NAEYC/CAEP. Regional articulated pathways toward earning an Early Childhood Education or Child Development Bachelor of Science (BS) degree are in place at some institutions and additional articulation pathways are in development.

- Advisory structure. Describe:

The TECTA advisory structure is designed by the Tennessee State University Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences and comprised of various academic, state government, professional agency, and community-based stakeholders, some of whom sit on the TNYCWC. Select sub-committees are formed as the TECTA program needs for purposeful strategic planning and implementation of services.

- Articulation. Describe:

TECTA continues to provide leadership in the development and revision of courses within the Early Childhood Education AAS degree as well as the on-going evaluation and effectiveness of the curriculum including textbook adoption for the academic courses used for CDA[®] qualifications. TECTA supports the development and student utilization of articulation agreements across the state through a faculty institute held year for two and four-year early childhood administrators and faculty. TECTA staff positioned at the two-year academic institutions provide statewide academic

advisement for students.

- Workforce information. Describe:

TECTA holds a comprehensive workforce data system that includes extensive information on providers working in licensed child care facilities who have participated in TECTA professional development training and received academic assistance or other early childhood focused support. TECTA data demonstrates professional learning supports during professional development multiyear timelines toward ongoing practice for quality improvement. TECTA is expanding toward an enhanced training and workforce data system to align with national registry data and include training integration provided by partners of the Lead Agency who serve to provide early childhood workforce support.

- Financing. Describe:

In order to qualify for TECTA financial assistance, a student must meet the following requirements:

1. Meet the eligibility requirements for in-state tuition.
2. Be currently employed or volunteer on a consistent basis at a state-regulated early care and education program. Applicants must provide proof of employment or consistent volunteer time when requested by a TECTA site.
3. Have completed a TECTA Orientation course, received a TECTA Orientation Certificate via the High School Equivalency Program, or be a declared major in an early childhood education, child development or related degree program and have earned 3 credits of early childhood coursework with a minimum grade of C.
4. Be admitted to a college or university and be enrolled in a required academic course leading to a credential or degree in early childhood education or child development.
5. Have completed and submitted the appropriate TECTA application forms and a signed "Release of Academic Information" form permitting the college or university at the end of the semester to release the student's grades to a local TECTA coordinator and TECTA Management.

TECTA provides financial assistance to eligible students enrolled in academic courses leading to CDA[®] preparation and academic credentials or degrees in Early Childhood Education/Child Development. The financial assistance may include full or partial in-state tuition costs. Based on availability of annual grant funds, TECTA

Management will determine the percentage of financial assistance to be awarded for CDA[®] preparation, academic credentials, and degrees.

Textbooks for CDA[®] preparation courses may be borrowed from TECTA sites as funding allows. The amount of financial assistance an individual may receive per semester, per funding year, shall be determined by availability of contract funds through the guidance of TECTA Management with site participation. Funding consideration may also be given to students enrolled in degree programs in a related field when an early childhood major is not accessible and the student's program of study is designed to meet the early childhood professional career goals of the student. Student tuition is paid directly to the institution of credit through tuition only contractual agreement with the TECTA Management and institution in collaboration with the local TECTA site for verification of student eligibility. Students must request financial assistance from the local TECTA contract institution. Students are not eligible to receive financial support from multiple TECTA contract institutions within a given semester.

TECTA also provides scholarships to individuals seeking the CDA[®] Credential. The scholarship pays for the application fee and assessment due to the Council for Professional Recognition upon application. TECTA Management will identify stipends or incentive awards for each student completing the CDA[®] credential, TECPAC, or other identified credential incentives contingent on availability of annual grant funds.

The following phrases are optional elements, or elements that should be implemented to the extent practicable, in the training and professional development framework.

- ☐ Continuing education unit trainings and credit-bearing professional development to the extent practicable. Describe:

The placement of TECTA within the eight higher education institutions and professional relationships with Tennessee Board of Regents and Department of Education enables and supports partnerships with professional development organizations to align with college credit-bearing opportunities. The career lattice framework of TECTA allows for implementing comprehensive pathways and multiyear timelines for transitioning to a bachelor's degree and beyond.

TECTA coordinating institutions, which may change as local needs and other factors change, currently includes: Austin Peay State University, Chattanooga State Community College, Dyersburg State Community College, East Tennessee State University, Roane State Community College, Southwest Tennessee Community College, Tennessee State University, and Tennessee Technological University.

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- ☐ Engagement of training and professional development providers, including higher education, in aligning training and educational opportunities with the state/territory's framework. Describe:

TECTA hosts its Higher Education Institute twice each year bringing Early Childhood Education/Child Development (ECED) Program Directors and Faculty together from partnering two and four-year institutions of higher learning across the state to promote coursework for ECED credentials, certificate programs, and degrees. Based upon new research, state initiatives and/or new federal guidelines the faculty institute provides for continuing infusions of new best practices and updating course alignments.

- ☐ Other. Describe:

- 6.1.2 Describe how the state/territory developed its training and professional development requirements in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (if applicable) or with another state or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC that addresses the professional development, training, and education of child care providers and staff.

It has been the policy that whenever revisions of curricula may be indicated, TECTA Management will solicit input and suggestions from all TECTA Orientation instructors and coordinators. Focus groups comprised of the TECTA Management Curriculum Coordinator, providers, staff, and consultants will meet to review the proposed revisions and make recommendations if possible. The Curriculum Coordinator will review all suggestions and recommendations and propose any needed revisions to the curriculum. TECTA staff and original authors will review the proposed revisions and generate a final product when possible. All revisions that result from this process must be incorporated into the curriculum used throughout the TECTA Program.

Whenever revisions of the TECPAC Academy curricula are needed, the TECPAC Program Manager will coordinate a group following the guidelines in the NAEYC Standards and Guidelines for Professional Development and finalize curricula in collaboration with TECTA Management.

- 6.1.3 Identify how the framework improves the quality, diversity, stability, and retention of caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.44(a)(7)). Check and describe all that apply.

- ☐ Financial assistance to attain credentials and post-secondary degrees. Describe:

TECTA provides financial assistance to eligible students enrolled in academic courses leading to CDA[®] preparation and academic credentials or degrees in Early Childhood Education/Child Development. The financial assistance may include full or partial in-state tuition costs. Based on availability of annual grant funds, TECTA

Management will determine the percentage of financial assistance to be awarded for CDA[®] preparation, academic credentials, and degrees.

- ☐ Financial incentives linked to educational attainment and retention. Describe:

TECTA provides scholarships to individuals seeking the CDA[®] credential. The scholarship pays for the application fee and assessment due to the Council for Professional Recognition upon application. TECTA Management identifies stipends or incentive awards for each student completing the CDA[®] credential, TECPAC, or other identified credential incentives.

- ☐ Financial incentives and compensation improvements. Describe:

As funding is available, TECTA provides financial incentives to individuals who have completed academic preparation in successfully earning a CDA[®] credential.

- ☐ Registered apprenticeship programs. Describe:

- ☐ Outreach to high school (including career and technical) students. Describe:

TECTA provides a Center-based Orientation equivalency certificate to high school students who have successfully completed two classes within the Early Childhood Education Careers Track. This satisfies the high school students' eligibility for obtaining TECTA academic advisement, technical assistance and college tuition assistance in earning certificates and/or degrees. A pilot program was conducted by TECTA in providing a scholarship for the application fee and assessment due to the Council for Professional Recognition upon application for the CDA[®] credential to high school students who successfully completed all four classes within the Early Childhood Education Careers Track. This pilot will be expanded to accommodate additional high school students across Tennessee regions.

