



Child-care Licensing



Child-care Licensing

- T**he community trusts Child-care Licensing (CCL) to:
- ◆ Help ensure that day-care centers, family day-care homes (registered family homes), and other day-care programs are caring, safe, and healthy places for children.
 - ◆ Help ensure that residential child-care facilities meet the needs of children for care, supervision, and treatment.
 - ◆ Monitor child-placing agencies that place children in foster care and adoption to help ensure that the best interests of the children are being served.
 - ◆ Evaluate persons who want to become licensed administrators of residential child-care facilities to make sure that they will be capable of managing programs to meet the best interests of children in care.
 - ◆ Check the records of persons who apply to child-care facilities for employment to ensure that they have not been convicted of criminal offenses.



The community trusts CCL to carry out its responsibilities so that:

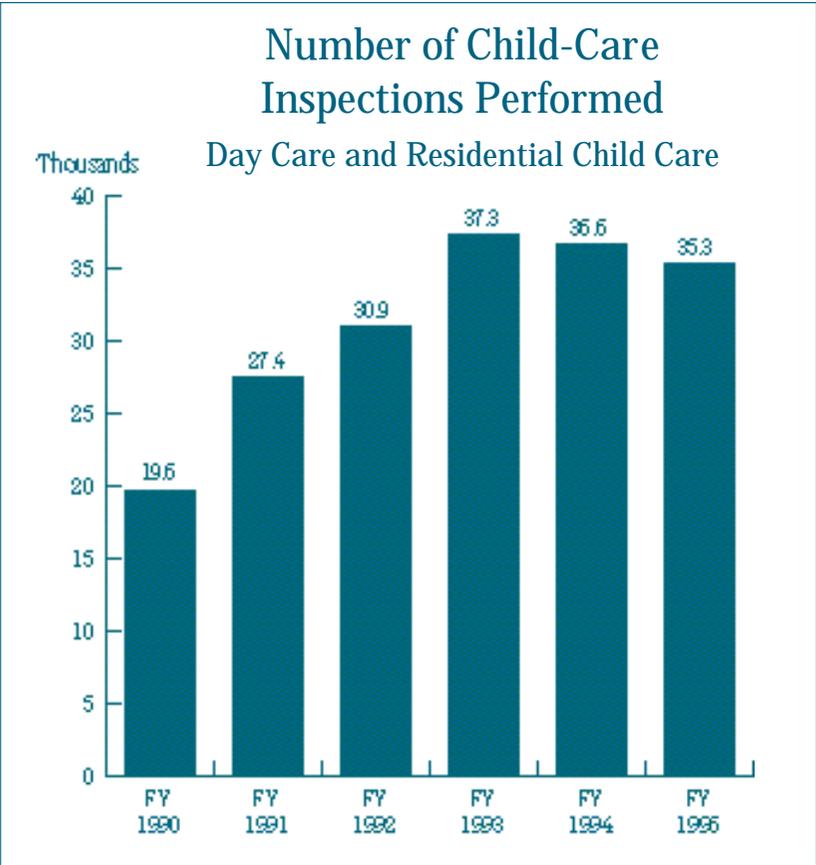
- ◆ Regulation is consistent, fair, objective, and equally applied.
- ◆ People regulated by CCL are treated with respect and dignity, and their legal rights are protected.
- ◆ Agencies and individuals regulated by CCL are full partners in the development and implementation of minimum standards.

The community expects CCL to:

- ◆ Hire and develop competent, professional staff who share and support the program's purpose and philosophy.
- ◆ Provide support to child-care facilities and caregivers in their efforts to achieve higher levels of care and treatment for children.
- ◆ Be fiscally responsible and accountable.
- ◆ Focus on the best interests of children and not let regulations or procedures unnecessarily delay or impede the development of facilities that serve children's best interest.

This report documents the licensing Division's commitment to serve the trust and expectations of the public. Objective performance measures are also shown in charts included in this section.

During the year, CCL developed key components for the implementation of the new standards.



Minimum Standards

After a four-year revision process, new Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers were adopted by the PRS Board in October of 1994. Because of legislative action during this year's session, standards dealing with the number of children one adult may care for, group size, and the amount of space required for each child in care under 18 months of age will not be implemented until September 1, 1997. The other revisions were effective June 1, 1995.

All day-care licensing staff received training on the new standards in February 1995, and CCL provided 153 orientation sessions for day-care centers throughout the state. More than 6,000 people (93 percent of whom were owners, directors, or staff of day-care facilities) attended the sessions. Many sessions (28 percent) were conducted on the weekends and 25 percent were offered in the evenings to make attendance more convenient for care providers. Participants were overwhelmingly positive in their written evaluations of the program.

