



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:

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Purpose

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

The Department designated the Office of Early Childhood (the Office), 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. The Office was established in 2012 to better align and coordinate early childhood programs, services, and systems. Prior to this date, the Department had contracted with Qualistar Colorado for the past 20 years to provide this support, originally as the Colorado Office of Resource and Referral Agencies (CORRA).

To facilitate a smooth transition, the Department executed a contract with Qualistar Colorado from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 to provide support and technical assistance to the Department and the local CCR&R agencies. This contract included training on the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System Technology Solution, which supports the data capture and query functions required by CCR&R agencies to support timely and informed referrals; the transfer of CCR&R resources and recommended best practices; an understanding of current CCR&R practices; and the transition of the national leadership role with Child Care Aware® of America.

As part of this transition, the Department centralized the resource and referral supports available to Colorado families. Through an open and competitive request for proposal process, the Department selected Mile High United Way, a qualified vendor that has both the expertise in operating a call center and the capacity to fulfill this important role. The contract with Mile High United Way was executed on July 1, 2016 and consolidated all child care referral supports to a single entity. The new statewide CCR&R call center offers a responsive, customer service driven support for families seeking child care in Colorado, offering four highly trained bilingual English and Spanish referral specialists. Since the launch of the statewide CCR&R call center the average referral calls have increased from 326 calls per month (June 2016) to 1,099 calls per month (August 2016).

This change has also increased the capacity of local CCR&R agencies to focus on other important state and federal CCR&R requirements such as recruitment, retention and quality of providers; adherence to the State Disaster Plan; professional development and engagement supports relative to the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Types of Services

CCR&R include two main categories: (1) referral services; and (2) provider services.

Referral services include:

1. **Internet Referrals:** An online search feature allows parents or caregivers to independently search for child care programs 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 bilingual referral specialists spend approximately 20-30 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. **Live Chat Options:** Parents or caregivers can engage referral specialists through live chat features embedded in the statewide centralized call center referral system. This is great option for parents or caregivers who may be caring for children while trying to find care.
4. **Email Options:** Parents or caregivers can send emails requesting a list of providers or other child care related questions. All emails are answered as quickly as possible, and within 24 hours.
5. **Walk-In Referrals:** Parents or caregivers can come in to the call center for assistance and receive in-person support.
6. **Enhanced and Special Needs 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. When necessary, the referral specialist may reach out to the local CCR&R agency to assist the family.

Mile High United Way supports the CCR&R centralized call center and provides referral services for parents or caregivers seeking child care. Mile High United Way staff work in partnership with local CCR&R agencies when enhanced or special need referrals require additional local support. To maintain local connection, Mile High United Way staff communicates monthly with all local CCR&R agencies to collect county and community specific information to provide to parents or caregivers as appropriate. Additionally, Mile High United Way staff participates in quarterly webinars with all local CCR&R agencies.

Provider services include updating child care program information to ensure that the information parents or caregivers receive is accurate. Specific referral data include 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 aids the referral search to ensure that families are matched with a child care program that meets their unique needs. These data are captured in the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System Technology Solution.

Other provider services include training, technical assistance and quality improvement activities. The frequency and intensity of these supports vary by region. Activities may include:

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

As of July 1, 2016, provider services have changed to align with the specific federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) requirements for CCR&Rs. These include:

1. Recruiting new licensed programs, particularly in the areas that have been identified as child care deserts;
2. Updating program information, collecting data and providing information on the supply of and demand for child care services and entering this information in the Colorado Shines Data System;
3. Working to foster collaborative relationships with Early Childhood Councils and community partners, public agencies and private entities, including faith-based and community based child care providers, to better understand the local market and increase the supply and quality of child care services in Colorado;
4. Providing technical assistance and resources to eligible child care programs, through bi-annual contact, to ensure optimal awareness and engagement in statewide initiatives, such as the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System, Professional Development Information System (PDIS) and Colorado Child Care Assistance Program; and,
5. Adhering to the requirements of the Colorado Child Care Disaster Plan as defined in the Colorado CCDF State Plan.

