CONSUMER EDUCATION WEBSITE
REQUIREMENTS

This tip sheet outlines the components required by the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) for consumer education websites. It also provides additional best practices to help states and territories design, implement, and maintain useful websites.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Content is available in multiple languages	Format supports individuals with disabilities	Content is written in plain language*

*All consumer education website content must be written in plain language so that users can fully understand the information and resources available. When writing in plain language, sentences should be short and direct and use present tense action verbs. The writer should also avoid jargon and use simple, familiar words. See Federal Plain Language Guidelines for recommendations on organizing content and using plain language writing principles

REQUIRED
State-Level
CONSUMER INFORMATION

✔ Contact Information for Lead Agency

✔ Information about local child care resource and referral services

✔ Plain language description of
  - licensing requirements
  - process for monitoring and inspecting child care providers
  - policies related to criminal background checks for child care providers and offenses that prevent individuals from working in child care

✔ Annual report of the following information:
  - Total number of deaths and serious injuries in child care settings by provider category and licensing status
  - Total number of children in care by provider category and licensing status
  - Total number of substantiated cases of child abuse in child care settings

✔ Interstate criminal background check process**

REQUIRED
Provider-Level
CONSUMER INFORMATION

✔ Zip-code based child care search

✔ Quality rating

✔ Timely posting of provider-specific monitoring and inspection reports for licensed child care providers, including:
  - Date of each inspection
  - Full monitoring and inspection reports in plain language
  - If full reports are not in plain language, a plain language summary must be posted with the full report
  - Inspection reports relating to substantiated complaints.
  - Inspection reports should include the prominent display of serious health and safety violations, including serious injuries or fatalities resulting from non-compliance
  - Corrective action taken by the State and child care provider for any identified non-compliance
  - Three years of reports for each provider

**This information element should be written for a provider audience.

CONSUMER EDUCATION WEBSITE
RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider including the following state-level information for consumers:

Child Care Assistance	**Types of Child Care and How to Choose Quality Care**	**Child Development and Developmental Screening**	**Understanding Quality Ratings**

IDEA Parts B and C

(for example, early intervention, preschool special education, k-12 special education)

Other Assistance

(for example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program)

Best Practice CONSIDERATIONS

✔ Format web content to make it easy for readers to visually scan (in other words, use concise headers, bullets, and white space).

✔ Organize your website content to make it logical (in other words, use clear categories and task-based—or action-oriented—menu labels, such as "apply for child care," "find child care," or "learn about your options").

✔ Make sure your consumer education website content and consumer education statement align. Post your consumer education statement.

✔ Develop a process to review website content regularly to ensure it stays accurate and helpful.

✔ Incorporate online inspection reports into child care search results, so families can review them during their search.

✔ Use your consumer education website as your main digital communications tool.

✔ Make sure your audience can find your consumer education website easily when they use an online search by applying search engine optimization techniques.

✔ Include specific contact information for families, such as who to contact to file a complaint.

Contact your regional office or State Systems Specialist for technical assistance.

Office of Child Care Resources

Office of Child Care. (2016). *Child Care and Development Fund final rule frequently asked questions.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/faq/child-care-and-development-fund-final-rule-frequently-asked-questions#Consumer%20Education

SCBC Best Practice Resources

Child Care State Capacity Building Center. (2021). *Template for displaying serious injuries, deaths, and instances of substantiated child abuse in child care.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care. https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/template-displaying-serious-injuries-deaths-and-instances-substantiated-child-abuse-child

Child Care State Capacity Building Center. (2021). *Consumer education websites: Resources for states and territories.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care. https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/consumer-education-websites-resources-states-and-territories

Office of Child Care. (n.d.). *Featured consumer education resources*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/featured-consumer-education-resources