



Getting Ready to Connect to Childcare.gov

Introduction

The Administration for Children and Families is moving forward with development of a national child care website (childcare.gov) that is authorized and required under the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. The vision for childcare.gov is to disseminate family-friendly, publicly available child care consumer education information for parents, providers, and the general public to help families to access safe, high-quality child care services in their communities. The website will be devoted to parents and provide access to a location-based search for child care providers to meet parents' needs and support States' and Territories' efforts to connect families to quality child care. Childcare.gov will rely on publicly available data provided by State and Territory child care agencies, CCDBG grantees, and partner agencies.

Additional information may be found on the Office of Child Care resource page for childcare.gov at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/national-website-and-hotline-project>.

Intended Audience

This document is intended to provide important information to Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Administrators as they prepare to respond to CCDBG requirements related to childcare.gov. In addition, the document is intended for key people CCDF Administrators and systems planners will want to engage, such as business analysts and information technology analysts who understand the child care data systems and child care search tools used in their States and Territories and staff who understand the important program and policy considerations associated with child care consumer education efforts. States and Territories may also decide to include similar staff or consultants from partner agencies if their child care search tools are administered or supported by external agencies.

Assessing Readiness

Some States and Territories have been identified to participate in a rapid validation and pilot project to inform the development of childcare.gov by the Administration for Children and Families. These grantees are representative of the range of readiness levels found in the *State and Territory Capacity Assessment* conducted during the research and information-gathering phase of the project in the first half of 2016 (available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/summary_of_capacity_assessment_all_states_territories_20160803.pdf). During the pilot, participants will engage in a series of information requests, document reviews, and virtual meetings between September 2016 and August 2017. Participating grantees will take a first step to identifying supports needed and best practice approaches for the remaining States and Territories.

However, all States and Territories, whether participating in the pilot or focusing on compliance with other CCDBG requirements, should begin to review resources available and plan for connecting with

childcare.gov. Decisions made now will determine costs and efficiencies for many years to come. This document is an important resource that can inform State and Territory planning.

Successful implementation of childcare.gov by November 2017 will require support for CCDBG grantees, including CCDF administrators, database managers, and web designers, who will work together to meet State and Territory consumer education requirements.

Your State or Territory Can Get Ready

States and Territories can begin by doing the following:

- Use the **Data Alignment Questionnaire** in this document to assess your State or Territory's capacity to provide the types of information needed to help families access safe, high-quality child care services in their communities.
- Join the childcare.gov **Information Exchange** to engage with other States and Territories and share child care consumer education innovations and insights. Every Wednesday from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. ET, the childcare.gov project team is available to answer your questions. No appointment is needed; join us at https://ccssn.adobeconnect.com/information_exchange and call 1-877-423-6338, passcode 2452362836.
- Provide input on the development of detailed requirements and the Fall 2016 Data Dictionary for childcare.gov through the Information Exchange or by emailing comments to askchildcaregov@icf.com.
- Identify technical assistance needed in order to connect with childcare.gov.

See It Here!

View screen shots of website wireframes and State templates, soon to be posted on the Office of Child Care resource page for childcare.gov at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/national-website-and-hotline-project>. See what childcare.gov can do for you.

Get Ready to Connect: Tools to Help States and Territories

The following tools will help as you convene and get started:

- The **Fall 2016 Draft Data Dictionary** has been updated and greatly expanded to allow you to review the types of data that childcare.gov can provide to help families to access safe, high-quality child care services.
- The **Childcare.gov Data Alignment Questionnaire** (provided in this document) can help you to assess and document the degree to which your State or Territory can align with the proposed data elements in the Fall 2016 Draft Data Dictionary.
- The **Getting Ready – Follow-Up Questionnaire** (provided in this document) can be used to inform your planning and next steps.

Childcare.gov Data Alignment Questionnaire

Use the template below to assess and document your State or Territory's (and/or partner agency's) ability to align with and provide each of the data elements included in the Fall 2016 Draft Data Dictionary. For each data element listed below, identify whether your State or Territory currently makes the element publicly available on its primary child care search tool (or plans to in the future) and whether the data can be provided in the format included in the Fall 2016 Draft Data Dictionary or in another format.

