

6M-9.300 Child Care Resource and Referral and Consumer Education.

(1) The ~~Division~~Office of Early Learning, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) state network, shall ensure delivery of CCR&R services as defined in the Child Care Development Block Grant of 2014, Title 45 Part 98 Code of Federal Regulations, and section 1002.92, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

(2) Definitions.

(a) “Business hours” refers to the hours during which a CCR&R organization has staff available to provide services to customers via telephone, through email or in person.

(b) “Child care listing” refers to the customized list of child care providers that best meet a family’s needs generated from the single statewide information system.

(c) “CCR&R organization” refers to any early learning coalition or other contracted entity providing CCR&R services to customers pursuant to section 1002.92, F.S.

(d) “Community resources” refers to social service and financial assistance programs that a family may be eligible for, such as the DCF Office on Homelessness, home visiting programs, mental health service, including School Readiness, Voluntary Prekindergarten, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children (WIC), Head Start and Early Head Start, as well as any organization or service that a family may qualify for that will support the family’s financial independence, assist with developmental concerns and help fill an unmet need.

(e) “Community outreach” refers to activities in the CCR&R service area that increase awareness of CCR&R services, and on social media platforms, and marketing activities.

(f) “Consumer education” refers to information and resources that assist an individual or family in making informed decisions regarding quality child care.

(g) “Differential fee” refers to a child care fee charged by a provider to a parent who participates in the School Readiness Program or any other subsidized child care assistance program that is in addition to the parent copayment set by the early learning coalition.

(h) “Family engagement” refers to the systematic inclusion of families as partners in their child’s development, learning and wellness, enabled by positive relationships between families and staff in coalitions and early learning programs.

(i) “Legally operating provider” refers to any child care, early learning or school-age provider that is either licensed, registered, or has a qualifying exemption from licensure from the Florida Department of Children and Families, including before-school and after-school programs, summer recreation and summer day camp programs, and recreational facilities.

(j) “Quality child care” refers to child care programs that maintain a degree of excellence, going above and beyond minimum standards for health and safety and training, and maintain a high level of positive teacher-child interactions, promoting the health and well-being of all children physically, socially, emotionally and developmentally.

(k) “Registration fee” refers to a fee charged by a provider to a parent for enrollment of a child into a child care program.

(l) “Service area” refers to the county or multicounty region served by the CCR&R organization.

(m) “Standard business hours” refers to operating hours between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

(n) “Single statewide information system” refers to the statewide early learning data system used to capture and provide critical information to early learning coalitions, parents, partners and providers.

(3) Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Services.

CCR&R services shall be locally administered, coordinated, and overseen by early learning coalitions in accordance with section 1002.92, F.S. Early learning coalitions or their contracted CCR&R organizations shall:

(a) Offer CCR&R services including child care listings, consumer education, and information regarding community resources, as identified in paragraph (7), below, to each family applying for or requesting CCR&R, School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program services, without regard to age, level of income or individual circumstances.

(b) Provide CCR&R services without cost to the family applying for or requesting services within two (2) business days of the request.

(c) Attempt to contact and respond to families requesting services in an emergency situation within four (4) business hours of becoming aware of the request. Emergency situations may include:

1. Closure of a child care or early learning provider with less than forty-eight (48) hours of notice;

2. Declaration of a state of emergency by local, state, or federal officials that affects families and providers within the CCR&R organization's service area; and,

3. Family emergencies including the death or hospitalization of a parent or guardian, a change in custody of a child with less than forty-eight (48) hours of notice, or a change in employment or employment status with less than forty-eight (48) hours of notice.

(d) Notwithstanding paragraphs (3)(b) and (c) of this rule, the CCR&R organization is not required to provide services in emergency situations if the CCR&R organization is unable to operate as a result of a state of emergency as declared by local, state, or federal officials.

(4) Accessibility of Information and Services.

(a) Each CCR&R organization shall provide the Division Office of Early Learning with an annual accessibility report no later than the last business day in August, identifying how CCR&R services are made accessible to families and providers within its service area, including families who have limited access to telephone services, internet services, or transportation. The report shall also outline the CCR&R organization's plan for family engagement and community outreach. The CCR&R organization shall coordinate with other community entities in order to expand the accessibility of services and document such coordination in the accessibility report.

(b) Each CCR&R organization shall maintain a website and at least one other form of outreach and awareness within its service area ~~that describes the services offered.~~ The outreach and awareness must include a statement of CCR&R and services offered through the program. The home page of the website for the early learning coalition and the contracted CCR&R organization, if applicable, shall clearly display at a minimum, a brief description of CCR&R and family and provider services contact information, the primary family and provider telephone number(s) as well as provider services contact information, including phone numbers, and hours of operation and a brief description of services available for families and providers.

