

## **SERVING THE FAMILY**

### **CHILD CARE 6 - 1**

#### **Child Care Referrals**

**Supersedes:** Child Care 6-1 (9/30/16)

**References:** **52-2-701 - 704 & 52-2-711 - 713 MCA**  
**Sections 37.80.101-103, 37.80.201-202, 37.80.205-206, 37.80.301-302,**  
**37.80.305 -306, 37.80.315-316, 37.80.501 ARM 45**  
**CFR Part 98.20 – 47**

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#### **Overview**

In Montana, referral assistance to families needing to locate child care is provided by the regional Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] agencies. The referral service is available to all families in the state and is separate from the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program. A computerized matching of the family's needs with the profiles of child care providers in the area where the family resides or works provides an objective referral.

Families seeking child care referrals may do so by contacting the referral agency using the agency's toll-free telephone number, by mail, by e-mail, by visiting the agency in person, or through online search at [www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov](http://www.bestbeginnings.mt.gov).

Referral listings shall be distributed through a method requested by the parent, to include:

1. Mailing to the parent at no charge
2. Picking up by the parent
3. Faxing to the parent
4. E-mailing to the parent

Referral requests for immediate care (within two weeks) shall be processed and distributed to the parent within two (2) business days. Referral requests for future care (two+ weeks away) shall be processed and distributed to the parent within five business days.

Parents who rely on a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship shall not receive referrals for providers ineligible for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program.

Licensed, registered, and non-licensed child care providers can participate in child care referrals. Relative Care Providers cannot participate in child care referrals.

No fee shall be charged for referrals.

#### **Information Provided in a Referral**

At a minimum, a basic referral shall include the following:

- Provider [first and last name] or facility name
- Location (address is optional)
- Telephone number
- Age range of children
- Facility type
- Days/hours of business

Consumer education material  
STARS to Quality participant

### **Unbiased Referrals**

All referrals must be unbiased. To ensure unbiased referrals, Referral Specialists use NACCRRAware to select providers who meet the majority of the family's preferences. Referral Specialists shall be trained to refine their queries so that at least 3 providers come up in the query. An exception for a minimum number of matches will be made for hard to find care or for locations that do not have 3 providers with vacancies. An exception for a minimum number of matches will be made for hard to find care or for locations that do not have 3 providers with vacancies.

Child care referrals for families who have children with disabilities must not be discriminatory. A provider search for these families shall include the full range of child care providers available, not just those who indicate they serve children with disabilities.

### **Intake –'Child Care Need' Form**

Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] agencies will conduct an initial meeting with the parent by phone, e-mail, mail, or in person to gather information regarding the family's child care needs and preferences. CCR&R's should complete or have the parent complete the Child Care Need form to obtain the information needed for a referral.

### **Consumer Education Material**

Consumer education material must be professional in appearance and at a minimum include the following information:

- Guidance on how to select a quality child care program that has a checklist of items to be aware of when selecting quality care;
- A local phone number to file a complaint;
- Where to check for substantiated complaints;
- Information about the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program;
- Information on child development; and
- Information on the Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] agency in the area where the provider lives or works.
- Licensing and registration requirements;
- Guidance about standard child care business practices such as contracts, rates and fees, etc.; and

Child Care Resource and Referral [CCR&R] agencies are responsible for maintaining and updating the NACCRRAware database. Providers participating in child care referrals must update their information annually. If a provider doesn't update information annually, the provider won't be used for child care referrals. The regional CCR&R agency will contact the provider annually for updates.