

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION LETTER

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Effective:	Immediately

To: Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers



From: Reagan Miller, Director, Workforce Development Division

Subject: **Texas Rising Star Accreditation Recognition Application Process**

PURPOSE:

To provide Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with information on changes to the Texas Rising Star (TRS) Guidelines regarding the application and review process for entities accrediting child care providers (providers) to participate in the TRS certification system.

BACKGROUND:

Under the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) current TRS Guidelines, providers with national accreditations from the following organizations are initially certified at the 4-star level without a full TRS assessment:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- National Association for Family Child Care
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education
- Council on Accreditation
- Association of Christian Schools International
- AdvancED Quality Early Learning Schools

Accreditors seeking recognition in the TRS certification system must submit crosswalks of their standards in relation to the TRS standards to determine the comparable TRS star level. Accreditors that receive recognition are initially certified at the level determined by the crosswalk without requiring an initial TRS facility assessment.

This WD Letter describes the eligibility criteria, minimum requirements, and crosswalk-scoring threshold for a national accrediting entity to become a TWC-recognized accrediting entity for TRS.

PROCEDURES:

NLF: Boards must be aware that the TRS Guidelines will be updated to include the following information regarding national accreditation recognition:

U.S. Department of Defense Recognition

Accreditation entities not currently recognized by TWC that would like to apply to be recognized through TRS would be initially certified at the 4-star level without a full TRS assessment if the accreditation is:

- recognized by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) for child care facilities operated by the U.S. military on military installations; or
- recognized as participating in DoD's Off-Base Child Care Military Fee Assistance Program.

Established National Accreditation

For national accrediting entities not recognized by DoD, the minimum criterion required to be eligible to apply for TWC recognition is that the accrediting entity must be well established and national in scope. To ensure this, the accrediting entity must have:

- accredited facilities in at least 26 states (50 percent of the 50 states and the District of Columbia);
- at least 500 nationally accredited facilities; and
- had the standards in place for at least five years.

Publically Accessible Standards and List of Facilities

Information regarding TWC-recognized national accrediting entities is provided to parents as part of consumer education required through the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. Therefore, the national accreditation entity must have a public website that contains, at a minimum:

- the accreditation measures;
- scoring thresholds; and
- a list of accredited facilities, searchable by state.

Minimum Assessor/Evaluator Qualifications

The national accrediting entity must have minimum assessor/evaluator qualifications that align with the following TRS requirements for assessors in TWC's Child Care Services rule §809.134(a). Specifically, the assessor/evaluator qualifications must include one of the following:

- A bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science;
- A bachelor's degree with at least 18 credit hours in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science with at least 12 credit hours in child development; or

- An associate’s degree in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science with two years of experience as a director in an early childhood program.

Includes All Age Groups

TRS certification includes measures for all age groups served by the TRS-certified facility. To be eligible for TWC recognition, the national accrediting entity’s measures and certification must include all age groups served by the facility.

Application Requirements and Procedures

The accreditation entities must complete a profile, which describes their compliance with the eligibility criteria listed above, specifically:

- the number of states with accredited facilities;
- the total number of accredited facilities;
- how long the current accreditation standards have been in place;
- the accrediting entity’s website with a link to the measures, scoring, and provider search information; and
- minimum assessor/evaluator qualifications.

The profile must also include:

- content areas included in the accreditation standards;
- total number of criteria;
- total number and listing of the required measures;
- percentage and number of measures that must be met in order to be certified;
- length of the accreditation certification period; and
- the monitoring process.

Submission of the TRS Crosswalk

National accreditation entities must complete and submit a crosswalk document provided by TWC to compare the accrediting entity’s standards to TRS standards. Please refer to the attachments for the crosswalk.

Assessment of the TRS Crosswalk

In the crosswalk, new accreditation entities must demonstrate that all TRS 2-star (required) measures are also required by the accrediting entity.

If the TRS 2-star required measures are not required by the accrediting entity, the entity must develop a separate assurance process to document that its accredited facilities in Texas will meet the TRS-required measures as part of the entity’s accreditation process for Texas.

Scoring of the TRS Crosswalk

TWC staff will review and evaluate the submitted crosswalk. If the entity meets the minimum thresholds listed below, a 2-star, 3-star, or 4-star level will be assigned to the accreditation entity within the TRS program:

TRS Star Level	Accreditation Score Thresholds
2-Star Certification	Accreditation requires all TRS 2-star (required) measures (or has submitted a separate assurance process for the Texas providers).
3-Star Certification	Accreditation requires all TRS 2-star (required) measures; plus, <i>80 percent</i> of TRS point-based measures <i>per age group</i> are included in the accreditation measures.
4-Star Certification	Accreditation requires all TRS 2-star (required) measures; plus, <i>90 percent</i> of TRS point-based measures <i>per age group</i> are included in the accreditation measures.

Receipt of accreditation recognition applications is suspended until September 1, 2016, pending full implementation of the revised TRS Guidelines and standards.

INQUIRIES:

Direct inquiries regarding this WD Letter to wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Accreditation Crosswalk Required Measures
2. Accreditation Crosswalk Point-Based Measures
3. TRS Group Sizes/Ratios

RESCISSIONS:

None

REFERENCES:

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014
Texas Workforce Commission Child Care Services Rule §809.134

FLEXIBILITY RATINGS:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that Boards must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this WD Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This rating indicates that Boards have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this WD Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”