(5) Location and Hours of Service.

(a) At least one physical location for CCR&R services shall be available in each CCR&R organization's service area.

(b) Each CCR&R organization shall have staff members available to provide CCR&R services via telephone, email and in person for a minimum of forty (40) hours each week during the organization's set-business hours.

(c) If the CCR&R organization is closed at any time during standard business hours, the CCR&R organization shall provide a message on their family services line and home page of its website, with its hours of operation and contact information for an alternative organization that can assist families during emergency situations, such as those outlined in paragraph (3)(d), above.

(d) CCR&R organizations shall be permitted to reduce the number of weekly hours of in-person and telephone availability by a maximum of eight (8) hours for each local, state, or federal holiday and each business day during which a local, state, or federal emergency is declared that makes the CCR&R organization unable to operate.

(6) Customized Child Care Listings.

(a) CCR&R services, including listings, may be offered in person, via telephone or using other electronic means.

(b) Child care listings shall be generated using the single statewide information system maintained by the Division Office of Early Learning.

(c) CCR&R organizations shall provide or send each family requesting services a list of legally operating child care providers in their service area within two (2) business days and in the format requested by the family. Each list shall be customized according to information provided by the family requesting services, or at a minimum, by entering the following information:

1. Location;
2. Days/time care is needed;
3. Child's date of birth;
4. Type of early learning program or provider, if requested;
5. Child's special need, if applicable;
6. Family's primary language, if not English;
7. Reason for care; and
8. Other services offered by providers, as requested by the family.

(d) Child care listings shall include a minimum of six (6) providers matching the criteria identified by the family requesting services unless fewer than six (6) providers match the criteria. Listings shall also include contact information for the CCR&R organization if additional listings or resources are needed by the family.

(e) The following consumer education information shall be included with each customized provider listing:

1. How to access each provider's licensing status, required health and safety standards, recent inspection reports and history of violations, as applicable.

2. How to access information regarding voluntary quality standards met by the provider, such as accreditation, Gold Seal, program assessment, child assessment, or participation in local quality initiatives.

3. Information on how to submit a complaint through the child care licensing agency.

4. Contact information for the state and local child care provider licensing agencies.

(f) Additional consumer education and community resources, as identified in subsection (7), shall be included with each customized listing, unless declined by the family.

(7) Consumer Education and Community Resources.

(a) CCR&R organizations shall offer information regarding and access to consumer education and community resources to all families applying for or requesting CCR&R services, unless declined by the family.

(b) Consumer education shall include:

1. Information and resources that enable parents to recognize quality indicators and to make informed choices on quality child care;

2. Information on the full range of child care provider types available, whether licensed or license-exempt, such as family child care homes, centers, before or after school programs, public or nonpublic schools, faith-based, and recreational facilities;

3. Child care licensing and inspection requirements for each type of provider;

4. Health and safety requirements, including background screening and disqualifying offenses;

5. Research and best practices regarding children's social-emotional, physical and cognitive development, developmentally appropriate practices and meaningful parent and family engagement;

6. State policies regarding the social emotional behavioral health of children; and

7. Information on where parents can receive a developmental screening for their child(ren).

(c) Each CCR&R organization shall maintain a current directory or access to community resources, which shall include:

1. Community services for each county within the CCR&R organization's service area;

2. Federal and state financial assistance programs;

3. Federal, state and local partners, including state agencies and social services organizations;

4. Child healthcare;

5. Child welfare and abuse;

6. Services for children with special needs or developmental disabilities, such as developmental screenings or assessments;

7. Resources provided by the Division Office of Early Learning or identified through collaboration with other entities; and

8. Other resources as needed and appropriate to the specific needs of the individual family.

(8) Provider Profile Updates.

(a) Each CCR&R organization shall ensure that contracted and non-contracted provider information for each legally operating child care, early learning or school-age provider, and each provider receiving state or federal funds within the CCR&R organization's service area, is updated and approved between January 1 and May 31 of each calendar year in the single statewide information system maintained by the Division Office of Early Learning.

(b) Provider information for providers with an active contract to provide School Readiness services or the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education program must be updated prior to contract renewal.