Data Element	Can Provide Data in Format Included in Data Dictionary	Can Provide Data in Another Format (not format in Data Dictionary)	Reason Unable to Provide Data (if applicable) <i>D = Do Not Collect</i> <i>Q = Data Quality Concern</i> <i>O = Other</i>
Program ID			
Program Name			
Program Address Street Number			
Program Address Street Name			
Program City			
Program State			
Program Zip Code			
Program County			
Program Website Link Title			
Program Website Link			
Program Email			
Program Phone Number			
Program Licensed Capacity – Infant			
Program Licensed Capacity – Toddler			
Program Licensed Capacity – Preschool			
Program Licensed Capacity – School Age			
Program Licensed Served			
Program/Facility Type			
License Type			
Licensing Inspection Reports Links			
Licensing Complaints Links			
Licensing Enforcement Actions Links			
License Number			
Program Social Media Link – Twitter			

Data Element	Can Provide Data in Format Included in Data Dictionary	Can Provide Data in Another Format (not format in Data Dictionary)	Reason Unable to Provide Data (if applicable) <i>D = Do Not Collect</i> <i>Q = Data Quality Concern</i> <i>O = Other</i>
Program Social Media Link – Facebook			
Program Social Media Link – Instagram			
Program Social Media Link – YouTube			
Quality Rating			
Highest Quality Rating Level			
Participation in State or Federal Programs			
Languages Spoken by Staff			
Curriculum Used			
Child Assessment Used			
Environmental Features			
Meal Options			
Accreditation			
Training and Experience to Support Special Needs			
Transportation Options			
Yearly Schedule			
Daily Opening Time – Sunday			
Daily Opening Time – Monday			
Daily Opening Time – Tuesday			
Daily Opening Time – Wednesday			
Daily Opening Time – Thursday			
Daily Opening Time – Friday			
Daily Opening Time – Saturday			
Daily Closing Time – Sunday			
Daily Closing Time – Monday			
Daily Closing Time – Tuesday			
Daily Closing Time – Wednesday			
Daily Closing Time – Thursday			
Daily Closing Time – Friday			
Daily Closing Time – Saturday			
Special Schedules			

Data Element	Can Provide Data in Format Included in Data Dictionary	Can Provide Data in Another Format (not format in Data Dictionary)	Reason Unable to Provide Data (if applicable) <i>D = Do Not Collect</i> <i>Q = Data Quality Concern</i> <i>O = Other</i>
Tuition – Infant – Hourly			
Tuition – Infant – Daily			
Tuition – Infant – Weekly			
Tuition – Infant – Monthly			
Tuition – Toddler – Hourly			
Tuition – Toddler – Daily			
Tuition – Toddler – Weekly			
Tuition – Toddler – Monthly			
Tuition – Preschool – Hourly			
Tuition – Preschool – Daily			
Tuition – Preschool – Weekly			
Tuition – Preschool – Monthly			
Tuition – School Age – Hourly			
Tuition – School Age – Daily			
Tuition – School Age – Weekly			
Tuition – School Age – Monthly			
Discounts Available			
Additional Deposits and Fees			

Additional Questions to Think About

- What is the most feasible method for sharing data with childcare.gov, an API (application programming interface), CSV (comma separated value) file, or a direct link?
- Which provider types (licensed centers, licensed family child care, license-exempt center-based programs) do you make publicly available on your consumer education website that could be included in the data shared with childcare.gov?
- From which data sources (e.g., licensing data system, child care resource and referral data system, quality rating system) would you need to pull data? How frequently are those sources updated?

Getting Ready – Follow-Up Questionnaire

After completing the **Data Alignment Questionnaire** above, answer the questions below to identify what your State or Territory can do next to get ready for childcare.gov.

- Do you have changes to recommend for the Fall 2016 Draft Data Dictionary that would make it more feasible for your State to use—for example, modifications to the data type values? If so, consider participating in one of the Information Exchanges or sending feedback via askchildcaregov@icf.com.
- What data governance structures and process are in place (or need to be in place) to facilitate integration of data across early childhood data systems?
- Which organizations and staff need to be involved in planning, coordinating, and carrying out the work?
- What key challenges do you anticipate in connecting with childcare.gov?
- What types of technical assistance could help your State with the above challenges?

If You Have Questions

If you have questions, email askchildcaregov@icf.com.

This document was developed with funds from Contract # HHSP2332015000711, Order # HHSP23337006T for the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care. This resource may be duplicated for noncommercial uses without permission.

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askchildcaregov@icf.com
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ>