



Day Care Licensing Annual Report to the General Assembly

FY 2025

This report is a requirement of the 2012 amendment to Section 7.10 of the Illinois Child Care Act (PA 97-1096) that mandates the Department of Children and Family Services provide the General Assembly a comprehensive annual report on its progress in meeting performance measures and goals related to child day care licensing.

September 30, 2025

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INTRODUCTION

This report is a requirement of the 2012 amendment to the Illinois Child Care Act that mandates the Department of Children and Family Services provide the General Assembly with a comprehensive annual report on its progress in meeting performance measures and goals related to child day care licensing. The data sets and performance measures included in this report were developed in conjunction with the provider community, advocates and other stakeholders.

Day care licensing staff are responsible for licensing day care homes, group day care Homes, and day care centers as well as assessing facility requests for exemption from licensure. Renewals for the above three facility types are conducted on a three-year cycle. Licensing is a limited form of regulatory administration that grants the licensee the authority to operate the facility. Unlike most other licenses issued in Illinois, there is no fee to receive or renew an Illinois day care license. Licensing staff utilize and apply provisions of the Child Care Act, and apply specific rules related to each facility type (Rules 406, 407 and 408), Rule 377 (Facilities Exempt from Licensure), Rule 383 (Licensing Enforcement) and Rule 385 (Background Checks) to perform their duties.

Licensing staff monitor licensees through at least one unannounced visit per year as well as through the investigation of complaints regarding both licensed and unlicensed facility operation. Unlike many regulatory agencies, DCFS does not have the authority to assess fines when licensing violations are cited. Instead, DCFS has to rely on best efforts to screen out unfit licensees during the application or renewal process and a combination of provider education and voluntary corrective action plans to prevent and correct violations. To prevent major disruptions to families, the Department's limited authority to revoke a license is used only in the most extraordinary circumstances.

As of June 30, 2025, there were 8,548 total licensed Day care facilities:

2,834	licensed Day care centers
4,979	licensed Day care homes
<u>735</u>	<u>licensed Group Day care homes</u>
8,548	total licensed Day care facilities

This represents a decline in total licensed childcare providers, down 161 facilities from 8,709 on July 1, 2024. This decline can be attributed to several factors ranging from the economy, the fields report of low wages, reported incidents of low enrollment in certain geographical areas, the lack of staff & numerous parents working remotely as well as the continual increase of license exempt programs. FY25 Total of Exemption Request Received 858 (this include return submittals): Exemption reviewed by a Statewide Panel

(Comprised of Regional Licensing Administrators, Legal & Associate Deputy) 858 (This includes return submittals), Of the 858, 449 were considered complete submittals and 344 were returned incomplete (this does not include return submittals), School Age Exemptions granted totaling 649 , 105 were determined to not meet School age exemption requirements. 72 exemptions were granted under Rule 377. The exemption requests increased by 100 in FY 25 there were approximately 758 requests for exemptions status in FY 2024.

SECTION 1: DETAILS ON THE FUNDING FOR CHILD DAY CARE LICENSING

A. Total Number of Full-time employees working on child day care licensing.

	Licensing staff as of July 1, 2025 (per Office of Employee Support)		
	Active Headcount	Actual Headcount	Pending Vacancies
Day Care Licensing Representatives (DCLRs)	135	151	16
Day Care Licensing Supervisors (PSAs)	10	23	13
Regional Licensing Administrators (PSAs)	2	4	2
Associate Deputy Director	1	1	0
Support Staff (Office Associates)	12	16	4
Staff on Leave or other assignment	(2)	-	--
Total Day Care Staff	150	195	35
Total Active Day Care Staff	150	195	35

As of 7-1-25, there were 133 Day Care Licensing Representatives (DCLR) on active status, there are 35 Statewide Vacancies as well which includes DCLR's, Office Associates, PSA's & RLA's. There are 11 management staff in the Division's headcount: 8 supervisors and 2 Regional Managers (1 PSA still needed in Southern region, 4 needed in Central

region, 1 needed in Northern and 6 in Cook), 4 Regional Administrator positions, of which 2 are currently vacant with 2 supervisors serving as acting RLA for Northern & Central Regions. Vacancies are posted and filled as they arise, keeping in mind the Division's overall assigned maximum headcount and giving priority to those areas where caseloads are highest, and vacancies have remained unfilled the longest.

There are presently 12 Office Associate clerical positions assigned to licensing teams spread across the state. There is an Office Coordinator position that staffs the Day Care/Adoption Information Line and one additional office associate that acts as receptionist at 1911 S. Indiana Ave site in Chicago (where all Cook County licensing representatives, supervisors, the Day Care Information Line, Cook Regional Licensing Administrator, and The Deputy Director etc. are housed).