(c) At a minimum, the CCR&R organization shall ensure that the following information, as applicable, is updated for each provider:

1. Contact information;

2. Gold Seal designation under s. 1002.945, F.S., and accreditation status, if applicable;

3. Quality rating, if available;

4. Program schedule;

5. Ages served;

6. Group sizes and ratios;

7. Enrollment information;

8. Private pay rates charged;

9. Registration fees charged, if applicable;
10. Differential fees charged, if applicable;
11. Environment;
12. Special services offered or information about what the provider offers, including but not limited to, arts and crafts, computer activities, family engagement, music lessons, therapeutic services, web cam on site with special education programs for prekindergarten children with disabilities, services for children with developmental disabilities, and vacation care programs;
13. Languages other than English spoken fluently by the provider's staff;
14. Transportation; ~~and~~;
15. Meal options;-
16. Family discounts;
17. Legal operating status;
18. Participation in the Child Care Food Program, if applicable;
19. A link to licensing inspection reports, if applicable;
20. The components of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program performance metric calculated under s. 1002.68, F.S. which must consist of the program assessment composite score, learning gains score, achievement score, and the provider's designations, if applicable;
21. The school readiness program assessment composite score and program assessment care level composite score results delineated by infant, toddler classrooms, and preschool classrooms results under s. 1002.82, F.S., if applicable;
22. Implementation of a DOE-approved curriculum and the name of that curriculum, if applicable; and
23. Participation in school readiness child assessment under s. 1002.82, F.S..

(d) Notwithstanding paragraphs (8)(a) and (8)(b), above, the CCR&R organization shall ensure provider information updated outside of the provider update time period is approved within fifteen (15) calendar days of being submitted by the provider into the statewide information system.

(e) Legally operating providers shall be included in the provider update process upon request by the provider. The early learning coalition must review and approve the provider profile submitted within the single statewide information system.

(9) The CCR&R organization shall document each request for CCR&R services described in paragraph six (6) above in the single statewide information system. Monthly, the CCR&R organization shall review the Division of Early Learning specified data report(s) to monitor CCR&R customer intake data in the single statewide information system. If DEL determines through its quarterly review that the organization's data is not representative of CCR&R services offered, the CCR&R organization shall review procedures to determine if revisions are needed to increase the number of CCR&R customer intakes in the single statewide information system.

(10)(9) Technical Assistance.

(a) The CCR&R organization shall provide technical assistance to existing and potential providers, as requested. Technical assistance may include information and resources regarding:

1. Early learning program types and available services;
2. Health and safety requirements;
3. Available training and professional development opportunities;
4. Effective business practices to help providers maximize their ability to serve children and families; and
5. Initiating new child care services, including how to access information regarding zoning and local child care ordinances, program and budget development, becoming a licensed provider, and other resources as needed and appropriate to assist the provider.

(11)(10) Staff Training Requirements.

(a) The CCR&R organization shall ensure all CCR&R staff, including staff in blended positions who provide CCR&R services, are trained by a CCR&R Coordinator or designated trainer, in customer service, consumer education, community resources, financial assistance programs for families, and available types of child care and early learning providers and programs, specific to their service area, and have successfully completed the CCR&R specialist evaluation within four (4) months of employment as a CCR&R specialist. Designated trainers for the CCR&R program, if not the coordinator, must comply with the coordinator training requirements.

(b) Each CCR&R organization must have a designated CCR&R coordinator. The designated CCR&R coordinator must

successfully complete the CCR&R specialist and coordinator evaluations within four (4) months of employment as the CCR&R designated coordinator.

(c) Each CCR&R organization shall accurately complete and submit the staff list to the DEL-designated location by the established deadline. Staff lists shall not be changed nor removed from its designated location once submitted. The CCR&R organization shall provide email notification to the CCR&R state network office within five (5) business days of a change in the designated CCR&R coordinator position.

(d) Each CCR&R organization shall complete assessments on 50 percent of its CCR&R staff by December 31 and complete assessments on the remaining 50 percent of CCR&R staff by June 30. The organization shall deliver training to CCR&R staff based on assessment results for quality assurance. The organization shall retain records of completed assessments and trainings, and staff assessment data for each CCR&R staff member on the staff list.

(12) Each CCR&R organization shall establish written procedures for training CCR&R staff on serving families and providers, monitoring CCR&R program data, completing provider updates and CCR&R customer intakes in the single statewide information system, and technical assistance provided in accordance with subparagraph (10) of this rule.

(13)(14) Early learning coalitions and CCR&R organizations are prohibited from charging a provider or other organization a fee for identifying the provider or other organization through the single statewide information system.

Rulemaking Authority 1002.92 FS. Law Implemented 1002.92 FS. History—New 8-10-09, Formerly 60BB-9.300, Amended 9-1-15, 10-21-18, XX-XX-21