

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services — Child Care Licensing



Applicants Guide to Listed, Registered, and Licensed Child Care

Including:

Child Day Care

Listed Family Homes
Registered and Licensed Child Care Homes
Licensed Child Care Centers

Residential Child Care

Foster Family Homes (Independent)
Foster Group Homes (Independent),
General Residential Operations,
Residential Treatment Centers,
Child-Placing Agencies (CPA),
Maternity Homes

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Information

Thank you for your interest in providing child care in Texas. The Child Care Licensing Division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is responsible for protecting the health, safety, and well-being of children who attend or reside in regulated child-care operations.

Child Care Licensing grants permits to child-care operators to provide care for children/clients. Different permits are offered for different types of operations. For example, a listed family home is granted a listing, a registered child-care home is granted a registration, and all other types of operations are granted a license.

This guide provides information you need to know about the licensing process. Licensing regulates child-care operations under two main categories: child day care and residential child care. Child day care includes the care, supervision, training, or education of an unrelated child or children 13 years old or younger for less than 24 hours per day in a place other than the child's own home. This includes child day care provided to school-age children before or after the customary school day. Residential child care includes the care, custody, supervision, assessment, training, education, or treatment of an unrelated child or children up to the age of 18 years for 24 hours a day that occurs in a place other than the child's own home. Residential operations also include maternity homes and child-placing agencies.



Licensing Staff

Phone Number

Licensing Supervisor

Phone Number

Licensing Staff Responsible for the Licensed Administrator Program
(for Residential Child Care only)

Phone Number



Specific Types of Child-Care Operations

The specific types of child-care operations regulated under child day care and residential child care are:

Types of Child Day Care

Listed Family Home - A caregiver at least 18 years old who provides care in her own home for compensation, for three or fewer children unrelated to the caregiver, ages birth through 13 years. Regular care is provided, which is care provided for at least four hours a day, three or more days a week, and more than nine consecutive weeks. The total number of children in care, including children related to the caregiver, may not exceed 12. **Note:** A home is subject to registration if it cares for more than three unrelated children on a regular basis, whether or not the unrelated children are in care at the same time. (A caregiver who is subject to regulation as a listed family home may instead become a registered child-care home.)

Registered Child-Care Home - A caregiver who provides regular care in her own home for not more than six children from birth through 13 years. Child day care can be provided for six additional school-aged children before and after the customary school day. The total number of children in care at any given time, including the children related to the caregiver, must not exceed 12.

Licensed Child-Care Home - The primary caregiver provides care in the caregiver's own residence for children from birth through 13 years. The total number of children in care varies with the ages of the children, but the total number of children in care at any given time, including the children related to the caregiver, must not exceed 12.

Licensed Child-Care Center - An operation providing care for seven or more children younger than 14 years old for less than 24 hours per day at a location other than the permit holder's home.

Types of Residential Child Care (24-Hour care)

Foster Family Home (Independent): A single independent home that is the primary residence of the foster parents and licensed to provide care for six or fewer children up to the age of 18 years.

Foster Group Homes (Independent): A single independent home that is the primary residence of the foster parents and licensed to provide care for seven to 12 children up to the age of 18 years.

General Residential Operation: An operation that is licensed to provide child care for 13 or more children up to the age of 18 years. The care may include treatment and other programmatic services.

Residential Treatment Center: An operation that is licensed to exclusively provide care and treatment services for emotional disorders for 13 or more children up to the age of 18 years.

Maternity Home: An operation that is licensed to provide care for four or more minor and/or adult women and her children during pregnancy and/or during the six-week postpartum period, within a period of 12 months.

Child Placing Agency (CPA): A person, agency, or organization, other than a child's parent, who is licensed to place or plan for the placement of the child in an adoptive home or other residential care setting.

CPA Foster Family Home: A home under the regulation of a child-placing agency that is the primary residence of the foster parent(s) and provides care for six or fewer children up to the age of 18 years. This home is not licensed or issued a residential permit by DFPS but is issued a verification by the child-placing agency.