Present Vacancies Statewide: 16 Day Care Licensing Representatives, 13 Supervisors, 2 Regional Licensing Administrators and 4 office associates. We are currently operating with 135 DCLR's statewide and it is important to note that the staffing number has continuously fluctuated and is not steadily consistent as staff come and go sporadically.

FY 25 Funded headcount for Day Care Licensing Unit was 137 staff.

FY 2025 STAFFING TRENDS

Licensing continued to see swings in staffing on almost a monthly basis. FY 2025 continues to see a rise in staff transferring for promotions or higher paying positions either within or outside of the Department. Also, staff are transferring/leaving for positions that do not require field work. FY 25 displayed the highest rise in management staff leaving for other position against the uncertainty of the Licensing Division transferring to a new agency & the discrepancy of union and merit comp pay gap.

There has been continued success hiring of new licensing representatives, however the Department has not been able to obtain the additional management staff. This does not produce immediate measurable effects with respect to improving the Division's performance. Also Day Care Licensing Representatives and Supervisors must undergo very specific training on applicable Statutes, Rules and Procedures and **get certified in those statutes and rules.** They study for and are required to receive a passing grade on four tests-- the Illinois Child Care Act, and Rules 406, 407, and 408 (Day Care Home, Center and Group Day Care Home standards). Additionally, they must familiarize themselves with other Rules, including Rule 377 (License Exempt Facilities), Rule 382 (Advertising by Unlicensed Facilities), Rule 383 (Monitoring, Complaints and Enforcement), Rule 385 (Background Checks), and 386 (Children's Product Safety) before they can make licensing recommendations and carry caseloads. Adequate training is a key step in ensuring consistency among practice statewide.

Names of all funding used to support child day care licensing:

1. Child Care Development Fund
2. General Revenue Fund

C. The amount of expenditures claimed against federal funding sources

Child Care Development Fund (by IL fiscal year)

Please see table on page 38.

Child Care Development Fund—FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR FIGURES						
		QE 12/31/13	QE 3/31/14	QE 6/30/14	QE 9/30/14	FFY 2014
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,357,722	7,210,512	7,373,443	7,173,803	29,115,480
Allocation Percentage		62.24%	58.88%	64.68%	64.18%	62.50%
Total CCDF Claim		4,579,538	4,245,494	4,769,457	4,604,106	18,198,595
FFY 2015		QE 12/31/14	QE 3/31/15	QE 6/30/15	QE 9/30/15	FFY 2015
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,414,833	7,199,652	7,445,003	7,159,161	22,059,538
Allocation Percentage		66.19%	66.94%	67.18%	64.31%	66.77%
Total CCDF Claim		4,908,068	4,819,406	5,001,703	4,604,013	14,729,177
FY2016		QE 12/31/15	QE 3/31/16	QE 6/30/16	QE 9/31/16	FFY 2016
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,017,478	6,994,432	7,179,508	6,757,614	21,191,418
Allocation Percentage		60.517%	60.48%	62.55%	62.53%	61.18%
Total CCDF Claim		4,246,787	4,229,978	4,491,078	4,225,559	12,967,843
FY 2017		QE 12/31/16	QE 3/31/17	QE 6/30/17	QE 9/31/17	FFY 2017
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,030,915	6,621,763	7,145,295	6,721,032	27,519,004
Background Checks		158,762	123,550	160,117	156,840	599,269
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		6,872,153	6,498,213	6,985,177	6,564,192	26,919,735
Allocation Percentage		62.53%	62.33%	63.08%	62.78%	62.68%
TOTAL CCDF Claim		4,297,278	4,050,340	4,406,314	4,121,341	16,875,272
FY 2018		QE 12-31-17	QE 3-31-18	QE 6-30-18	QE 9- 31-18	FFY 2018
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,142,207	6,783,442	6,931,481	6,291,704	26,148,833
Background Checks		168,712	164,063	173,971	201,597	708,343
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		5,973,495	6,619,379	6,757,510	6,090,107	25,440,490
Allocation Percentage		62.54%	62.68%	63.11%	62.44%	62.55%
TOTAL CCDF Claim		3,735,835	4,148,808	4,264,441	3,802,940	15,952,024

