9   Family Outreach and Consumer Education

CCDF consumer education requirements facilitate parental choice in child care arrangements, support parents as child care consumers who need information to make informed choices regarding the services that best suit their family's needs, and the delivery of resources that can support child development and well-being. Lead Agency consumer education activities must provide information for parents receiving CCDF assistance, the general public, and, when appropriate, child care providers. Lead Agencies should use targeted strategies for each group to ensure tailored consumer education information and take steps to ensure they are effectively reaching all individuals, including those with limited English proficiency and those with disabilities.

In this section, Lead Agencies address their consumer education practices, including details about their child care consumer education website, and the process for collecting and maintaining a record of parental complaints.

9.1   Parental Complaint Process

Lead Agencies must maintain a record of substantiated parental complaints against child care providers and make information regarding such complaints available to the public on request. Lead Agencies must also provide a detailed description of the hotline or similar reporting process for parents to submit complaints about child care providers; the process for substantiating complaints; the manner in which the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints; and ways that the Lead Agency makes information on such parental complaints available to the public on request. Lead Agencies are not required to limit the complaint process to parents.

9.1.1   Parental complaint process

a.   Describe the Lead Agency's hotline or similar reporting process through which parents can submit complaints about child care providers, including a link if it is a Web-based process: *On the Lead Agency's webpage (https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services) there is a link in the Information for Families section to submit complaints. The link (https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/contact) directs the user to a list of the Licensing Specialist(s) assigned to each county, which includes their contact information.*

b.   Describe how the parental complaint process ensures broad access to services for families that speak languages other than English: *The State of North Dakota provides automatic translation for nd.gov websites, courtesy of Google Translate.*

c.   Describe how the parental complaint process ensures broad access to services for persons with disabilities: *The Lead Agency's website complies with all priority 1 and 2 guidelines of the W3 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, is Section 508 approved, complying with all guidelines of the U.S. Federal Government Section 508 Guidelines, and validates as XHTML 1.0 Strict. Free Relay North Dakota services are also available and enable people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind or those with a speech disability to place and receive phone calls. Communications Assistants are specially trained to facilitate the calls.*

d.   For complaints about providers, including CCDF providers and non-CCDF providers, does the Lead Agency have a process and timeline for screening, substantiating, and responding to complaints, including information about whether the process includes monitoring?

☒ Yes. If yes, describe:

Complaints regarding providers are documented and reviewed as soon as possible to determine if the complaint is substantiated. All complaints are investigated as soon as possible by a licensing specialist, who completes an unannounced review of the licensed or regulated program. If a violation is found, a Correction Order is issued. A reinspection of the provider is conducted once the provider provides information of compliance or at the end of the period allowed for the correction. Further monitoring of the provider is conducted as appropriate. The process is the same for CCDF and non-CCDF providers and licensed and license-exempt providers.

☐ No.

e.   For substantiated parental complaints, who maintains the record for CCDF and non-CCDF providers? *Substantiated complaints for providers are documented in the Child Care Licensing System. A record of the substantiated compliant is maintained in the provider record for both CCDF and non-CCDF providers.*

f.   Describe how information about substantiated parental complaints is made available to the public; this information can include the consumer education website discussed in subsection 9.2: *Correction Orders that are issued as a result of a monitoring visit due to a substantiated complaint are posted publicly, along with the inspection report, on the consumer education website within each program's profile. Direct link to public search tool: https://stage.worklifesystems.com/parent/40.*

9.2   Consumer Education Website

Lead Agencies must provide information to parents, the general public, and child care providers through a State or Territory website, which is consumer-friendly and easily accessible for families who speak languages other than English and persons with disabilities. The website must:

- Include information to assist families in understanding the Lead Agency's policies and procedures, including licensing child care providers;
- Include monitoring and inspection reports for each provider and, if available, the quality

of each provider;

- Provide the aggregate number of deaths, serious injuries, and the number of cases of substantiated child abuse that have occurred in child care settings;

- Include contact information for local CCR&R organizations to help families access additional information on finding child care; and

- Include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency and other organizations to better understand the information on the website.

