



# The National Child Care Website: Update from Childcare.gov

## Summary of Questions from Webinar

### Question and Answer Categories

- [Communication and engagement with CCDF grantees, OCC staff, and technical assistance providers](#)
- [Childcare.gov data collection](#)
- [System security and documentation](#)
- [Data services practice and innovation](#)
- [Website design](#)
- [State technical assistance and support](#)

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Communication and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Had ACF/OCC considered simply providing a link to each State's website so that parents could conduct the child care search at the State level, rather than taking the effort to transfer the data to childcare.gov?</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Why is the Office of Child Care (OCC) developing childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 calls for the development of a National Child Care Website (childcare.gov) to disseminate family-friendly, publicly available child care consumer education information for parents, providers, and the general public to help families access safe, high-quality child care services in their community. Childcare.gov will be devoted to parents and provide access to a location-based search for child care providers that meets parents' needs and supports the efforts</p>

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		<p>of States and Territories to connect families to quality child care. Childcare.gov will rely on publicly available data that are provided by State and Territory child care agencies, CCDBG grantees, and partner agencies. An overview of the law is available on the OCC resource page for childcare.gov at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/national-website-and-hotline-project">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/national-website-and-hotline-project</a>.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are the results of the parent research available? It would be very helpful.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. What research was conducted to inform the design of childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>Multiple sources of information informed the design of childcare.gov. First, the childcare.gov design team conducted a review of the literature on family decision-making and also reviewed existing State resources. The design team then facilitated listening sessions with Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) staff in States and Territories and with stakeholders in a variety of national organizations. Family focus groups also were conducted in four States to gather thoughts and feedback about the national website from parents across the country. Summaries of the listening sessions and family focus group findings are provided on the OCC resource page for childcare.gov at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/national-website-and-hotline-project">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/national-website-and-hotline-project</a>.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will there be any interface between the national complaint hotline and the website? For example, if reports are made about serious safety risks for children, will child care.gov still list the providers involved or will they be removed from the search during investigation?</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. What is the relationship between the National Complaint Hotline and childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>The National Complaint Hotline (Hotline) will allow callers to report (anonymously if desired) suspected child abuse or neglect, or violations of health and safety requirements, by an eligible child care provider. The National Complaint Hotline will be staffed during specific hours to accept concerns about health and safety, including reports of abuse in child care settings. Complaints received will be routed to a designated</p>

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		<p>representative in each State.</p> <p>Childcare.gov will operate separately from the National Complaint Hotline. However, since childcare.gov will include publicly available State information, any changes or updates to public provider information made at the State level as a result of reported concerns will also be reflected on childcare.gov.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hello from Alaska. We spend a significant amount of time and organizational resources spreading information about the services we provide. Are you confident that childcare.gov will be an effective resource for families in our State? To put it more clearly, will the traffic that will be directed to our State child care resource and referral (CCR&amp;R) through the childcare.gov portal justify the effort necessary to link our data in a robust and meaningful way?</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Will childcare.gov drive traffic to existing State websites? If so, how?</b></p> <p>Yes, childcare.gov may drive web traffic to State and local websites and resources as new audiences are engaged through the national website. Each State will have a designated page with links to State-specific resources for parents, including links to consumer education within the State.</p> <p>It's important that States and Territories know that the decisions they make now will determine costs and efficiencies for their websites for many years to come. Childcare.gov will help States save planning and implementation dollars, drive users to their sites, and simplify the alignment and integration of data between their websites and the national childcare.gov site.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How are you going to avoid duplication and diluting the connection between States and end-users? Or, in what ways are you going to connect us with our user communities?</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. How will childcare.gov connect parents and families with State resources?</b></p> <p>Despite States' best efforts, parents may not be aware of the helpful child care resources included on State websites. Childcare.gov will help raise parents' awareness of State and local resources, tools, and supports. The site will also include tools to help States and Territories build and expand their own consumer education websites at all levels of planning and</p>