During the year, CCL developed key components for the implementation of the new standards, including a preservice training program and delivery plan for day-care center employees, an evaluation and approval mechanism for organizations that credential day-care center directors, and development of a document that will show the standard, the rationale for the standard, and compliance information.

In residential child-care licensing, staff developed and delivered a training and technical assistance program for child-placing agencies. The new

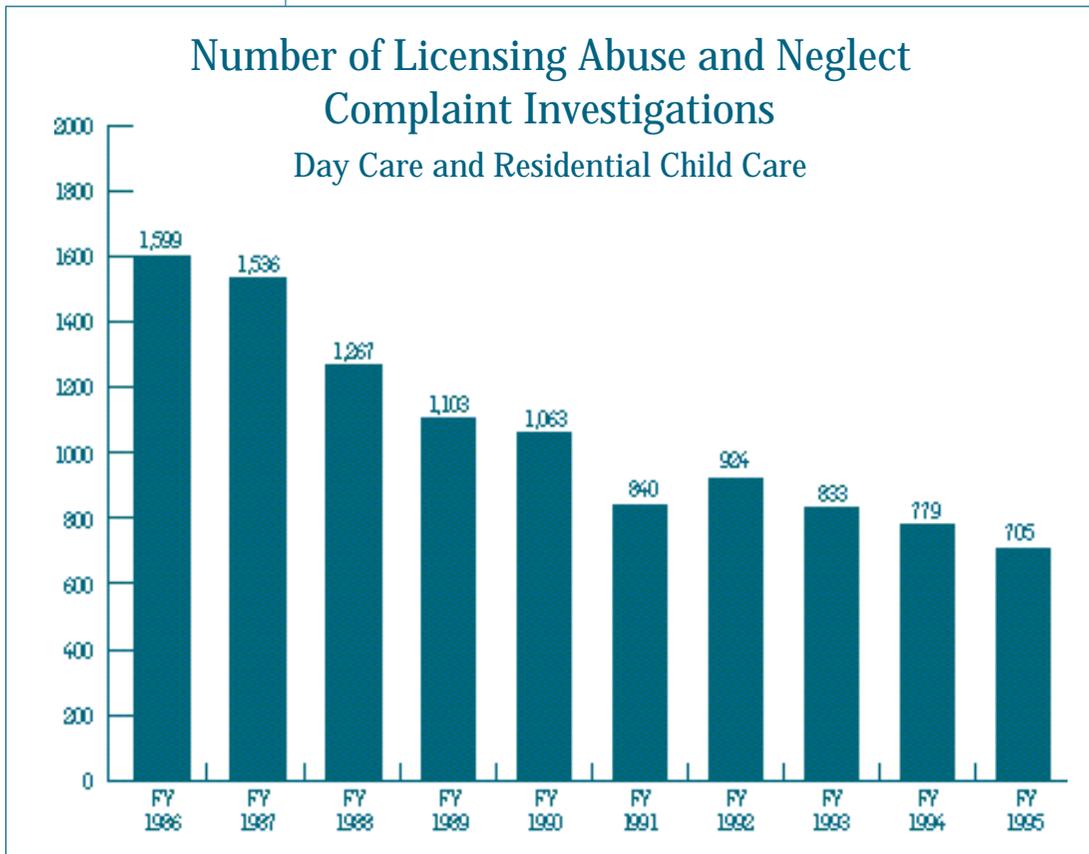
Regulation Initiatives

Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies, implemented in fiscal year 1994, included major changes in requirements for agency policies and procedures. During 1995, seven training sessions were conducted throughout the state to assist agencies in the process of developing new policies and procedures related to foster care and adoptive placement.