9.2.1   Consumer-friendly website

Does the Lead Agency ensure that its consumer education website is consumer-friendly and easily accessible?

    i.   Provide the URL for the Lead Agency's consumer education website homepage: *https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services*

    ii.   Does the Lead Agency certify that the consumer education website ensures broad access to services for families who speak languages other than English?

        ☒ Yes.

        ☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

    iii.   Does the Lead Agency certify that the consumer education website ensures broad access to services for persons with disabilities?

        ☒ Yes.

        ☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

9.2.2   Additional consumer education website links

Provide the direct URL/website link for the following:

    i.   Provide the direct URL/website link to how the Lead Agency licenses child care providers: *https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/providers Early Childhood Services Century Code 50-11.1: https://ndlegis.gov/cencode/t50c11-1.pdf*

    ii.   Provide the direct URL/website link to the processes for conducting monitoring and inspections of child care providers:

      iii.   *Licensing Specialist 620-01-20-01 #6:*
https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/62001/62001.htm#620-01-20-01.htm?TocPath=Early%2520Childhood%2520Services%2520Policies%2520and%2520Procedures%2520620-01%257CProgram%2520Responsibilities%2520620-01-20%257C_____1
Time Frames for Licensing Process 620-01-35-10:
https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/62001/62001.htm#620-01-35-10.htm?TocPath=Early%2520Childhood%2520Services%2520Policies%2520and%2520Procedures%2520620-01%257CEarly%2520Childhood%2520Licensing%2520620-01-35%257C_____3
Required Licensing Documents Needed to Issue a License 620-01-35-15:
https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/62001/62001.htm#620-01-35-15.htm?TocPath=Early%2520Childhood%2520Services%2520Policies%2520and%2520Procedures%2520620-01%257CEarly%2520Childhood%2520Licensing%2520620-01-35%257C_____4
Renewal of License Policy 620-01-35-25:
https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/62001/62001.htm#620-01-35-25.htm?TocPath=Early%2520Childhood%2520Services%2520Policies%2520and%2520Procedures%2520620-01%257CEarly%2520Childhood%2520Licensing%2520620-01-35%257C_____5
Unannounced Reviews:
https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/62001/62001.htm#620-01-116.htm?TocPath=Early%2520Childhood%2520Services%2520Policies%2520and%2520Procedures%2520620-01%257C_____23

      iv.   Provide the direct URL/website link to the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks for staff members of child care providers:
https://www.hhs.nd.gov/criminal-background-checks-licensed-or-regulated-child-care-providers
Early Childhood Services Century Code 50-11.1:
https://ndlegis.gov/cencode/t50c11-1.pdf
Background Check Procedures 620-01-40:
https://www.nd.gov/dhs/policymanuals/62001/62001.htm#620-01-40.htm?TocPath=Early%2520Childhood%2520Services%2520Policies%2520and%2520Procedures%2520620-01%257C_____9

      v.   Provide the direct URL/website link to the offenses that prevent individuals from being employed by a child care provider:
https://www.hhs.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/DHS%20Legacy/esc-direct-bearing-offenses.pdf

9.2.3   Searchable list of providers

   a.   The consumer education website must include a list of all licensed providers searchable by ZIP code.

      i.   Does the Lead Agency certify that the consumer education website includes a list of all licensed providers searchable by ZIP code?

         ☒ Yes.

ii. Provide the direct URL/website link to the list of child care providers searchable by ZIP code: *The Lead Agency's website, https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/families, includes a direct link to the provider search tool, https://stage.worklifesystems.com/parent/40*

iii. In addition to the licensed child care providers that must be included in the searchable list, are there additional providers included in the Lead Agency's searchable list of child care providers? Check all that apply:

☐ License-exempt center-based CCDF providers.

☒ License-exempt family child care CCDF providers.

☒ License-exempt non-CCDF providers.

☐ Relative CCDF child care providers.