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		<p>readiness, resulting in cost savings while improving services to families. Additionally, both the web and mobile designs of childcare.gov will include direct links to State-specific consumer materials about how to apply for child care assistance, information about the State's quality rating and licensing systems, and additional family services in English and Spanish.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will the functionality of local sites that allow online applications be affected?</li> <li>▪ If a State website currently has mapping capabilities to show locations of providers, etc., will the State be able to give up that function and use the childcare.gov functionality instead?</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. How will the functionality of current State websites (for example, mapping features or online application systems) work with childcare.gov? Will these features be affected by this new website?</b></p> <p>Childcare.gov will operate separately from State websites and will not affect or impact any features or information included on the sites.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I think that Childcare.gov is a great idea but there has to be a way as not to confuse the parent with what is available on the State level. I do believe that if a parent is in need of child care in another State that this would be the site to come to and will there be a link at the State level to childcare.gov from the State's website?</li> </ul>	<p><b>7. How can States and OCC work together to clarify the information provided through childcare.gov and State websites?</b></p> <p>States and Territories participating in the pilot stage of developing childcare.gov will be working with OCC and ICF (the childcare.gov contractor) to assure that information available through childcare.gov is clear and easy to understand and that families using childcare.gov easily find links to the State or Territory website. The Data Dictionary, currently in draft form, will make information found both at childcare.gov and at the State or Territory website clear.</p> <p>The vision for childcare.gov is to provide basic information and then direct the family to the State or Territory information as quickly as possible.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will standard information regarding the use and existence of this site be provided to States to communicate with programs and providers on the use of this site as another means of marketing?</li> </ul>	<p><b>8. What information and materials will be provided to States to share updates on childcare.gov with programs and providers?</b></p> <p>Regular progress updates about the development of childcare.gov will be posted on the OCC resource page for childcare.gov at <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/national-website-and-hotline-project">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/national-website-and-hotline-project</a>.</p>
<p><b>Childcare.gov data collection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the State-oriented open source template represent a set of information that must be provided by the States, or is it just an opportunity to use a fully developed template? Put another way, other than providing childcare.gov all of the data it requires, is there additional information the State must provide?</li> </ul>	<p><b>9. What provider information is needed from my State to post on childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>CCDBG reauthorization requires childcare.gov to provide consumers, directly or through linkages to State data sources, with the following minimum information and services: (1) a localized list of all eligible child care providers, differentiating between licensed and licensed-exempt providers; and (2) provider-specific information from a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or information about other quality indicators, to the extent that such information is publicly available and practicable.</p> <p>The reason the Data Dictionary has so many data elements is that families want to have all the information they need to determine whether a child care provider will meet their needs. We are hoping that States and Territories will provide as much data regarding child care providers as they have publically available to childcare.gov.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How much staff time do you think it will take?</li> </ul>	<p><b>10. How much staff time will it take for my State or Territory to support the data collection effort for childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>The childcare.gov design team is working with OCC to conduct a validation and pilot of childcare.gov and will be developing estimates for State time commitments based on feedback collected through the pilot. This information is</p>