FFY 2019		QE 12-31-18	QE 3-31-19	QE 6-30-19	QE 9-30-19	FFY 2019
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,930,925	6,820,056	7,164,541	6,648,627	27,564,149
Background Checks		133,156	148,659	163,170	140,558	585,543
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		6,797,769	6,671,397	7,001,371	6,508,069	26,978,606
Allocation Percentage		61.77%	61.67%	63.22%	63.53%	62.55%
Total CCDF Claim		4,199,067	4,114,553	4,426,057	4,134,860	16,874,537

FFY 2020		QE 12-31-19	QE 3-31-20	QE 6-30-20	QE 9-30-20	FFY 2020
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,957,633	7,049,643	6,923,479	6,897,975	27,828,730
Background Checks		179,711	214,060	110,123	194,970	698,864
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		6,777,921	6,835,584	6,813,357	6,703,005	27,129,866
Allocation Percentage		64.76%	64.54%	63.54%	63.57%	64.10%
Total CCDF Claim		4,389,465	4,411,719	4,329,137	4,260,947	17,391,267

FFY 2021		QE 12-31-20	QE 3-31-21	QE 6-30-21	QE 9-30-21	FFY 2021
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,717,081	6,388,558	6,747,942	6,999,398	26,852,979
Background Checks		198,817	188,623	176,579	175,519	739,538
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		6,518,264	6,199,935	6,571,363	6,823,879	26,113,441
Allocation Percentage		62.72%	64.51%	62.25%	62.15%	62.91%
Total CCDF Claim		4,088,308	3,999,378	4,090,621	4,240,944	16,419,252

FFY 2022		QE 12-31-21	QE 3-31-22	QE 6-30-22	QE 9-30-22	FFY 2022
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,746,895	6,579,068	7,513,820	27,839,447	20,325,627
Background Checks		193,569	234,477	258,952	935,689	676,738
	Adjusted Day Care Licensing	6,553,327	6,344,591	7,254,868	26,903,758	19,648,890
Allocation Percentage		62.37%	60.80%	64.58%	65.63%	63.35%
Total CCDF Claim		4,087,387	3,857,575	4,359,888	4,761,535	17,066,385

FFY 2023		QE 12-31-22	QE 3-31-23	QE 6-30-23	QE 9-30-23	FFY 2023
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,481,679	7,003,808	6,853,246	8,715,067	31,259,184
Background Checks		270,760	263,503	237,540	205,533	977,337
	Adjusted Day Care Licensing	7,210,919	6,740,305	6,615,706	8,509,533	30,281,847
Allocation Percentage		66.03%	66.87%	68.14%	69.09%	67.53%
Total CCDF Claim		4,761,528	4,507,464	4,507,956	5,878,839	20,463,524

FFY 2024		QE 12-31-23	QE 3-31-24	QE 6-30-24	QE 9-30-24	FFY 2024
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,749,363	7,404,509			15,153,872
Background Checks		188,053	152,359			340,412
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		7,561,310	7,252,150	-	-	14,813,460
Allocation Percentage		71.04%	69.92%			70.48%
Total CCDF Claim		5,371,851	5,070,534	-	-	10,442,385

FFY 2025		QE 12-31-24	QE 3-31-25	QE 6-30-25	QE 9-30-25	FFY 2025
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,906,523	8,131,777	8,484,398		24,522,698
Background Checks		163,289	195,938	350,209		709,436
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		7,743,234	7,935,839	8,134,188	-	23,813,262
Allocation Percentage		71.53%	72.28%	72.67%		72.16%
Total CCDF Claim		5,538,415	5,736,270	5,911,049	-	17,185,733

D. The identity of federal funding sources: Childcare Development Fund
E. How funds are appropriated, including appropriations for line staff, support staff, supervisory staff, and training and other expenses and the funding history of such licensing since fiscal year 2014.

Please refer to chart of appropriations on pages 38-43.

SECTION 2: CURRENT STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS OF DAY CARE LICENSING REPRESENTATIVES AND DAY CARE LICENSING SUPERVISORS IN COMPARISON WITH STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS SPECIFICATIONS IN THE JOB DESCRIPTIONS:

As of 6-30-2024:

Field of Study	Day Care Licensing Representative Qualifications		PSA Qualifications	
	Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees	Bachelor's Degrees	Master's Degrees
Social Work (BSW or MSW)	20	15		20
Psychology	17	8		1
Social Studies	18			
Education	50	19		1
Law Enforcement	4	2		
Fine Arts and Letters	4			
Home Economics	1			
Business Management	4			
Non-MSW Social Work	9	9		
Statistics	1			

Does not include undergraduate degrees for those with graduate degrees.

Please begin on page 34 for details on the “*Current Education & Experience Qualifying Criteria*” that CMS uses when considering Day Care Licensing Representative candidates.

