



Texas Workforce Solutions

Texas Rising Star Child Care Provider Welcome Packet



Texas 
Rising Star

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Executive Welcome Letter

Congratulations on Achieving Texas Rising Star Certification!

The Texas Workforce Commission is proud to welcome your program to Texas Rising Star!

As a Texas Rising Star-certified child care program, you can now enjoy the benefits of Texas' quality improvement system, including one-on-one support, professional development opportunities, priority for local funding, free outreach materials, and the potential for higher payment rates.

To get you started, this Welcome Kit includes:

- Resources to help you promote your Texas Rising Star-certified program.
- Instructions on use of the Texas Rising Star logo and graphics.
- Information on what you can expect as a certified program.

Thank you for your dedication to the success of Texas' young children and families.

Sincerely,



Edward Serna
Executive Director

Language Explaining the Texas Rising Star Program

How to Explain Texas Rising Star to Your Audience

The Texas Rising Star program is a quality improvement, rating, and certification system for early childhood programs in Texas. The program ensures that child care and early learning programs participating in the TWC Child Care Services (CCS) program meet higher quality standards than many other programs across the state.

Higher quality early learning prepares Texas children for success in school and beyond. Higher quality child care builds trust between the program and the families it serves and empowers parents to be engaged and informed about their child's development. When children are enrolled in top-tier programs, parents can focus on their training, work, or career to build a strong future for Texas.

Becoming a Texas Rising Star-certified program has benefits that may include higher CCS payment rates; ongoing mentoring and support; professional development opportunities for staff; program benefits like stipends, curriculum, materials and equipment; and targeted free advertising to families and the community.

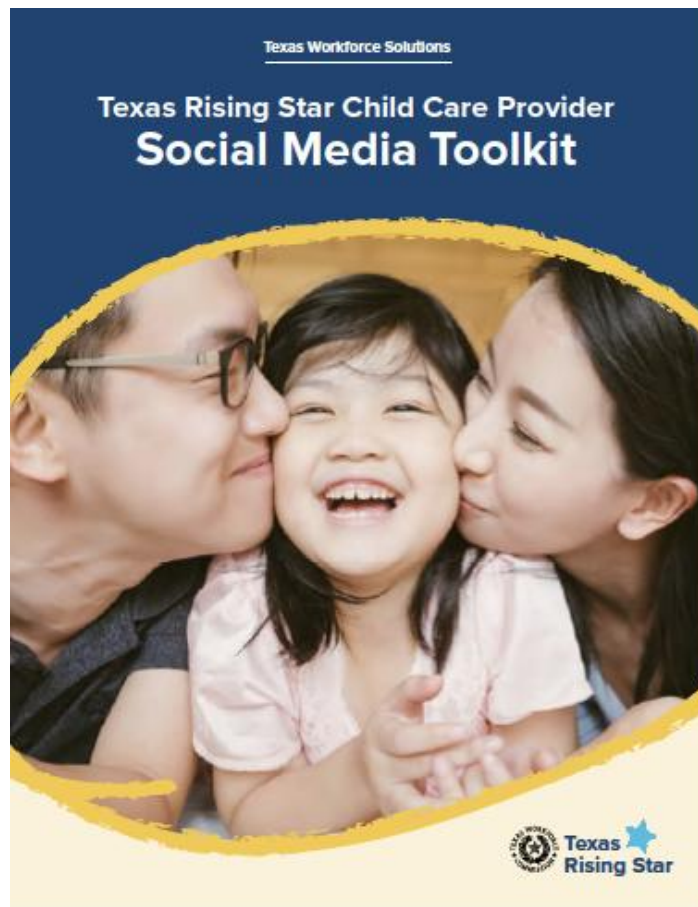
Programs who participate in the CCS program will receive free support and resources to achieve a Texas Rising Star quality rating of Two-Star, Three-Star, or Four-Star.

Social Media Toolkit

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) created a [social media toolkit](#) to help Texas Rising Star-certified child care and early learning programs promote their participation in the Texas Rising Star program to parents, families, and the community through social media.

Through this toolkit you'll find:

- When, where, and how to reach your audience on social media.
- What to communicate on your social media platforms.
- Sample social media posts to post on your accounts.



