

TO: License-exempt child care programs administered by public/private schools or municipalities

FROM: Liz Proietti, Director, OEC Licensing Division

RE: Updates to the License-Exempt Health and Safety Requirements

DATE: October 4, 2024

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The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act authorizes the federal child care subsidy known as the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). This is the primary federal funding source for providing low-income families that are working or participating in education and training with help paying for child care, and for improving the quality of care, learning, and development for all children. Connecticut's subsidy program is Care 4 Kids. You are receiving this notice because your program is 1) administered by a public or private school or municipality and is, therefore, exempt from licensing requirements; and 2) participates in Care 4 Kids. Such programs must comply with health and safety requirements.

Every three years, CT must complete a new CCDF plan which must be approved by the Federal Office of Child Care (OCC) before the issuance of funds is authorized for the next federal fiscal year. The plan submitted for the 2025-2027 fiscal years includes updates to the license-exempt health and safety requirements. These updates are highlighted in this memo and a copy of the revised requirements is attached for your information.

**Effective October 1, 2024**, inspections of all license-exempt programs will include monitoring of compliance with the following changes:

#### **Administration**

Written policies, plans and procedures must include child abuse and neglect, including recognizing the signs of maltreatment, as well as procedures in case of illness and emergencies. Programs shall require that new program staff receive employee orientation and that staff receive annual training on the programs policies, plans and procedures. Documentation of such training shall be maintained on site.

#### **Staffing**

The staff to child ratio shall be at least one staff for every ten children ages three to five, and one staff to every fifteen children for ages five to twelve. Group size for field trips, outdoor play, and activities exclusively for school age children shall not exceed thirty children.

Children born in September, October, November, and December who are not enrolled in kindergarten but who will turn five (5) by January 1 shall be deemed eligible to enroll as a school age child provided such program receives written authorization from such child's parent and the director to enroll such child in the school age program. The written authorization shall be maintained at the child care program.

Programs shall ensure documentation of compliance with background check requirements for staff is maintained at the child care program.

Staff shall complete at least one percent of the total annual hours worked of professional development and the operator shall maintain in the child care program documentation of such training. At least one training shall include a health and safety topic as defined in 45 CFR § 98.44(b)(1). Such health and safety topics may now also include the recognition and prevention of child maltreatment, child abuse and neglect.

### **Physical Plant and Program Practices**

Bio contaminants, including but not limited to, blood, bodily fluids or excretions that may spread infectious disease, shall be disposed of in a safe manner and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, when applicable.

#### **Procedures in case of illness**

- (1) Staff members shall be knowledgeable about signs and symptoms of childhood illness and shall be responsible for the initial observation of each child upon arrival and continued observation throughout the day for such signs and symptoms.
- (2) Any child showing suspicious signs or symptoms of short-term contagious illness shall be placed in a designated isolation area with continual visual supervision by staff. The parent(s) or other authorized adult shall be called immediately to remove the child from the program.
- (3) Standard precautions and sanitary practices are used to prevent the spread of infection.

Proper Hygiene - Children and staff shall wash their hands with soap and water before eating or handling food and after toileting.

Programs with questions about these new requirements should reach out to their Licensing Specialist at the CT Office of Early Childhood. The Office of Early Childhood thanks you for your partnership in ensuring children's safety. We believe these new requirements will benefit children, parents, and staff in meeting the needs of children.

