

# TOOTRiS Acquires WorkLife Systems to Champion Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies

*Preserving legacy. Powering growth.  
Supporting the experts who have built the  
backbone of early childhood for over 50  
years.*

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[TOOTRiS](#), the nation's largest and most comprehensive Child Care platform and services provider, proudly announces its acquisition of [WorkLife Systems](#) (WLS), a trusted and mission-driven software provider that supports

hundreds of Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies. This milestone marks the beginning of an exciting new era — one that helps CCR&Rs thrive in a modern, technology-based landscape while honoring the legacy and local expertise that have sustained early childhood care and education for decades.

"For over two decades, Theresa Fjelstad has done extraordinary work in leading WorkLife Systems, delivering essential technology that has helped CCR&R agencies support families and providers more effectively. We are honored to welcome WLS into TOOTRiS," said Alessandra Lezama, TOOTRiS CEO. "When I founded TOOTRiS, my goal was to transform Child Care by making high-quality care accessible and affordable for all. The deep, local commitment of CCR&Rs — who are the heart of early learning — will be further empowered through this partnership. Today marks a pivotal step in uniting technology, investment, and grassroots expertise to strengthen the future of Child Care and better serve the families who depend on it."

## A Shared Mission: Stronger Together

WLS was founded by Theresa Fjelstad, a visionary leader who spent 20 years building technology that became the backbone of CCR&R operations — from provider referrals and subsidy tracking to grant administration, professional development, and technical assistance.



**TOOTRiS**  
Powering Absolute Potential



Now, with TOOTRiS as its new steward, this trusted platform will continue to evolve based on input from CCR&Rs — preserving its integrity while gaining powerful enhancements from automation tools, real-time capabilities, and dedicated expert teams that TOOTRiS offers.

“I’m incredibly proud of what we’ve built at WLS,” said Fjelstad. “But I knew it was time for this platform — and the agencies it serves — to take the next bold step. Alessandra has remarkable vision, and a genuine desire to uplift CCR&Rs and strengthen the Child Care industry as a whole, and that’s exactly the kind of partnership these agencies need. TOOTRiS is the only partner I could imagine carrying this mission forward with the same heart, purpose, and drive to make a difference.”

### What This Means for CCR&Rs

Today CCR&Rs are Child Care infrastructure anchors in their local communities, supporting millions of families and empowering Child Care providers. Through this acquisition, TOOTRiS reaffirms its deep respect for this legacy and makes a commitment to:

- Explore public-private partnerships aimed at helping CCR&Rs diversify funding and reduce reliance on state and federal contracts.
- Elevate CCR&R expertise of communities, providers, and families by supporting and amplifying their insights through technology and new partnerships.
- Support and upgrade WLS systems, based on input given by CCR&Rs, through the powerful capabilities of TOOTRiS technology, including state-of-the-art automation, real-time availability tools, and subsidy payment processing.

### Looking Ahead

TOOTRiS and WLS share a unified vision: to make high-quality Child Care more accessible, affordable, and equitable for every family by strengthening the very agencies that make that possible. Together, we’re creating a connected network where CCR&Rs are supported and celebrated.

“Theresa’s legacy is one of trust, innovation, and community,” said Cindy Lehnhoff, Director of the National Child Care Association (NCCA). “And she’s passing the torch to a team that truly gets it. TOOTRiS is the partner we need to build a more responsive and equitable Child Care system.”

“Simply put, this merger is about empowerment,” added Lezama. “CCR&Rs are already doing extraordinary work. TOOTRiS is here to help them do even more — faster, easier, and at greater scale.”

As the landscape of early learning continues to evolve, TOOTRiS is proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the CCR&Rs who have been shaping it for more than 50 years — and ready to power their next 50 years.

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