



Appendix A: Terminology Used in the Consumer Education Website Self-Assessment

This is a companion resource to define several of the terms within the State and Territory Child Care Consumer Education Website Self-Assessment Checklist. The definitions are provided for use when reviewing a consumer education website. These definitions are developed from consumer education best practice and are not necessarily included in Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) regulations. They are provided to give additional context for reviewing a consumer education website and not for determining compliance with CCDF regulations. Any questions about compliance with CCDF regulations should be directed to the appropriate Office of Child Care Regional Program Office.

Aggregate: The collection of combined, cumulative, summative, and comprehensive data about (a) children and families receiving child care services; (b) provider training and education; and (c) state and territory demographics and resources to provide child care services.

Best practice: An approach or process that is based on research or evidence of change for the better, deemed as such by content experts.

Broken link: A web page URL that no longer provides access to the intended source. The broken link may lead to error messages, such as “Page Not Found.”

Center-based child care: Defined by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 as “early childhood and/or school-age care and education services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child, outside of a home-based or residential setting”. States may have definitions of center-based child care that include additional details.

Complaint: A documented concern expressed by an individual (parent, staff member, or the general public) that a practice or feature within a child care facility is unsatisfactory.

Compliance: The act of carrying out or meeting a recommendation, policy, regulation, or procedure.

Consumer-friendly (sometimes referred to as “user-friendly”): Consumer information that is easy to understand and navigate and gives an impression of usefulness, clarity, efficiency, and openness. A consumer-friendly website looks professional and attractive.

Contact information: Information that consumers can use to reach child care agencies or programs.

Corrective action plan: A plan that describes a path to correct a noncompliance with a federal, state, or local regulation, usually accompanied with a timeline for doing so.

Easily accessible website: A website with content that is easy to access and find. It follows a natural progression that allows the user to move at his or her own direction and pace. Therefore, an effective navigation system is required. Content is broken up into easily digestible amounts. Pages that are only composed of scrolling text are not present. An internal search option is also a key element in making a site’s content easily accessible.

Eligible children: Those children whose families meet the state or territory requirements to receive CCDF child care subsidies, which pay for a portion of the child care expense.



Family engagement: Child care professionals and families engage in an interactive process of relationship-building in support of family and child outcomes. The process is mutual, respectful, and responsive to each family's language and culture. Meaningful relationship-building is ongoing and requires time and attention.

Grade-level readability: An appropriate reading level, which is measured using a tool such as the Flesch-Kincaid grade level test (this tool is available via Microsoft Word). An eighth-grade reading level is widely accepted as an appropriate level for information geared toward the general public. A sixth-grade reading level is the desired level for content geared toward parents.

Health and safety inspection: The physical presence of a designated/qualified inspector at a child care program to assess the program's compliance with health and safety requirements. These may also be referred to as "monitoring inspections" or "monitoring visits."

Health and safety practices: Daily application of health and safety methods to prevent injury and the spread of infectious /communicable diseases, and to respond appropriately to potential hazards or emergency situations.

Home-based child care (also known as a "family child care home"): Defined within the CCDBG Act of 2014 as "one individual who provides child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day, as the sole caregiver, in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)'s work". States and territories may have definitions of home-based child care that include additional details.

Major substantiated complaint: Those complaints against a child care provider found to be true that include serious injuries, child fatalities, and/or child maltreatment such as abuse or neglect.

Monitoring: A systematic review of compliance with standards or regulations. May include an observation of the program's facility and practices.

Navigation: The functionality of a website that facilitates movement from one web page to another web page. Often sites provide "Previous" and "Next" buttons, a "Home" button, and other tools, such as breadcrumbs, to ensure that the site's content is easily accessible through a variety of paths.

Plain language (also referred to as plain English): A way to communicate with members of your audience so that they can understand the first time they read or hear the message. Note that language that is plain to one set of readers may not be plain to others. It is considered plain if the intended audience finds it is easy to read, understand, and use.

Regulatory language: Language included in a rule, made and maintained by a legal authority, which defines a legal requirement and is designed to govern conduct. Regulatory language is a governmental order having the force of law. For example, language included in CCDF regulation is regulatory language.

Serious injury: A severe injury or creation of a condition requiring the child to be hospitalized or to receive significant medical attention.

Standards: A set of norms, indicators, or requirements established by federal, state, or local governments.

Statutory language: Text included in a law or statute that provides the legal framework for regulations or standards. For example, language included in the CCDBG Act of 2014 is statutory language.

Substantiated child abuse: The results of an investigation with findings that confirm physical, mental, or emotional maltreatment of a child; sexual molestation of a child; or depriving a child of necessary care (food, shelter, health care, or supervision), which either caused serious harm or created a substantial risk of serious harm.

Substantiated complaint: An investigated complaint with evidence to confirm the allegation.



Tag line: A phrase or short sentence placed directly below a webpage’s masthead (the masthead is the title at the top of the page). The tagline functions to quickly identify the purpose of the website. It may be a subtitle, an organizational motto, or a vision or purpose statement.

Timely manner: Posting monitoring and inspection results within a reasonable period of time to ensure maximum transparency and up-to-date information. The preamble to the CCDF Final Rule sets 90 days as a benchmark for posting reports.

Transparency: Access to clear and easily accessible information.

The State Capacity Building Center (SCBC) works with State and Territory leaders and their partners to create innovative early childhood systems and programs that improve results for children and families. The SCBC is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care.

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