Utah is currently implementing a new Child Care Quality System (CCQS), with center-based programs beginning October 2019 and family-based programs beginning October 2020. This system will help parents make informed choices about the child care programs their child attends so that the program will better prepare their child for kindergarten and life. This system will also ensure government child care subsidies are supporting quality programs.

NEW FEDERAL REQUIREMENT FOR SUBSIDY RATES
The federal Child Care Development Fund law requires all states to consider the level of quality when establishing subsidy rates for child care providers. As a result, Utah must identify the quality of its child care programs and publish the results to the general public. This requirement supports information child care providers already know — children in high-quality child care programs that supports their growth and development are better prepared for kindergarten and life.

QUALITY RATINGS FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS
Participation is voluntary for child care programs not covered by state child care subsidies, however; all licensed programs will be eligible to receive a rating. All programs that care for children covered by child care subsidies will receive a rating. That rating will then be used to establish the subsidy rate for the child. Each participating provider will receive a rating based on points achieved in five areas that influence quality:

- Health and Safety
- Learning Environments and Relationships
- Leadership and Professional Development
- Management and Administration
- National Accreditation

There are four levels of quality ratings that a provider could receive from the new Child Care Quality System. Providers that receive “High Quality” or “High Quality Plus” ratings may receive an Enhanced Subsidy Grant.

Beginning October 2019, center program ratings will be available to the public on the Care About Childcare website.

HOW THIS HELPS CHILD CARE PROVIDERS
- **Enhanced Subsidy Grant:** Programs rated High Quality or High Quality Plus may receive a monthly Enhanced Subsidy Grant.
- **A Valuable Marketing Tool:** Receiving a high-quality ranking from the state is an impressive selling point for providers as they promote their business.
- **Funding Resources:** The Office of Child Care is reallocating funds to help providers achieve a higher rating.
HOW THIS HELPS PARENTS

The Office of Child Care is committed to helping parents make informed choices on child care. Nationally, the quality of a child care program is important to parents who rely on child care while they are working. The new system is an important way to inform parents about the quality of child care programs which will help them select a provider that meets their needs. In addition to quality, parents also consider the location, cost and personal recommendations when making their selection.

PROVIDER FEEDBACK

The Office of Child Care values the expertise of the state’s child care providers and appreciates the efforts they have made to provide safe and healthy settings for Utah’s young children. The office received feedback from many providers while developing the new system in an effort to balance the needs of the children with a program’s business needs. Feedback and recommendations will continue to be received through the CCQS subcommittee, the Office of Child Care Advisory Council and statewide public meetings.

A survey was also sent to all child care providers about the costs of managing a quality program. This feedback will help the Office of Child Care determine how to reallocate funds to support providers that want to achieve higher quality ratings.

TIMELINE

2017: Framework design and public meetings
May–Jun 2018: Finalize framework and evaluate scoring
July 2018: Pilot begins with center programs
Jul–Sep 2018: Programs begin to calculate points
Jan 2019: Early rating opportunity for centers
Mar–Aug 2019: Classroom observations begin

Oct 2019: CCQS implemented for center programs
Oct 2019: Accept applications for center program ratings
Spring 2020: Applications for center programs to apply for technical assistance
Summer 2020: Early rating opportunity for family programs
Oct 2020: CCQS implemented for family programs

Questions? Contact the Office of Child Care at occ@utah.gov