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		expected to be ready in the fall of 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are addresses a required data component for posting?</li> </ul>	<p><b>11. Are addresses a required data component for posting?</b></p> <p>In some States, providers are not required to make their addresses available to the public. This is a desired data field for childcare.gov. However, if this information is not available for your State, childcare.gov will not display it in provider listings.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We handle search by ages in different groupings from the ones you displayed on the slide, I think this is an example of challenges you will have to standardize how the data from various States is provided and any context needed.</li> <li>▪ Are you going to be comparing your data dictionary against our data elements or will we be expected to convert our tables using your data element titles?</li> <li>▪ How will programs from multiple States that meet a set of search criteria be handled? It potentially could be very confusing as each State will differ in data available and even what the exact same data (in appearance) might mean, like a quality rating.</li> </ul>	<p><b>12. How will childcare.gov standardize provider data across varying State systems?</b></p> <p>After collecting sample data and feedback on the Fall 2016 Draft Data Dictionary, the project team will revise the data dictionary that defines the standard data elements that childcare.gov will use. These elements will provide an effective user experience with the site. The revised data dictionary will be published and provided to all States and Territories to support their efforts to share data with childcare.gov.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How frequently will States be required to send the provider data?</li> </ul>	<p><b>13. How frequently will childcare.gov update provider information?</b></p> <p>Childcare.gov will be set to ingest data once daily. State sites can refresh their data by uploading to a secure location.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will information be tagged with the date of last update?</li> </ul>	<p><b>14. Will provider information included on childcare.gov feature the date of the last update?</b></p> <p>Yes, the date of the last system update will be included on childcare.gov.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will there be a mechanism to remove providers who have been sanctioned?</li> <li>▪ How will the data stay in sync? There will need to be some mechanism to handle closures and revocations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>15. Will there be a mechanism to update provider information on childcare.gov to reflect any closures, revocations, or to remove those providers that have been sanctioned?</b></p> <p>All of the provider data displayed on childcare.gov will be based on what States make available and share with the national website. We anticipate that States using the Application Processing Interface (API) will update provider information nightly, while those using a comma separated value (CSV) will submit an updated data file routinely.</p>
<p><b>System security and documentation</b></p>	<p><i>No questions received on this topic</i></p>	<p><i>No questions received on this topic</i></p>
<p><b>Data services practice and innovation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is this childcare.gov application a separate application or a mobile responsive version of the website?</li> </ul>	<p><b>16. Will parents and families be able to access childcare.gov from their mobile device (mobile phone or tablet)? If so, how?</b></p> <p>Yes, parents and families will be able to access childcare.gov on the go through their mobile device. Childcare.gov will feature a mobile responsive version accessible on mobile phones and tablets. A mobile application is also being developed and will be available to download on all types of mobile devices (available through Google Play and the App Store on iTunes).</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If you allow parents to save favorites, results, etc., the assumption is they will register with childcare.gov to be able save results. Is that correct? I am concerned that there might be</li> </ul>	<p><b>17. Will parents and families need to register to access the information included on childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>We recognize that some parents and families will not want to</p>

