

Not sure what something means or what a certain acronym stands for? Check out this glossary of terms and see if it's there.

Approved Training

There are 4 approved Training Tiers. Approved Trainers will submit their training for approval online. You will be asked to enter information regarding your training to determine what Tier level can be assigned. An email notification will be sent informing you of your approval status.

Registered Training

Sponsors will print a certificate of training that contains the training ID number. Barcode labels will no longer be available. This training meets state licensing guidelines for continuing education. The trainer will now have to be a Level 2 on the Registry to offer this type of training.

Continuing Education

Informal training that meets the guidelines as defined by the Department of Children and Families will continue to be accepted toward the continuing education requirement as it always has. The Registry adds training hours to the applicant's record from the continuing education form or certificates, but this type of training does not have a core knowledge area assigned and is listed only as a combined total.

Accessibility

In the child care field, the term refers to the availability of child care when and where a family needs it.

Accreditation

A process through which child care programs voluntarily meet specific standards to receive endorsement from a professional agency. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) are among the organizations that offer accreditation programs for child care.

Adult-Child Ratio

A ratio of the qualified caregivers to children in a child care program.

Affordability

In the child care field, the term refers to the degree to which the price of child care is a feasible family expense. High-quality care may be available but it may not be affordable for a family with a low or moderate income.

After-School Child Care

Programs for school-age children that occur after the school day ends.

Attachment

A psychological bond between adult and child. It is believed that secure bonding leads to psychological well being and resistance to ordinary as well as extreme stress experienced throughout a lifetime.

Best Practices

A term used to denote the ways of delivering services that have been found through research or experience as the "best" ways to achieve desired outcomes.

Block Grant

A mechanism for consolidating and streamlining federal funding streams, giving more authority to states and communities for the design, delivery, and oversight of services.

CCDF Plan

A plan developed by the designated CCDF child care agency in each state, territory, or Tribe. The plan serves as a guide for the administration of child care services and quality activities under CCDF. States must promote public involvement in the plan development/review process and submit the plan to the federal Department of Health and Human Services for review and approval every two years.

Capacity

The total number of children that may be in child care at any one time in a particular program.

Center-Based Child Care

Programs that are licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services in a non-residential setting.

Certification

The process by which an individual or institution attests to or is shown to have met a prescribed standard or set of standards.

Child Care Bureau

See Office of Child Care.

Child Care Provider

An institution or individual who provides child care services.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)

Local and statewide services including (1) guidance and referrals for parents seeking child care; (2) the collection of information about the local supply of child care; and, (3) provider training and support. Some CCR&R agencies also administer child care subsidies.

Child Care Subsidy

Public or private financial assistance intended to lower the cost of care for families.

Child Care Tax Credit

The federal or a state program that reduces the tax liability for families with employment-related child care expenses.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)

Federally funded grant authorized by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, P.L.104-193, to assist low-income families, families receiving temporary public assistance, and those transitioning from public assistance to obtain child care so they can work or attend training /education.

Child Development

The process by which a child acquires skills in the areas of social, emotional, intellectual, speech and language, and physical development, including fine and gross motor skills. Developmental stages refer to the expected, sequential order of acquiring skills that children typically go through. For example, most children crawl before they walk, or use their fingers to feed themselves before they use utensils.

Child Development Associate Credential

A credential earned by an early childhood educator who has demonstrated his or her skills in working with young children and their families by successfully completing an established credentialing process. The CDA credentialing process is administered by the Council of Early Childhood Professional Recognition.

Child Protective Services

An official public agency, usually a unit of the public county social services agency, responsible for receiving and investigating reports of suspected abuse or neglect of children and for ensuring that services are provided to children and families to prevent abuse and neglect.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

A state-administered program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides federal subsidies for meals for income-qualifying participants in licensed non-residential child care centers and licensed or license-exempt family or group child care homes.

Co-Payment

A specific fixed amount for a subsidized service that is the recipient's responsibility to pay.

Comprehensive Services

An array of services that meet the needs of and promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children and families enrolled in the program.

Continuity of Care

Provision of care to children by consistent caregivers in consistent locations throughout the day and/or year to ensure a stable and nurturing environment.

Developmental Assessment

Measurement of a child's cognitive, language, knowledge and psychomotor skills in order to evaluate development in comparison to children of the same chronological age.