SECTION 3: DATA HISTORY FOR FY 2010 TO FY 2025 ON DCLR CASELOADS AND STAFFING LEVELS IN ALL AREAS OF THE STATE:

The average day care caseload statewide as of July 1, 2025, is 64 facilities per worker. **When actual workload based on facility type is considered (known as weighted caseloads) the average rises to 75 facilities per worker. (Please note that these number reflect as of 7.1.25 it does not reflect the staffing shift through out FY25 which would reflect higher worker caseloads)**

Day Care caseloads may either be blended (a mixture of both homes and centers) or

specialized (only homes or only centers). One region remains specialized, and the three others are now blended. No region’s performance, however, can be attributed strictly to the manner in which cases are assigned.

With regard to the number of cases in a caseload, it is important to keep in mind that all caseloads are not equal. For instance, a caseload of 75 Day Care Centers would not be comparable to one with a caseload of 75 Day Care Homes. The work of licensing Day Care Centers, which can serve sometimes hundreds of children, employ scores of staff, and have many more rules relative to programming, records, equipment, etc., is significantly more detailed and complex. Licensing a center is more complicated and time-consuming than a home. To better illustrate the fact that a worker with 75 Day Care Centers on their caseload would be overloaded, while a worker with only 75 Day Care Homes would not have enough. The figures are also presented for “weighted caseloads.” At present, the Department does not have AFSCME-negotiated average caseload standards; these weights and figures are meant solely for illustrative purposes.

Only for the purposes of this report, we have assigned values of 2 points to Day Care Centers, 1 ½ points to Group Day Care Homes and 1 point to Day Care Homes. Caseloads for each region were then configured considering the total number of each of the three facility types. **The results indicate that when facilities are weighted, the statewide average caseload is comparable to serving 75 facilities per person as of July 1,2025.**

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends a caseload average of 50:1 to allow for bi-annual visits. This would require the Department to employ 235-day care licensing representatives, which will be 100 more licensing representatives than the Department currently employs or 42% more staff than what DCFS has now for Day care licensing and monitoring.

The Department is striving for a 75:1 average statewide.

FY 2010					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	43	3,902	4,946	91	115
Central	40	3,251	3,880	81	97
Southern	16	1,410	1,801	88	113
Cook	56	5,132	6,534	92	117
Statewide	155	13,695	17,161	88	111
FY 2011					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	41	3,821	4,880	93	119
Central	31	3,216	3,840	87	104

Southern	16	1,379	1,660	86	104
Cook	54	5,066	6,505	94	121
Statewide	148	13,482	16,885	91	114

FY 2012					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	40	3,691	4,753	92	119
Central	34	3,091	3,707	91	109
Southern	13	1,329	1,726	102	133
Cook	51	5,051	6,522	99	128
Statewide	138	13,162	16,708	95	121

FY 2013					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	34	3,532	4,607	104	136
Central	29	2,965	3,574	102	123
Southern	14	1,272	1,655	91	118
Cook	48	5,001	6,511	104	136
Statewide	125	12,770	16,347	102	131

FY 2014					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	34	3,434	4,526	101	133
Central	34	2,776	3,338	82	92
Southern	14	1,118	1,545	80	110
Cook	48	4,903	6,452	102	134
Statewide	130	12,968	16,513	100	127

FY 2015					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted

Northern	32	3,265	4,384	102	137
Central	26	2,593	3,130	100	120
Southern	12	1122	1,483	94	124
Cook	47	4,787	6,279	102	134
Statewide	117	11,817	15,276	101	131

FY 2016					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	29	3,124	3,521	108	121
Central	29	2,476	3,006	85	104
Southern	15	1,058	1,416	71	94
Cook	44	4,605	6,164	105	140
Statewide	117	11,263	14,107	96	121

FY 2017					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	30	2,918	3,923	97	131
Central	27	2,388	2,908	84	108
Southern	13	1,009	1,358	78	104
Cook	50	4,449	6,010	89	120
Statewide	120	10,764	14,199	90	118

FY 2018					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	33	2,778	3,755	69	114
Central	32	2,252	2,761	70	86
Southern	14	951	1,285	68	92
Cook	47	4,281	5,828	91	124
Statewide	126	10,262	13,629	81	108

FY 2019					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted

Northern	29	2699	3663	93	126
Central	31	2174	2664	70	86
Southern	11	904	1225	82	111
Cook	50	4257	5847	85	117
Statewide	121	10,034	13,399	83	111

FY 2020					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	27	2648	3599.5	99	134
Central	30	2132	2622	72	88
Southern	15	856	1165	58	77
Cook	48	4205	5799	88	121
Statewide	120	9,841	13,185.5	83	110

