

Tennessee's Child Care Report Card Evaluation Program Factsheet

Every Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) licensed child care agency will be evaluated as part of the licensing renewal process. After the evaluation, agencies will receive a new license and a report card with the results of their evaluation. The report card must be displayed along with the new license. This program is part of the state's comprehensive plan to provide more information to parents choosing and using licensed child care and to improve the quality of licensed child care in Tennessee.

What is the criteria for a child care agency evaluation?

Centers will be evaluated on the following seven areas.

1. Director Qualifications
2. Professional Development
3. Developmental Learning
4. Parent/Family Engagement
5. Ratios and Group size
6. Staff Compensation
7. Program Assessment
8. Child Health and Well-being

Family and Group Child Care Homes will be evaluated on the following five areas:

1. Professional Development
2. Developmental Learning
3. Parent/Family Engagement
4. Business Management
5. Program Assessment
6. Child Health and Well-being

Who evaluates licensed child care agencies?

The information that will be used to evaluate licensed child care agencies will be collected as part of the reevaluation before a current license expires. A TDHS Licensing Program Evaluator will collect all of this information except for the program assessment information, which will be collected by a highly trained TDHS Assessment Program Evaluator, also referred to as an Assessor. The Child Care Assessment Unit will notify the child care agency via email or letter approximately 3 – 4 months before the current license expires. This will be followed up with a phone call to schedule an assessment. Depending on the size and type of your program, one or more TDHS Assessors will observe the program using the [Environment Rating Scales®](#) (ERS®) that applies to the agency.

The ERS are nationally recognized, reliable tools for valid assessment of child care program quality. The Assessor(s) will use the appropriate rating Scale(s) to assess the agency's physical environment, basic care practices, curriculum, interactions with children, schedule and program structure. Once the licensing Program Evaluator has

collected all required information, including the program assessment results, he or she will use it to fill out a report card that will be mailed to the agency with the new license.

How was the evaluation and report card program developed?

The evaluation and report card program is based on a law that the Tennessee Legislature passed in 2000 and revised in 2001. Two teams of child care professionals developed the evaluation areas and criteria, which were modeled after successful child care improvement programs in North Carolina and Oklahoma. The teams met for seven planning sessions. These sessions were led by consultants from the National Child Care Information Center.

The proposed criteria were shared with child care professionals in 23 public meetings across the state. About 2,000 child care operator/owners attended these meetings. The proposed criteria were also mailed to all licensed agencies and shared with child care professional organizations. The final criteria were based on suggestions from those in attendance and others. Then TDHS and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth approved and finalized the criteria.

How will a licensed child care agency know the results of the evaluation?

When the child care agency receives the new license from TDHS, a report card is also received that shows how well report card criteria was met. The report card must be displayed with the new license so parents can see how the agency is currently doing in each area.

What if I have questions about the agency evaluation or program assessment?

The Licensing Program Evaluator will send you your new license and report card. You will also receive a summary report about the assessment(s) conducted at your facility. Once you read this information, if you have questions about your report card you may contact your licensing Program Evaluator. If you have questions about your assessment or your summary report you may contact the [Assessment Unit Field Supervisor](#) or your local [Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Center](#). As a part of your report card packet you will also receive information regarding the amount of time you have to appeal any part of the report card that you feel is incorrect.

If parents have questions about the report card posted in the child care agency, they can speak with the owner/director and request more information, including the summary report of the program assessment. Parents may also visit ([link](#)) to obtain more information from TDHS or contact the child care agency's [Licensing office](#).

What can I do to be prepared for my evaluation and program assessment?

To be prepared for your evaluation:

- Review all the information TDHS sends you about the licensing rules and the evaluation program.
- Keep information for your Licensing Program Evaluator organized.

- Call your local [Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Center](#) or a [Tennessee Early Childhood Training Alliance \(TECTA\)](#) office to find out about upcoming workshops on the evaluation program or the Environment Rating Scales.
- [Review the licensing regulations](#) with your staff and communicate with parents the intent of the rules for keeping children safe, healthy and engaged in learning opportunities.
- Review the Environment Rating Scales, the Tennessee Additional Notes, and the Scales tools and [resources](#).
- Engage the families served in setting and obtaining quality improvement goals. The Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Center Family Engagement Quality Coach can assist you.

How can I obtain more information?

If you would like to learn more about the evaluation program, contact your TDHS [Licensing Program Evaluator](#).

If you would like to learn more about the Environment Rating Scales, contact your local [Tennessee Child Care Resource and Referral Center](#) or call your local [TECTA](#) office.

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