Developmental Domains

Term used to describe areas of a child's development, including: "gross motor development" (large muscle movement and control); "fine motor development" (hand and finger skills, and hand-eye coordination); speech and language/communication; the child's relationship to toys and other objects, to people and to the larger world around them; and the child's emotions and feeling states, coping behavior and self-help skills.

Developmental Milestone

A memorable accomplishment on the part of a baby or young child; for example, rolling over, sitting up without support, crawling, pointing to get an adult's attention, or walking.

Developmentally Appropriate

A way of describing practices that are adapted to match the age, characteristics and developmental progress of a specific age group of children.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

A concept of classroom practice that reflects knowledge of child development and an understanding of the unique personality, learning style, and family background of each child. These practices are defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Drop-in Child Care

A child care program that children attend on an unscheduled basis.

Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS)

A research-based assessment instrument to ascertain the quality of early care and education programs. The scale is designed for classrooms of children ages 2 1/2- 5 years. It is used to assess general classroom environment as well as programmatic and interpersonal features that directly affect children and adults in the early childhood setting.

Early Head Start

A program established under the 1994 Head Start Reauthorization Act to serve low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers. This program is family centered and community based and designed to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Early Head Start supports parents in fulfilling their parental roles and helps them move toward economic independence. Participation in this program is determined based on referrals by local entities, such as Head Start programs, to Early Head Start program centers. Programs offer the following core services: (1) High quality early education in and out of the home; (2) family support services, home visits and parent education; (3) comprehensive health and mental health services, including services for pregnant and post-partum women; (4) nutrition; (5) child care, and, (6) ongoing support for parents through case management and peer support. Programs have a broad range of flexibility in how they provide their services.

Early Intervention

A range of services designed to enhance the development of children with disabilities or at risk of developmental delay. Early intervention services under public supervision

generally must be given by qualified personnel and require the development of an individualized family service plan.

Earned Income Tax Credit

The federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) reduces the income tax liabilities of low- to moderate-income working families (with annual incomes of up to about \$32,000) and provides a wage supplement to some families. One important feature of the federal EITC is that it is refundable, meaning that a family receives, as a cash payment, any amount of the credit that exceeds its tax liability. By definition, only families with earnings are eligible for the EITC.

Even Start

The U.S. Department of Education's Even Start Family Literacy Program provides parents with instruction in a variety of literacy skills and assists them in promoting their children's educational development. Its projects must provide participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult basic education, and parenting education.

Extended Day Program

A term that refers to programs for school-age children and provides supervision, academic enrichment, and recreation for children of working parents after school hours end.

FDCRS - Family Day Care Rating Scale

A research-based rating scale of 40 items used to assess the quality of a family child care environment. The scale is divided into 7 categories: space/furnishings, basic care, language/reasoning, learning activities, social development, adult needs, and supplemental items.

Family Assessment

A systematic process of learning from family members their ideas about a child's development and the family's strengths, priorities, and concerns as they relate to the child's development.

Family Child Care

Child care provided for a group of children in a home setting. Most states have regulatory guidelines for family child care homes if they serve a number of children or families over a specified threshold or if they operate more than a specified number of hours each month.

Family Literacy

Literacy for all family members. Family literacy programs frequently combine adult literacy, preschool/school-age education, and parenting education.

Free Play

An unhurried time for children to choose their own play activities, with a minimum of adult direction. Providers may observe, intervene, or join the play, as needed. Free play may be indoors or outdoors.

Gross Motor Development

A child's development of large muscle movement and control.

Head Start

A federal program that provides comprehensive developmental services for low-income, preschool children ages 3-5 and social services for their families. Head Start began in 1965 and is administered by the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Head Start provides services in four areas: education, health, parent involvement and social services. Grants are awarded to local public or private non-profit agencies.

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

A federal program that provides grants to states and jurisdictions to support the planning of service systems and the delivery of services, including evaluation and assessment, for young children who have or are at risk of developmental delays/disabilities. Funds are provided through the Infants and Toddlers Program (known as Part C of IDEA) for services to children birth through 2 years of age, and through the Preschool Program (known as Part B-Section 619 of IDEA) for services to children ages 3-5.

ITERS-Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale

A 35-item instrument designed to evaluate the quality of a child care setting for infants and toddlers. The scale is divided into 7 areas: furnishings and displays for children; personal care routines; listening and talking; learning activities; interaction; program structure; and adult needs.

