



COLORADO
Department of Human Services

Senator Kevin Lundberg, Chair
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1776

November 25, 2014

Dear Senator Lundberg,

Please find the attached annual report concerning Colorado's child care resource and referral system. This report contains information about the resource and referral services provided to Colorado's families and child care providers through a contract with Qualistar Colorado. Per Section 26-6-116 (2), C.R.S., this report contains information about the qualification of Qualistar Colorado to administer the child care resource and referral system, the types of services being provided, the costs associated with those services and the number and types of persons receiving those services.

Please contact Mary Anne Snyder for any additional information about this project.

Sincerely,



Reggie Bicha, Executive Director

Cc: Senator Larry Crowder, Vice-Chair
Senator Irene Aguilar
Senator Owen Hill
Senator John Kefalas
Senator Linda Newell
Senator Jeanne Nicholson
Senator-elect Beth Martinez Humenik





COLORADO
Department of Human Services

Representative Dianne Primavera, Chair
House Public Health Care and Human Services
Committee
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1776

November 25, 2014

Dear Representative Primavera,

Please find the attached annual report concerning Colorado's child care resource and referral system. This report contains information about the resource and referral services provided to Colorado's families and child care providers through a contract with Qualistar Colorado. Per Section 26-6-116 (2), C.R.S., this report contains information about the qualification of Qualistar Colorado to administer the child care resource and referral system, the types of services being provided, the costs associated with those services and the number and types of persons receiving those services.

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Reggie Bicha, Executive Director

Cc: Representative Dave Young, Vice-Chair
Representative Kathleen Conti
Representative Justin Everett
Representative Joann Ginal
Representative Janak Joshi
Representative Lois Landgraf
Representative Beth McCann
Representative Sue Schafer
Representative Johnathan Singer
Representative Amy Stephens
Representative Max Tyler
Representative Jim Wilson





COLORADO
Office of Early Childhood

Report to the Colorado General Assembly: Child Care Resource and Referral System in Colorado

Submitted to:
Senate Health and Human Services Committee &
House Public Health Care and Human Services
Senator Kevin Lundberg and Representative Dianne Primavera

By:
Mary Anne Snyder
Director, Office of Early Childhood
Colorado Department of Human Services

December 1, 2014

Purpose

Pursuant to C.R.S. 26-6-116, the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) has authored this report to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Colorado General Assembly. The purpose of the report is to provide the Health and Human Services Committee with information concerning the status of the child care resource and referral (CCR&R) system in Colorado. On December 1st of each year, the Department is required to report to the Health and Human Services Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The report includes: the entity that the Department has currently designated to administer the system and the qualifications of that entity to serve in such a capacity; the types of services that are being provided pursuant to the system; the numbers and types of persons receiving such services; and the cost associated with the system.

System Administrator and Qualifications

The CDHS designed and developed the statewide CCR&R system to assist in promoting availability, accessibility, and quality of child care services in Colorado. The Department has the authority to designate, and enter into a contract with, a private or public entity responsible for administering the system. Currently the Department contracts with Qualistar Colorado to provide for the administration and oversight of the statewide CCR&R system. The Department has contracted with Qualistar Colorado to provide this support for 20 years, originally as the Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies (CORRA). To assist the contractor, the Department covers the cost for membership to Child Care Aware® of America and the subscription to NACCRRAware, a data service that generates child care referrals and reports, and manages provider, client, and community data.

Types of Services

Services provided by the local CCR&R agencies vary by region. Twelve of the 17 agencies provide referral services for parents seeking child care. Often, smaller CCR&R agencies partner with larger agencies to more efficiently deliver referral services; however, most enhanced referral services occur at the local level. Referral services include:

1. **Internet Referrals:** An online search feature allows caregivers to locate a child care program based on a variety of search criteria (address, distance, ages served, type of care, quality level and whether the program accepts child care subsidy).
2. **Telephone Referrals:** In cases where the referral occurs by phone, trained referral specialists spend approximately 20 minutes with each parent, collecting detailed information about the family's care needs, ensuring the family is knowledgeable about the choices available to them, and referring families to other services and supports as needed.
3. **Enhanced Child Care Referrals:** Providing parents of children with complex care and special needs with enhanced referral services. Enhanced referrals may also include assistance to families with special language needs or emergency needs (e.g. the needs to begin child care within 24 hours or less). In an enhanced referral, the referral specialist learns of the family's needs and locates child care programs that meet the criteria.

To ensure that the information provided to families is accurate, referral specialists contact child care programs twice a year. The database includes more than 200 data points, including hours of operation, teaching philosophy, ages served, whether the program is near public transportation, whether the program accepts

families participating in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP), and whether the program accepts children full-time, part-time or both.