Logo and Graphic Guidelines

Texas Rising Star-certified early learning programs can use the Texas Rising Star logo and their designated star-level graphic for marketing and outreach.



Programs must use only the official logo and star-level graphic provided by their Workforce Solutions Board. When used, the star-level graphic must also accurately reflect a program's certified quality level (Two-Star, Three-Star, or Four-Star).

Note: Graphics must be used without modification. Make sure not to obscure them by overlaying type, photos, or any other elements. Additional guidance on the use of the Texas Rising Star logo, the designated star-level graphic, and other branding elements are provided within the Texas Rising Star Style Guide and Social Media toolkit.

Next Steps and Opportunities

The following resources serve as a guide for programs looking to navigate their Texas Rising Star certification journey. This section will provide actionable insights and strategies across four areas: **Ongoing Assessments**, **Continued Mentorship**, **Moving Up a Star Level**, and **Continued Compliance**.

In **Ongoing Assessments**, you'll learn about the different assessments that help your program meet and maintain Texas Rising Star quality standards. These assessments, from the initial evaluation to recertification, ensure your program stays on track and offers opportunities for reassessment when needed.

Continued Mentorship focuses on how mentors support your program's growth. They provide coaching, technical assistance, and feedback to help you implement Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIPs) and reach your goals. Learn how to establish a mentoring relationship that drives your program's success.

In **Moving Up a Star Level**, discover how your program can enhance its star-level certification through strategic improvements, understand the criteria, plan for CQIPs, and take the necessary steps to achieve higher recognition in the Texas Rising Star program.

Continued Compliance highlights maintaining high-quality through unannounced annual monitoring visits and the screening impacts based on licensing deficiencies incurred.



Ongoing Assessments

As a certified Texas Rising Star program, additional assessments are available or required (depending on the situation) to support a program's journey to maintaining certification or achieving higher levels of certification. During a visit, assessors objectively evaluate a program's compliance with standards and level of quality. Assessors evaluate certification status for new and existing Texas Rising Star- certified programs using the applicable facility and classroom assessment forms.



Key assessments include:

1. Initial Assessment

The initial assessment is a full evaluation of required and points-based measures. The assessor confirms that all required measures, such as written policies, are verified. In addition, the assessor evaluates points-based measures, such as teacher-child interactions and indoor and outdoor learning environments. This assessment is used to generate the program's initial star-level certification.

2. Annual Monitoring Visit

The annual monitoring visit is unannounced and must be conducted before the yearly anniversary date of the Texas Rising Star certification start date. Programs will receive two annual monitoring visits during their three-year certification period. The annual monitoring requires that at least 50% of all classrooms (at least one from each age group) are assessed, all required measures verified, and all points-based measures are scored for all categories.

Results of the annual monitoring will not affect the program's star-level certification. The scores are used to help the program maintain or increase its star level. Should a program's calculated score at the annual monitoring visit fall below its current star level, the program will be placed on a Service Improvement Agreement (SIA) for six months and receive targeted mentoring to prepare them for the SIA Assessment.

3. Recertification Assessment

Texas Rising Star certification lasts three years. The Recertification Assessment will occur no later than three years to the month of the previous full assessment.

The recertification assessment requires that 100% of classrooms are assessed, all required measures are verified, and all points-based measures are scored for all categories. Programs may lose, gain, or maintain a star level as a result of the Recertification Assessment.

4. Star-Level Evaluation

Two- and Three-Star programs that have made significant improvements across Texas Rising Star measures may request a Star-Level Evaluation to determine a new star-level certification. Star-Level Evaluations are full assessments of all classrooms, categories, and applicable measures.

5. Category Reassessment

After a full assessment, programs may request a reassessment of their program's two lowest-rated categories within 30 days of the Texas Rising Star certification effective date.

6. Facility Changes

A Texas Rising Star-certified program that experiences any one of these changes (expansion, splits, facility type, change in ownership, or move to a new location within the same city, ZIP code, or county in which the program is currently operating) must undergo a Texas Rising Star reassessment within the initial three-month period from the change.