- ☐ Policies for paid sick leave. Describe:

- ☐ Policies for paid annual leave. Describe:

- ☐ Policies for health care benefits. Describe:

- ☐ Policies for retirement benefits. Describe:

- ☐ Support for providers' mental health, such as training in reflective practices and stress-reduction techniques and health and mental health consultation services. Describe:

The new child care rules require all administrative and teaching staff to receive training and consultation the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The Lead Agency is in partnership with the Department of Mental health to participate in the Zero to Three Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health consultation to support

providers in the classroom and outside of the classroom with stress reduction techniques such as mindfulness and health and wellness activities.

☐ Other. Describe:

6.2 Training and Professional Development Requirements

The state/territory must develop training and professional development requirements, including pre-service or orientation training (to be completed within 3 months) and ongoing requirements designed to enable child care providers to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children and to improve the knowledge and skills of the child care workforce. Such requirements shall be applicable to child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF funds across the entire age span, from birth through age 12 (658E(c)(2)(G)). Ongoing training and professional development should be accessible and appropriate to the setting and age of the children served (98.44(b)(2)).

- 6.2.1 Describe how the state/territory incorporates the knowledge and application of its early developmental guidelines (where applicable); its health and safety standards (as described in section 5); and social-emotional/behavioral and early childhood mental health intervention models, which can include positive behavior intervention and support models (as described in section 2) in the training and professional development requirements (98.44(b)(2)(ii)).

This information is incorporated in web-based trainings available through the Tennessee Child Care Online Training System (TCCOTS) and trainings provided by Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).

Incorporating these elements begins with the application process to become a child care agency. At the child care center level, individuals or groups that wish to provide care must participate in pre-application and pre-orientation training. New agency staff are required to have an initial orientation and instruction that includes some of these items. Thereafter, trainings offered through TECTA and CCR&R to fulfill annual training requirements would provide instruction on these elements. Several examples of trainings offered through the TCCOTS and CCR&R were outlined in the response to section 6.1.2 and 6.2.1. For example, CCR&R and TECTA both provide training on the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards and trainings that support children's social and emotional development and they provide detailed instruction on health and safety requirements.

- 6.2.2 Describe how the state/territory's training and professional development requirements are accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or tribal organizations receiving CCDF funds (as applicable) (98.44(b)(2)(vi)). **Not applicable.**

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- 6.2.3 Describe how the state/territory will recruit and facilitate the participation of providers with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities (98.16(dd)).

The Lead Agency continues to ensure translations of licensing documents are available in languages other than English, including Spanish, Somali, and Arabic on the basis of demand. The Lead Agency also seeks guidance from its Division of Rehabilitation Services on recruitment efforts for persons with disabilities.

- 6.2.4 If the Lead Agency provides information or services to providers in other non-English languages, please identify the three primary languages offered or specify that the State has the ability to have translation/interpretation in primary and secondary languages.

The Lead Agency continues to ensure translations of licensing documents are available in languages other than English, including Spanish, Somali, and Arabic on the basis of demand.

- 6.2.5 Describe how the state/territory's training and professional development requirements are appropriate, to the extent practicable, for child care providers who care for children receiving child care subsidies, including children of different age groups (such as specialized credentials for providers who care for infants and/or school-age children); English-language learners; children with developmental delays and disabilities; and Native Americans, including Indians and Native Hawaiians (98.44(b)(2)(iii–iv)).

Training is available through the Tennessee Child Care Online Training System and Child Care Resource and Referral includes provisions for addressing these areas. Provisions for providing training and resources for specialized services that target focal impact areas such as homelessness, health and safety and limited English proficiency or other specializations have been added to the FY 2019 contracts with these partners.

- 6.2.6 The Lead Agency must provide training and technical assistance to providers and appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving homeless children and families (658E(c)(3)(B)(i)).

- a) Describe the state/territory's training and TA efforts for providers in identifying and serving homeless children and their families (relates to question 3.2.2).

The Lead Agency provides training for Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) on serving children and families experiencing homelessness. CCR&R provides statewide training to child care agencies on identifying and providing resources for children experiencing homelessness statewide. The Lead Agency and CCR&R Family Engagement Quality Coaches provide outreach services to families experiencing homelessness by implementing strategies to increase networks to families experiencing homelessness and support effective cross-sector collaboration.

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- b) Describe the state/territory's training and TA efforts for Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff in identifying and serving homeless children and their families (connects to question 3.2.2).

The Lead Agency provides training to its Child Care Services staff on identifying and serving homeless children and families. CCR&R provides training to child care agencies on identifying and serving homeless children and their families to child care agencies.

- 6.2.7 The states and territories are required to describe effective internal controls that are in place to ensure program integrity and accountability (98.68(a)). Describe how the state/territory ensures that all providers for children receiving CCDF funds are informed and trained regarding CCDF requirements and integrity (98.68(a)(3)). Check all that apply.

- ☐ Issue policy change notices
- ☐ Issue new policy manual
- ☐ Staff training
- ☐ Orientations
- ☐ Onsite training
- ☐ Online training
- ☐ Regular check-ins to monitor the implementation of CCDF policies
- ☐ The type of check-ins, including the frequency. Describe:
- ☐ Other. Describe:

- 6.2.8 Lead Agencies must develop and implement strategies to strengthen the business practices of child care providers to expand the supply and to improve the quality of child care services (98.16 (z)). Describe the state/territory's strategies to strengthen provider's business practices, which can include training and/or TA efforts.

- a) Identify the strategies that the state/territory is developing and implementing for training and TA.

Each Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential Academy consists of ten (10) two-hour sessions of instruction. The sessions are comprised of direct instruction, interactive assignments, and participation in online discussion boards. See Tennessee Early Childhood Program Administrator Credential mentioned above in 6.1.

Child Care Resource and Referral will work closely with providers through the development of continuous Quality Improvement Plans that will target specific areas

to strengthen a provider's level of quality, business practices, accessibility and availability impact to supply, and the general improvement of child care services.

- b) Check the topics addressed in the state/territory's strategies. Check all that apply.
- ☐ Fiscal management
 - ☐ Budgeting
 - ☐ Recordkeeping
 - ☐ Hiring, developing, and retaining qualified staff
 - ☐ Risk management
 - ☐ Community relationships
 - ☐ Marketing and public relations
 - ☐ Parent-provider communications, including who delivers the training, education, and/or technical assistance
 - ☐ Other. Describe:

6.3 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines

6.3.1 States and territories are required to develop, maintain, or implement early learning and developmental guidelines that are appropriate for children in a forward progression from birth to kindergarten entry (i.e., birth-to-three, three-to-five, birth-to-five), describing what children should know and be able to do and covering the essential domains of early childhood development. These early learning and developmental guidelines are to be used statewide and territory-wide by child care providers and in the development and implementation of training and professional development (658E(c)(2)(T)). The required essential domains for these guidelines are cognition, including language arts and mathematics; social, emotional, and physical development; and approaches toward learning (98.15(a)(9)). At the option of the state/territory, early learning and developmental guidelines for out-of-school time may be developed. *Note:* States and territories may use the quality set-aside, discussed in section 7, to improve on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines.

- a) Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are research-based, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and aligned with kindergarten entry.

The Tennessee Early Childhood Education Early Learning Developmental Standards, or TN-ELDS, were first developed in 2004 to provide documentation of the continuum of developmental milestones from birth through age five based on the

research about the processes, sequences, and long term consequences of early learning and development.

