

# Child Care

## NEWS BRIEF



### Child Care Services February Newsletter

#### Greetings from your partners at the TN Department of Services, Child Care Services Team!

We hope that you are doing well and that this month of winter and spring like weather is bringing you joy no matter which season you prefer. The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) is continuing on our journey of transformation to strengthen our business processes and improve your customer experience. The focus of this February Newsletter will be filled with activities related to transformation as well as supports and resources to assist you in your work.

#### Paycheck Protection Program for Very Small Businesses

##### Apply for PPP Before March 10<sup>th</sup>: Help for Family and Center Based Child Care Businesses With Fewer Than 20 Employees

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is a [forgivable loan](#) program to help very small businesses, such as child care programs, with much needed financial support during these unprecedented times. From February 24 to March 10, 2021, only businesses with fewer than 20 employees can apply for a PPP loan. This exclusive application period allows [participating lenders](#) to focus on serving very small businesses, such as family child care (FCC) educators and early care and education (ECE) programs.

Learn more about PPP loans by exploring the resources below.

The Biden-Harris Administration statement issued on February 22, 2021, provides details on changes to PPP to increase lending opportunities for small businesses to further promote equitable access to relief. The statement includes information on the exclusive application period for PPP to help very small businesses, such as *FCC educators* and *ECE programs*. Here's a link to the statement for more details: [Changes to PPP To Further Promote Equitable Access to Relief](#).

For more information about PPP and other financial business supports, please visit the Office of Child Care's (OCC) webpage: [Early Care and Education Providers: Taking Advantage of the New Small Business Administration Loan and Grant Programs](#), which includes the following information:

- Two national webinar videos to help you understand and access PPP—one video for *FCC educators* and one video for *ECE programs*
- Several [resources for small businesses](#) to help FCC educators and ECE programs learn more about PPP and navigate the challenges created by the pandemic.

**Applications for the Paycheck Protection Program are due no later than March 31, 2021, for all businesses, but program funding may run out before then.**

#### QRIS Redesign Update

Over the past two years, the TDHS Child Care Team has been working with you to make progress on our transformation journey, and in 2020 we gained significant momentum as we banded together to ensure child care continued during the pandemic.



Our transformation journey is grounded in our "WHY" Statement - *Every family should have access to QUALITY care for children and adults*. This basic statement guides all our work and reinforces our three primary goals for Tennessee's child care system: **Improve Quality, Increase Access, and Strengthen Business Efficiency.**

A big part of our transformation is based in redesigning our Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), which was launched 20 years ago. When launched in 2001, Tennessee's Star Quality Program was one of the first child care quality rating programs in the country. Over the years, this program has significantly helped to raise awareness about the importance of quality child care and has assisted many agencies in improving their programming. By redesigning the quality assessment and rating program, Tennessee will again be a pioneer in supporting quality early care and education. You have been a part of visioning this future state through focus group sessions and information captured through routine engagements.

##### Customer Experience

With this program and staff reorganization, the most meaningful indicators of quality will be measured on a consistent basis by licensing staff. Providers will experience those staff members as partners in supporting quality care for children and families. Redesigning the QRIS, coupled with systems modernization *and* adjusting how we do business to better serve child care providers and families, guides us on our next steps in transformation, which is reorganizing the TDHS child care team to match the future state of child care services in Tennessee.

##### Staff Reorganization

As we move from our old way of doing business, we will restructure staffing to be more customer-centered and supportive to child care providers. This focus on partnerships and continuous improvement not only impacts us internally, but will have a great impact on the child care industry as a whole. We are shaping the future of the next generation.

##### What will be different?

*Our service delivery model is changing, which includes our organizational structure. This means you may see a change. We will be increasing the number of Licensing Consultants to provide more opportunity to engage with you as a partner.*

- We will be reorganizing districts to match the Department's overall approach by aligning with the state's nine (9) workforce regions.
- Current Licensing and Assessment functions will be merged into one larger Licensing program.
  - Licensing Consultants (formerly known as Program Evaluators) - This role will be responsible for the full scope of observation including compliance, quality evaluations and scoring. The Licensing Consultants will be a partner, and support agencies by serving as a consultant and resource for individualized quality improvement.
- A Pre-Licensure Unit will work with programs seeking licensure to explain expectations, answer questions, identify resources, and help applicants navigate the licensure process.
- The Child Care Certificate Program will include a Customer Response Team to support families and providers.
- We will be increasing the number of Child Care Specialists in the Certificate Program to continue strengthening customer service and to deepen the relationship and focus on consumer education.
- Assessment will no longer exist as an independent program. The Licensing Team will conduct all monitoring using a holistic approach and scoring process.
- Over the next 3 months, TDHS Child Care Services staff will be transitioning into these new roles. Throughout this transition, staff will continue serving providers and families.

##### Legislation

Over the last two years, through engagement of a national consultant and interactions with you, TDHS has crafted a vision for the future state of child care. The Department has pending legislation that supports this vision and the QRIS redesign. We want to make you aware of some components of the bill currently routing through the Legislative process.

- The bill streamlines the process for providers and removes burdensome regulation such as an annual licensure fee.
- Supports a new framework that collects on-going data throughout the year instead of a one-time quality review.
- Provides targeted, relationship-based quality improvement coaching and connects to necessary resources.
- Provides financial resources to support quality improvement.
- Recognizes Early Childhood Education program quality that is defined by the strongest predictors of child outcomes.

Consistent with final legislation, TDHS will continue to engage providers through the rule making process and focus groups to inform this future state.