7. Reconsideration

A reconsideration may be requested by a program that feels that the assessment was inaccurate or unfairly conducted. The reconsideration process may include reviewing the current scoring to confirm accuracy or scheduling a second assessment with the same assessor or different assessor. The reconsideration may also involve a reassessment of a category and/or measure as requested by the program.

After consulting a mentor to request any one of these assessments, submit a Texas Rising Star Certification Request Form:

<https://cliengage.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portal/39>.

Continued Mentorship

Mentors are essential in helping programs achieve, maintain, and improve their Texas Rising Star certification status. Mentors will provide ongoing support to encourage and assist a program's director and staff in meeting their certification and maintenance goals.

Ongoing Mentorship

Mentors will continue to regularly consult with programs to develop and monitor Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIPs), model best practices, provide constructive feedback, deliver targeted training, and refer programs to other helpful resources and training. Participation in a CQIP is required.



CQIPs can also address key quality areas not directly measured by Texas Rising Star, such as inclusive caregiving practices, working with English language learners, and policies to prevent suspension and expulsion.

CQIPs are continually created and updated throughout the program's participation in Texas Rising Star. CQIPs can be further refined after annual visits with the assistance of the mentor. Additional technical assistance plans are generated after each assessment and can be used to further refine the CQIP.

Texas Rising Star programs have access to professional development resources, including multiple online modules demonstrating best practices on a range of topics. Mentors may recommend specific courses or resources based on a program's quality improvement needs.

The amount of time a mentor spends on-site at the facility will vary based on their caseload and the program's needs. At a minimum, the mentor will visit the program once a month, either in person or through a scheduled call or virtual meeting.

For more detailed information, visit

<https://texasrisingstar.org/providers/continuous-quality-improvement/>

Moving Up a Star Level

The Texas Rising Star program offers three levels of quality certification: Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star. As programs enhance their child care and early learning quality, they may have an opportunity to increase their star-level certification.

Star Certification

The methodology for determining the star level of a category is based on the child care and early learning program's average score across all measures of a category:



Four-Star – average score is 2.4 or greater
(80% of total possible points)



Three-Star – average score is 1.80 to 2.39
(60–79.9% of total possible points)



Two-Star – average score is below 1.80
(less than 60% of total possible points)

Certification Categories

Each category contributes to the overall star level for the child care and learning program. Category 2: Teacher-Child Interactions is weighted more heavily than the other three categories and thus has a larger impact on the overall star level calculated.

Certification Category	Weight
1. Director and Staff Qualification Training	20%
2. Teacher-Child Interactions	40%
3. Program Administration	20%
4. Indoor and Outdoor Environments	20%



Increase Stars Through CQIPs

CQIPs are designed to assist programs in increasing the quality of the child care and early learning experiences they provide with the goal of maintaining or increasing the program's star level. A CQIP contains improvement goals for a targeted number of Texas Rising Star measures and/or categories, as well as resources to help reach those improvement goals. This includes professional development coursework, coaching from a Texas Rising Star mentor, and identification of other available resources and training material.

CQIPs will continue to be developed between the child care and early learning program and their assigned mentor throughout certification. These can be refined to focus on specific areas for improving the program's star level or simply maintaining the quality of care being provided.

For more information, visit the [Texas Rising Star Continuous Quality Improvement page](#).

Star-Level Evaluation

Once the child care and early learning program has made significant improvements across Texas Rising Star measures, the program may request a Star-Level Evaluation to achieve a higher star-level certification. This evaluation, agreed upon by the program and the mentor, can be requested at any time via the online request form and involves a full assessment of all classrooms, categories, and applicable measures.

For more information, visit <https://texasrisingstar.org/about-trs/certification-levels/>.

Continued Compliance

Texas Rising Star-certified programs require annual monitoring to ensure high-quality child care and early learning is provided and are subject to Child Care Regulation (CCR) licensing screening impacts.

Service Improvement Agreement (SIA)

Texas Rising Star assessors conduct unannounced, annual monitoring visits (annual monitoring) to ensure Texas Rising Star-certified programs are maintaining the level of quality reflected in their current star-level certification. If a program does not maintain their certified star level during their annual monitoring, an SIA will go into effect for six months to assist the program. Texas Rising Star-certified programs retain their current star level while on the SIA, and technical assistance is provided by a mentor through the SIA and an updated CQIP which will focus on the Texas Rising Star categories that resulted in a lower overall calculated star level.