Local CCR&R agencies support professional development through the promotion and utilization of the Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System (PDIS). The PDIS has over 25,600 registered users and over 106,200 course completions to date. Courses include:

1. Adult Learners: Module 1 Professionalism
2. Adult Learners: Module 2 Training Facilitation Skills
3. Adult Learners: Module 3 Culture
4. Adult Learners: Module 4 Supporting Diverse Learners
5. Child Care/Preschool Immunizations
6. Child Health Promotion 1
7. Child Health Promotion 2
8. Colorado Competencies For Educators and Administrators
9. Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines
10. Colorado Shines QRIS for Leaders
11. Cultural Responsiveness and Family Engagement #1
12. Cultural Responsiveness and Family Engagement #2
13. Developmental Monitoring and Screening
14. Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in Preschool Programs
15. Inclusion Series: Transition in Early Childhood Overview
16. Inclusion Series: Transition in Early Childhood Preparation and Adjustment

17. Intro to Child Assessment
18. Intro to Colorado Shines QRIS Levels 3 through 5
19. Introduction to Colorado Shines QRIS Levels 1 and 2
20. Introduction to First Aid and CPR
21. Introduction to the CLASS Tool
22. Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales
23. Preventing Abusive Head Trauma and Shaken Baby Syndrome
24. Raising Of America: Are We Crazy About our Kids?
25. Raising Of America: DNA Is Not Destiny
26. Raising Of America: Once Upon a Time
27. Raising Of America: Wounded Places
28. Social and Emotional Health and Development
29. Supporting Children and Families Impacted by Homelessness
30. Training Design: Competencies and Learning Objectives
31. Welcoming Children with Special Needs

Data

The referral services are most commonly used by women (91%), most of whom identify as the mother, with much smaller percentages identifying as fathers and grandparents, and occasionally case managers. The most common ages are between the ages of 20 and 29 years. See Table 1.1 for the percentage of calls per age group.

Age	Percent of Total
Under 20	3%
20-29 Years of Age	47%
30-39 Years of Age	35%
40-49 Years of Age	7%
50-59 Years of Age	2%
60-69 Years of Age	1%
70 Years of Age or Older	0%
Refused	5%

Fifty one percent (51%) of callers report being single parent households. Eligibility for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP), Colorado's child care subsidy program, is self-reported and 51% of callers report being eligible. Additionally, 61% reported active employment, 25% seeking employment, 7% students, 3% at home and 4% refused to answer. This information was gathered from July 1, 2015 to present.

Call referral data includes logged calls, saved referral searches, special needs referrals and internet referral searches. The total for logged calls is typically higher than saved referral searches as total referrals includes calls related to other questions regarding child care and resources. Multiple calls with parents or caregivers may not always result in a new search. For example, in enhanced referrals, the call center may assist families by calling providers to check availability of slots thus reducing the list of providers for families. Saved referral searches are specific to the number of unique searches saved. Special needs referrals include specific categories outlined in our database. These categories are: (1) Social Emotional Behavior; (2) Respiratory Illness, (3) Diabetes; (4) Physical Disability Limitations; (5) Seizure Disorders, (6) Food/dietary; (7) Medical/special Procedures; (8) Cognitive Delays; and (9) Special Circumstances. The number of special needs referral calls encompasses all categories.

Total online referral search is typically higher than unique searches as the total online count includes return users while the unique search excludes returning users. Additionally, online referral searches were often refined by entering specific criteria. The most common criteria used for refining searches were location, quality rating level of 3-5 and type of program (i.e. center, home and preschool). The online data and call data was gathered during the period of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016.

Type	Count
# of Referral Searches Generated by Phone	7,561
# of Client Calls Logged	7,328
Referral Seeking Special Needs Care	196
Total Online Referral Searches	55,630
Unique Online Individuals Searches	22,671

Below are comments from parents who used CCR&R referral services.

"I was so happy the information was sent to me and the foot work was already complete as far as names and addresses. I found a [child care] provider close to my home and she is wonderful. I would not have found her without this service. Both individuals I spoke with were very helpful. I am a very satisfied customer."

"I spoke with [the referral specialist] and she was very helpful and informative. I am a first time mom and felt so lost and confused, didn't know where to start. She gave me a great list of providers and a ton of information to help me get started with finding the right fit for us. Thank you!"