CPA Foster Group Home: An operation under the regulation of a child-placing agency that is the primary residence of the foster parent(s) and provides care for seven to 12 children up to the age of 18 years. This home is not licensed or issued a residential permit by DFPS but is issued a verification by the child-placing agency.

Licensing Materials

Introduction and Required Application Materials to be a Listed Family Home:

There are no minimum standard rules for listed homes. The materials you will receive from Licensing staff include:

- ◆ A Listing Request form, Form 2986;
- ◆ A Request for Criminal History and Central Registry Check form on all applicable persons, Form 2971; and
- ◆ A Child Care Fee Schedule form, Form 2988.

Fill out the forms completely. You will need to pay a \$20 application fee when you submit the application materials to Licensing. If you have problems or questions, contact Licensing staff (see inside front cover).

Introduction to be a Registered or Licensed Operation:

Licensing staff will hold a pre-application interview with you to discuss requirements, procedures, and answer questions. The pre-application interview may consist of a one-on-one interview, a group meeting, or an orientation class.

Note: Those interested in obtaining a permit to operate a registered and licensed child day care home must complete the pre-application interview within one year prior to the application date.

Licensing staff will give you the forms and materials you will need to apply for a permit. The materials you will receive include:

- ◆ A copy of state minimum standard rules for the type of operation you plan to open;
- ◆ A copy of the child-care licensing law (Texas Human Resources Code, Chapter 42); and
- ◆ Required application materials/forms.

Required Application Materials to be Registered

You will need to submit the following materials for review before your application is accepted:

- ◆ A completed Request for a Registration Permit form, Form 2919;
- ◆ A completed Request for Criminal History and Central Registry Check form on all applicable persons, Form 2971;
- ◆ A notarized Affidavit for Applicants for Employment with a Licensed Operation or Registered Child-Care Home form, Form 2985. This form must be completed for all employees and for those applicants you intend to hire. The person applying for a registration is not required to submit the affidavit with the application;
- ◆ Proof of current certification in infant/child/adult CPR;



- ◆ Proof of current certification in first aid in rescue breathing and choking;
- ◆ A completed Child Care Fee Schedule form, 2988 and a fee of \$35;
- ◆ Verification that the applicant completed the required orientation within one year prior to the date of application; and
- ◆ Proof of a high school diploma or high school equivalent.

Required Application Materials to be Licensed

You must submit the following materials for review before your application is accepted:

- ◆ A completed Child Day Care Application form, Form 2910; or a completed Application for A License to Operate a Residential Child-Care Facility, Child-placing Agency, or Maternity Home, Form 2960;
- ◆ A completed floor plan of the building and surrounding space to be used, including dimensions of the indoor and the outdoor space. Floor plans submitted for a residential child care operation do not need to include the dimensions of the outdoor space but do need to show the dimensions and purpose of all rooms and must specify where children and, if applicable, caregivers will sleep;
- ◆ Background Check information on all applicable persons, (for the names of all applicants and employees as known);
- ◆ A completed Personal History Statement, Form 2982, for each applicant who is a sole proprietor or partner. For child day care, all persons designated as director or co-director must complete this form. For residential child care, this form is not needed if the owner is also the licensed administrator;