#### Background Check Process Update

Effective March 1, 2021, to avoid unnecessary reprints, the fingerprint registration process will be updated to identify any applicants who were fingerprinted in the last five (5) years for Child Care and have been employed by a Tennessee child care agency without a break in service of more than 180 days. As a part of the registration process, the IdentityGo system will check for a previous child care related scan, after the applicant enters their personal identifying information. If a record is not found, the applicant will be allowed to continue the registration process and schedule a time to be printed. If a record is found, the applicant will receive a pop-up message indicating that they have been fingerprinted in the last five (5) years and will direct the applicant to contact the TDHS Background Check Unit for further instructions.

Example of message: **Our records indicate you may have been fingerprinted in the last 5 years. Please contact the DHS background check unit for further instructions by email at [CCBackground.DHS@tn.gov](mailto:CCBackground.DHS@tn.gov) or by phone at (615) 253-4170.**

If the applicant reaches out to the Background Check Unit, the representative will review the applicant information and advise the applicant regarding the next steps in the process. In most cases, the TDHS representative will:

1. Provide the applicant with a print code that will allow the applicant to complete the registration process and schedule a time to be printed

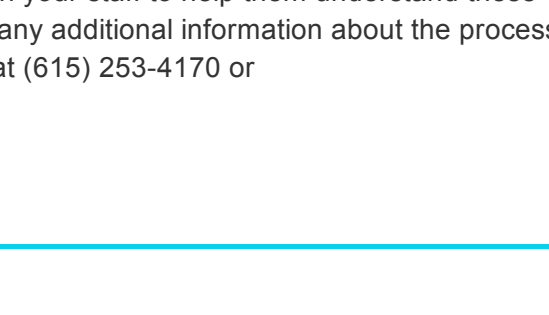
OR

2. Instruct the applicant to have the provider complete a [Criminal Background Check Transfer Form](#) to utilize the existing fingerprint results on file

We hope this information is helpful as you work with your staff to help them understand these changes in the registration process. If you require any additional information about the process, please contact the TDHS Background Check Unit at (615) 253-4170 or [CCBackground.DHS@tn.gov](mailto:CCBackground.DHS@tn.gov).

#### TNPAL Update

Each month, we will provide an update on TNPAL as child care educators and administrators begin familiarizing themselves with this resource. TDHS has launched the



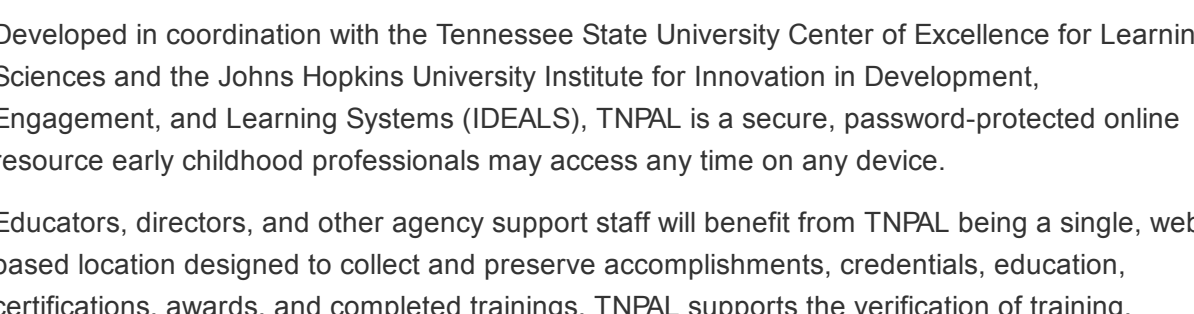
**Tennessee Professional Archive of Learning (TNPAL)**, a free online resource for early childhood professionals working in TDHS-licensed child care agencies to better support professional development.

Developed in coordination with the Tennessee State University Center of Excellence for Learning Sciences and the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Innovation in Development, Engagement, and Learning Systems (IDEALS), TNPAL is a secure, password-protected online resource early childhood professionals may access any time on any device.

Educators, directors, and other agency support staff will benefit from TNPAL being a single, web-based location designed to collect and preserve accomplishments, credentials, education, education, and employment by TDHS and agency directors. TNPAL also empowers educators to connect with coaches and engage with new professional development planning tools.

Signing up is easy—early childhood professionals may sign up using a web browser on any computer, phone, or tablet by visiting [www.tnpal.org](http://www.tnpal.org).

Our partners at CCR&R and TECTA have created a video that walks you through creating an account on the TNPAL platform, found below.



#### How to Copy and Paste:

1. Click, hold, and drag your cursor across the ID to highlight it.
2. Right-click on the highlighted ID with your mouse and select "copy".
3. Right click on the space you want to fill with your ID and select "paste".

TNPAL requires early childhood professionals to use a personal email to assure information security and that professional development and completed trainings are portable. TNPAL uses a profile registration to match information with trainings completed through **TCCOTS** and partners like **CCR&R** and **TECTA**. Additional training opportunities and resources are available through **TrainTN** ([www.traintn.org](http://www.traintn.org)).

Our partners at TECTA and CCR&R are available to assist with guided registrations to support educators and agencies with signing up to TNPAL. The TNPAL Help Desk is also available to assist with your TNPAL user experience. Visit [www.tnpal.org](http://www.tnpal.org) to learn more and sign up. If you prefer a guided experience, register for a TNPAL orientation through our partners by visiting TECTA ([www.tecta.info](http://www.tecta.info)) or CCR&R ([www.tncrr.org](http://www.tncrr.org)).

#### All Daily Child Care Notices Can be Found by Clicking Here