



Audit Summary

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State of Rhode Island Child Care Provider Compliance With Health and Safety Standards

**Audit Period – July 2022
through February 2025**

AUDIT FINDING AND CONCLUSIONS

Our audit identified noncompliance with one or more State child care licensing requirements relating to health and safety standards at all 50 providers reviewed. Although the Department of Human Services (DHS), Office of Child Care (OCC), conducted the required desk audits and site visits at all 50 providers that we reviewed, these procedures did not adequately ensure provider compliance with health and safety requirements. Our audit specifically noted:

- 232 instances of noncompliance with provider facility health and safety requirements.
- 920 instances of noncompliance with documentation requirements for providers and staff. Documentation deficiencies were noted for 320 of the 464 staff members reviewed.
- Noncompliance with background check requirements for providers and staff were noted at 26 of 50 child care providers reviewed. Required documentation was lacking for 72 of the 464 child care staff members reviewed.
- Noncompliance with child record documentation requirements were noted at 43 of 50 child care providers reviewed. Child record documentation requirements were not met for 174 of the 622 children reviewed at provider locations.

These instances of potentially hazardous conditions and noncompliance indicate that additional measures need to be taken to ensure that providers comply with mandated health and safety requirements for children in their care.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

Our audit objective was to determine whether OCC's monitoring procedures ensured that Family Child Care (FCC) and Child Care Center (CCC) providers complied with licensing requirements related to the health and safety of children in their care.

Specifically, our audit reviewed OCC provider monitoring documentation for evidence of compliance with licensing requirements during the two-year period from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024. These audit procedures focused on OCC's documentation in relation to the initial licensure or licensure renewal of each sampled provider during the two-year period. Examples of critical licensing requirements include completed provider applications, background record checks, facility and home inspections (e.g., fire, lead, radon), and documented health and safety policies (e.g., emergency preparedness and response plans).

Our audit also included child care provider facility inspections to evaluate the effectiveness of OCC's monitoring procedures in ensuring child care provider compliance with health and safety requirements. Provider facility site visits were performed from November 2024 through February 2025. Facility site visits focused on physical security, operating requirements relating to health and safety, and reviewing documentation required for current employees and children enrolled with the provider.

REPORT SIGNIFICANCE

Child care provider audits are crucial for ensuring the health and safety of enrolled children. They serve as a vital tool for monitoring compliance with regulations, identifying potential hazards, and protecting children from harm, ultimately improving the overall quality of care. This audit highlights the need for improved oversight and monitoring of the State's child care providers.

AUDIT STANDARDS

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards (GAS)*. Management's response to the findings and recommendations, including planned corrective actions, are detailed in our report.

AUDIT PROCEDURES

For the 50 child care providers in our sample, we elected to evaluate compliance with State regulation divided into the following 4 categories:

- Facility health and safety requirements;
- Staff documentation requirements;
- Provider and staff background check documentation requirements; and
- Provider child record documentation requirements.

A complete listing of all RI Child Care Regulations evaluated during our audit can be found in Appendix A of the report.

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AUDIT RESULTS

Overall Results - Table A shows the range of overall provider compliance (as a percentage of the number of compliance criteria applicable to the provider) for the 50 sample providers evaluated during our audit. The table shows that 60% of child care providers were found to have significant noncompliance (compliance percentages less than 90% - noncompliance of 10% or greater) with health and safety regulations. The results also show that 7 of the 50 providers (14%) had noncompliance of greater than 25% of the regulations reviewed during our audit.

Table A - Child Care Health and Safety Requirements Provider Compliance Analysis			
Overall Compliance Ranges	CCC	FCC	Total %
Greater than 95%	3	6	18%
90% - 95%	7	4	22%
85% - 89%	5	8	26%
80% - 84%	5	0	10%
75% - 79%	2	3	10%
Less than 75%	3	4	14%
Total (# of providers)	25	25	100%
Number of Compliance Requirements Reviewed (CCC - 58) (FCC - 58)			

While Table A details compliance based on the overall number of compliance criteria applicable to each of the 50 providers reviewed, Table B summarizes provider compliance percentages for the audit areas evaluated, highlighting significant noncompliance (>10%) in the four compliance areas as follows:

- Facility Health and Safety Requirements – 32 Providers (64%)
- Provider / Staff Background Check Requirements – 19 Providers (38%)
- Provider / Staff Documentation Requirements – 28 Providers (56%)
- Child Documentation Requirements – 16 providers (32%)

Table B - Overall Results by Audit Area Provider Compliance Results				
Compliance Percentage	Facility Health and Safety	Provider / Staff Background Checks	Provider / Staff Documentation Requirements	Child Documentation Requirements
Greater than 95%	26%	50%	30%	56%
90% - 95%	10%	12%	14%	12%
85% - 89%	28%	8%	12%	10%
80% - 84%	16%	12%	8%	10%
75% - 79%	8%	8%	12%	0%
Less than 75%	12%	10%	24%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

In addition, the following number of providers had compliance rates lower than 75% (lowest level of compliance aggregated in the report) in these areas:

- Facility Health and Safety Requirements – 6 Providers (12%)
- Provider / Staff Background Check Requirements – 5 Providers (10%)
- Provider / Staff Documentation Requirements – 12 Providers (24%)
- Child Documentation Requirements – 6 providers (12%)

AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommended that DHS OCC:

- 1) Improve child care provider compliance with health and safety requirements by a) ensuring that all inspection deficiencies noted are immediately addressed by providers, b) developing a training program to improve ongoing provider compliance with health and safety requirements, and c) determining the appropriate level and frequency of on-site provider monitoring needed to significantly improve provider compliance (inclusive of the resources needed for enhanced monitoring).
- 2) Improve monitoring of provider compliance with staff documentation requirements by enhancing documentation reviews for providers and staff during site visits.
- 3) (a) Improve monitoring of provider compliance with employee background checks (e.g., criminal background checks, Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry Check) by enhancing documentation reviews for providers and staff during site visits. (b) Implement procedures requiring providers to submit documentation of staff background checks to OCC for review and approval prior to work commencement.
- 4) Improve monitoring of child record documentation requirements (e.g., immunization records, emergency treatment forms) by enhancing documentation reviews during site visits.

The audit also highlighted an additional matter, requiring reporting under GAS, warranting consideration by those charged with oversight of the State's child care program.

The audit report is available on our website - www.oag.ri.gov or by calling the office at 401.222.2435