

Child Care

NEWS BRIEF



Greetings from your Partners at the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Child Care Services Team!

Spring is upon us! It is time for outdoor activities and embracing opportunities for growth.

As you care for Tennessee's children and families, it is important that you care for yourselves. Please take time to de-stress and to nurture your overall health and wellbeing.

This edition of the Child Care Newsletter provides new and updated information related to enrollment vs. capacity, available in-person rules training sessions, "Compliance Corner", and a reminder on available resources. We greatly appreciate our child care provider partners and all that you do to strengthen our Tennessee communities.

Enrollment vs. Capacity

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) has been capturing data over the past several years through the Desert Mapping Tool and in our elicencing system to understand and communicate the full child care landscape in Tennessee. Review of the data shows that there is child care licensed capacity that is underutilized.

Elicencing enrollment vs. capacity data is entered by the Licensing Consultant for TDHS licensed agencies at each quarterly visit. Licensed capacity is determined by space within the physical facility. Each provider may cap the number of children to be served based on multiple factors including the ages served in the classroom space, availability of workforce or other factors. The actual enrollment is entered for each agency at these quarterly visits yielding data about the availability of licensed capacity, provider preferred capacity and actual enrollment. Statewide, as of March 31, 2026, the current child care landscape indicates a TDHS licensed capacity of 190,046, maximum capacity allowed by provider of 149,638 and total enrollments of 102,845. The gap between providers' desired enrollment and actual enrollment represents untapped resources for Tennessee families to access care and

opportunities for child care providers to strengthen their financial stability and sustainability.

There have been activities to further explore this trend in underutilization through focus groups, an intentional evaluation through a Governor’s Veterans Fellow Project, and through licensing consultant quarterly visits.

There are tools available to our licensed child care providers through the Small Business Academies offered by Child Care Resource and Referral. We encourage you to explore opportunities to build enrollment through these resources. Our team can assist you with other approaches such as modifying your license for ages served, sharing other tools and resources such as how to partner with local employers. Remember, you may submit your suggestions, thoughts and strategies through the “Your Feedback Matters” tile in your Provider Portal.

Update: Rules Revisions Training Opportunities

The newly revised Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) Licensure Rules became effective on November 20, 2025, and February 9, 2026. Our Licensing team has scheduled in-person sessions to engage with you on the new rules in order to address questions and provide clarification. These sessions kick-off April 7th and are available statewide as per the schedule below. Please register through the QR Code provided to you through your Licensing Consultant. Reminder: if you took the online training in December 2025, training credit was provided at that time. The in-person sessions will include the same information and additional training credit will not be awarded.

County	Region	Training Date	Start Time	End Time	Time Zone	Seats	Venue Name
Davidson	Central	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	12:00 P M	2:00 P M	Central	100	West End United Methodist Church
Davidson	Central	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	100	West End United Methodist Church
Montgomery	Mid Cumberland	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	6:00 PM	8:00 P M	Central	125	Grand mama's House at Tiny Town Rd.
Shelby	Shelby County	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	110	Methodist Bonheur Community Outreach

							(CCR&R Office) Auditorium
Lawrence	South Central	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	125	Mars Hill Baptist Church (Fellowship Hall)
Hamilton	Southeast	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	6:30 P M	8:30 P M	Eastern	100	Chattanooga State Community College
Sullivan	Upper East	Tuesday, April 7, 2026	6:30 P M	8:30 P M	Eastern	160	Colonial Heights United Methodist Church
Knox	East	Thursday, April 9, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Eastern	200	Second Presbyterian Church (fellowship hall)
Knox	East	Thursday, April 9, 2026	12:00 P M	2:00 P M	Eastern	200	Second Presbyterian Church (fellowship hall)
Sumner	Mid Cumberland	Thursday, April 9, 2026	12:00 P M	2:00 P M	Central	100	First United Methodist Church, Fellowship Hall
Shelby	Shelby County	Tuesday, April 14, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	130	YMCA of Memphis & the Mid-South 7171

							Goodlett Farms Pkwy, Cordova, TN 38016
Maury	South Central	Tuesday, April 14, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	125	Connection Church (Sanctuary)
Bradley	Southeast	Tuesday, April 14, 2026	6:30 P M	8:30 P M	Eastern	300	Cleveland State Community College
Rutherford	Central Region	Thursday, April 16, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	500	Southeast Baptist
Coffee	South Central	Thursday, April 16, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	125	Trinity Lutheran Church (Fellowship Hall)
Putnam	Upper Cumberland	Thursday, April 16, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	150	TTU UC Tech Pride Room 101
Madison	West	Thursday, April 9, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	100	First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall
Obion	West	Thursday, April 16, 2026	6:00 P M	8:00 P M	Central	50	Promethean Foundation Training Room

Should you have any questions, please submit them to ChildCareRules.DHS@tn.gov. Thank you for all you do for families and children in Tennessee.



Compliance Corner

with Glenna Jones, Child & Adult Care Licensing Director of Field Operations

Spring is here! The daffodils are blooming, the sun is shining, and we all look forward to more time outside! As we have more time on the playground and more transitions, this is the perfect time to review your playground supervision plan. Ensuring your playground supervision plan includes effective procedures for the following will help to prevent incidents, will keep children safe, and will assist your agency in maintaining continual rules compliance:

1. Arrival and departure procedures;
2. Playground design and placement of equipment;
3. Individual staff duties to ensure age-appropriate supervision can be given to each child at all times;
4. Individual children's needs, including high risk behaviors;
5. Emergency procedures, including communication with other staff; and
6. Name-to-face roll call before leaving classroom and upon arrival at playground and prior to leaving playground and upon arrival in classroom.