Ill Child Care

Child care services provided to a child who has a mild illness. Similar terms include "mildly ill child care" and "sick child care."

In-Home Child Care

Child care provided in the child's home by relatives or non-relatives during the hours when parents are working. Non-relative caregivers are sometimes called nannies, babysitters and au pairs.

In-Kind

A contribution of property, supplies, or services that are contributed by non-federal third parties without charge to the program.

Inclusion

The principle of enabling all children, regardless of their diverse abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities.

Informal Care

A term used for child care provided by relatives, friends and neighbors in the child's own home or in another home, often in unregulated settings. Related terms include kith and kin child care, and child care by family, friends, and neighbors.

Kith and Kin Child Care

A term used for child care provided by relatives (kin), and friends and neighbors (kith) in the child's own home or in another home, often in unregulated settings. Related terms include informal child care, and child care by family, friends, and neighbors.

Latchkey Program

A term no longer generally used for programs that provide child care for school-age children during the hours immediately before and after the normal school day and during school vacations. More commonly used terms include school-age child care and before- and after-school child care.

Learning Disability

An impairment in a specific mental process which affects learning.

Leaver Studies

Research studies designed to learn about the experiences of families who recently stopped receiving cash assistance, or "left welfare."

License-Exempt Child Care

Legally operating child care that is exempt from the regulatory system of the state or community. In many cases, subsidized child care that is otherwise license-exempt must comply with requirements of the subsidy system (e.g., criminal records checks of providers).

Licensed Child Care

Child care programs operated in homes or in facilities that fall within the regulatory system of a state or community and comply with those regulations. Many states have different levels of regulatory requirements and use different terms to refer to these levels (e.g., licensing, certification, registration).

Licensing Inspection

On-site inspection of a facility to assure compliance with licensing or other regulatory requirements.

Licensing or Regulatory Requirements

Requirement necessary for a provider to legally operate child care services in a state or locality, including registration requirements established under state, local, or Tribal law.

Manipulative Toys

Small toys that foster fine-motor development and eye-hand coordination, such as nesting cups, puzzles, interlocking blocks, and materials from nature.

Market Rate

The price charged by providers for child care services offered to privately paying families. Under CCDF, state lead agencies are required to conduct a market rate survey every two years to determine the price of child care throughout the state. In their state plans, lead agencies are required to describe how the rates they pay to child care providers serving subsidized children ensure access to the child care market. This should include a description of how payment rates are adequate, based on the local market survey.

Maternity Leave

Paid or unpaid time off work to care for a new baby, either after adoption or giving birth. In the U.S., under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, companies with 50 or more employees are required to offer eligible employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period after the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child.

Mentors

Trusted and experienced supervisors or advisers who have personal and direct interest in the development and/or education of younger or less experienced individuals, usually in professional education or professional occupations.

Migrant child care

Special child care programs designed to serve children of migrant workers while their parents work.

Mildly Ill Child Care

Child care services provided to a child who has a mild illness. Similar terms include "ill child care" and "sick child care."

Military Child Care

Child care supported by the Department of Defense (DoD) to children of military personnel. In response to the Military Child Care Act of 1989, the DoD created a child care system that included monitoring and oversight, staff training and wage standards, program accreditation, and reduced costs to families.

Mixed Age Grouping

Grouping children or students so that the chronological age span is greater than one year. Multiple-age grouping is prevalent in family child care.

Needs Assessment

An analysis that studies the needs of a specific group (e.g., child care workers, low-income families, specific neighborhoods), presents the results in a written statement detailing those needs (such as training needs, needs for health services, etc.), and identifies the actions required to fulfill these needs, for the purpose of program development and implementation.

Non-Traditional Hour Child Care

Care provided during non-traditional work hours (i.e. weekends, work between either before 6am or after 7pm Monday-Friday).

Nonprofit organization

An entity with the following characteristics that distinguish it from a business enterprise: (a) contributions of significant amounts of resources from resource providers who do not expect proportionate return, (b) operating purposes other than to provide goods or services at a profit, and (c) absence of ownership interests like those of business enterprises. Not-for-profit organizations have those characteristics in varying degrees.

Nursery Schools

Group programs designed for children ages 3-5. Normally they operated for 3-4 hours per day, and from 2-5 days a week.