☐ Other (e.g., summer camps, public pre-Kindergarten). Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

b. Identify what additional (optional) information, if any, is available in the searchable results by ZIP code. Check the box when information is provided.

Provider Information Available in Searchable Results					
	All licensed providers	License-exempt CCDF center-based providers	License- exempt CCDF family child care home providers	License- exempt non-CCDF providers	Relative CCDF providers
Contact information	☒	☐	☒	☒	☐
Enrollment capacity	☒	☐	☒	☒	☐
Hours, days, and months of operation	☒	☐	☐ ☒	☐	
Provider education and training	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Languages spoken by the caregiver	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality information	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Monitoring reports	☒	☐	☒	☐	☐
Willingness to accept CCDF certificates	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ages of children served	☒	☐	☐	☒	☐
Specialization or training for certain populations	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Care provided during nontraditional hours	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

c.   Identify any other information searchable on the consumer education website for the child care provider type listed below and then, if checked, describe the searchable information included on the website.

   i.   ☒ All licensed providers. Describe: *License number and type of facility (center, preschool, etc), webpage (if available), number of years in operation, location map, basic environment, pets, transportation, special needs education/experience, and polices*

   ii.   ☐ License-exempt CCDF center-based providers. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

   iii.   ☒ License-exempt CCDF family child care providers. Describe: *License number, basic environment, transportation, years of operation, transportation, policies.*

   iv.   ☐ License-exempt, non-CCDF providers. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

   v.   ☐ Relative CCDF providers. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

   vi.   ☐ Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

9.2.4   Provider-specific quality information

Lead Agencies must identify specific quality information on each child care provider for whom they have this information. Provider-specific quality information must only be posted on the consumer education website if it is available for the individual child care provider.

a.   What specific quality information does the Lead Agency provide on the website?

   i.   ☒ Quality improvement system.

   ii.   ☒ National accreditation.

   iii.   ☐ Enhanced licensing system.

   iv.   ☐ Meeting Head Start/Early Head Start Program Performance Standards.

   v.   ☐ Meeting pre-Kindergarten quality requirements.

   vi.   ☐ School-age standards.

   vii.   ☐ Quality framework or quality improvement system.

   viii. ☐ Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

b.   For what types of child care providers is quality information available?

   i. ☒ Licensed CCDF providers. Describe the quality information: *Quality information includes a brief description of the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) standards including the provider's current QRIS designation.*

   ii. ☐ Licensed non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

   iii. ☐ License-exempt center-based CCDF providers. Describe the quality information: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

   iv. ☐ License-exempt FCC CCDF providers. Describe the quality information: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

   v. ☐ License-exempt non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

   vi. ☐ Relative child care providers. Describe the quality information: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

   vii. ☐ Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

9.2.5 Aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated abuse

Lead Agencies must post aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of child abuse that have occurred in child care settings each year on the consumer education website. This aggregate data must include information about any child in the care of a provider eligible to receive CCDF, not just children receiving subsidies.

This aggregate information on serious injuries and deaths must be separated by category of care (e.g., centers, family child care homes, and in-home care) and licensing status (i.e., licensed or license-exempt) for all eligible CCDF child care providers in the State/Territory. The information on instances of substantiated child abuse does not have to be organized by category of care or licensing status. Information must also include the total number of children in care by provider type and licensing status, so that families can better understand the data presented on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of abuse.

 a. Certify by checking below that the required elements are included in the Aggregate Data Report on serious incident data that have occurred in child care settings each year.

   i. ☒ The total number of serious injuries of children in care by provider category and licensing status.

   ii. ☒ The total number of deaths of children in care by provider category and licensing status.

   iii. ☒ The total number of substantiated instances of child abuse in child care settings.

   iv. ☒ The total number of children in care by provider category and licensing status.