The TN-ELDS are designed to promote developmentally appropriate, research-based best practice utilizing the fundamental philosophy, cognitive, emotional, and social capacities are inextricably intertwined especially in early childhood and continue throughout life. The original design and each revision considered research based peer reviewed references from the Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Division of Early Childhood, American Academy of Pediatrics, and others.

- b) Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are appropriate for all children from birth to kindergarten entry.

The major vision of the TN ELDS in 2012 originated with the Common Core State Standards Initiative state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in college courses and in workforce training programs. As Tennessee moved forward with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards for Reading/English Language Arts and Mathematics, it was imperative to revise and align the TN-ELDS for Four Year-Olds with the Common Core State Standards. This then prompted revisions of the TN-ELDS at all ages in order to provide a consistent framework to support the work of teachers, caregivers and families who plan and provide learning experiences for young children.

- c) Check the domain areas included in the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Cognition, including language arts and mathematics
- ☐ Social development
- ☐ Emotional development
- ☐ Physical development
- ☐ Approaches toward learning
- ☐ Other. Describe: Science, Social Studies, Creative Arts

- d) Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are implemented in consultation with the educational agency and the State Advisory Council or other state or state-designated cross-agency body if there is no SAC.

The Lead Agency collaborates with the Tennessee Department of Education and with other early care and education partners in the development of the early learning and developmental guidelines that are adopted by the Tennessee State Board of Education.

- e) Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are updated and include the date first issued and/or the frequency of updates.

The standards for four-year-olds initially developed and approved in 2005 were revised and adopted by the Tennessee State Board of Education in August 2012 and were revised again in 2017 by the Tennessee Department of Education (DOE). Revisions are initiated by DOE and/or the Lead Agency in response to revisions in state academic updates as well as ongoing review and implementation aligned with best practices. The recent revised standards provide a direct association and alignment with content areas found in Tennessee's state academic state standards for kindergarten readiness and kindergarten standards.

The birth-48 month standards initially developed and approved in 2005 were revised in 2013 and adopted by the State Board of Education in January 2014. These revised standards continue to be a resource for educators, child care providers, and families who work with children in this age range. It is expected that these standards will be under review for revision in 2018-2019 for precursor pathway toward developmental learning aligned with kindergarten readiness and best practice.

- f) Provide the Web link to the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines.

<https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/academic-standards/early-learning-development-standards.html>

6.3.2 CCDF funds cannot be used to develop or implement an assessment for children that:

- Will be the primary or sole basis to determine a child care provider ineligible to participate in the CCDF,
- Will be used as the primary or sole basis to provide a reward or sanction for an individual provider,
- Will be used as the primary or sole method for assessing program effectiveness,
- Will be used to deny children eligibility to participate in the CCDF (658E(c)(2)(T)(ii)(I); 98.15(a)(2)).

Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are used.

Tennessee embeds the early learning and developmental guidelines in a variety of approaches in the preparation of and ongoing professional development for the child care workforce and in classroom practice. Child Care Resource and Referral and the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance train providers so the early learning guidelines content is included in higher education coursework, technical assistance services to early care and education practitioners, classroom instruction and supports the improvement of program quality.

- 6.3.3 If quality funds are used to develop, maintain, or implement early learning guidelines, describe the measureable indicators that will be used to evaluate the state/territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services and the data on the extent to which the state/territory has met these measures (98.53(f)(3)).

The Lead Agency provides training and technical assistance on the early learning and development guidelines through the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R).

Developmental Learning is a main component of the report card and rated licensing system. CCR&R provides targeted technical assistance to support provider's participation in the QRIS in addition to Infant-Toddler Quality Coaches throughout the state to provide targeted training and technical assistance supporting infant-toddler programs. TECTA provides specific orientation courses for pre-school and school-age children.

7 Support Continuous Quality Improvement

Lead Agencies are required to reserve and use a portion of their Child Care and Development Fund program expenditures for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care (98.53). The quality activities should be aligned with a statewide or territory-wide assessment of the state's or territory's need to carry out such services and care. States and territories are required to report on these quality improvement investments through CCDF in three ways:

1. In the Plan, states and territories will describe the types of activities supported by quality investments over the 3-year period (658G(b); 98.16(j)).
2. ACF will collect annual data on how much CCDF funding is spent on quality activities using the expenditure report (ACF-696). This report will be used to determine compliance with the required quality and infant and toddler spending requirements (658G(d)(1); 98.53(f)).
3. For each year of the Plan period, states and territories will submit a separate annual Quality Progress Report that will include a description of activities to be funded by quality expenditures and the measures used by the state/territory to evaluate its

progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory (658G(d); 98.53(f)).

States and territories must fund efforts in at least one of the following 10 activities:

- Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce
- Improving on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services
- Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers
- Establishing or expanding a statewide system of child care resource and referral services
- Supporting compliance with state/territory requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety (as described in section 5)
- Evaluating the quality of child care programs in the state/territory, including evaluating how programs positively impact children
- Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- Performing other activities to improve the quality of child care services, as long as outcome measures relating to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry are possible.

Throughout this Plan, states and territories will describe the types of quality improvement activities where CCDF investments are being made, including but not limited to, quality set-aside funds and will describe the measurable indicators of progress used to evaluate state/territory progress in improving the quality of child care services for each expenditure (98.53(f)).

This section covers the quality activities needs assessment and quality improvement activities and indicators of progress for each of the activities undertaken in the state or territory.

7.1 Quality Activities Needs Assessment for Child Care Services

- 7.1.1. Lead Agencies must invest in quality activities based on an assessment of the state/territory's needs to carry out those activities. Lead Agencies have the flexibility to design an assessment of their quality activities that best meet their needs, including how often they do the assessment. Describe your state/territory assessment process, including the frequency of assessment (658G(a)(1); 98.53(a)).

The Lead Agency conducts its assessment of need utilizing methodologies that include annual and periodic analyses by the institutions of higher education, research studies that focus on the impact of the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), market rate and supply and demand studies, public focus groups and information sessions with partners, consumers, and providers of child care services, and review of contracts and services.

- 7.1.2. Describe the findings of the assessment and if any overarching goals for quality improvement were identified.

Below is an example of recommendations that resulted from the statewide focus group, informational meetings, and rulemaking hearings:

- Strengthen provider understanding of the QRIS through delivery of trainings, quality improvement supports, and mock assessments.
- Reevaluation of the current QRIS.
- Increase funding for professional development.
- Implement social, emotional, behavioral, and special needs supports for children, families, and teaching staff.
- Increase access to online and in-person training with a wider variety of topics.
- Strengthen peer learning through coaching, mentoring, and hands-on application of trainings.
- Introduce parenting classes on such practical subjects as childhood obesity/nutrition, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), budgeting, nutrition, physical fitness, and tobacco cessation.

7.2 Use of Quality Funds

- 7.2.1. Check the quality improvement activities in which the state/territory is investing.

- ☐ Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce. If checked, respond to section 7.3 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ CCDF funds
 - ☐ Other funds
- ☐ Developing, maintaining, or implementing early learning and developmental guidelines. If checked, respond to section 6.3 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ CCDF funds
 - ☐ Other funds

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- ☐ Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system. If checked, respond to 7.4 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ CCDF funds
 - ☐ Other funds
 - ☐ Improving the supply and quality of child care services for infants and toddlers. If checked, respond to 7.5 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ CCDF funds
 - ☐ Other funds
 - ☐ Establishing or expanding a statewide system of CCR&R services, as discussed in 1.7. If checked, respond to 7.6 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ CCDF funds
 - ☐ Other funds
 - ☐ Facilitating compliance with state/territory requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety standards (as described in section 5). If checked, respond to 7.7 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ CCDF funds
 - ☐ Other funds
 - ☐ Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care services within the state/territory. If checked, respond to 7.8 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ CCDF funds
 - ☐ Other funds
 - ☐ Supporting accreditation. If checked, respond to 7.9 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ CCDF funds
 - ☐ Other funds
 - ☐ Supporting state/territory or local efforts to develop high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development. If checked, respond to 7.10 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

- ☐ CCDF funds
- ☐ Other funds
- ☐ Other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of child care services and which measurement of outcomes related to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry is possible. If checked, respond to 7.11 and indicate which funds will be used for this activity. Check all that apply.