- ◆ Proof that the for-profit corporation or the limited liability company is not delinquent in paying the franchise tax. Proof can include the following:
 - (1) the governing body's most recent Franchise Tax Certificate of Good Standing; or
 - (2) the Certificate of Formation if the corporation or company has not existed long enough to owe the tax at the time of the application; or
 - (3) documented proof that Texas Tax Code, Chapter 171, exempts the corporation or company from paying the tax;
- ◆ Proof of Liability Insurance (applicants applying for a licensed child-care home permit are not required to have liability insurance). You must obtain liability insurance coverage for injury to a child that occurs while the child is in your care or on the premises of the operation in the amount of at least \$300,000 for each occurrence of negligence. If you do not obtain liability insurance, you must submit with your application an acceptable written explanation of why you do not provide the insurance coverage. You must also send us a sample letter or pamphlet with which you plan to inform parents that you do not provide the coverage. If we do not agree with your explanation, we may instruct you to obtain the insurance before we will issue you a permit;
- ◆ A completed Plan of Operation, Form 2948, for child day care operations. The Plan of Operation must show how your operation will comply with the law and appropriate minimum standard rules. We will provide potential applicants for a permit to operate a residential child-care operation with a list of the required policies and procedures (Forms 2784, 2785, 2786, or 2787) that they must develop and submit with the application;
- ◆ A completed Child Care Fee Schedule form, Form 2988 and fee. Generally, you must submit a \$35 application fee, and a \$35 initial permit fee for a licensed child-care operation other than a child-placing agency or maternity home. The initial fee is \$50 for a child-placing agency or maternity home. Some operations may be exempt from some of the fees. The application fee is non-refundable. Under certain conditions, the initial fee may be refunded;
- ◆ A completed Governing Body/Director Designation Form, Form 2911, is required for child day care only. This form is not required if the governing body is a sole proprietorship and the proprietor is also the director; and
- ◆ For residential child care, a completed Form 2760, Controlling Person Form, on all applicable persons.

Fill out the forms completely. If you have problems or questions, contact Licensing staff (see inside front cover).



Application

Submitting the Application

When you submit an application and its supporting documentation, Licensing staff have 21 days to review the paperwork. After they complete the review, you will be notified in writing that your application is either:

- ◆ Complete and accepted for processing; or
- ◆ Incomplete or the materials submitted do not show compliance with relevant law or minimum standard rules. The notification letter will explain what you must do to complete the application or why your materials do not show compliance. In this case, you will have an opportunity to resubmit the needed items. You will be given three opportunities to submit all required materials. If the application is returned as incomplete three times within one year, your application will not be accepted and you may not apply again for one year from the date we returned your last application as incomplete.

Special Requirements for Residential Child Care Public Notice and Hearing Requirements

If your application has been accepted and you are becoming a general residential operation or a residential treatment center, you must meet the public notice and hearing requirements if the operation is located in a county with a population of less than 300,000.

Licensing staff will provide you with specific information about the requirements for giving public notice and conducting a public hearing.

Child-Placing Agencies

Each license issued to a child-placing agency is limited to one DFPS region. If you want to operate in another region you must apply for and be granted a license to operate in that region.

Effective January 1, 2007, the minimum standards for a child-placing agency prohibit the agency from verifying a home that is not the primary residence of the foster family. However, if a waiver/variance is approved in order for a child-placing agency to verify a home that is not the foster family's primary residence, you must comply with public hearing requirements before verifying the home if the home is in a county with a population of less than 300,000.

The Application Inspection

(for Applicants Applying for a Registration or License Only)

Before issuing you an initial or non-expiring permit, Licensing staff will conduct an inspection to ensure you and your operation comply with the applicable law and minimum standard rules. If an operation is providing care, it must meet all standards except those for which waivers and variances have been granted. If the operation is not



providing care, it must meet those standards that do not require the presence of children. If Licensing staff observe deficiencies with the law or minimum standard rules, they will tell you about them and give you due cause by which you must make the corrections.

Decision on the Application

We will issue a permit if you have complied with the law and applicable minimum standard rules. We will deny you a permit if you do not comply with the law or minimum standard rules. We will issue or deny the permit no later than 60 days after we have accepted your application.

Fire and Sanitation Inspections and Gas Leakage Tests

Child-care centers, general residential operations, residential treatment centers, independent foster homes, and maternity homes must have fire and sanitation inspections. Child-care centers, general residential operations, residential treatment centers, and maternity homes must also have a test for gas leakage if the building has a gas line. These reports must be on file at the inspection. If the reports call for corrections, you must make those corrections before we will issue a permit. In some areas, you will also need to meet zoning, building code, and other requirements concerning the location and construction of the child-care operation. These are not licensing requirements, but you may have to meet them before local authorities will perform fire and sanitation inspections. Ask for inspections from local fire and sanitation officials as soon as possible so inspectors may conduct their inspections in a timely manner. If you have difficulty obtaining a fire or sanitation inspection due to unavailability of an inspector, contact Licensing staff (see inside front cover) for alternative suggestions.