After the six-month SIA, an assessment of the identified categories will be conducted for all classrooms/staff, as applicable to the category. A new star level may be determined, based on the observations at the end of the SIA assessment, resulting in a higher or lower star level. SIAs are not considered a full assessment unless all categories are assessed.



Texas Rising Star Screening Impacts

A Texas Rising Star–certified program can be put on Texas Rising Star screening impact (star level drop, probation, or suspension) for, at minimum, six months based on CCR licensing deficiencies incurred within the most recent six months.

- Star Level Drop occurs when the program is cited for any one of the specified licensing deficiencies within Section 3 of the Texas Rising Star-Certified Screening Form.
- Probation A occurs when the program is cited for any one of the noted licensing deficiencies within Section 4 of the Texas Rising Star-Certified Screening Form.
- Probation B occurs when the program has incurred 26-40 total points from licensing deficiencies weighted high or medium-high.
- Suspension occurs when the program falls below Two-Star or meets one of the specified situations noted within Section 2 of the Texas Rising Star-Certified Screening Form.

During any type of screening impact, a program will continue to receive technical assistance from their assigned mentor to assist with issues that have caused the deficiencies, as noted in their CQIP. The mentor may collaborate with the program's CCR representative for guidance on what technical assistance can be provided, as applicable.

To download your specific screening form, visit <https://texasrisingstar.org/trs-tools/>.

Additional Resources

Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C)

The Texas Child Care Connection (TX3C) website is our mobile-friendly, online platform that includes an [Availability Portal](#) that helps match families that need child care with early learning programs that have availability. The site includes quality indicators and access to each program’s licensing reports. Additionally, child care and early learning programs can upload pictures of their facilities and specific information about their offerings to better inform parents. TX3C also provides a central access point for families accessing child care services across the state, including an online application for child care financial assistance.

For more information, visit [TX3C](#).

CLI Engage

The Texas Workforce Commission has partnered with the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI) at UT Health Houston to provide CLI Engage, an online platform supporting Texas Rising Star programs. CLI Engage offers free professional development courses, child progress monitoring tools, and classroom activities aimed at enhancing the quality of child care and early education. Child care and early learning programs are encouraged to continue to use the free resources provided for each of their teaching staff.

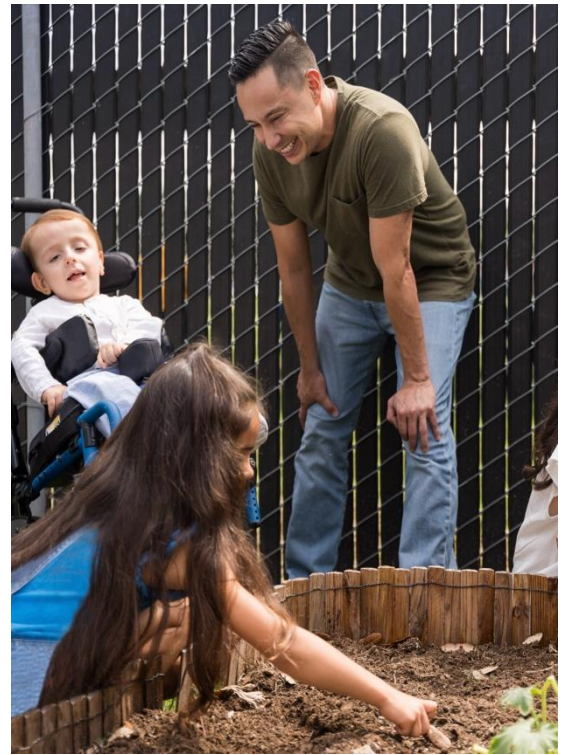
For more details, visit [CLI Engage](#).



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a long-standing educational institution that provides numerous resources for child care professionals, including online courses to meet state training requirements, aiding early childhood educators in their career development. AgriLife's Promoting Early Education Quality (PEEQ) is focused on providing free or low-cost professional development based on research- and evidence-based practices at all levels of the early education field. Topics include outdoor play, mental health, special needs, Child Development Associate (CDA), and so much more.

For more details, visit [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Childcare Training Courses](#).



TWC Prekindergarten Partnerships

The Texas Workforce Commission's Child Care Prekindergarten Partnerships Department serves as a resource to establish and expand pre-k partnerships throughout the state. Pre-k partnerships are a collaboration between public schools and quality-rated child care programs to provide pre-k instruction in the child care classroom of 3- and 4-year-old children. These partnerships offer benefits like extended care hours for working families, and increased enrollment, resources, and professional development opportunities for both schools and child care centers. Financial support is available to eligible child care programs who form new pre-k partnership classrooms.

Learn more at the [TWC Prekindergarten Partnerships](#) page.



TECPDS

The Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS) is a free online professional repository which supports early childhood professionals with resources and tools to help them meet their professional development needs. TECPDS defines professional development as any opportunity that enhances the knowledge and skills of those working with young children, including training, education, and employment.

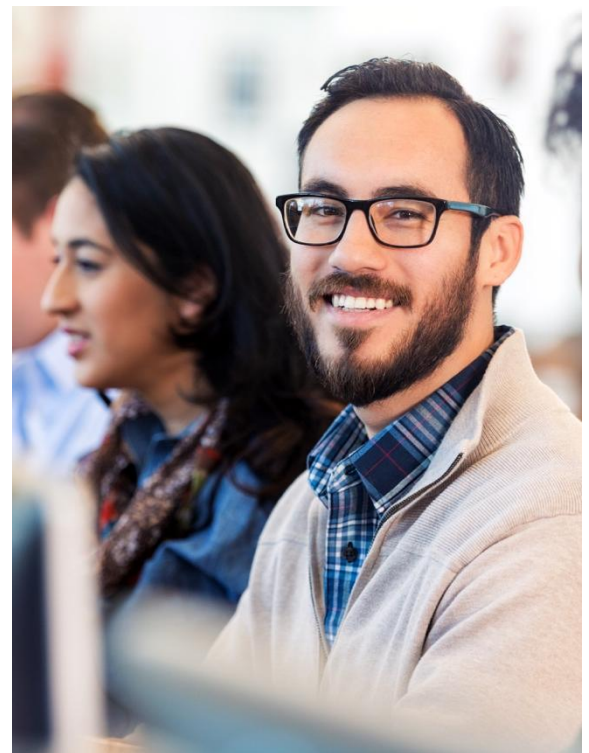
Advance your early childhood career pathway at tecpds.org.

Early Childhood Professional Development Scholarships

TWC granted the Early Childhood Professional Development Scholarship grant to the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TXAEYC). With this grant, TXAEYC provides scholarships to eligible educators through their T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood program. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood is a comprehensive scholarships program that supports early childhood educators in obtaining credentials and degrees.

Through T.E.A.C.H., you can earn your Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, associate, or bachelor's degree and/or participate in an ECE Registered Apprenticeship Program. Their scholarship models are a three-way partnership between the scholarship recipient, their sponsoring employer, and TXAEYC, each contributing to the furthering of a scholarship recipient's educational growth and retention in the field.

Learn more at [T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Texas](https://teach.texas.gov).



Other Quality Initiatives Available

TWC Child Care Services and Workforce Solutions Offices provide numerous quality initiatives for child care and early learning programs. TWC has statewide initiatives such as the [Texas Infant-Toddler Specialist Network](#), Skills for Small Business for Employers, free Child Care Business resources, and the [Texas Child Care Provider Cost of Quality Calculator](#). The local Workforce Solutions Offices may provide materials and equipment, stipends and incentives, or professional development scholarships and training.

For more details visit, <https://www.twc.texas.gov/programs/child-care/for-providers> or ask your mentor about local initiatives available.



Contact

Local Board contact information

Child Care Services

Provide feedback to TWC about Child Care Services at CCEL@twc.texas.gov

Texas Rising Star

Provide feedback to TWC about Texas Rising Star at TRS4YearReview@twc.texas.gov