

Child Care Electronic System (CCES)
Frequently Asked Questions
Certified Home Providers

Terminology

What is CCES?

The Department of Economic Security (DES) Child and Community Services Division (CCSD) is implementing a Child Care Electronic System (CCES) to develop the ability to conduct business with child care providers in a digital environment and improve important business processes and practices for providers and DES, and build resources for parents with full access to child care information and services. The first part of the CCES is electronic attendance tracking which will be implemented through the awarded vendor, KinderSystems®.

What is a DES Certified Family Child Care Provider?

DES Child and Community Services Division offers the opportunity for individuals to be Certified Home Providers or Certified In-Home Providers. Certified Home providers can care for up to 4 children in their home for compensation. A Certified In-Home provider can care for up to 6 children approved for DES child care assistance in the children's home if all children are part of the same sibling group or share the same guardian.

What are the teams within the Child and Community Services Division that a Provider will have contact with?

There are several teams within the Child and Community Services Division that a Certified Provider may have contact with for support.

- The first team is the Provider Network and Support Certification Team. This is the team of state licensing surveyors who are assigned to work directly with the certified home providers. Each certified home provider is assigned a licensing surveyor.
- The next team is the Payment Processing Unit or PPU. This is the team that processes all billing submitted for payment and addresses questions about the billing and payment process.
- The certified team may also be in communication with the Family Support and Eligibility (FSE) team. This is the team that accepts applications for child care assistance, determines eligibility for child care assistance, completes the certificates of authorizations for child care assistance, and processes redeterminations and any changes as it relates to child care eligibility.

KinderSystems® Terminology

What is KinderSystems®?

A suite of software programs and team of industry experts focused on helping government agencies administer child care services with improved operations and accountability.

What is KinderConnect®?

KinderConnect® is a web-based portal for providers, caregivers, parents, and guardians. It is the host for time and attendance tracking and reporting.

What is KinderSign®?

KinderSign® is an application for iPad and Android tablets that streamlines child care attendance tracking. The solution gives Certified providers an efficient way to collect attendance, report absences, send and receive messages, approve or deny transactions, and view case information.

What is KinderSmart®?

KinderSmart® is a mobile app for iPhone or Android devices that streamlines child care attendance tracking. The solution gives sponsors an efficient way to report attendance, report absences, read messages, and approve transactions.

What are the specific user roles available for KinderConnect®?

- Operator – anyone who uses or ‘operates’ the electronic system. This could be any internal DES roles, a provider role, or a family role.
- Internal DES Roles:
 - System Administrator – DES IT Systems staff. A system administrator has the highest level of access in order to provide support with attendance and system errors.
 - Region Administrator - DES Payment Processing Staff and Provider Network & Support Staff. A region administrator has access to provider attendance data for monitoring and billing practices.
- Provider Role:
 - Provider Administrator – this is the Certified Provider’s role. A provider administrator has certain privileges like being able to create other operators at that provider’s location or submit attendance for payment.
- Family Roles:
 - Sponsor - a primary caretaker, such as the parent, guardian or any other person that the child’s primary caretaker approves to check their child or children in and out of care. Each sponsor that the provider enters must be uniquely identified by a ten-digit phone number. Once a sponsor is entered into the system the provider must then associate the sponsor with the child(ren) that she or he is authorized to check in and out.

Training and Technical Assistance

Will the Certified Providers be required to use the CCES?

All Certified Providers will be required to submit attendance electronically. New Certified Providers will be trained and supported in using CCES. At renewal of the Provider Registration Agreement, existing providers will transition to CCES. The Provider Network and Support Administration will support providers with enrollment in the CCES. Communication will be sent out to all providers with a plan and timeline for CCES training and enrollment.

What training is available for Providers using CCES?

Training will be provided by KinderSystems® for all certified providers on how to use KinderSign, KinderSmart and KinderConnect. A certified provider will participate in training before they begin their participation in the CCES. Providers will start using the system to capture attendance on the 1st day of the following month the provider is trained. The training provided will include a live webinar with a main presenter and an assistant presenter and/or a scheduled pre-recorded webinar with a live presenter (who is there mainly to answer questions that are asked during the training).

Will training be available in Spanish?

Yes. Training and support will be available in Spanish.

Who should the provider contact if they need assistance with KinderConnect, KinderSmart or KinderSign?

Dial (833) 859-3433 or email at SupportAZ@KinderSystems.com. Support staff are available from 6:00 AM - Midnight, Mountain Standard Time, 7 days a week.

What types of support are available to the provider participating in CCES?

The Child and Community Services Division Provider Network and Support Certification Team is available to support a Certified Provider using KinderSystems® and transitioning to electronic attendance and submission of attendance for payment. The provider should continue to contact the Certification team with questions about the CCES Participation Agreement, authorizations or billing questions.