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	<p>confusion if they do the same thing on the State site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When you conducted focus groups with parents, did they have any issues registering for the site? In Ohio, we removed the registration component from our search as families didn't want to register.</li> </ul>	<p>register for childcare.gov. As such, no registration will be required to access the information included on childcare.gov. A simple registration will be needed if a childcare.gov user wishes to save a search or compare providers. Saving the search makes it easy for the user to come back to the same information at a later time.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will the list of providers populate by alphabet/name, highest rating on top?</li> </ul>	<p><b>18. How will information about providers be displayed on childcare.gov (for example, alphabetically)?</b></p> <p>There are many ways for provider information to be displayed on childcare.gov. Some States have intentionally designed their search features to allow the results to display the highest quality-rated providers first. The childcare.gov design team will use feedback from States, Territories, and parents to inform the order in which provider listings are displayed on childcare.gov.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ So we will be sending links to all our visit reports as part of our data?</li> <li>▪ Do you plan to show licensing reports also? If not, how will the site easily link back to the State site to that specific provider without them having to search again?</li> </ul>	<p><b>19. Will childcare.gov include inspection reports, licensing complaints, and licensing actions?</b></p> <p>Childcare.gov will provide links to inspection reports, licensing complaints, and licensing actions that States make publicly available.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ So if CCR&amp;Rs are working with providers to build photo profiles, will childcare.gov be able to incorporate these when available?</li> <li>▪ The high-level data dictionary lists provider pictures. Will childcare.gov have capability for providers to upload pictures directly to the site? Is this part of the design or design consideration?</li> </ul>	<p><b>20. My State is currently working with child care providers to develop photo profiles. Will childcare.gov be able to incorporate this information when it becomes available?</b></p> <p>Currently, photo profiles are not part of the design of childcare.gov. This may be considered as a future enhancement to the site.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Could we look at providing an API for States to receive the analytics?</li> <li>▪ We have to report number of referrals per quarter and or year. When people use childcare.gov and search for child care in New Mexico how will we count those hits to be able to report numbers of searches?</li> <li>▪ Will the interface to childcare.gov be one way or will the States be receiving any information back from childcare.gov?</li> </ul>	<p><b>21. Will States receive any analytics from childcare.gov? If so, what information will be included?</b></p> <p>Through childcare.gov, State and Territory Lead Agencies and partners will have access to data dashboards and analytics on child care search preferences, the supply of child care programs, and gaps between parent preferences and local supply in regions of the State or Territory.</p>
<p><b>Website design</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will you be following a waterfall or iterative/incremental implementation model?</li> </ul>	<p><b>22. What process is the childcare.gov design team utilizing to design and develop childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>The childcare.gov design team uses an Agile scrum process to build childcare.gov that includes load testing. Our sprints are three weeks long. We defined requirements and scope within user stories, which are prioritized and worked on within a sprint.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are you planning to load test your implementation? What sort of test period will be provided prior to the site and interfaces going "live?"</li> <li>▪ How time consuming do you anticipate it will be for States to convert data in their existing systems for submission to childcare.gov?</li> <li>▪ What is the planned launch date for this and when will States be expected to start submitting data?</li> </ul>	<p><b>23. What is the development schedule and timeline for the launch of childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>The childcare.gov design team is targeting spring of 2017 as the site release for States to review the site and conduct testing.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How will the template present our State content about quality settings and resources?</li> </ul>	<p><b>24. How will the template present our State content about quality settings and resources?</b></p> <p>The template will be built to allow States and Territories to</p>