The provider services include professional development supports for the workforce to address licensing and quality practices within the early care and education field. Local agencies reinforce the Professional Development Information System (PDIS) as an important resource to support career planning and professional development. The PDIS has over 25,600 registered users and over 106,200 course completions to date.

Course Title	Count
Adult Learners: Module 1 Professionalism	721
Adult Learners: Module 2 Training Facilitation Skills	347
Adult Learners: Module 3 Culture	299
Adult Learners: Module 4 Supporting Diverse Learners	200
Child Care/Preschool Immunizations	1557
Child Health Promotion 1	4932
Child Health Promotion 2	4258
Colorado Competencies For Educators and Administrators	334

Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines	4487
Colorado Shines QRIS for Leaders	2298
Cultural Responsiveness and Family Engagement #1	4659
Cultural Responsiveness and Family Engagement #2	3323
Developmental Monitoring and Screening	NA-Published 9/30/16
Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in Preschool Programs	87
Inclusion Series: Transition in Early Childhood Overview	139
Inclusion Series: Transition in Early Childhood Preparation and Adjustment	543
Intro to Child Assessment	4377
Intro to QRIS 3 through 5	1518
Introduction to Colorado Shines QRIS: Levels 1 and 2	3236
Introduction to First Aid and CPR	NA-Published 9/30/16
Introduction to the CLASS Tool	3605
Introduction to the Environment Rating Scales	2794
Preventing Abusive Head Trauma and Shaken Baby Syndrome	7472
Raising Of America: Are We Crazy About our Kids?	1254
Raising Of America: DNA Is Not Destiny	1039
Raising Of America: Once Upon a Time	973
Raising Of America: Wounded Places	896
Social and Emotional Health and Development	4771
Supporting Children and Families Impacted by Homelessness	NA-Published 9/30/16
Training Design: Competencies and Learning Objectives	95
Welcoming Children with Special Needs	3890

CCR&R agencies provide important local supports that have led to the successful launch of the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System, conducting outreach and engagement to the 4,320 licensed child care programs participating in this new system. Provider engagement with the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement System has increased from 20.2% to 34.3% since July 2015. Engagement is defined as any licensed facilities, eligible for Colorado Shines rating, that have obtained a Level Two (2) quality rating or higher. The number of children receiving child care subsidy enrolled in high quality programs (Levels 3-5) has also increased

from 33% to 44%. Licensed programs have achieved various levels of quality in the Colorado Shines Quality Rating and Improvement, as of June 30, 2016 there were 2,793 Level 1 programs; 879 Level 2 programs; 232 Level 3 programs; 397 Level 4 programs; and 19 Level 5 programs.

CCR&R agencies also provide navigation supports to individuals interested in opening a licensed child care program. The Office has conducted analyses to determine areas of the state that have insufficient supply of licensed child care based on the population of children five years of age or younger. These areas are referred to as child care deserts. Next steps include the development of community specific dashboard reports to inform local agencies as they develop targeted strategies to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care services.

Costs Associated with the System

The total expended for SFY 2016 was \$738,932. The program transitioned from being administered by Qualistar Colorado to being administered by the Department, Office of Early Childhood during this year. The cost for the Office of Early Childhood to administer the CCR&R network during this transition year was \$75,715. This includes personnel, expenses and data system access and support for the Colorado Shines Technology Solution. The Office contracted with Qualistar for six (6) months to implement the program at a cost of \$397,527. This contract included sub-contracts with the local CCR&R agencies and centralized call center provider. For the final six months of the year, the Office contracted directly with these agencies for a cost of \$215,690. During this time the Office expended \$50,000 through an additional contract with Qualistar Colorado to support the smooth transition of these administrative responsibilities to the Office of Early Childhood.

Conclusion

The CCR&R network serves a valuable role in Colorado that continues to evolve to support the needs of a changing community and alignment and coordination of early childhood programs, services, and systems. This past year of transition has allowed the Department and Office to strategically implement effective changes in the CCR&R system to better serve the families seeking child care and the businesses and professionals that offer the important early care and learning supports offered through licensed child care businesses statewide.