Contact KinderSystems® at (833) 859-3433 or SupportAZ@KinderSystems.com for any of the following:

- Using KinderConnect, KinderSign and/or KinderSmart
- Locked out of your account
- To reset your PIN
- Registration Concerns
- Reset or Forgot your password or your secret question
- To update Sponsor Accounts in KinderConnect

Operational Requirements

What equipment does the provider need?

The provider will need access to WIFI and power. The provider will need a laptop, PC, tablet (Apple or Android) or smartphone (Apple or Android) to run KinderConnect®. Even though you can use a smartphone for KinderConnect® it is not ideal due to the size of the screen.

The KinderSmart® application can be used on a Smartphone. In this case, providers will display a QR code near the entrance to the place of care – either on a computer screen or as a paper document that is printed. Parents hold this QR code up to the camera app on their smartphone to check (sign) children in and out of child care each day.

Once a month, DES providers will be required to log into KinderConnect® to verify attendance data, and hit the 'send' button to request payment. This step will require internet access, a laptop, PC or tablet with an internet browser to access KinderConnect®. A Smartphone can be used but note that there could be challenges with this due to the small screen.

What kinds of smartphones can run KinderSmart®?

The KinderSmart® app runs on Android and Apple smartphones. It does not run on other smartphone operating systems such as Windows, Nokia, Blackberry, etc.

What are the login credentials that get sent out to providers?

Provider login credentials consist of first and last name (these names must exactly match what is included in AZCCATS). A verification code which DES will send by email. Note that the verification code is used only once. After a provider gets through initial provider registration, the verification code is never used again.

Is it possible to add a child's picture to the KinderConnect account?

Yes. A provider can upload a photo on the 'Child Page' using KinderConnect®. This might be helpful if a provider is not using a CCMS and wants the picture to display in KinderSign upon successful login.

Provider Documentation

When does the provider need to submit attendance data?

The provider should transmit electronic attendance data for the current month no later than 10 calendar days following the last day of each calendar month. This includes providing all necessary information for children authorized for child care assistance as identified in the CCES Participation Agreement.

How often should the provider review attendance data?

The provider should review attendance data on a daily basis to determine if any children in attendance do not have an electronic sign in and sign out by the approved parent/guardian.

The provider is required to ensure that all attendance is complete and accurate prior to submission for payment. Note the following are very common errors with attendance:

- Incomplete time pairs -- an 'in' transaction without a corresponding 'out' transaction, or vice-versa. In other words, the parent checked their child in that morning, and forgot to check their child out that evening.
- Times out of sequence -- where an 'out' transaction occurs before the corresponding 'in' transaction. In other words, the parent checked their child out at the end of the day, and forgot to check the child that morning.

What if a sign-in or sign-out of a child is missed?

For children receiving child care assistance who were not electronically signed in and out by the approved parent/guardian, the child care provider may correct the electronic attendance record, per the signed CCES Participation Agreement. Any correction to the record must be completed prior to the child's start of the next day of care.

Will the provider still need to use paper sign in and sign out sheets?

No paper sign in/out sheets will be necessary. Providers can use a paper sign in/out sheet as a backup until the CCES is running smoothly or should there be an internet outage at the place of care.

Child Certificate of Authorizations and Payment Processing

How often do providers submit attendance for payment?

Providers are to submit electronic attendance data for the current month no later than 10 calendar days following the last day of each calendar month. This includes providing all necessary information for children authorized for child care assistance as identified in the CCES Participation Agreement.

A provider may only submit attendance for a child one time per month. Additional attendance will require a supplemental billing form and communication with the Payment Processing Unit.

The provider will sign into their KinderConnect® account, review attendance data, and verify that the attendance information is correct for all children who attended that month. The provider will submit the attendance data from KinderConnect to AZCCATS for payment processing.

What if there is an attendance error identified in KinderConnect?

KinderConnect® will flag attendance with yellow or red highlights. Attendance that is shown as yellow or red will require correction by the Provider.

- Red means an invalid time has been entered, such as the 'In' time was before an 'Out' time.
- Yellow means that a corresponding 'In' or 'Out' time is missing. All attendance for days where child care was provided should have an in and out time.

All invalid or missing attendance will require the provider to correct or remove the attendance in KinderConnect®. If times are missing or incorrect the provider can correct them in the Attendance Detail page. Additional support can be found on the [CCES Information Site](#).

Will Providers continue to receive paper billing documents?

Yes, DES will continue to mail paper billing documents to all providers until CCES is fully implemented and electronic billing documents are available. Providers are not to submit the paper billing documents for payment processing. An exception would be if the KinderConnect® System is down, i.e., an internet outage.

Do providers still need to use the AZCCATS billing document if they are submitting through the CCES?

No, providers participating in the CCES will submit their attendance through KinderConnect and are NOT to submit the paper billing document. There will be circumstances when attendance cannot be submitted for a child through KinderConnect and the paper billing form will need to be submitted. Providers will be trained on these specific scenarios.