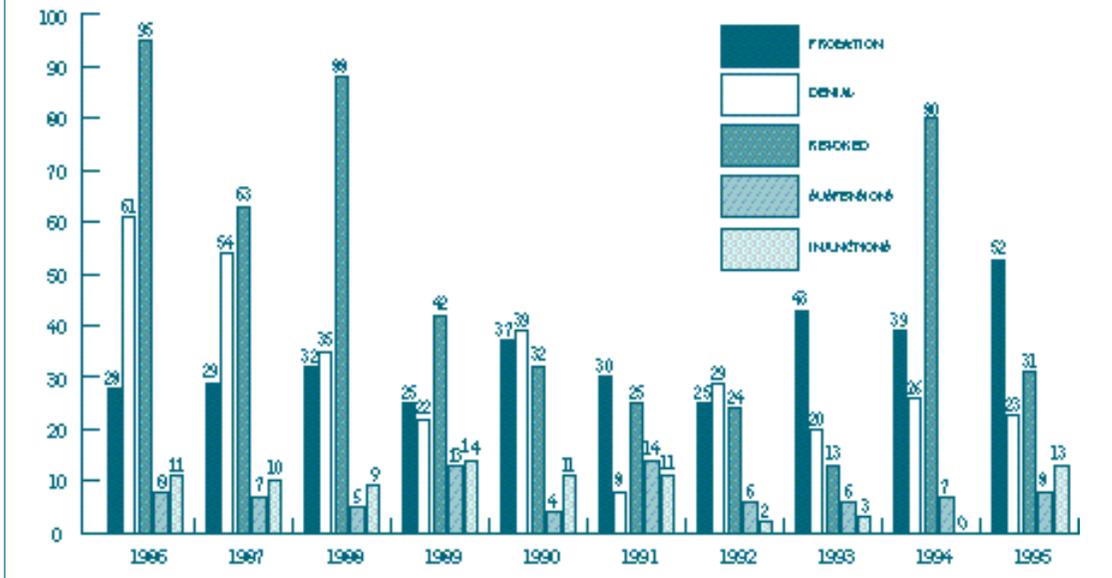
Moving from a program where registered family homes were visited on a 30 percent random sample basis, in fiscal year 1995 CCL significantly increased the level of regulation of these facilities.

All applicants for registration are now inspected prior to issuing a new registration and, when a registered family home caregiver moves to a new location, the new residence is visited as part of issuing a registration at the new address.

Registered family homes are now evaluated for and assigned to a monitoring plan based on an assessment of the home's compliance history and other pertinent factors. Homes determined to need more frequent monitoring are assigned to a plan that involves an inspection visit every 12 to 15 months. The "basic plan" requires an inspection visit every 20 to 24 months. Homes with a good compliance history are inspected every 30 to 36 months. A complete standard by standard evaluation is completed at each visit. All complaints continue to be investigated.



Number of Adverse Actions Day Care and Residential Child Care



Child-care Licensing Works in Partnership

Child-care Licensing participates actively in the AmeriCorps project, a highly rated collaborative program that involves parent education sites in communities across the state. Licensing staff help train volunteers and project supervisors, particularly those who work in child-care centers. CCL staff are very active in the project in Amarillo, where they provide resources, training, and other support to AmeriCorps' school site day-care centers. Fourteen teen-age mothers from this area reported that they would have had to drop out of school if not for the child care provided by this program. They also said that their children were developmentally on track or ahead of their peers as a result of participation in the day-care center program.

During fiscal year 1995, CCL joined forces with the Texas Department of Health in the Shots Across Texas immunization initiative. The Health Department's local immunization units visit child-care facilities to check that all children in care have the required immunizations. Under this cooperative arrangement, CCL then follows up with facilities where all children are not fully immunized. This joint effort, along with a great deal of public information and technical assistance on the importance of immunizations to children's health, has resulted in significantly better compliance with immunization requirements in child-care facilities. This collaboration is a major component in the drive to meet the Governor's mandate to have 90 percent of all Texas 2 year-olds completely immunized by the year 2000.

CCL staff recognize parents' needs for information about how to select child care and how to work with day-care centers and registered family homes to improve the quality of care for their child. Staff in San Antonio developed a package, based on a sound and slide presentation, to provide basic information and help focus question and answer sessions. The program can be used any-

