



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

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Purpose

Pursuant to C.R.S. 26-6-116, the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS or the Department) 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 Department 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.

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) was established in 2012 to better align and coordinate early childhood programs, services, and systems. To this end, the Department will designate the OEC, Division of Early Care and Learning, as the public entity responsible for the administration and oversight of the statewide CCR&R system effective January 1, 2016. To facilitate the transition, the Department will execute a contract with Qualistar Colorado from January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016, to provide support and technical assistance to CCR&R agencies. This contract will include training on the Department's new data system, part of the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System Technology Solution, which will support the data capture and query functions required by CCR&R agencies to make timely and informed referrals. It is anticipated that this alignment will increase efficiencies and save dollars.

Types of Services

Services provided by the local CCR&R agencies vary by region. Twelve of the 17 agencies provide referral services for parents or caregivers 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 parents or 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 or caregiver, collecting detailed information about the

family's care needs, ensuring the parent or caregiver is knowledgeable about the choices available to them, and referring the family to other services and supports as needed.

3. Enhanced Child Care Referrals: Providing parents or caregivers 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 parents or caregivers is accurate, referral specialists contact child care programs twice a year. The database includes specific data points on areas such as 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. This information is collected to ensure that families are matched with a program that can meet their unique needs.

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, provider professional development and assist with CCR&R 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; and
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. Seventy-eight percent of phone referral users are women. Of the total phone referral users, 52% are between the ages of 20 years and 29 years, and 58% are single-adult households. The majority of phone referral service users (63%) are eligible for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP), Colorado's child care subsidy program.

In SFY 2015, 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. Users of the internet referral services are not required to report demographic information

The following table provides an overview of the referral activity for SFY 2015.

	SFY 2015 Count
Internet Referral User	48,003
Internet Referral Search	137,585
Telephone Referral Count	6,578
Enhanced Referrals	351

All trainings and technical assistance activities are posted on the Qualistar Colorado website. This site received 13,491 page views. Currently, Qualistar Colorado does not track quality improvement and professional development activities. Through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant funds, the Department 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, \$581,000 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. Additionally, the Office of Early Childhood is no longer using a state intermediary. The Department has brought this service in-house to ensure alignment and increase efficiency within the CCR&R network.

The balance of funds, \$243,838, is used by Qualistar Colorado for the purpose of administration staffing, and to provide support, to regional agencies consumer education materials, trainings and travel expenses related to the annual Colorado CCR&R meeting.

Conclusion

The CCR&R system serves 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. The two types of services provided include referral services (internet and telephone) and training, technical assistance and quality improvement activities.