Child Care Permit

Granting the Non-Expiring Listing or Registration

We will grant a non-expiring listing or registration, valid until relinquished or revoked for a good cause, if your home has met the requirements of the law and for registered homes, minimum standard rules must be met too. If your home does not meet the requirements within the time limit, we will deny the non-expiring permit, (See "Decision on the Application" page 5) and you will not be allowed to care for children.

Granting the Initial License or Non-Expiring License

In most cases, we will grant you an initial license if you meet the requirements. An initial license allows you to operate pending the issuance of a non-expiring license and



is valid for six months from the date we issue it. We may renew an initial license for up to an additional six months for a maximum of one year. The initial license expires when we issue you a non-expiring license.

A licensed operation that has changed ownership or location may qualify for a non-expiring license without going through the initial license period. An operation qualifies for a non-expiring permit if it is currently licensed and there is a change in ownership that has not resulted in changes in policy or procedure or in the staff who have direct contact with the children or maternity home clients. An operation also qualifies for a non-expiring license if it is currently licensed and there is a change in location, other than a child-placing agency, that has not resulted in changes in the type of services. If you have a permit to operate a child-placing agency you do not need to apply for a new permit if you move, but you must obtain an amended permit. To obtain an amended permit you must notify us as early as possible before the move but no later than 15 days prior to the move. A department form must be completed by you and after our inspection and standards are met, an amended license is issued.

Transition to the Non-Expiring License (When Issued an Initial License)

During the six-month initial period, your child-care operation must show that it can meet standards on a continuing basis in order to qualify for a non-expiring license. While your operation has an initial license, Licensing staff will

conduct at least three inspections to evaluate the operation's compliance with minimum standard rules, including those requiring the presence of children. Licensing staff will provide technical assistance as needed. After each inspection, Licensing staff will notify you of the findings.

During the initial period, Licensing staff will focus on evaluating standards that require the presence of children in care. Your operation must provide care early enough in the initial period for Licensing staff to check compliance with all standards. Providing care means your child-care operation must admit and involve children in an ongoing child-care program. For a child-placing agency, we consider it operational as long as, at a minimum, it verifies a foster home, completes an adoptive home study, or an adoption readiness review.

If you are unable to begin operation during the initial period, we cannot issue you a non-expiring license. About a month before your initial permit expires, Licensing staff will notify you in writing and give you the opportunity to renew your initial license. Note: We can grant only one renewal of an initial permit.

Granting the Non-Expiring License

Licensing grants a non-expiring license, valid until relinquished or revoked for a good cause, if:

- ◆ The operation is providing care;
- ◆ The initial permit has been in effect for at least three months; and
- ◆ The operation has met the minimum standard rules on a continuing basis and paid its fee;
- ◆ The licensed operation changed ownership that did not result in changes in policy or procedure or in the staff who have direct contact with the children or maternity home clients; or
- ◆ The licensed operation, other than a child-placing agency, changed location and there is no change in the type of services. A child-placing agency does not need to apply for a new permit if it moves, but must obtain an amended permit. To start the process of obtaining an amended permit you must notify us as early as possible before the move but no later than 15 days prior to the move.

The application for an initial permit is also the application for the non-expiring license; it is not necessary to submit another application. However, before we issue a non-expiring permit, you must pay the non-expiring licensing fee. (\$35 + \$1 per license capacity for licensed child-care operations (other than a child-placing agency or a maternity home), \$100 for a child-placing agency (not applicable for a child-placing agency that moves), and \$50 + \$2 per license capacity for a maternity home.) This fee will also be due annually from the date of the issuance of the non-expiring permit.