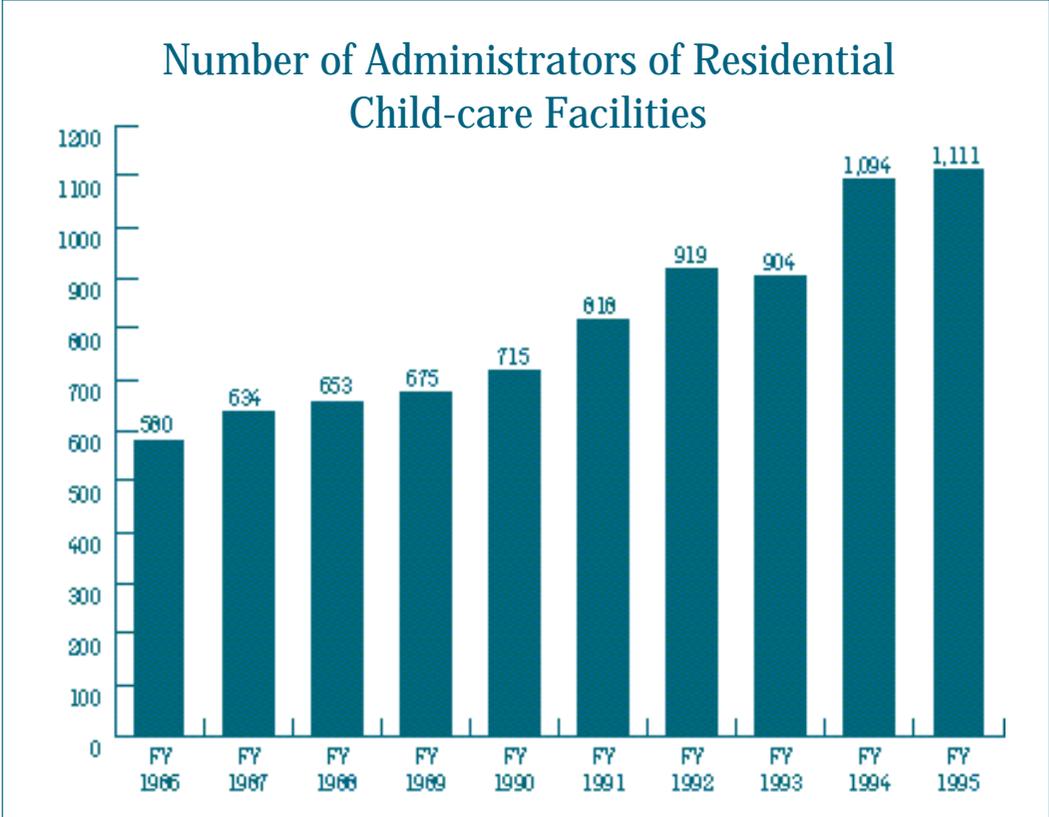
Dallas and Arlington CCL staff have a “mentors” program, supporting child-care providers in their efforts to help and educate each other.

where with minimal staff support to educate parents and the community about child-care issues and the roles and responsibilities of parents, child-care providers, Licensing, employers, and the community in the selection, availability, and oversight of child-care programs.

Dallas and Arlington CCL staff have a “mentors” program, supporting child-care providers in their efforts to help and educate each other. In this program, new and inexperienced child-care providers are “mentored” by seasoned veterans in this area. CCL staff provide training and general support to the program which promotes better child care for the entire community.

Residential child-care licensing staff across the state have been applauded this year by child-care facilities and child-placing agencies for providing more technical assistance and consultation. One child-care facility in particular credits transformation over the past few years to good administration and technical assistance and consultation from the licensing representative. The “...program has improved by about 400 percent!...” developing a much enriched staff training program and adding new therapeutic programs for the children in care. Children in this facility usually remain until they turn 18. The facility has added such features as ropes courses and wilderness experiences for children and staff. This facility also started an independent living program and is helping more residents go on to college.

CCL’s partnership with the public is also reflected in the large number of people who volunteer their services to assist the regulatory program. In fiscal year 1995, CCL had the benefit of over 7,000 hours of direct service from over



Licensing staff are supporting the development of inter-generational projects throughout the state.

925 volunteers from across the state. On average, for each hour a licensing staff member spends helping a volunteer get started, licensing is paid back ten and three-quarter hours of service from that volunteer. These volunteer hours represent several notable projects that reflect Licensing’s commitment to collaboration. Provider training and workshops for parents are done in collaboration with area businesses, colleges and universities, and professional child-care organizations. Community organizations, like libraries, chambers of commerce, and professional child-care associations, have volunteered to distribute educational information about Licensing and choosing child care to parents.

Volunteer hours are also used in administrative work in the Licensing offices. Student interns have helped with intake information for new facilities or serious incident reports, parent contacts for complaint investigations, and training curriculum development. Volunteers from day-care centers have:

- ◆ provided licensing orientation,
- ◆ arranged for new Licensing staff to observe the operation of day-care facilities during the staff’s initial learning period, and
- ◆ participated in regional advisory counsels and groups.

Licensing staff are supporting the development of inter-generational projects throughout the state. These will benefit providers, parents, and children. Inter-generational programs include training for seniors and child-care staff, community and parent education about child care, and efforts to build strong child-care networks in communities.



Customer Service

CCL staff across the state also routinely present a wide variety of training at workshops, conferences, and other events.

Registered family homes are an important day-care resource for Texas families. These individual caregivers in private homes often find it hard to get training. This year, CCL made a self-instruction videotape orientation program available for new caregivers as an alternative to workshop attendance. The response, particularly in rural areas where workshop attendance can require an overnight stay, is very positive. CCL also sponsored leadership training to help registered family home associations grow and develop.

In Bryan, CCL staff started a newsletter for registered family home caregivers. It helps to alleviate the isolation of many caregivers, giving them news about the CCL program and sharing child-care hints, recipes, and activities among caregivers. Another newsletter, directed to registered family home caregivers and group day home providers, was started in San Antonio. This publication reaches about 1,500 providers.

In the Texas-Mexico border areas, many caregivers speak Spanish only. CCL staff in Pharr organized a registered family home conference featuring 8 hours of quality, prevention-oriented training—all in Spanish.

In the Beaumont and Houston areas, CCL regulates 600-plus Vietnamese-speaking child-care providers. The region has employed Vietnamese-speaking staff for several years, and pioneered in the translation of minimum standards, public and parent information brochures, and other materials for that population. This year, Vietnamese-speaking CCL staff arranged several co-sponsored training sessions with local churches. All the training sessions were conducted in Vietnamese and focused on child care, child guidance, and safety issues.

Another problem many child-care centers and registered family homes face is the lack of trained substitute staff when caregivers have to be away from their jobs. In El Paso, CCL staff, working with a grant from the Levi Strauss Child Care Fund, spearheaded the Substitute Caregiver Project. CCL staff trained more than 50 qualified substitute caregivers this year. This program is the first of its kind in the nation, and Levi Strauss has agreed to continue its funding for another year.

Day Care Licensing in regional area 3, which covers North and Northeast Texas, decided to take a close look at record-keeping and information availability after a generally positive series of articles in the Fort Worth Star Telegram pointed out some problem areas. Staff went to work on the hundreds of licensing records in the region, separating out information that is confidential by statute, and making sure that the public information was readily available, on short notice, to the community.

CCL in Northeast Texas put a lot of emphasis this past year on working with local fire and health officials. The focus is on avoiding duplication of effort and making it easier for child-care providers to provide a safe and healthy environment for children in care.

CCL staff across the state also routinely present a wide variety of training at workshops, conferences, and other events. In fiscal year 1995 CCL staff offered more than 600 training events to over 19,000 participants in such topics as child development, positive guidance, governing board responsibilities, what to look for in choosing day care, keeping business records, and minimum standards.

Plans for the Future

One of the CCL staff in El Paso continues his efforts to provide free weekly G.E.D. tutoring, in Spanish, for registered family home caregivers who do not have a high school diploma. This year, 27 caregivers enrolled and 23 successfully completed their G.E.D. requirements. A graduation ceremony, complete with caps and gowns, celebrated their achievements.

In Houston, an unsympathetic landlord decided to evict a day-care center that serves low income children with special needs. The center asked the licensing representative for help in expediting a new license at their new location, so that the center would not lose federal funding. The licensing representative expedited the license, but also saw other needs. Through the representative's efforts, other, more affluent centers, came to the aid of the center. One day-care center donated its extra outdoor play equipment to the special needs center, and volunteers helped move and set the equipment up. Through networking and partnership, the special needs facility did not have to turn away any children needing services.

All across the state, CCL staff continue to volunteer their time and effort to support quality care for children. The specific programs—fairs, conferences, workshops—number in the hundreds, with staff doing everything from training and handing out leaflets to actually building the booths. It's not in their job descriptions and almost all of it is done on their own time. This kind of activity demonstrates CCL staff commitment to working with child-care providers, parents, child advocates, and the community to improve the overall quality of care for children.

Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

CCL staff have long been concerned that in some cases the formal "citation" of standards violations interferes with the real objectives of the program, to reduce real areas of risk to children in care. Some caregivers may become overly anxious or feel threatened by CCL. CCL staff will soon begin piloting a different kind of enforcement that emphasizes planning, technical assistance, and management techniques and training.

CCL is represented on the statewide steering committee and individual staff are providing leadership locally for the Young At Heart program. The objective is to develop an intergenerational program with a pool of seniors who will provide volunteer support for day-care centers. There will be a lot of emphasis on working with children who have special needs or disabilities.

The Texas Department of Health and CCL will be working together in 1996 on a project that supports the Health Department's outreach for Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment or EPSDT, the Medicaid check ups and treatment for eligible children. This project will strengthen the regulation of health related activities in child-care facilities. Professional nursing staff will work with CCL staff on related issues. These medical professionals will also help CCL staff in regulating facilities that care for children with extensive medical needs and disabling conditions.

Beginning September 1, 1995, Licensing will assume responsibility for regulating maternity homes in Texas. To begin with, Licensing will be using existing rules and minimum standards developed under the agencies that previously regulated these programs. Starting in September 1995, Licensing staff will work with licensed maternity homes to develop new policy, procedures, and minimum standards. □



