Initial Guidance into the Development of the CCDF State Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024
Discussion Paper

Background

The Child Care and Development Block Grant requires states to submit a Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan every three years. The Administration for Children and Family’s Office of Child Care has released the draft FY 2022–2024 State and Territory CCDF Plan Preprint. While final guidance is not yet available, we understand that the CCDF State Plan will be due on June 30, 2021.

There are no significant changes to the structure of the CCDF State Plan. The FY 2022–2024 State and Territory CCDF Plan Preprint maintains the eight-section structure of the current FY 2019–2021 State and Territory CCDF Plan Preprint. The eight sections are:

1. Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems and Funding Sources
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 Children
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 Program Integrity and Accountability

The Child Care and Early Learning Division anticipates the following key activities and milestones:

- Stakeholder Input in the Development of the CCDF State Plan – Fall 2020
- Commission Approval of a Draft CCDF State Plan – April 2021
- Public Hearing(s)/public review/comment – April/May 2021
- Commission Approval of Final CCDF State Plan – June 2021
- CCDF State Plan Effective Date – October 1, 2021

Issue

While much of the CCDF State Plan reflects the state’s existing structure and policies for the administration of CCDF, states also use the State Plan to outline overarching goals for the upcoming three years. States are asked to report on how they will develop, maintain or implement early learning and developmental guidelines; support continuous quality improvement investments; and, how they assessed which quality activities would best meet their needs. As Child Care & Early Learning (CC&EL)

1 Draft FY22-24 CCDF State Plan Preprint: page 99, page 100
Division staff are developing the draft CCDF State Plan, and seeking input from stakeholders, we want to provide some possible strategic priorities that the Commission may consider, and solicit feedback to determine if there are common priorities and needs that stakeholders identify.

Below are new or expanded areas that TWC may consider in the coming three years, many of which may align to the Tri-Agency’s strategies for subsidized child care to increase kindergarten readiness, and with the 2020-2025 Texas Early Learning Strategic Plan.

- **Texas Rising Star**
  Over the past few years, TWC has increased its investment of CCDF funds in support of Texas Rising Star. As of August 2020, 1,910 providers have participated in the Texas Rising Star program, representing a nearly 70 percent increase since 2015. TWC will continue our focus on Texas Rising Star and will establish goals for more subsidy providers to participate in Texas Rising Star. TWC will also consider developing a structure outreach campaign to educate both parents and providers on Texas Rising Star.

- **Prekindergarten Partnerships**
  TWC has been supporting the expansion of Prekindergarten Partnership models and contributed to the development of TEA’s Early Learning Public-Private Partnership Guidebook. CC&EL issued Technical Assistance Bulletin 297 to provide Boards with this information, which includes guidance on the benefits of partnerships, funding options for partnerships, and the steps of developing partnerships. TWC will continue our collaborative efforts with TEA to help build and expand the availability of prekindergarten services within child care programs.

- **Rural Child Care**
  TWC may consider efforts to address the need for child care in rural areas of Texas. This could include efforts to engage interested rural communities in design solutions to increase the supply of high quality child care.

- **Child Care Resource and Referral**
  Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) services are noted as an option that states may fund in the CCDF regulations at 45CFR §98.52. Under the federal regulations, CCR&Rs are a system of local or regional organizations which:
  - Provide parents with consumer education information
  - Assist families in making informed decisions about enrolling their children into the most appropriate child care setting
  - Collect data and provide information on coordinating child care with other early education services
  - Collect data and provide information on the supply of and demand for child care services
  - Work to establish partnerships and increase the supply of and quality of child care

  CCR&Rs are also contemplated in the Texas Labor Code, Section 310. TWC has carried out some referral provisions through HHSC’s 211 call center.
The Local Workforce Development Boards currently carry out many of the services that CCR&Rs provide. There are, however, additional services that we may wish to consider in order to build out a more robust CCR&R function within the state.

- **Shared Services Alliances**
  TWC may promote new Shared Services Alliance hubs, allowing child care providers to partner with other programs in their area to leverage economies of scale and secure advantageous pricing structures on goods and services. Each Alliance will determine how to best share strategies including administrative, accounting or human resources functions, training and professional networking, substitute teacher pools, shared IT platforms or public-private prekindergarten partnerships.

- **Texas Core Competencies for Early Education Childhood Practitioners and Administrators**
  The current Texas Core Competencies for Early Education Childhood Practitioners and Administrators were published in 2013 and outline the concepts, skills and abilities that early childhood professionals would learn, understand and be able to demonstrate. Since their publication, the Institute of Medicine has published Transforming the Workforce for Children from Birth through Age 8. A review of the Texas Core Competencies to reflect the latest research would ensure Texas’ standards reflect updated national frameworks.

- **Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines**
  The current Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines (ITELG) were published in 2013, and detail child outcomes, competencies and skills across domains of learning, and supports for healthy development. CC&EL propose to update the ITELG resource to reflect the latest research, resources, and to address the need for improved supports for infant and toddler educators.

- **Parent Copays/Parent’s Share of Cost**
  Currently, each Local Workforce Development Board is charged with establishing a local policy regarding the amounts that parents will contribute to the cost of child care (e.g, the Parent Copay, or Parent’s Share of Cost). CC&EL will examine the development of state parameters to create consistency in the amounts that parents are required to contribute to the cost of child care.

**Decision Point**
Staff seeks the Commission’s direction on including the potential strategic priorities, outlined above, in discussions with stakeholders as the draft CCDF State Plan is developed.