If your operation does not meet standards during the initial period, we will deny the non-expiring license (See "Remedial Actions," page 8). Licensing staff may also revoke the initial license before it expires. If it is denied or revoked, your operation must stop providing care.

Dual or Multiple Permits

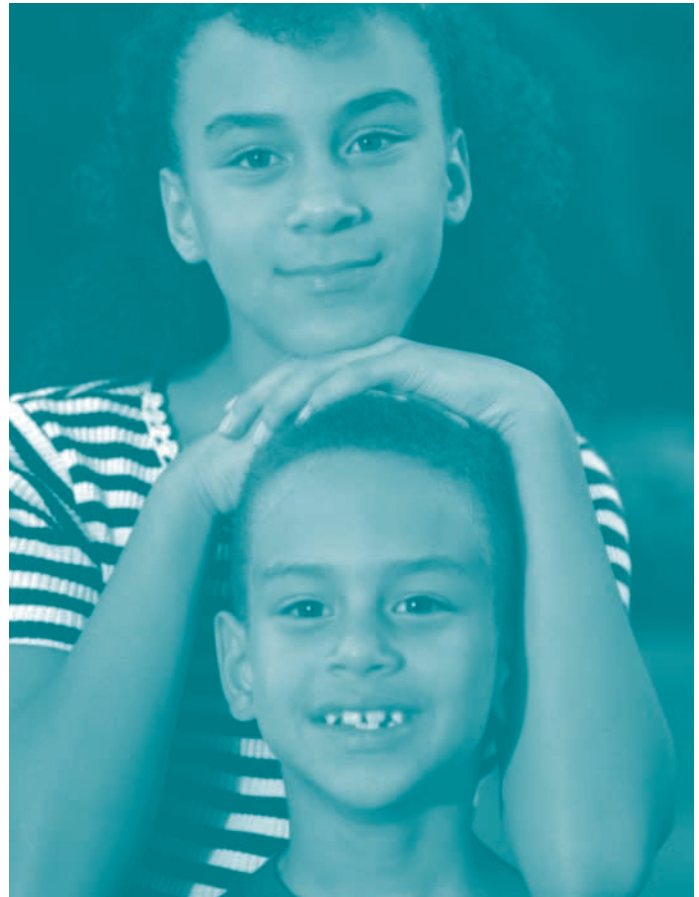
- ◆ We can issue only one listing, registration, or child day care license to a child day care home for a single living unit.
- ◆ You may offer child day care at your agency foster home, independent foster home, or general residential operation under certain conditions. Your Licensing representative will provide more information if you are interested.
- ◆ A licensed or registered child day care may offer 24-hour care if we approve your permit to care for children both during the day and night. Even then a child may only be in care for three consecutive 24-hour periods with a maximum of six 24-hour periods per month; or not more than 16 hours within a 24-hour period on a daily basis. You cannot exceed these limits without getting a permit as a residential child-care operation.
- ◆ Multiple operations may not operate under one permit unless they are:
 - Contiguous to one another, are the same type of child-care operation, and have the same governing body. For example, a full-time day-care center and after-school day care offered in the same building can operate under one permit because they are both regulated as day-care centers; or
 - Not contiguous, but are the same type of child-care operation, they are nearby one another, and they operate under a single operation as evidenced by staffing, finance, and administrative supervision effectively supporting the operations and programs.

Help in Meeting Standards

(Registered and Licensed Operations Only)

Continuing Compliance

Licensing staff will periodically inspect your registered or licensed operation to make sure it continues to meet minimum standards. By law, we must make at least one unannounced inspection every three years to a registered operation, and we must make at least one unannounced inspection per year to a licensed operation. Licensing staff will notify you in writing of the results of each inspection. Licensing staff can answer questions about standards and how to comply with them. There may be several ways your operation can meet a particular standard.



We do not inspect listed homes; however, if we receive a report that abuse or neglect is occurring in the home, or a report of child care being provided that could be subject to registration or licensure, we will investigate the allegation.