Office of Child Care (OCC)

Formerly the Child Care Bureau, a division of Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to states, territories, and federally-recognized Tribes.

On-Site Child Care

Child care programs that occur in facilities where parents are on the premises.

Out of School Time

Refers to the non-school time periods for school-age children and adolescents, during which there is often a need for school-age child care and other types of programming.

Outcome

A statement of an intended result.

Parent Choice

Accessibility by parents to a range of types of child care and types of providers. The term often is used to refer to the CCDF stipulation that parents receiving subsidies should be able to use all legal forms of care, even if a form child care would be otherwise unregulated by the state.

Parent Education

Instruction or information directed toward parents on effective parenting.

Parental Leave

Job protected leave for the birth, adoption, or serious illness of a child.

Part-Time Child Care

A child care arrangement where children attend on a regular schedule but less than full time.

Part-Year Child Care

Child care that is offered less than 12 months a year. Typical programs include summer camps and summer child care for school-age children or younger children enrolled in 9-month early education programs, such as some Head Start and pre-kindergarten programs.

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA)

PRWORA is the federal welfare reform act. Titles in the act provide block grants for temporary assistance to needy families and child care; changes to Supplemental Security Income, child support, child protection, child nutrition, and food stamp program requirements; and restriction of welfare and public assistance benefits for aliens.

PRWORA replaced AFDC programs with a stable block grant for six years. The replacement block grant program is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which provides states greater flexibility in designing eligibility, benefit calculation and other criteria.

Physical Disabilities

Disorders that result in significantly reduced bodily function, mobility, or endurance.

Pre-Kindergarten

Programs designed children who are ages 3-5, generally designed to provide children with early education experiences that prepare them for school. Also sometimes referred to as preschool and nursery school programs.

Prenatal Influences

Factors occurring between conception and birth and affecting the physical or mental development of an individual.

Preschool Programs

Programs that provide care for children ages 3-5. Normally they operated for three to four hours per day, and from two to five days a week.

Preservice Training

In the child care field, refers to education and training programs offered to child care staff prior to their formal work in a child care program.

Professional Development

In the child care field, the term refers to opportunities for child care providers to get ongoing training to increase their preparation and skill to care for children. These include mentoring programs, credentialing programs, in-service training, and degree programs.

Professional Isolation

A condition of professional individuals or groups characterized by lack of communication or interaction with colleagues, the relevant professional community, or related professional organizations.

Professional Recognition

Expressed or implied acknowledgment of one's professional efforts, qualities, and/or training.

Quality

Quality child care commonly refers to early childhood settings in which children are safe, healthy, and receive appropriately stimulation. Care settings are responsive, allowing children to form secure attachments to nurturing adults. Quality programs or providers offer engaging, appropriate activities in settings that facilitate healthy growth and development, and prepare children for or promote their success in school.

Quality Initiatives

Initiatives that are designed to increase the quality or availability of child care programs or to provide parents with information and support to enhance their ability to select child care arrangements most suited to their family and child's needs. The CCDF provides funds to states to support such initiatives. Common quality initiatives include child care resource and referral services for parents, training and professional development and wage enhancement for staff, and facility-improvement and accreditation for child care programs.

Regulated Child Care

Child care facilities and homes that comply with either a state's regulatory system or another system of regulation. In the United States, there is considerable state variation in the characteristics of the homes and facilities that must comply with regulations, as well as in the regulations themselves. A related term is "licensed child care," which often refers to a particular level or standard of regulation.

Relative Child Care

Child care provided by extended family members either within the child's home or at the relative's home. These forms of child care are often referred to as informal care or child care by kith and kin.

Reporting Requirements

Information that must be reported to comply with federal or state law. Under the CCDF, states must report information about child care subsidy expenditures, numbers and characteristics of children and families who receive subsidies, the types of services that they receive, and other information.

Respite Child Care

Child care services offered to provide respite to a child's primary caregiver.

Retention

In the child care field, the term often refers to issues related to the reduction in the turnover of child care staff.

School Readiness

The state of early development that enables an individual child to engage in and benefit from first grade learning experiences. Researchers, policymakers, and advocates have described school readiness in different ways, but generally they refer to children's development in five arenas: health and physical development; social and emotional development; approaches toward learning; language development and communication; and, cognition and general knowledge. Some policymakers and researchers also use the term "school readiness" to describe a school's capacity to educate children.