Sixteen of the agencies participate in training, technical assistance and quality improvement activities. These agencies work with child care programs to increase the quality of care, professional development and assist with staff retention. Activities include:

1. Licensed child care program trainings;
2. Technical assistance and coaching to child care programs striving to maintain licensing compliance or to increase quality;
3. Training for non-licensed programs and professionals to support business planning when interested in becoming licensed;

Qualistar Colorado maintains an online Training Calendar. Trainers from CCR&Rs and from other organizations can post their trainings for child care professionals. CCR&Rs coordinate the offering of required trainings in their areas including Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid, Medication Administration and Universal Precautions as well as other trainings for early childhood professional development. Examples of other provider trainings include the following, which were offered by one particular CCR&R during the second quarter of the fiscal year: "Cooking Matters for Child Care Professionals;" "Helping Children with Their Understanding of Numbers;" "Children's Environmental Intervention;" "How to Incorporate Music into Your Day;" "Communicating with Parents;" and "Hand Hygiene."

Data

The referral services offered by local agencies are most commonly used by mothers between the ages of 18 years and 34 years, with incomes up to \$75,000, who work outside of the home. Users of the internet referral services are not required to report demographic information; however, phone referral users share that information. Seventy-eight percent of phone referral users are women. Of the total phone referral users, 45% are between the ages of 20 years and 29 years, and 51% are single-adult households. The majority of phone referral service users (57%) are Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) recipients.

In state fiscal year (SFY) 2014, there were 362,005 page views of the online child care search. Users stay on the search for an average of seven minutes. Most users conduct multiple searches by refining their search criteria. There were 61,834 sessions conducted last year on the online search.

The following three tables provide an overview of the referral activity for SFY 2014.

Internet Referrals				
	SFY 2013	SFY2014	Change	Explanation of Change
Internet Referral - User Count	8,137	37,026	+355%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Site visitors are no longer required to enter personally identifiable information when conducting an online search. Referrals are now estimated based on the number of search sessions conducted. A session is a single user's full interaction with the search tool for a continuous period of time. Duplicates may exist. ▪ Qualistar Colorado has created an ongoing plan to

				<p>increase its search engine optimization (SEO) in order to direct more parents to the child care search built into their website. This optimization plan includes improving Google ad words campaigns, ongoing keyword search and working to rank for those keywords, as well as building links to the Qualistar site and using Google Analytics to inform their monthly strategies and priorities for SEO and Search Engine Marketing (SEM).</p>
Internet Referral Search Count	95,328	145,145	+152%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2013 changes to the Child Care Search tool impacted the way searches are counted. The new child care search produces dynamic results, so when a user changes the search criteria he or she receives a new set of results, which counts as another search. In the previous version of the child care search, users conducted an average of three searches; in the new system that number is just over four. This information is generated into a report at the end of each month to determine the usefulness of this search feature.

Telephone Referrals				
	SFY 2013	SFY 2014	Change	Explanation of Change
Telephone Referral Count	7,262	4,657	-36%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The improved functionality and visibility of the online search tool better meets the needs of many families looking for care, so fewer families need to access a phone referral.

Enhanced Child Care Referrals				
	SFY 2013	SFY 2014	Change	Explanation of Change
Special Needs Referral Count	224	74	-67%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced referrals have declined in large part because the CCR&R that serves El Paso County no longer has a contract from Child Care Aware® of America to conduct enhanced referrals for military families, as in the past. Their progression away from enhanced referrals was gradual due to different military branches cutting funding at different times. The final cut was in April, 2014. The reason for the steep reduction in special needs referrals, however, is unknown. It is possible that some families of children with special care needs are able to find what they need on the online search to a greater extent due to improvements to that service.
Other Enhanced Referral Count	409	310	-24%	
Total Enhanced Referrals	633	384	-39%	

All trainings and technical assistance activities are posted on the Qualistar Colorado website. This site receives an average of 1,200 visits each month and has almost 15,000 page views per year. Currently, Qualistar Colorado does not track quality improvement and professional development activities. Through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant funds, the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood is developing a technology solution that will track these activities in SFY 2015.

Costs Associated with the System

Of the \$824,838 in federal funds allocated through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to the CCR&R system in Colorado, \$590,517 is sub-contracted to 17 regional agencies. Funding for the regional agencies vary, between \$10,373 and \$147,942, and are based on the number of child care facilities, the number of families with young children, and the square mileage for each service delivery area. In addition, the allocation calculation considers the number of referrals conducted by the agency from the previous year. Referral agencies operate as private non-profits; some, however, are governmental agencies.

The balance of funds (\$234,321) is used by Qualistar Colorado to cover administration (staffing) and support to regional agencies (consumer education materials, trainings and travel expenses related to an annual meeting for the CCR&R regional directors and referral specialist staff).

Conclusion

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies serve a valuable role in Colorado that continues to evolve to support changing community needs, as well as support the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood strategic plan. Qualistar Colorado administers the CCR&R system and sub-contracts with 17 regional agencies. The two types of services provided include referral services (internet and telephone) and training, technical assistance and quality improvement activities.