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		<p>customize the way they display certain types of information. At a minimum, a place for linking to child care settings and applicable resources will be made available within the template. The template will be flexible to allow variations in ways to display important links to State and Territory information.</p> <p>The draft concept of the State and Territory templates will be available at the end of September 2016. The templates will be ready for use in late 2016.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It would be helpful if there was a mechanism for a link back from ChildCare.gov to that provider in the State system to prevent people from having to search twice for QR ratings, reports, and more info that is not in ChildCare.gov system.</li> </ul>	<p><b>25. Will childcare.gov be able to link to a provider’s listing on a State website?</b></p> <p>Yes, childcare.gov will be able to link to resources that help parents and families find child care within their State or Territory.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will you address in more depth how childcare.gov will interface with existing systems. I'm in Chicago and they recently launched a site that provides childcare info.</li> <li>▪ Are you planning on using an API call to interface with State's websites?</li> </ul>	<p><b>26. Will childcare.gov be able to access information from my current State website or system? If so, how?</b></p> <p>Each State will decide the source of the data used to populate childcare.gov. Some States may choose to have their CCR&amp;R statewide network provide the data, while others may use data that has been aggregated by the CCDF Lead Agency. There are several ways in which childcare.gov will access information from State sites, including using CSV file formats or web service API.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What staff will our State need to code and test our CSV or API data transfers?</li> </ul>	<p><b>27. What staff from our State or Territory should be involved in coding and testing our CSV or API data transfers?</b></p> <p>Software engineers with a background in REST API development and database migration skills should be involved in coding and testing the CSV or API data transfers.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Will there be a standards level for providers who are included in the website?</li> </ul>	<p><b>28. Is there a standards level for providers listed on childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>Childcare.gov will only display information that is publicly available in each State and Territory, and, as such, will not have a standards level for providers to meet to be featured on childcare.gov.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are you going to need geocode data or will your site handle that?</li> </ul>	<p><b>29. Will childcare.gov include geocode data?</b></p> <p>Childcare.gov will use Google’s API for location-based information included in the search feature. If States have geocode data available, childcare.gov can use this information for the site.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Who will own the provider level data...States? CCA? OCC?</li> </ul>	<p><b>30. What is the system of record for the data presented on childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>Each State and Territory is the system of record for the data included on childcare.gov.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If a State is using API, who covers the cost of this?</li> <li>▪ Are there additional funds being provided to States for the resources that will be necessary to do this?</li> </ul>	<p><b>31. Is additional funding available to support my State in collecting data and information for childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>The Office of Child Care does not have additional funding available to States and Territories.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the intent that all States provide data if /when a State site has all of the highlighted/required functionality and information?</li> </ul>	<p><b>32. What if my State does not have information for each of the data elements for childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>Childcare.gov will only display those desired data elements that are publicly available in the State; those data elements that are not available will not be displayed on the site.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As our State-level technology evolves over time, do you have strategies to reduce challenges to States when our platforms change as we need to maintain or get approval from our federal partners?</li> </ul>	<p><b>33. Will childcare.gov be able to respond and adapt to changing State systems and evolving technology? If so, how?</b></p> <p>Yes, the design of childcare.gov will be responsive to allow it to adapt to changing technology and grow over time as State and Territory partner systems also evolve.</p>
<p><b>State technical assistance and support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When you say you will be reaching out to States, does that mean you will reach out to both CCR&amp;Rs and State administrative offices, or just to State administrative offices with it being their responsibility to invite CCR&amp;Rs if they wish?</li> <li>▪ The templates for States are open source correct? So CCR&amp;Rs will be able to use them if they wish?</li> <li>▪ Is there going to be a special session available for State webmasters?</li> </ul>	<p><b>34. How will the Childcare.gov design team work with my State to collect data and information for childcare.gov?</b></p> <p>The childcare.gov design team will work directly with States and other designated partners (such as CCR&amp;R or United Way agencies) to collect data to populate childcare.gov. The design team is hosting weekly sessions to provide an opportunity to discuss the data collection process and to address any State- and Territory-specific issues. Please join the childcare.gov Information Exchange every Wednesday from 2:00–4:00 p.m. ET by dialing in to 1-877-423-6338 and using the code 2452362836.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When will the requirements for the API calls be identified and shared? NDS just released its API module in June and would like to support NDS users in sharing data via the NDS API.</li> </ul>	<p><b>35. When will my State receive more information about the web service API?</b></p> <p>More information about the API will be available as the design team finalizes the data dictionary and data elements. The childcare.gov design team will coordinate with States on the API release.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For States ready to leverage the API, will there be dedicated partners we need to work with to vet our system enhancements (so they) don't break the API calls? I foresee this meaning extra work in our enhancement projects to vet potential impact to shared data.</li> </ul>	<p><b>36. What support is available to States to support the web service API?</b></p> <p>States will receive technical support from the childcare.gov design team throughout the development of childcare.gov. The design team will work directly with States to answer questions or to work through any issues and concerns, as well</p>

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		<p>as modify the API so the calls are effective. States can contact the design team at <a href="mailto:askchildcaregov@icf.com">askchildcaregov@icf.com</a> to ask questions about the technology or provide input about childcare.gov.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How much time and money will we save by using your template for our State website?</li> </ul>	<p><b>37. How much time and money will my State save by using the childcare.gov template for our State website?</b></p> <p>This will be based on the time commitment estimates. States will receive the time commitment estimates later in 2016.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How can childcare.gov help me design my website?</li> </ul>	<p><b>38. How can the childcare.gov design team help me design my State website?</b></p> <p>The childcare.gov design team will provide documentation for States to use for their websites. Technical support is also available during the childcare.gov Information Exchange every Wednesday from 2:00–4:00 p.m. ET by dialing-in to 1-877-423-6338 and using the code 2452362836.</p>

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