- ☐ CCDF funds
- ☐ Other funds

7.3 Supporting Training and Professional Development of the Child Care Workforce With CCDF Quality Funds

Lead Agencies can invest in the training, professional development, and post-secondary education of the child care workforce as part of a progression of professional development activities, such as those included at 98.44 in addition to the following (98.53(a)(1)).

7.3.1 Describe how the state/territory funds the training and professional development of the child care workforce.

- a) Check and describe which content is included in training and professional development activities and describe who or how an entity is funded to address this topic. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ Promoting the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including those efforts related to nutrition and physical activity, using scientifically based, developmentally appropriate, and age-appropriate strategies. Describe:

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) provide training, technical assistance, coaching and mentoring to providers on a number of early care and education topics through a quality contract with the Lead Agency such as:

- Abusive Head Trauma
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Assessing Children's Learning: How Children Learn and Develop
- Basic Skills for Brain Smart Classroom Management
- Brain Development
- Childhood Obesity

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- Conscious Discipline
 - Defining the Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers
 - Developmental Standards: The Building Blocks for Stronger Families
 - Food Portions (by age groups)
 - Inclusion
 - Race and Culture in Early Childhood Settings
 - Tennessee Early Intervention System
 - Transforming Aggression into Healthy
- ☐ Implementing behavior management strategies, including positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social-emotional development and early childhood mental health and that reduce challenging behaviors, including a reduction in expulsions of preschool-age children from birth to age 5 for such behaviors. (See also section 2.5.) Describe:
- The Lead Agency has adopted a suspension and expulsion policy that promotes positive social-emotional development and provides strategies and resources to reduce challenging behaviors and support for early childhood mental health for educators and families.
- CCR&R and TECTA provide training, technical assistance, coaching and peer mentoring to providers on classroom guidance, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) 30-hour training series, and Center for Social and Emotional Foundation for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid model.
- ☐ Engaging parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills, and capacity to become meaningful partners in supporting their children's positive development. Describe:
- CCR&R and TECTA provide training, technical assistance, coaching and mentoring to providers on a number of early care and education topics through a quality contract with the Lead Agency.
- ☐ Implementing developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, and evidence-based curricula and designing learning environments that are aligned with state/territory early learning and developmental standards. Describe:
- The Lead Agency requires Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS) training provides an introduction to and exploration of the Tennessee early learning developmental standards for early care and educators. TN-ELDS

provides early care and educators with developmentally appropriate and culturally and linguistically responsive instructions focusing on a framework of developmental milestones for all children inclusive of diverse cultures and languages.

- ☐ Providing onsite or accessible comprehensive services for children and developing community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development. Describe:

2 Generation Strategy

The Overarching Strategy for Creating Cycles of Success for Tennessee Families

The Tennessee Department of Human Services has adopted a service delivery model that is consistent with the 2 Generation Approach as an organization. Our goal is to develop a foundational framework for the Department, where all programs are aligned and in synch – ensuring 2 Generation tactics are applied when working with all customers in all aspects of case management and service delivery.

2 Generation approaches can be found along a continuum. Whole-family approaches focus equally and intentionally on services and opportunities for the parent and the child. Child-parent approaches focus first or primarily on the child but are moving toward a 2 Generation approach and also include services and opportunities for the parent. Parent-child approaches focus first or primarily on the parent but are moving toward a two-generation approach and also include services and opportunities for children. This includes innovative state programs and initiatives as the Lead Agency's partnership with the Governor's Books From Birth Foundation and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Read to be Ready summer literacy camps with the Tennessee Department of Education (DOE), and increasing access to quality care through the Child Care Certificate Program Smart Steps initiative.

- ☐ Using data to guide program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement. Describe:
- ☐ Caring for children of families in geographic areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment. Describe:
- ☐ Caring for and supporting the development of children with disabilities and developmental delays. Describe:

Through a contract with the Lead Agency, Signal Centers, Inc. as described in section 1.7 fulfills a scope of services which improves the overall quality of child

care, strengthens the training and technical assistance system for the state, and assures quality and consistent practices among the CCR&R Network.

- ☐ Supporting the positive development of school-age children. Describe:
- ☐ The Lead Agency, in collaboration with DOE and other partners, has recently revised the School-Age Early Learning Developmental Standards. CCR&R and TECTA provide training, technical assistance, coaching and mentoring to providers to support the positive development of school-age children through a quality contract with the Lead Agency.

☐ Other. Describe:

b) Check how the state/territory connects child care providers with available federal and state/territory financial aid or other resources to pursue post-secondary education relevant for the early childhood and school-age workforce. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Coaches, mentors, consultants, or other specialists available to support access to post-secondary training, including financial aid and academic counseling
- ☐ Statewide or territory-wide, coordinated, and easily accessible clearinghouse (i.e., an online calendar, a listing of opportunities) of relevant post-secondary education opportunities
- ☐ Financial awards, such as scholarships, grants, loans, or reimbursement for expenses, from the state/territory to complete post-secondary education
- ☐ Other. Describe:

In order to qualify for financial assistance through the TECTA, a student must meet the following requirements:

1. Meet the eligibility requirements for in-state tuition.
2. Be currently employed or volunteer on a consistent basis at a state-regulated early care and education program. Applicants must provide proof of employment or consistent volunteer time when requested by a TECTA site.
3. Have completed a TECTA Orientation course, received a TECTA Orientation Certificate via the High School Equivalency Program, or be a declared major in an early childhood education, child development or related degree program and have earned three credits of early childhood coursework with a minimum grade of C.
4. Be admitted to a college or university and be enrolled in a required academic course leading to a credential or degree in early childhood education or child development.

-
5. Have completed and submitted the appropriate TECTA application forms and a signed “Release of Academic Information” form permitting the college or university at the end of the semester to release the student’s grades to a local TECTA site coordinator and to TECTA Management.

TECTA provides financial assistance to eligible students enrolled in academic courses leading to CDA[®] preparation and academic credentials or degrees in Early Childhood Education/Child Development. The financial assistance may include full or partial in-state tuition costs. Based on availability of annual grant funds, the TECTA Management Office will determine the percentage of financial assistance to be awarded for CDA[®] preparation, academic credentials, and degrees. Textbooks for CDA[®] preparation courses may be borrowed from TECTA sites. The amount of financial assistance an individual may receive per semester, per funding year, shall be determined by availability of contract funds through the guidance of TECTA Management with TECTA site participation. Funding consideration may also be given to students enrolled in degree programs in a related field when an early childhood major is not accessible and the student’s program of study is designed to meet the early childhood professional career goals of the student. Student tuition is paid directly to the institution of credit through tuition only contractual agreement with the TECTA Management Office and institution in collaboration with the TECTA site for verification of student eligibility. Students must request financial assistance from the TECTA site contract institution. Students are not eligible to receive financial support from multiple TECTA contract institutions within a given semester.

TECTA provides scholarships to individuals seeking the CDA[®] Credential. The scholarship pays for the application fee and assessment due to the Council for Professional Recognition upon application. Based on annual funding, the TECTA Management Office will identify stipends or incentive awards for each student completing the CDA[®] credential, TECPAC, or other identified Credential incentives.

- 7.3.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency is continually evaluating indicators and measurements relevant to these activities which may include but are not limited to:

- Scoring components of QRIS;
- Professional development delivered to early care and educators;

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- Child care agency participation in the Gold Sneaker initiative;
 - Delivered trainings, technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring

7.4 Quality Rating and Improvement System

Lead Agencies may respond in this section based on other systems of quality improvement, even if not called a QRIS, as long as the other quality improvement system contains the elements of a QRIS.

7.4.1 Does your state/territory have a quality rating and improvement system?

- ☐ **Yes**, the state/territory has a QRIS operating statewide or territory-wide. Describe how the QRIS is administered (e.g., statewide or locally or through CCR&R entities) and any partners and provide a link, if available.

The Lead Agency administers the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) in Tennessee. The Lead Agency is supported by the University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (UT SWORPS) to provide quality checks of the Child Care Assessment staff on use of Environment Rating Scales (ERS™) tools. The following information below describes how the QRIS is administered in the State of Tennessee and can also be accessed directly from the website links listed directly below this description.

Child Care Assessment staff are highly trained professionals who conduct classroom observations and provider assessments objectively and without bias utilizing ERS™ tools. Reliability checks and careful communication ensure that all child care agencies participating in the QRIS are assessed fairly.

Assessors have experience in the child development field and are extensively trained and evaluated for use of ERS™ tools. This training begins with a series of workshops conducted by UT SWORPS where Assessors learn about using these scales to evaluate the quality of child care programs. This training continues with the completion of multiple practice observations where Assessors use the scales in actual child care agencies under the direction of trained UT SWORPS Assessment Specialists and other training staff to ensure Assessors interpret scales consistently.

As an Assessor uses a particular scale, an Assessment Specialist accompanies the Assessor on an observation or assessment where each independently (and without sharing information with each other) assess a child care program and compare notes afterward. For the Assessor to be determined "reliable", the assessment must closely match the Assessment Specialist's version. Such activities are referred to as Reliability Checks.

Anchors hold the Child Care Assessment program to a common standard. As their title implies, they are responsible for "anchoring" the interpretation and use of the scales. Anchors have the "last word" whenever questions arise about the meaning of something on a scale and are also responsible for writing Additional Notes to the Scales which clarify and interpret the scales where needed. Additional Notes are sent to all Child Care Assessment staff to ensure each person performing assessments uses the same interpretations. In all their decisions, Anchors consult with an Advisory Team and find consensus and agreement before making any decision about a specific interpretation or question. Anchors also play a role in Reliability Checks: They make certain Assessment Specialists and their fellow Anchors all remain reliable in their use of the scales.

Links provided below:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services/child-care-report-card-star-quality-program.html>

<http://tnstarquality.org>

- ☐ Yes, the state/territory has a QRIS initiative operating as a pilot-test in a few localities or only a few levels but does not have a fully operating initiative on a statewide or territory-wide basis. Provide a link, if available.
- ☐ If Yes, describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.
- ☐ No, but the state/territory is in the QRIS development phase.
- ☐ No, the state/territory has no plans for QRIS development.

7.4.2. QRIS participation.

a) Are providers required to participate in the QRIS?

- ☐ Participation is voluntary.
- ☐ Participation is mandatory for providers serving children receiving a subsidy. If checked, describe the relationship between QRIS participation and subsidy (e.g., minimum rating required, reimbursed at higher rates for achieving higher ratings, participation at any level).

These choices do not adequately describe our QRIS system. Therefore, we are selecting this item that includes a description box to more adequately describe our system.

The QRIS system in Tennessee includes both mandatory and voluntary aspects. After the first year of operation, all licensed child care providers are evaluated annually as part of the QRIS system and must post a report card detailing the evaluation results within their facility. Providers earning a 1, 2, or 3 Star Rating may elect to participate in the Star Quality program. Providers in the Star Quality program that participate in the Child Care Certificate Program are eligible for bonus payments based upon the Star Rating earned.

☐ Participation is required for all providers.

b) Which types of settings or distinctive approaches to early childhood education and care participate in the state/territory's QRIS? Check all that apply.

☐ Licensed child care centers

☐ Licensed family child care homes

☐ License-exempt providers

☐ Early Head Start programs

☐ Head Start programs

☐ State prekindergarten or preschool programs

☐ Local district-supported prekindergarten programs

☐ Programs serving infants and toddlers

☐ Programs serving school-age children

☐ Faith-based settings

☐ Tribally operated programs

☐ Other. Describe:

Licensed Group Homes

Selected Department of Education approved sites.

7.4.3. Support and assess the quality of child care providers.

The Lead Agency may invest in the development, implementation, or enhancement of a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services. *Note:* If a Lead Agency decides to invest CCDF quality dollars in a QRIS, that agency can use the funding to assist in meeting consumer education requirements (98.33). If the Lead Agency has a QRIS, respond to questions 7.4.3 through 7.4.7.

Do the state/territory's quality improvement standards align with or have reciprocity with any of the following standards?

-
- ☐ No.
 - ☐ Yes. If yes, check the type of alignment, if any, between the state/territory's quality standards and other standards. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ Programs that meet state/territory preK standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between preK programs and the quality improvement system).
 - ☐ Programs that meet federal Head Start Program Performance Standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between Head Start programs and the quality improvement system).
 - ☐ Programs that meet national accreditation standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, an alternative pathway exists to meeting the standards).
 - ☐ Other. Describe:
 - ☐ None.

7.4.4 Do the state/territory's quality standards build on its licensing requirements and other regulatory requirements?

- ☐ No.
- ☐ Yes. If yes, check any links between the state/territory's quality standards and licensing requirements.
 - ☐ Requires that a provider meet basic licensing requirements to qualify for the base level of the QRIS.
 - ☐ Embeds licensing into the QRIS.
 - ☐ State/territory license is a "rated" license.
 - ☐ Other. Describe:
 - ☐ Not linked.

7.4.5. Does the state/territory provide financial incentives and other supports designed to expand the full diversity of child care options and help child care providers improve the quality of services that are provided through the QRIS.

- ☐ No.
- ☐ Yes. If yes, check all that apply.
 - ☐ One time grants, awards, or bonuses

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- ☐ Ongoing or periodic quality stipends
 - ☐ Higher subsidy payments
 - ☐ Training or technical assistance related to QRIS
 - ☐ Coaching/mentoring
 - ☐ Scholarships, bonuses, or increased compensation for degrees/certificates
 - ☐ Materials and supplies
 - ☐ Priority access for other grants or programs
 - ☐ Tax credits (providers or parents)
 - ☐ Payment of fees (e.g., licensing, accreditation)
 - ☐ Other:
 - ☐ None

7.4.6. Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency is in the beginning stages of working with numerous outside agencies to educate providers with training and a commitment to promoting safe, stable, nurturing relationships with children and their families. The Lead Agency is also discussing the need to determine the feasibility of strengthening and scaling-up its monitoring of early childhood teacher/provider professional development trainings through the introduction of such resources as a training and workforce registry to further enhance the availability of high quality child care in Tennessee.

7.5 Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers

Lead Agencies are encouraged to use the needs assessment to systematically review and improve the overall quality of care that infants and toddlers receive, the systems in place or needed to support and enhance the quality of infant and toddler providers, the capacity of the infant and toddler workforce to meet the unique needs of very young children, and the methods in place to increase the proportion of infants and toddlers in higher quality care.

Lead Agencies are required to spend 3 percent of their total CCDF expenditures on activities to improve the supply and quality of their infant and toddler care.

7.5.1 What activities are being implemented by the state/territory to improve the supply (see also section 4) and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers? Check all that apply and describe.

☐ Establishing or expanding high-quality community- or neighborhood-based family and child development centers. These centers can serve as resources to child care providers to improve the quality of early childhood services for infants and toddlers from low-income families and to improve eligible child care providers' capacity to offer high-quality, age-appropriate care to infants and toddlers from low-income families. Describe:

☐ Establishing or expanding the operation of community- or neighborhood-based family child care networks. Describe:

☐ Providing training and professional development to enhance child care providers' ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers. Describe:

Lead Agency partners with the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies to provide training, technical assistance, and coaching to child care agencies and professionals who care for infants and toddlers to increase the quality of care for this age group. Infant/Toddler professionals are required to attend Tennessee Child Care Professional Training (TN-CCPT) trainings and increase their knowledge through technical assistance, targeted technical assistance, and TN-CCPT trainings.

CCR&R Quality Coaches work in collaboration with the Lead Agency Child Care Assessment program by reviewing and comparing scales scores from the previous year to the current year to identify variables, if any, and meet with the child care agency or professional to provide clarity on the formal and informal notes as well as to discuss areas of improvement. This meeting is called an informal notes meeting and usually consist of a CCR&R Quality Coach, Child Care Assessment supervisor, child care agency and/or education staff typically weeks after the annual assessment. Should more training be required or requested, the CCR&R Quality Coach will develop a quality improvement plan with the child care agency or professional to deliver more interactive and hands-on trainings in order to achieve implementation of best practices within the classroom(s).

☐ Providing coaching, mentoring, and/or technical assistance on this age group's unique needs from statewide or territory-wide networks of qualified infant-toddler specialists. Describe:

☐ Coordinating with early intervention specialists who provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.). Describe:

-
- ❑ Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's QRIS, including classroom inventories and assessments. Describe:
 - ❑ Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's child care licensing regulations. Describe:

The Proposed Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies Chapter 1240-04-01 require the following:

- For infants/toddlers, a portion of the day shall include floor time for activities that develop physical, social, language and cognitive skills.
- Each caregiver shall be responsible for providing consistent care for a specific infant(s)/toddler(s). "Consistent care" includes, but is not limited to: planning and record-keeping for the child, communication, general interaction with and routine care of the child.
- In infant/toddler rooms, equipment and space shall be provided for climbing, crawling, and pulling without the restraint of playpens or cribs.
- Toys, educational materials, and play materials shall be organized and displayed within children's reach so that they can select and return items independently.
- Toys and teaching aids that are small or that have small parts that can be inhaled or swallowed shall be inaccessible to infants and toddlers.
- Because of the importance of language development and communication skills infants and toddlers shall have language experiences with adults on a daily basis.
- The licensing regulations requires the management of the agency shall maintain a system that enables all children in the agency's care to receive a level of supervision of their status and activities that is appropriate to their age and their developmental, physical and mental status to ensure children's health and safety. For children six week of age through nine years of age, an adult must be able to hear the child at all times, must be able to see the child with a quick glance, and must be able to physically respond immediately. When infants are cared for in a center with older children, they shall not be grouped with children older than thirty (30) months of age, and a separate area shall be provided for them. Infant and toddler groups may never exceed the required ratios and group sizes; for a single grouping of 8 infants ages weeks to 15 months, the ratio should be 1:4 (one adult per 4 infants/toddlers). For a single grouping of 10 infant/toddlers ages 6 weeks to 30 months, the ratio should be 1:5.
- Staff members are required to be well trained in Early Childhood Development including safe sleep practices, shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma,

supervision during high risk activities such as eating and outdoor play. Staff members are also required to have ongoing training for the prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and use of safe sleeping practices and prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma.

- ☐ Developing infant and toddler components within the early learning and developmental guidelines. Describe:
- ☐ Improving the ability of parents to access transparent and easy-to-understand consumer information about high-quality infant and toddler care that includes information on infant and toddler language, social-emotional, and both early literacy and numeracy cognitive development. Describe:
- ☐ Carrying out other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of infant and toddler care provided within the state/territory and for which there is evidence that the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler health and safety, cognitive and physical development, and/or well-being. Describe:

Infant and Toddler Quality Coaching

Growing research continues to reflect that the first three years of life are the most important in terms of brain development. Because so many children under the age of three spend time in child care while their parents work or attend school, it is imperative that the child care workforce be trained to provide high quality care for these children and their families.

Child Care Resource and Referral Infant and Toddler Quality Coaches provide training, on-site technical assistance, and coaching to child care professionals in the areas of child development, health and safety, behavior management and early childhood education focusing on those children aged three years and under.

- ☐ Other. Describe:

7.5.2. Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency has significantly increased the number of Infant-Toddler Quality Coaches available through Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Network beginning FY 2019. Infant-Toddler Quality Coaches provide intense technical assistance and coaching for infant and toddler educators. Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) is providing additional coursework, financial assistance, and professional development enhancing support for infant/toddler teachers, including the introduction of the Tennessee Infant-Toddler Credential. The CCR&R Infant-Toddler

Quality Coaches will collaborate with TECTA to convene local peer learning groups for infant and toddler educators across the state and assist TECTA through its partnership with the Tennessee Family Child Care Alliance with further strengthening the quality of infant-toddler care in family and group child care settings.

7.6 Child Care Resource and Referral

A Lead Agency may expend funds to establish or expand a statewide system of child care resource and referral services (98.53(a)(5)). It can be coordinated, to the extent determined appropriate by the Lead Agency, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based, or regionally based lead child care resource and referral organization (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii)). This effort may include activities done by local or regional child care and resource referral agencies, as discussed in section 1.7.

- 7.6.1 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency is continually evaluating indicators and measurements relevant to these activities and may include but are not limited to:

- Quantity of Tennessee Child Care Professional Trainings (TN-CCPT) offered
- Quantity of Tennessee Child Care Professional Trainings (TN-CCPT) hours delivered.
- Quantity of Continuous Quality Improvement Plans developed.
- Quantity of families participating
- Quantity of Technical Assistance (TA) delivered to families.
- Quantity of Technical Assistance (TA) delivered to child care agencies.
- Quantity of Pre and Post Evaluations completed.

7.7 Facilitating Compliance With State Standards

- 7.7.1 What strategies does your state/territory fund with CCDF quality funds to facilitate child care providers' compliance with state/territory requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety and with state/territory licensing standards? Describe:

The Lead Agency supports compliance with standards by covering the costs of such necessary health and safety components as background checks, fire inspections, environmental inspections, and immunization audits.

Additionally, the Lead Agency provides access to free training, technical assistance, coaching, and peer mentoring that enable providers to achieve and maintain compliance through grants and contracts.

7.7.2 Does the state/territory provide financial assistance to support child care providers in complying with minimum health and safety requirements?

☐ No.

☐ Yes. If yes, which types of providers can access this financial assistance?

☐ Licensed CCDF providers

☐ Licensed non-CCDF providers

☐ License-exempt CCDF providers

☐ Other. Describe:

7.7.3 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency's measurable indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- The number of high-quality child care agencies;
- Complaints validated;
- Legal enforcements;
- Delivery of targeted technical assistance, coaching, and peer mentoring; and
- Violations.

7.8 Evaluating and Assessing the Quality and Effectiveness of Child Care Programs and Services

7.8.1 Describe how the state/territory measures the quality and effectiveness of child care programs and services currently being offered, including any tools used to measure child, family, teacher, classroom, or provider improvements, and how the state/territory evaluates how those tools positively impact children.