Will providers receive anything in place of the paper billing documents?

DES will continue to mail paper billing documents to all providers until the CCES is fully implemented and electronic billing documents are available. Once the CCES is fully implemented, DES will stop mailing billing documents, and all providers using the CCES for payment processing will be sent a single sheet billing document to use in circumstances requiring the provider to use a manual billing document.

What documents will providers receive to show the payments that were processed?

Providers who receive warrants (checks) will continue to receive a warrant (check) stub through mail which shows how much the provider was paid and the listing of children.

Providers who are paid through direct deposit will continue to receive a direct deposit stub.

If there is a change to a child's authorization or when an authorization is backdated, what action does the provider need to take?

Providers are able to submit for attendance on authorized children according to the dates included on the certificate of authorization. Should the dates change with an authorization, such as backdating the authorization to align with when the application for child care assistance is submitted, a provider will be able to submit for the newly authorized timeframe, as long as the child did attend the program on the dates authorized. Below are specific billing scenarios to be aware of when submitting attendance for payment.

Billing Scenarios

Scenario 1 - Split Authorization in a Month

A provider can only submit attendance to DES once a month per child. When attendance for a specified child is submitted to DES for payment for a partial month, the provider cannot submit attendance for the remainder of the month when a new authorization is created for that child that allows for the full month to be paid.

The provider would submit the remaining attendance for the child through a supplemental billing document. The supplemental billing document will be generated and sent to the provider. The provider must submit the supplemental billing document via email with the printed Attendance Per Student Report for that specific child, and not through KinderConnect.

If a child's attendance record has not been submitted to DES via KinderConnect for the specified month, the provider should submit the child's attendance to DES electronically, a supplemental billing document is not required.

How this will work through the CCES:

- A newly approved provider will not be able to register with KinderSystems® until the authorization is completed, as the P number and the authorization are both needed for a pin number to be generated.
- The pin number is necessary to register with KinderSystems®.
 - The Certification team will be responsible for tracking the PINs so the Certified team will know that there is an issue with an authorization and can follow up with DES Family Support and Eligibility.

- Once the authorization is in place it will be backdated to the start date.
- The provider will submit paper billing for the timeframe of the start of the enrollment into CCES.

Scenario 2 - Paid Absences

When attendance for a specified child with a split authorization (or two authorizations) is submitted to DES for payment for a month, and there are paid absences included within the authorization period, there must be at least one attendance unit in each authorization period for the absence to be paid through the CCES. The provider cannot submit for a paid absence(s) without an attendance unit within an authorization period through the CCES.

A supplemental billing will be required to pay for the absences that occurred for the authorization period without attendance for the specified child. The supplemental billing document will be generated and sent to the provider. The provider must submit the supplemental billing document via email with the printed Attendance Per Student Report for that specific child.

Scenario 3 - Age Restrictions

- Provider serves children ages 1 and up
- Child's DOB 02052024
- Child has an authorization that started 02062025 (Effective day after turning 1)
- Payment for February is denied because the provider does not serve children under age 1

AZCCATS is coded to read the child's age on the first day of the month so for this example reads the child's age as 0 (child was 12 months on 2/1/2025 and turned 1 on 2/5/2025). Because the System reads that the child is age 0 it will not pay out any of the units for that month. This scenario would require a supplemental billing form to be ordered.

How far back can a provider submit billing and be reimbursed?

The provider should transmit electronic attendance data for the current month no later than 10 calendar days following the last day of each calendar month. This includes providing all necessary information for children authorized for child care assistance as identified in the Provider Registration Agreement (PRA). Billing will not be accepted after the ninth (9) month after services were provided.

Provider Type and Status

What happens when a Certified Family Child Care Home Provider changes to a DES Contracted Group Home (A provider changes their provider type from Certified Provider to DES Contracted Group Home Provider)?

When a Certified provider wants to become a DES Contracted Group Home the Certified provider must apply and complete the process to become a DES Contracted Group Home. Once approved as a DES Contracted Group Home the provider information will be changed in AZCCATS and sent to KinderConnect®. Updated authorizations will be initiated for the children authorized for child care from AZCCATS and sent to KinderConnect®. Old authorizations will end. Certified Providers interested in becoming a DES Contracted Group Home will need to contact CCSD Licensed Centers and Group Homes at ccacontracts@azdes.gov.

What happens when a provider's status changes?

A Certified Provider status can be active, hold, or closure.

- Active: When a Certified Provider is active with a current authorization, AZCCATS and KinderConnect® interact as normal.
- Hold: When a Certified Provider is on hold, a provider is unable to be paid until the reason for the hold has been addressed. AZCCATS and KinderConnect® interact as normal.
- Closure: When a Certified Provider is closed, the Family Support and Eligibility Team is notified and any existing authorizations will be stopped. AZCCATS will send any changes in authorizations to KinderConnect®.