School-Age Child Care

Child care for any child who is at least five years old and supplements the school day or the school year.

School-Based Child Care

Child care programs that occur in school facilities.

Self Care

In the child care field, a term used to describe situations when children are not supervised by adults or older children while parents are working.

Set-Aside Funding

A specified portion a larger pool of funding, that latter of which is intended for a relatively broad purpose. The set-aside must be spent exclusively on a specific activity or set of activities that is related to the broad purpose of the larger pool.

Sick Child Care

Child care services provided to a child who has a mild illness. Similar terms include "ill child care" and "mildly ill child care."

Sliding Fee Scale

A formula for determining the amount of child care fees or co-payments to be paid by parents or guardians, usually based on income. Families eligible for CCDF-subsidized child care pay fees according to a sliding fee scale developed by the state, territory, or Tribe. A state may waive fees may for families with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level.

Social Development

Pattern or process of change exhibited by individuals resulting from their interaction with other individuals, social institutions, social customs, etc.

Social Promotion

In the education field, the term refers to the process of passing students on to the next level or grade based on age or social maturity rather than academic accomplishment.

Special Education

Educational programs and services for disabled and/or gifted individuals who have intellectually, physically, emotionally, or socially different characteristics from those who can be taught through normal methods or materials.

Special Needs Child

A child under the age of 18 who requires a level of care over and above the norm for his or her age.

Subsidized Child Care

Child care that is at least partially funded by public or charitable funds to decrease its cost for parents.

Subsidy

Private or public assistance that reduces the cost of a service for its user.

Subsidy Take-Up Rates

The rate at which eligible families use child care subsidies. "Take-up rate" is a term generally used when all families who are eligible for a service have access to it. In the case of child care services, a state may choose to offer child care subsidies to a portion of those who are eligible for them and many have waiting lists because of limited funding.

Supplemental Child Care

A secondary form of child care that supplements a primary arrangement, for example, a grandmother who cares for the child after Head Start classes end or for the time when a center is closed.

Supply Building

Efforts to increase the quantity of high-quality family child care and/or center based programs in a particular local area.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

A component of Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). TANF replaced the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs, ending the federal entitlement to assistance. States each receive a block grant and have flexibility to design their TANF programs in ways that promote work, responsibility, self-

sufficiency, and strengthen families. TANF's purposes are: to provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes; to reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; to prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. With some exceptions, TANF cash-assistance recipients generally are subject to work requirements and a five-year lifetime limit.

Therapeutic Child Care

Child care services offered provided for at-risk children, such as children in homeless families, and in families with issues related to alcohol and substance abuse, violence, and neglect. Therapeutic child care is commonly an integrated complement of services provided by professional and paraprofessional staff and includes a well structured treatment program for young children provided in a safe, nurturing, stimulating environment. It often is offered as one of a complement of services for a family.

Tiered Reimbursement System

A subsidy payment system that offers higher payments for child care that meets higher quality standards or for child care that is in short supply.

Title 1

Part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act legislation of the U.S. Department of Education. Section A of Title 1 describes how funds under this Act may be used to provide early education development services to low-income children through a local education agency (LEA). These services may be coordinated/integrated with other preschool programs.

Transitional Child Care

Child care subsidies offered to families who have transitioned from the cash assistance system to employment. The Family Support Act of 1986 established a federal Transitional Child Care program, which was replaced by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Some states continue to operate their own Transitional Child Care programs.

Tribal Child Care

Publicly supported child care programs offered by Native American Tribes in the United States. Federally recognized Tribes are CCDF grantees.

Unlicensed Child Care

Child care programs that have not been licensed by the state. The term often refers both to child care that can be legally unlicensed as well as programs that should be but are not licensed.

Unregulated Child Care

Child care programs that are not regulated. The term often refers both to child care that can be legally unregulated as well as those programs that should be but are not regulated.

Vouchers

In the child care field, refers to a form of payment for subsidized child care. States often have different definitions regarding the exact nature of vouchers, and sometimes refer to them as certificates.

Waiver

A suspension or change of an eligibility requirement in a client's case.

Work Requirements

Requirements related to employment upon which receipt of a child care subsidy or cash assistance is contingent.

Wrap Around Child Care Programs

Child care designed fill the gap between an another early childhood program's hours and the hours that parents work.