The Lead Agency is continually evaluating indicators and measurements relevant to these activities and may include but are not limited to:

- To measure the program assessment component of the report card for all licensed approved child care agencies, Lead Agency Child Care Assessment staff observes each child care home or selected classrooms in each child care center for at least 3

hours using the appropriate Environment Rating Scale (ERS)[®] to assess its physical environment, basic care, curriculum, schedule, program structure, and the child care professional's conversations and other interactions with the children. The Lead Agency Child Care Assessor then submits the rating score sheet and explanatory notes to University of Tennessee Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (UT SWORPS), where a software system calculates the *overall program assessment* score from the *classroom/home observation* scores using the Lead Agency's scoring logic.

- The *observation* score is the score obtained when an assessor uses one of the four rating scales (ITERS-R[™], ECERS-R[™], SACERS-U[™], or FCCERS-R[™]) to assess a classroom or family/group home. In the case of a family/group home, the Lead Agency Child Care Assessor completes only one observation to determine the score. For a child care center, the number of observations depends on the size of the center and the number of classrooms. At each center, Lead Agency Child Care Assessors observe at least one third of all classrooms (and at least one of each age group served by the center). The overall agency score is based on the average of the classroom observation scores unless the program has a classroom with a score of 2.99 or lower. In that case, the lowest classroom score is used as the *overall program assessment* score. If a classroom scores below 3.00, the scale authors consider that classroom to be providing inadequate child care.
- UT SWORPS evaluators analyze the results of all report card component scores to identify trends in quality over time and across the state. For the program assessment component, data are analyzed at two levels: the *overall program assessment* score, also called the “agency score,” for centers is the average of the ERS[®] scores used in the assessment of the appropriate classrooms and for family/group homes is the equivalent of the FCCERS-R[™] scale score; and the observation score, sometimes called the “classroom score,” for centers is the score earned on the ERS[®] (ITERS-R[™], ECERS-R[™], and SACERS[™]) in the selected classrooms of centers; for family/group homes, the observation score is the score earned on the FCCERS-R[™]. Additionally, evaluators analyzed the *overall program assessment* results in two ways: *group scores* and *paired scores*. The group score analysis included scores for all agencies evaluated during the program year in which their license expired. Since agencies constantly open and close, the compared groups (Year 1 compared to each current year, or the previous year compared to the current) were dissimilar in composition and size. The paired score analysis, used to analyze movement of star levels for individual programs, examined only the agencies evaluated in the group of years which are being reviewed. In the paired score analysis, the compared groups were identical in composition and size. These analyses are shared with administrators at the

Lead Agency, CCR&R, and TECTA to inform decisions about targeting technical assistance, program planning, workload distribution and resource allocation.

- 7.8.2. Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the State/Territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency is in the planning stages of working with numerous external agencies and partners to educate providers with training and a commitment to promoting safe, stable, nurturing relationships with children and their families. The Lead Agency is also discussing the need to determine the feasibility of scaling-up the tracking of early childhood teacher/provider professional development trainings, etc., which in turn will enhance the quality of childcare provided.

The quality of child care in Tennessee has improved since Program Year 1 of the Report Card and Star Quality Program. The statistically significant improvements in quality between Year 1 and Year 15 were dramatic. The proportion of agencies receiving an overall report card rating of 3 stars in Year 15 (72.7%) was more than twice the proportion of agencies receiving a 3-star overall rating in Year 1 (30.3%).

To support the ongoing quality improvement underpinning of the Tennessee Report Card and Star Quality Program, report card component data for all licensed and/or approved child care agencies are reported to the Lead Agency, Child Care Resource and Referral, and the Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance regularly throughout the year. Timely reporting of individual agency results and statewide and regional trends are used to inform program improvement efforts. These component scores are used to measure progress overtime and identify child care agencies in need of technical assistance.

These findings indicate that many child care agencies in Tennessee understand all aspects of high-quality care. As a result of this knowledge, they are able to offer higher quality, developmentally appropriate child care that provides the children in their care with the tools the children need to succeed in life.

7.9 Accreditation Support

- 7.9.1 Does the state/territory support child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of high quality?

☐ **Yes**, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to child care centers and family child care homes to achieve accreditation.

Limited support for accreditation is incorporated within the statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System. Licensed child care centers and homes that are accredited by a recognized entity receive two bonus points when the components scores are calculated.

The Lead Agency will provide accreditation support through Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance (TECTA) for programs involved in National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation self-study in collaboration with the Nashville Area Association for the Education of Young Children (NAAEYC) and Ready, Set, Grow! in Memphis.

TECTA will provide scholarships for child care agencies to enroll in NAEYC accreditation self-study. In addition to any professional development that staff may need in acquiring higher education tuition support, TECTA will provide available staff time to working with programs in attaining and maintaining NAEYC accreditation status.

The new TECTA/Tennessee Family Child Care Alliance (TFCCA) Collaborative will seek to increase the number of TFCCA networks and member programs seeking and maintaining National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) program accreditation. The TECTA/TFCCA Collaborative will also promote and support a professional development CDA[®] pathway and Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS[™]) through the mentoring aspect of the collaborative with TECTA support.

- ☐ Yes, the state/territory has supports operating as a pilot-test or in a few localities but not statewide or territory-wide. Describe:
- ☐ No, but the state/territory is in the accreditation development phase.
- ☐ No, the state/territory has no plans for accreditation development.

- 7.9.2. Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Tennessee Report Card & Star Quality Program Program Year Report examines the relationship between Accreditation and Program Assessment Scores. It also allows us to monitor whether or not the number of accredited agencies is increasing or decreasing each year.

7.10 Program Standards

7.10.1 How does the state/territory support state/territory or local efforts to develop or adopt high-quality program standards relating to:

- ☐ **Health.** Describe the supports: The Lead Agency works collaboratively with the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) to strengthen and increase the availability of and access to health-related programs and services for children, families, and child care agencies. Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is implementing a new specialist team of Health, Safety, and Well-Being Quality Coaches who provide direct support for child care agencies on health training and health-related activities.
- ☐ **Mental health.** Describe the supports: The Lead Agency works with Tennessee the Association of Infant Mental Health in Tennessee (AIMHiTN), Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance, and CCR&R to promote social emotional and behavioral health supports for children, families, and early childhood educators.
- ☐ **Nutrition.** Describe the supports: The Lead Agency works collaboratively with TDH to strengthen and increase the availability of and access to nutrition-related programs and services for children, families, and child care agencies. CCR&R is implementing a new specialist team of Health, Safety, and Well-Being Quality Coaches who provide direct support for child care agencies on nutrition training and nutrition-related activities.
- ☐ **Requirements for participation in the Gold Sneaker Initiative** were incorporated in Proposed Report Cards and Rated Licensing for Child Care Agencies Rule Chapter 1240-04-07. Gold Sneaker facilities will:
 - Offer children at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day;
 - Limit television and video viewing to 60 minutes per day of educational programs;
 - Not allow children to remain sedentary or passive for more than 60 minutes continuously;
 - Ensure physical activity is a positive experience;
 - Ensure appropriate feeding patterns, including breastfeeding;
 - Ensure appropriate feeding patterns, including adequate time for meal consumption;
 - Ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including appropriate portion sizes;
 - Promote a positive attitude toward food; and

- Maintain a tobacco free campus.

☐ Physical activity. Describe the supports:

Requirements for participation in the Gold Sneaker Initiative were incorporated in Proposed Report Cards and Rated Licensing for Child Care Agencies Rule Chapter 1240-04-07. Gold Sneaker facilities will:

- Offer children at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day;
- Limit television and video viewing to 60 minutes per day of educational programs;
- Not allow children to remain sedentary or passive for more than 60 minutes continuously;
- Ensure physical activity is a positive experience;
- Ensure appropriate feeding patterns, including breastfeeding;
- Ensure appropriate feeding patterns, including adequate time for meal consumption;
- Ensure appropriate infant and child feeding patterns, including appropriate portion sizes;
- Promote a positive attitude toward food; and
- Maintain a tobacco free campus.

☐ Physical development. Describe the supports:

7.10.2 Describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency is continually evaluating indicators and measurements relevant to these activities that may include but are not limited to:

- Scoring components of QRIS;
- Professional development delivered to early care and educators;
- Child care agency participation in the Gold Sneaker initiative;
- Delivered trainings, technical assistance, coaching, and mentoring.

7.11 Other Quality Improvement Activities

- 7.11.1 List and describe any other activities that the state/territory provides to improve the quality of child care services, which may include consumer and provider education activities, and describe the measureable indicators of progress relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency is evaluating and planning for health and safety professional development, financial assistance supporting early care and education, and other shared services models. The Lead Agency is also evaluating and assessing its current Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

8 Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

Program integrity and accountability activities are integral to the effective administration of the CCDF program. Lead Agencies are required to describe in their Plan effective internal controls that ensure integrity and accountability while maintaining the continuity of services (98.16(cc)). These accountability measures should address reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, including program violations and administrative errors.

This section includes topics on internal controls to ensure integrity and accountability and processes in place to investigate and recover fraudulent payments and to impose sanctions on clients or providers in response to fraud.

8.1 Internal Controls and Accountability Measures To Help Ensure Program Integrity

- 8.1.1 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that all its staff members and any staff members in other agencies who administer the CCDF program are informed and trained regarding program requirements and integrity. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Issue policy manual
- ☐ Issue policy change notices
- ☐ Staff training. Describe:

All Lead Agency staff are trained annually and periodically as new policies or procedures are implemented to ensure program integrity and program controls.

- ☐ Ongoing monitoring and assessment of policy implementation. Describe:

The Lead Agency's Office of Inspector General Audit Services Division conducts monitoring review of child care providers and vendors serving as the lead agency's principal quality partners.

- ☐ Other. Describe:

8.1.2 Lead Agencies must ensure the integrity of the use of funds through sound fiscal management and must ensure that financial practices follow generally accepted accounting principles (98.68 (a)(1)). Describe the processes in place for the Lead Agency to ensure sound fiscal management practices for all expenditures of CCDF funds, including the following:

☐ Verifying and processing billing records to ensure timely payments to providers. Describe: The Lead Agency will be developing a payment schedule in the issuance of funds to ensure proper and consistent billing cycles.

☐ Fiscal oversight of grants and contracts. Describe: The Lead Agency fiscal and child care services work in collaboration to provide oversight to grants and contracts.

☐ Tracking systems to ensure reasonable and allowable costs. Describe: The Lead Agency fiscal and child care services program has developed tracking systems to ensure expenditures are earmarked for allowable costs.

☐ Other. Describe:

8.1.3 Check and describe the processes that the Lead Agency will use to identify risk in their CCDF program. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

☐ Conduct a risk assessment of policies and procedures. Describe: The Lead Agency conducts an annual risk assessment of the CCDF Program.

☐ Establish checks and balances to ensure program integrity. Describe: Use supervisory reviews to ensure accuracy in eligibility determination. Describe: Quality Assurance eligibility reviews of cases are performed by the Quality Improvement and Strategic Solution (QISS) Division. Monthly sampled results are disseminated to Child Care Certificate Management for review.

☐ Other. Describe:

8.1.4 Lead Agencies are required to have processes in place to identify fraud and other program violations to ensure program integrity. Program violations can include intentional and unintentional client and/or provider violations, as defined by the Lead Agency. Administrative errors refer to areas identified through the error-rate review process. Check and describe any activities that the Lead Agency conducts to ensure program integrity.

a) Check which activities that the Lead Agency has chosen to conduct to identify unintentional or intentional program violations.

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- ☐ Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)).
 - ☐ Run system reports that flag errors (include types). Describe:
 - ☐ Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records.
 - ☐ Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.
 - ☐ Audit provider records.
 - ☐ Train staff on policy and/or audits.
 - ☐ Other. Describe:
- b) Check which activities the Lead Agency has chosen to conduct to identify administrative errors.
- ☐ Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, CACFP, FNS, Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, PARIS).
 - ☐ Run system reports that flag errors (include types). Describe:
 - ☐ Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records.
 - ☐ Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.
 - ☐ Audit provider records.
 - ☐ Train staff on policy and/or audits.
 - ☐ Other. Describe:

Administrative errors are detected through the ACF-404 Error review conducted by the Lead Agency's QISS Division in accordance with its ACF approved sample plan and reporting requirements.

- 8.1.5 The Lead Agency is required to identify and recover misspent funds as a result of fraud, and it has the option to recover any misspent funds as a result of errors. Check and describe any activities that the Lead Agency uses to investigate and recover improper payments due to program violations or administrative errors, as defined by your state/territory.
- a) Check activities that the Lead Agency uses to investigate and recover improper payments due to intentional program violations or fraud. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

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- ☐ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe: Amounts > \$100.00
 - ☐ Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).
 - ☐ Recover through repayment plans.
 - ☐ Reduce payments in subsequent months.
 - ☐ Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.
 - ☐ Recover through other means.
 - ☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit below.
 - ☐ Other. Describe:

The Lead Agency's Office of Inspector General (OIG) determines the appropriateness of engaging the ACF OIG and/or Tennessee Office of the Comptroller in cases of fraud, waste, or abuse.
- b) Describe the results of the Lead Agency activities regarding the investigation and recovery of fraud or intentional program violations.
- The Lead Agency's Office of Inspector General investigates fraud and intentional program violations. The recovery of funds associated with fraud or intentional program violations is joint effort between the lead agencies' CCDF program, fiscal and legal staff in coordination with the State of Tennessee Attorney General's Office.
- c) Check any activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to unintentional program violations. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:
- ☐ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe: Amounts > \$100.00
 - ☐ Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).
 - ☐ Recover through repayment plans.
 - ☐ Reduce payments in subsequent months.
 - ☐ Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.
 - ☐ Recover through other means.
 - ☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments. Describe:

The Lead Agency's Office of Inspector General monitors for unintentional program violations. The recovery of funds is joint effort between the Lead Agencies' CCDF program, fiscal and legal staff in coordination with the State of Tennessee Attorney General's Office.

☐ Other. Describe:

d) Check any activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to administrative errors.

☐ Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe: **Amounts > \$100.00**

☐ Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agency(ies) (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).

☐ **Recover through repayment plans.**

☐ **Reduce payments in subsequent months.**

☐ Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.

☐ **Recover through other means.**

☐ Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit below.

☐ Other. Describe:

8.1.6 What type of sanction will the Lead Agency place on clients and providers to help reduce improper payments due to program violations?

☐ **Disqualify the client.** If checked, describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for clients who are disqualified. **Clients appeal through the administrative hearing process with the lead agency's Division of Appeals and Hearings.**

☐ **Disqualify the provider.** If checked, describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for providers who are disqualified. **The Lead Agency CCDF Program Management would terminate the provider contract. The Lead Agency decision is final and is not appealable.**

☐ In egregious or incidents of suspected criminal activity or fraud, referrals to appropriate federal or state law enforcement agencies for prosecution may be warranted.

☐ Other. Describe: