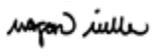


TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION LETTER

ID/No:	WD 02-15
Date:	January 15, 2015
Keyword:	Child Care
Effective:	Immediately

To: Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers


From: Reagan Miller, Director, Workforce Development Division

Subject: **Funding to Assist Child Care Providers to Improve Quality, Including Activities That Support Texas Rising Star Certification**

PURPOSE:

To provide Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with information and guidance on funding to assist child care providers to improve quality, including activities that support Texas Rising Star (TRS) certification.

BACKGROUND:

Under amended Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Child Care Services rule §809.16(a)(1)–(3), Boards are permitted to use allocated child care funds for any nondirect care quality improvement activity permitted by Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) regulations at 45 CFR §98.51. These activities can include, but are not limited to:

- activities designed to provide comprehensive consumer education to parents and the public;
- activities that increase parental choice; and
- activities designed to improve the quality and availability of child care.

In State Fiscal Year 2014, TWC's three-member Commission (Commission) approved \$11.2 million for eight statewide quality initiatives:

- Funding for mentors and assessors to provide technical assistance for the TRS program (\$3.6 million)
- Funding for TRS implementation (\$600,000)
- Inclusion training and technical assistance to providers (\$1.5 million)
- Development of Child Care Professional Career Pathways—integrating Fast Start and Adult Education and Literacy programs (\$2 million)
- Child Care Incentive and Child Care Quality Award Conference (\$400,000)
- Pilots of individualized instruction and assessment tools (\$2 million)
- Parent Portal (\$100,000)
- Child care assistance in military communities (\$1 million)

On November 4, 2014, the Commission approved a \$1.5-million distribution of Board child care funds to improve access to infant and toddler care.

The Commission also is considering recommendations for TRS program modifications, adopting new rules and guidelines based on the recommendations of the TRS workgroup, in accordance with House Bill (HB) 376, enacted by the 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2013).

HB 376 also requires that at least 2 percent of a Board's annual child care allocation be used for quality child care initiatives and that Boards give priority to quality child care initiatives that benefit child care facilities that are:

- working toward TRS program certification; or
- working toward a higher TRS certification level.

The proposed TRS rules and guidelines currently under Commission consideration contain substantial changes to the TRS program, which may require that additional technical assistance resources, including mentors and assessors, be available to Boards and child care providers during initial implementation.

PROCEDURES:

Boards must be aware that on December 9, 2014, the Commission approved a one-time distribution of \$6.4 million in child care funds to Boards to assist child care providers in:

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- improving the quality of care; and
- achieving TRS certification or attaining a higher TRS certification level.

Boards must be aware that:

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- TWC will issue a separate contract for the funds; and
- the funds will be available for 24 months from January 1, 2015.

Boards must ensure that the funds are used for activities that directly relate to:

NLF

- quality activities described in WD Letter 12-13, Change 1; or
- specific TRS standards and measures as described in Attachment 1, including:
 - professional development;
 - curriculum development;
 - equipment;
 - scholarships;
 - stipends; and
 - mentoring services.

Boards may use the funds for:

LF

- one-time financial incentives to support quality activities for providers that achieve TRS certification or attain a higher level of TRS certification; and
- additional, temporary TRS mentoring staff.

Because this is a one-time funding, Boards must ensure that any additional mentoring staff is temporary.

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Boards must ensure that the funds are not used for:

- reimbursement for direct child care services; or
- increased rates.

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Boards must be aware that funds are distributed to each Board based on its proportion of total funds allocated using the methodology in TWC General Administration rule §800.58 (see Attachment 2).

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INQUIRIES:

Direct inquiries regarding this WD Letter to wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Allowable Quality Activities Related to TRS Certification

Attachment 2: Funding to Assist Child Care Providers to Improve Quality

RESCISSIONS:

None

REFERENCE:

WD Letter 12-13, Change 1, issued September 20, 2013, and entitled “Implementation of Amended Chapter 809, Child Care Services Rules, Regarding Quality Improvement Activities — Update”

FLEXIBILITY RATINGS:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that Boards must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this WD Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This rating indicates that Boards have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this WD Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”