   v. If any of the above elements are not included, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

b.   Certify by providing:

      i.   The designated entity to which child care providers must submit reports of any serious injuries or deaths of children occurring in child care and describe how the Lead Agency obtains the aggregate data from the entity: *Providers report any serious injuries or deaths of children occurring in child care to the Licensing Specialist, who in turn adds the information into the child care licensing system. The Lead Agency is able to obtain aggregate data from the child care licensing system.*

      ii.   The definition of "substantiated child abuse" used by the Lead Agency for this requirement: *Substantiated child abuse is defined as a provider who has been issued a Confirmed Decision following a CPS assessment, and the finding wasn't appealed, or the appeal was lost.*

      iii.   The definition of "serious injury" used by the Lead Agency for this requirement: *Serious injury is defined as any accident or injury which occurs in the early childhood setting or as a result of care provided in the early childhood setting that results in medical attention.*

c.   Provide the direct URL/website link to the page where the aggregate number of serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated child abuse, and the total number of children in care by provider category and licensing status are posted: *https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/data*

9.2.6   Contact information on referrals to local child care resource and referral organizations

The Lead Agency consumer education website must include contact information on referrals to local CCR&R organizations.

a.   Does the consumer education website include contact information on referrals to local CCR&R organizations?

    ☒ Yes.

    ☐ No.

    ☐ Not applicable. The Lead Agency does not have local CCR&R organizations.

b.   Provide the direct URL/website link to this information: *www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/families/choosing-care*

9.2.7   Lead Agency contact information for parents

The Lead Agency consumer and provider education website must include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency or its designee and other programs that can help the parent understand information included on the website.

a.   Does the website provide directions on how parents can contact the Lead Agency or its designee and other programs to help them understand information included on the website?

    ☒ Yes.

☐ No.

    b.   Provide the direct URL/website link to this information:
             https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services

9.2.8   Posting sliding fee scale, co-payment amount, and policies for waiving co-payments

The consumer education website must include the sliding fee scale for parent co-payments, including the co-payment amount a family may expect to pay and policies for waiving co-payments.

    a.   Does the Lead Agency certify that their consumer education website includes the sliding fee scale for parent co-payments, including the co-payment amount a family may expect to pay and policies for waiving co-payments?

          ☒ Yes.

          ☐ No.

    b.   Provide the direct URL/website link to the sliding fee scale.
             https://www.hhs.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/EA/CCAP/DN241.pdf
             https://www.hhs.nd.gov/applyforhelp/ccap

9.3   Increasing Engagement and Access to Information

Lead Agencies must collect and disseminate information about the full range of child care services to promote parental choice to parents of children eligible for CCDF, the general public, and child care providers.

9.3.1   Information about CCDF availability and eligibility

Describe how the Lead Agency shares information with eligible parents, the general public, and child care providers about the availability of child care services provided through CCDF and other programs for which the family may be eligible. The description should include, at a minimum, what is provided (e.g., written materials, the website, and direct communications) and what approaches are used to tailor information to parents, the general public, and child care providers. *The Lead Agency's free online provider search tool allows users to search for a child care provider that fits their needs. Results can be customized by adjusting search criteria by provider type, location, hours of operation, and ages served. Personalized one-on-one help is available by either phone or email through the Lead Agency's contracted child care resource and referral vendor. The Human Service Zones stock Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Brochures for customers visiting the office. These brochures provide an overview of the CCAP program, how to find a provider, and the eligibility process. The Human Service Zones also stock brochures for all other economic assistance programs which families may be eligible for; SNAP, TANF, LIHEAP and more. This information is also available on the Economic Assistance Website.*

9.3.2   Information about child care and other services available for parents

Does the Lead Agency certify that it provides information described in 9.3.1 for the following required programs?

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

- Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) program.

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

- Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

- Programs carried out under IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C.

☒ Yes.

☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

9.3.3 Consumer statement for parents receiving CCDF services

Lead Agencies must provide parents receiving CCDF services with a consumer statement in hard copy or electronically that contains general information about the CCDF program and specific information about the child care provider they select.