Waivers and Variances

(Registered Homes and Licensed Operations Only)

The child-care licensing law allows Licensing to grant waivers and variances. A waiver is permission not to meet a standard. By law, it can only be granted if meeting the standard is financially impractical and your operation can show that the children are protected. A variance is permission to meet the intent of the standard in a way other than specified by the standard. You may request a waiver or variance when applying for a permit or at any time after you receive a permit. To request a waiver or variance, complete the child-care waivers variance request form, form 2937 and send it to Licensing staff. Licensing staff and the supervisor will review your request and the supervisor will either approve or deny it.

Administrative Reviews

You may request an administrative review if you disagree with certain decisions or actions of Licensing staff. An administrative review is not a formal appeal—it is an

informal consideration of facts. To request an administrative review, send your request in writing within 15 days after receiving notice of your rights to an administrative review to the Licensing supervisor or the designee given in the notification letter. Describe the decision or action with which you disagree. The administrative review will be held as soon as practical. The assigned reviewer will gather the facts and may visit your child-care operation or schedule a meeting with you. We will inform you of the decision in writing.

Failure to Comply With Law or Minimum Standard Rules

Notification of Deficiency with Law or Minimum Standard Rules

(Registered and Licensed Operations Only)

Licensing staff will notify you or your designee, in writing of any deficiency found during an inspection. A deficiency may be with the law, minimum standard rules, or any condition of the permit, waivers, and variances. It is common for deficiencies to be noted and most are resolved. You may feel that Licensing staff should overlook a minor deficiency, however, we must notify you of all deficiencies. Licensing staff may give technical assistance for the corrections and work out a time limit for you to make the corrections.

Remedial Actions

Licensing will impose an evaluation or probation on a registered or licensed operation when:

- ◆ There is risk in the form of repeated deficiencies with rules that do not endanger the health and safety of children;
- ◆ The loss of the permit may result if the deficiencies continue; and
- ◆ A fixed period of time is needed to monitor continuing compliance with the minimum standard rules.

Evaluation is a corrective action that requires a closer-than-routine period of monitoring inspections after developing a plan for compliance when a specific incident or pattern of deficiencies is not serious enough to require probation. Evaluation is used when deficiencies present a lower risk to children, and the operation does not need to cease operating in order to make corrections, if conditions imposed are followed.

Probation is a corrective action that is imposed on the permit when a specific incident or pattern of deficiencies could lead to adverse action. Probation is used when there is a risk to children but further action, such as closing, would not be necessary if conditions imposed are followed.



Denial of the Application for a Permit: If you are not able to correct deficiencies after being given an opportunity to do so, we may deny your application and communicate our decision to you. You will be informed of the denial by letter, as well as your right to an administrative review and an appeal hearing of the denial. If you do not request an administrative review or an appeal hearing, the denial is final 30 days after receipt of the letter. If we deny an application, your operation must stop providing care and close. If we deny you a permit to operate a child day care operation, you may not apply for another permit before the second anniversary of the date on which the denial takes effect. If we deny you a permit to operate a residential child-care operation, you may not apply for another permit before the fifth anniversary of the date on which the denial takes place.

Revoking a Permit: When deficiencies pose a risk that endangers the health, safety, or well-being of children or there are indications of a continued failure to comply with rules or law, we may revoke your permit. If a child dies or is abused or neglected as a result of violation of standards or the law, or if a deficiency presents a clear danger to the health or safety of the children, we may take immediate steps to revoke the permit. In all instances, Licensing will notify your operation of the right to an administrative review and an appeal hearing. If we revoke your child day

care permit, you may not apply for another permit before the second anniversary of the date on which the revocation takes effect. If we revoke your residential child-care permit, you may not apply for another permit before the fifth anniversary of the date on which the revocation takes place. In addition, if we revoke your residential permit, each controlling person at the operation will be “designated.” A designated controlling person will be offered an administrative review and a hearing. When the revocation against the operation is final, and the due process rights for the designated controlling person are final, the controlling person will be a “sustained controlling person.” A sustained controlling person is prohibited from being issued a residential permit, from being a controlling person in a residential operation, and from working in any capacity at a residential operation for a five-year period.

Emergency Suspension and Closure of an

Operation: In some instances, Licensing can suspend a permit and order immediate closure of an operation. The child-care licensing law permits us to do this if there is an immediate risk to the health or safety of children attending or residing in your operation.

Injunction: Licensing may request legal action to obtain a temporary restraining order or to obtain a temporary and permanent injunction. An injunction is requested through the Licensing attorney from the Attorney General. The child-care licensing law permits us to do this if there is a substantial risk of immediate harm to the health or safety of children in care, or if an operation subject to regulation is operating illegally and has failed to submit an application.

Suspension for Nonpayment of Fees: Licensing can also suspend your permit if you do not pay your annual fee within one month after the due date. You will be notified in writing of the intention to suspend your permit.

Investigations

When a Report Is Received

The child-care licensing law requires us to investigate a report that a registered or licensed operation is not meeting standards or is violating the child-care licensing law or rules, unless the reporter is anonymous and the report does not appear to be factually based. If a report alleges that abuse or neglect is happening in a listed, registered, or licensed operation, the law requires us to investigate. If there is a report about your operation, Licensing staff will inform you and perform an investigation. The identity of the person who made the report is confidential under Texas’ Open Records Law. Licensing staff cannot furnish any information about the reporter.

Specially trained Licensing staff investigate alleged abuse or neglect. A monitoring Licensing staff will usually



investigate alleged deficiencies in standards. In both types of investigations, Licensing staff will inspect the operation, interview employees and children, review records, and conduct other investigative work to determine the disposition of each allegation. You, your family, and child-care employees should be encouraged to cooperate with the investigator and not hinder the investigation in any way.

When the Investigation Is Complete

The investigator has a time frame in which it must be completed. After the investigation, the Licensing investigator will inform the operation of the findings and any corrections needed.

Harassment

Someone may repeatedly make reports that, upon investigation, turn out to be invalid. In such cases, we can inform the person making the reports that, unless there is new information about possible violations of standards, no more investigations will be conducted.



DFPS Licensing Files

Public Access to Licensing Records

Licensing Division records are considered “open record” and are available to the public under state law.

Exceptions are:

- ◆ The name and identifying information about a reporter of alleged violation of the standards, rules, or law, or people who make allegations during an investigation unrelated to the original report;
- ◆ Children’s last names, whether or not victims, and identifying information;
- ◆ Criminal history information;
- ◆ Certain confidential information from another agency, division, or person;
- ◆ Information that may be constitutionally protected including information about pending court cases;
- ◆ Incomplete investigations of minimum standard deficiencies;
- ◆ Social Security numbers of anyone in an operation; and
- ◆ File information from Licensing’s abuse or neglect investigations.

DFPS Public Web Site

Information about your operation and its compliance history will be available on our public web site at <http://www.txchildcaresearch.org>. Families and placing agents wanting information about child-care operations in their areas will be able to access this information. The results of inspections and investigations will be available on the web site after the administrative review and due process period has ended. However, if no deficiencies are found when a report is made anonymously, there will be no record of the investigation on the website.

Summary

Texas recognizes that:

- ◆ Caring for children outside of their homes is a service that should be regulated by a state agency to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the children; and
- ◆ The rights of child-care operators must be protected with procedures that ensure due notice, the opportunity to comply with the rules and regulations, and rights to request supervisory or administrative review and appeal.

Through the efforts of child-care operators, parents, DFPS, and other interested agencies and individuals, a system has been developed that meets both criteria.

The licensing process is not complicated. Licensing staff help applicants and child-care operators at all stages of the process. We make every effort to minimize paperwork and carefully consider costs to the operation when reviewing standards and procedures.

DFPS continues to evaluate and monitor the licensing process and standards. Your comments and suggestions are encouraged.



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