Reviewing your plan is only step one. After carefully reviewing the plan, making updates and creating procedures to implement the plan, everyone on your team must be trained to effectively implement the plan. Your Licensing Consultant or Program Specialist is an excellent resource to assist in the review and implementation of your agency's playground supervision plan. They can provide agency specific technical assistance to partner with you to develop plans and procedures that achieve high quality, safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate care for children. Please reach out to them, they are ready to support you in the vital work you do every day. We look forward to talking with you and seeing you in the bright sunshine, soon!

Reminder: Quality Resources and Supports

TDHS is committed to supporting licensed child care agencies with ongoing resources and tools through our Quality Partner network. As you know, based on

changes in our CCDF budget, it was necessary to reduce some direct supports and partners. Our vision remains to allow opportunities for continuous improvement, and we have worked with our partners to optimize resources and initiatives that will have the greatest impact. These available initiatives are provided by our expert partner agencies, Child Care Resource and Referral network (CCR&R), and the University of Tennessee and Social Work Office of Planning and Resource Services (UT-SWORPS). Below are current resources that are available. We will be sharing additional resources as these are fully developed.

In September, TDHS formed a workgroup to begin exploring options for resources to fill the gaps in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This expanded to include our quality partners for their expertise. Additionally, TDHS has been part of the National ECE Workforce Center's Community for Action Cohort through Child Trends with six other states to explore opportunities to bolster the child care workforce.

To address the immediate need, our workgroup developed an equivalency to replace the TECTA Administrator Orientation for new directors who do not have a four-year degree. We reached out to the Licensing Standards Committee for feedback on this equivalency, which is titled "Administrator Foundations Series". This series launched in January 2026.

Administrator Foundations Series

- Two pathways for Directors without a college degree (with established agency and with new agency)
- Combination of Small Business Academy, New Director Academy and New Director Training-elements of all that will bolster what was formerly in place with TECTA Orientation - Provides coaching support on specific topics through a Professional Development plan

Training Frequency: The *Administrator Foundations Series* will be offered over the course of two months, ensuring new directors have at least two chances to attend each session within their first 120 days in the role. Training will be tracked through **TNPAL**.

Currently Available through CCR&R - [Tennessee Child Care Resource & Referral Network](#)

- Small Business Support Specialists
- Infant and Toddler Coaches
- Family Engagement Quality Coaches
- Health Safety Supervision Quality Coaches
- Developmental Support Quality Coaches
- First Aid and CPR
- Early Language and Literacy
- QRIS Coaches
- Family and Group Child Care Coaches
- Emergency Preparedness
- Administrative Specialization (ADS)
 - Pathway for Owners and Directors in preparation for higher education coursework
- Early Language and Literacy Specialization
 - Designed for child care staff who have not yet pursued higher education coursework

CCR&R Accreditation Provider Support Process

Deciding which accreditation agency is best for your agency

- The CCR&R CDA & Accreditation Coordinator or Small Business Coach will assist the child care educator or agency with identifying which accrediting body is best for their child care agency. If NAEYC is selected, CCR&R will also assist the agency

- in determining which tier of accreditation (Recognition, Accreditation, or Accreditation +) is most beneficial to their agency.
- The educator or agency will select the appropriate accreditation based on their agency needs and child care setting.

Support during the accreditation process

- Depending on the pathway chosen, accreditation can take up to 2 years to complete.
- The CDA & Accreditation Coordinator, with assistance from the Small Business Coach, will provide regular support through coaching and technical assistance visits to prepare the child care agency to meet all performance standards for accreditation. This may include but is not limited to preparation of classrooms, review of materials, and mock verification visit observations.
- The CDA & Accreditation Coordinator, in collaboration with the Small Business Support team, will provide regularly scheduled check-in communication (virtual office hours and/or Peer Learning Groups) with agencies seeking accreditation to ensure each agency is moving forward with their accrediting process and provide resources, coaching, or support as desired.

Support during the annual report and renewal process

- Depending on the accrediting body, accreditation can be for 1-5 years with annual reports due on the accreditation anniversary each year. The CDA & Accreditation Coordinator will maintain contact with agencies we have assisted to achieve accreditation and provide resources and support with the annual report and renewal process.

Child Care WAGES® Tennessee - [Child Care WAGES® Tennessee](#)

The **WAGES®** program in Tennessee has expanded, raising the qualifying salary cap from \$20/hour to \$30/hour. This is due to a \$7.2 million investment in State dollars to expand the program. For more information, please visit the link above.

Currently Available through UT-SWORPS

Provider Advisory Groups

- Six Groups across the State with 10 to 12 members for each group
- Why Provider Advisory Groups
 - Offer more complete perspective for TDHS and CCDF Partners
 - Facilitate solutions-based conversations and incubate new strategies (ex. *How to Increase Infant Slots*)
 - Establish a formal vehicle for Providers' voice in child care policy
 - Opportunity for providers to share best practices and identify potential for improvements and growth

Tennessee Child Care Help Desk- [Tennessee Child Care Help Desk - Tennessee Child Care Help Desk](#)

Follow @TNHumanServices



Tennessee Department of Human Services

505 Deaderick Street

Nashville, TN 37243-1403

[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt Out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

710 James Robertson Pkwy | Nashville, TN 37243 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma®

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.