Please certify if the Lead Agency provides parents receiving CCDF services a consumer statement that contains the following 8 requirements:

1. Health and safety requirements met by the provider

2. Licensing or regulatory requirements met by the provider

3. Date the provider was last inspected

4. Any history of violations of these requirements

5. Any voluntary quality standards met by the provider

6. How CCDF subsidies are designed to promote equal access

7. How to submit a complaint through the hotline

8. How to contact a local resource and referral agency or other community-based organization to receive assistance in finding and enrolling in quality child care

Does the Lead Agency provide to families, either in hard copy or electronically, a consumer statement that contains the required information about the provider they have selected, including the eight required elements above?

☒ Yes.

☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

9.3.4 Informing families about best practices on child development

Describe how the Lead Agency makes information available to parents, providers, and the general public on research and best practices concerning children's development, including physical health and development, and information about successful parent and family engagement. At a minimum, the description should include what information is provided; how the information is provided; any distinct activities for sharing this information with parents, providers, the general public; and any partners in providing this information. *Families are a child's first teacher. The Information for Families Section of Lead Agency's website includes an*

accordion with links to resources for families. This accordion provides links to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developmental checklists, information about early childhood developmental screenings, early learning standards birth to kindergarten, Head Start and Early Head Start, and Waterford Upstart, and access to the VROOM app and website for daily family engagement tips to turn everyday activities into brain building moments.

9.3.5   Unlimited parental access to their children

Does the Lead Agency have procedures to ensure that parents have unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds:

☒ Yes.

☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

9.3.6   Informing families about best practices in social and emotional health

Describe how the Lead Agency shares information with families, providers, and the general public regarding the social-emotional and behavioral and mental health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models based on research and best practices for those from birth to school age: *The Lead Agency provides information on its website in the Information for Families section about early childhood special education inclusion support. This site includes a link to the North Dakota Mental Health Program Directory. The Lead Agency, in collaboration with partners, developed Parents Lead, an evidence-based prevention program that provides parents and caregivers variety of tools and resources to support them in creating a safe environment for their children that promotes behavioral health.*

9.3.7   Policies on the prevention of the suspension and expulsion of children

a.   The Lead Agency must have policies to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children from birth to age 5 in child care and other early childhood programs receiving CCDF funds. Describe those policies and how those policies are shared with families, providers, and the general public: *The Lead Agency contracts an Inclusive Child Care Support vendor with specialists available to provide site visits in programs and observe classroom environments, work with staff and provide hands on training to assist with behavior management and special needs. The Lead Agency provides inclusive care support grants with state general funds to assist providers with staffing needs and resources to assist with behavior management and special needs. These grants can also be used for environmental modification and specialized equipment and materials. The Lead Agency shares information about this program on their website and encourages providers to utilize these services to serve children with special needs alongside their peers.*

b.   Describe what policies, if any, the Lead Agency has to prevent the suspension and expulsion of school-age children from child or youth care settings receiving CCDF funds: .

9.4   Providing Information on Developmental Screenings

Lead Agencies must provide information on developmental screenings to parents as part of the intake process for families participating in CCDF and to child care providers through training and education. This information must include:

- Existing resources and services that the State can make available in conducting developmental screenings and providing referrals to services when appropriate for children who receive child care assistance, including the coordinated use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act and developmental screening services available under IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C; and,

- A description of how a family or child care provider can use these resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive subsidies and who might be at risk of cognitive or other developmental delays, which can include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays.

Information on developmental screenings, as in other consumer education information, must be accessible for individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities.

9.4.1   Developmental screenings

Does the Lead Agency collect and disseminate information on the following:

a.   Existing resources and services available for obtaining developmental screening for parents receiving CCDF, the general public, and child care providers.

☒ Yes.

☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

b.   Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program—carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)—and developmental screening services available under Part B, Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.).

☒ Yes.

☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

c.   Developmental screenings to parents receiving a subsidy as part of the intake process.

☒ Yes. If yes, include the information provided, ways it is provided, and any partners in this work: *The Lead Agency provides information regarding developmental screenings on its website to access information regarding developmental screening. Screening services are provided through Right Tracks. https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/families*

☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

d.   How families receiving CCDF services or child care providers receiving CCDF can use the available resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays.

☒ Yes.

☐ No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*