FY 2021					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	28	2487	3398.5	88	121.3
Central	29	2005	2477.5	69.13	88.48
Southern	13	813	1112.5	62.5	85.57
Cook	37	4095	5663	110.67	153
Statewide	107	9,400	12651.5	87.85	118.23

FY 2022					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	26	2348	3251	90	125
Central	25	1859	2322	74	93
Southern	11	763	1054	69	96
Cook	39	3960	5524	102	142
Statewide	101	8930	12151	88	120

FY 2023					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	32	2313	3251	72	125
Central	26	1793	2256	69	87
Southern	12	763	1057	64	88
Cook	47	3874	5442	82	116
Statewide	117	8743	12006	75	103

FY 2024					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	34	2269	3171	67	93
Central	26	1825	2304	70	89
Southern	9	753	1039	84	115
Cook	46	3862	5449	84	118
Statewide	115	8709	11963	76	104

FY 2025					
Region	#DCLRS	TOTAL # OF FACILITIES		Average Caseload per DCLR	
		Regular	Weighted	Regular	Weighted
Northern	42	2283	3197	54	76
Central	26	1707	2155	66	83
Southern	12	748	1026	62	86
Cook	55	3824	5387	70	98
Statewide	135	8562	11765	65	87

SECTION 4: QUARTERLY DATA ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

A. The percentage of new applications disposed-of within 90 days

The DCFS-imposed 90-day time frame for the disposition of an initial application is applicable to all three facility types. This date was negotiated with AFSCME solely for assessing work performance for employee annual performance evaluations. The 90-day timeframe is subject to many outside influences and factors which can cause delays, including but not limited to: weather and construction issues, required background check assessments of criminal convictions, and inspections from outside agencies such as local zoning bodies, Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal, Illinois

Department of Public Health, local health departments, Lead and Radon tests and Licensing staffing shortages in some areas. Provider preparation and willingness to correct deficiencies in a timely manner remains a major factor contributing to delay in the disposition of initial licensing applications.

The 90-day timeframe begins on the date the application is data-entered into the DCFS computer system. This data-entry is not made until the application has been received, logged in to ensure tracking, and reviewed to determine that it is complete and correct. Approximately 50% of initial applications are returned to the applicant because they are either incomplete or incorrect. The on-line application project has been delayed due to the Department’s pursuit of improved technology functions via the adoption of Illinois Connect which should go live 2026 for daycare licensing and will eventually include the decommission of the SACWIS, CYCIS and MARS systems currently in operation.

The percentage of new applications disposed of within 90 days:

FY 2025

Region	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Annual Average
Northern	71%	63%	77%	73%	71%
Central	90%	88%	70%	67%	78%
Southern	82%	92%	100%	90%	88%
Cook	61%	44%	50%	52%	52%
Statewide	73%	61%	66%	65%	67%

The table below is Cumulative, not Quarterly.

Death, Injury, Facilities, and CANTS Reporting Totals				
Region	Deaths	Injuries	CANTS	# of Facilities
Northern	1	44	25	70
Central	0	57	0	57
Southern	0	57	46	103
Cook	2	133	19	226
Statewide	3	291	90	456

Background Check

The Background Check unit has onboarded several staff but still need to fill additional vacancies to control the backlog. Cook County Background Check Unit should consist of 24 staff, although several vacancies have been filled, it takes time for training which affects the number of authorizations that could be processed. However, the Background Check Unit processed 44,361 of the 56,749 authorizations received for daycare centers with 10-18 staff for FY'25. The Springfield background unit staffed with 4 permanent staff and 3 temporaries with the limited staff still managed to process over 6, 570 DCH/GDCs for FY'23.

The Department does not currently have a backlog for day care home and group day care home authorizations. However, due to the number of staff in the background check unit in Chicago, there is a backlog with the day care center authorizations for employees. When the Background Check Unit Chicago is fully staffed the workload consists of a minimal of 750 Daycare Center Authorizations forms (718-B-DC) assigned to employees per week. The unit currently has 600 authorization forms to be processed. The Chicago Background Check Unit is actively working to address the backlog through hiring new staff, overtime for current staff, and assistance from former staff.

Proposed changes to Rule 385 Background Checks are still pending in order that it aligns with the Child Care Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG). For Day Care Background Checks, DCFS had to comply with the Child Care Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) that requires prospective childcare staff to start employment as a Provisional Employee after completing the FBI fingerprint criminal background check or ISP fingerprint criminal background check. Pending completion of all background checks components, the staff member must be under the supervision of a staff member who has a full background check clearance. On, 4/20/23, an Informational Transmittal 2023.07 went out to inform all DCFS licensing staff, background check unit and day care center licensed facilities of a new revised Background Check Authorization Form CFS 718-B (DC).

Background Check Initiative

In response to the federal changes surrounding background checks, a background check portal was created that went live in November 2022. Licensed day care centers employers can access the portal to check background status for employees required for hiring purposes. The employer does not have to wait on a clearance letter in the mail and can make a hiring decision at a faster rate. The background check portal includes a fingerprint search feature that allows the public applying for employment to search and see if they need fingerprinting before completing the background check process, obtain background check forms and get the latest news and FAQs surrounding updates. The background check portal also has two new features that accepts electronic signatures and allows day care centers to upload the Background Check Authorization when employees do not require fingerprints. All information surrounding the status of background checks are confidential and is shared only with authorized designated administrators.

Targeted initiatives-Mobile fingerprinting, Automation of the background check forms for providers and transmissions of documents electronically, using password protected/encryption. Licensing with the fingerprint vendor quarterly around discussion of processing background checks and establishing connection with the Illinois State Police responsible for providing criminal records to the Department.

The background check units also experienced significant staff turnover including managers and supervisors during the reporting period. But the units are stable currently, even though there are critical vacancies, and we are making all efforts to fill those vacancies as qualified candidates are available.

Due to the current workforce deficit the Department of Children & Family Services has worked diligently with the childcare community and has made some allowance during this time to ensure children and families can continue to be serviced.

B. The percentage of licenses renewed on time

Despite no statutory reference, license renewals are considered “on time” if the recommendation is complete and data-entered on or before the expiration date of the license. Licensing Rules do require, however, that a renewal application packet be mailed to the licensee no later than six months prior to the expiration date of the license. A renewal application is considered “timely” if it is received back from the licensee no later than three months prior to the expiration of the license. Renewal applications can be submitted by the licensee up to and including the day of the expiration with no significant consequences to the provider. The renewal study is conducted, all the while, the licensee is allowed to continue care uninterrupted.

The licensee may still bill for CCAP (subsidy) children and food program reimbursements while the renewal application is pending, as DCFS considers a timely renewal application to have the “full force and effect” of an actual license. We experience a lack of sense of urgency from the part of licensed providers in submitting renewal applications and supporting documentation on a timely basis. We continue to remind and encourage all providers to submit renewal applications on a timely basis and as early as possible.

Licensees who fail to submit their renewal packets prior to the three months before expiration receive letters, e-mails, and phone calls from their licensing representatives to remind them of the pending expiration of their license in an effort to encourage the licensee to submit their application to allow sufficient time for the renewal study and processing.

Licensees who fail to submit a renewal application until after their license expires are not subject to renewal. The license has expired and if an application is received well after the expiration, it is now considered an initial license application, as there is no active license to renew. If a subsequent license is granted, it is not backdated. There will be a gap or lapse in licensure between the two licenses.

During this reporting period, the number of renewals considered as “on time” has steadily decreased with each quarter, due to delays by the providers in meeting the required standards and external inspection certifications including Fire Marshall clearances that are required to issue the license renewal. Additional steps in the background check as required by the Federal CCDBG statute (Child Care Block Development Grant) caused some delays due to the lack of staff resources. Renewals cannot be issued without the appropriate clearances and updates. Besides, the workload of the background check unit has increased by 30% annually with the new requirement that all licensees and employees of Day care have a comprehensive criminal background check repeated every 5 years or less. Additional head count has been authorized for the background check unit and staff are being hired even though the unit is not fully staffed yet. So, the Department is addressing the issue by increasing Background Clearance Unit staff. At present, Department is conducting a comprehensive background check of Day care employees and licensees at every license renewal time. That means a full background check of Day care employees and providers are done at three-year intervals or at renewal cycles. Further, the providers are slow in responding to Background check hits that are waiver eligible. Repeat reminders and follow up is required to get their recommendation to issue a waiver or not. Until then, however, delays in issuing and renewing licenses will be observed. By all means, priority status has been given to renewal applicants, because they are currently operating and actively providing care to children and any disruption to this ability to provide care would be detrimental to families.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused day care facilities to lose numerous staff who did not wish to return to work in the childcare arena. This continues to cause an already hemorrhaging field that continues to suffer from a lack of qualified staff as well as potential candidates that are seeking early childhood education as a field of choice. Though there remains a lack of candidates this does not equate to the need to lessen the qualification of /for staff as it remains imperative to ensure that children receive quality education that is developmentally and age appropriate to ensure milestones are met to increase the ease of their transition into mainstream education and to insure a successful transition.

Percentages of licenses renewed prior to expiration:

Region	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Annual Average
Northern	95%	95 %	100 %	99 %	96 %
Central	92%	97 %	100 %	98 %	92 %
Southern	90%	100 %	91%	97 %	90 %
Cook	93%	93%	96 %	95%	92 %
Statewide	93%	94 %	97 %	96 %	94 %

The Illinois Child Care Act [Section 4.5(h)] requires Day care centers, Day care homes, and Group Day care homes to be monitored “at least annually.” These visits are conducted on an unannounced basis (no prior knowledge is given to the licensee as to when the visit will occur) at each facility in the two years between initial and renewal or between renewals.

An AFSCME-negotiated agreement allows for the visits to be considered timely for the purpose of a DCLRS’ annual employee performance evaluation if the visit is within a 90-day timeframe around the license anniversary date—no more than 60 days prior or 30 days following the license anniversary. The Child Care Act does not stipulate a specific timeframe for completion, other than the monitoring should be conducted on an “annual” basis.

The data for annual unannounced monitoring visits is presented in detail in the table on page 21. It is given for both the 60/30 union-negotiated timeframe (columns marked “E” in green) and for a rolling “annual” calculation of the past 365 days (columns marked “A” in blue).

With staffing challenges, staff turnover and uncovered cases being assigned to other licensing staff or other teams, if the 60/30 timeframe cannot be met, the monitoring requirement is not overlooked until next year. Overdue annuals are considered a priority and the expectation for DCLRs is that annual monthly visits be conducted even if is beyond the 60/30 timeframe.

Please refer to the chart on Page 21 for additional data.

Completion of Annual Unannounced Monitoring											
	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		FY 2025		
	60/30 Eval	FY Annual	60/30 Eval	FY Annual	60/30 Eval	FY Annual	60/30 Eval	FY Annual	60/30 Eval	FY Annual	
Northern											
DCC	49 %	83 %	65 %	82 %	62 %	86 %	59 %	81 %	58 %	84 %	
DCH	60 %	78 %	57 %	79 %	54 %	81 %	61 %	80 %	58 %	79 %	
GDC											
H	66 %	83 %	70 %	84 %	76 %	86 %	57 %	78 %	67 %	83 %	
Total	58 %	80 %	62 %	81 %	60 %	83 %	60 %	80 %	60 %	81 %	
Central											
DCC	42 %	84 %	76 %	83 %	58 %	83 %	55 %	81 %	57 %	83 %	
DCH	61 %	83 %	63 %	83 %	62 %	82 %	60 %	80 %	61 %	82 %	
GDC											
H	33 %	73 %	57 %	71 %	60 %	74 %	71 %	78 %	55 %	74 %	
Total	55 %	83 %	66 %	82 %	60 %	82 %	60 %	80 %	60 %	82 %	
Southern											
DCC	65 %	87 %	76 %	87 %	63 %	93 %	72 %	90 %	69 %	89 %	
DCH	69 %	82 %	69 %	84 %	56 %	88 %	63 %	84 %	65 %	84 %	
GDC											
H	75 %	94 %	60 %	95 %	70 %	92 %	78 %	82 %	72 %	90 %	
Total	68 %	85 %	60 %	95 %	59 %	89 %	67 %	86 %	67 %	86 %	
Cook											
DCC	55 %	68 %	60 %	66 %	38 %	61 %	40 %	55 %	49 %	62 %	
DCH	45 %	61 %	41 %	61 %	35 %	61 %	44 %	58 %	42 %	60 %	
GDC											
H	52 %	66 %	48 %	69 %	42 %	68 %	41 %	61 %	46 %	63 %	
Total	48 %	64 %	49 %	63 %	37 %	62 %	43 %	57 %	45 %	61 %	
Statewide											
DCC	53 %	76 %	66 %	74 %	52 %	74 %	51 %	69 %	55 %	73 %	
DCH	55 %	72 %	54 %	72 %	48 %	73 %	54 %	70 %	53 %	72 %	
GDC											
H	56 %	75 %	60 %	77 %	58 %	77 %	54 %	71 %	57 %	75 %	
Total	54 %	74 %	58 %	74 %	50 %	74 %	53 %	70 %	54 %	75 %	

*(This data above does not reflect data from 12.2024 & 3.2025 which were unavailable during this reporting)

C. Percentage of provider requests for supervisory review

When cited for one or more violations, all licensees are given a standardized letter of notice to clearly identify which rules were in violation and how, to review the correction plan that was developed with their input, and to reinforce the corrective plan completion timeframe. The letter also contains very specific language designed to inform the licensee of their right to appeal the finding of violation and how to request such an appeal. The letter contains an offer of a Supervisory Review, to be conducted face-to-face with the licensee, the licensing representative, and licensing supervisor. In some cases, where a licensee reasonably cannot attend in person, the Supervisory Review may be conducted via telephone.

The purpose of the Supervisory Review is to address the violation(s) and the parameters of the correction plan. A licensee may present evidence to support his/her stance that they were not in violation of the Rule, may discuss their concerns that the Rule was misapplied or misinterpreted by the licensing representative, or may renegotiate the terms of the correction plan. Depending upon the evidence presented by both parties, a Supervisor may uphold or overturn the violation or may amend the correction plan to extend the date to allow additional time for correction. Attendance at Supervisor Review is voluntary on the part of the licensee. There is no adverse consequence if the licensee does not take advantage of the offer of the Review, only that the cited violation(s) will stand.

	Supervisory Reviews Offered				Supervisory Reviews Requested by License Holder			
	DCH	GDCH	DCC	Quarter Total	DCH	GDCH	DCC	Quarter Total
Quarter 1 Total	456	65	476	997	0	6	3	9
Quarter 2 Total	290	103	374	767	1	0	6	7
Quarter 3 Total	411	56	375	842	0	0	4	4
Quarter 4	355	56	394	805	1	1	9	11
Annual Totals	1512	280	1619	3411	2	7	22	31
					0.1%	2.5%	1.4%	0.9%

The chart above details the number of times in FY 2025 that a licensee was cited for one or more violations, per facility type, and the number of times a provider requested a Supervisory Review to discuss the citation(s). Please keep in mind that licensees may receive multiple visits (based on their compliance history) so it cannot be construed that the number of reviews offered equals the number of individual licensees cited. Often the same licensees are cited during the year at multiple monitoring visits or complaints or a combination of both.

It should be noted although only 32 Supervisory Reviews were requested by providers, 91 Reviews were conducted in total. This discrepancy between those requested and those held illustrates the licensing practice of requesting licensees come in for a Review to discuss violations, patterns of non-compliance, or other concerns held by the Department. Licensees may not have requested the Review, but the Licensing Supervisor and Representative felt that the matter was important enough to make such a request of the licensee. Often, these reviews are a prime opportunity to provide consultation, foster cooperation and support. Of course, the licensee is at liberty to decline such a request with no consequences. Due to the pandemic most of these reviews were conducted virtually.

G. Progress on Adopting the Key Indicators System

In 2014 DCFS entered into a contract with the National Association of Regulatory Administration (NARA) for the purpose of development of Key Indicators and Weighted Licensing Violations. The assignment of weights to the licensing standards was completed first by means of a survey of 100+ stakeholders to rank each licensing standard with a weight from 1 to 9 (with 1 being the lowest risk to children in care and 9 being the highest risk if violated) to each licensing standard for all three facility types.

These weights could be used by the Department and its partners to use a risk factor for numerous purposes. We are in continued discussions with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) to investigate the potential for the weighted violations to support ExceleRate, the state's voluntary quality rating system for childcare providers. Other uses could provide additional information to parents and the public to assist with making childcare decisions, or as a framework for fines (other states have utilized fines and fees; however, they are not currently under consideration in Illinois).

The Key Indicator Project became operational statewide as of July 1, 2016. The principle behind Key Indicators is based on years of research by internationally recognized expert Dr. Richard Fiene and his colleagues. Key Indicator programs are utilized by several other states, as well. Illinois provided NARA four years (2010 through 2013) of violation data on licensed facilities, from which NARA was able to extrapolate a list of licensing standards, by facility type, that indicate quality or success in licensure. These key indicators are those licensing standards which have been identified as being in compliance by high-functioning licensees and out of compliance by more challenged licensees. Illinois was honored to have Dr. Fiene himself provide guidance and consultation on not only the data-gathering process but our procedures as well.

Along with an additional set of high-risk "non-negotiable" standards which must be reviewed at every visit (capacity, background clearances, pool safety, etc.) and two random standards which are changed at intervals, the key indicators create a differential monitoring system which allows Licensing Representatives to focus more time on challenging licensees and consultation.

Providers are pre-screened with stringent eligibility criteria which, when applied, disqualifies those licensees with a history of high-risk or numerous violations, prior enforcement action, and/or failed correction plans, among others. If the qualifying licensee is in compliance with the standards reviewed during the Key Indicators annual monitoring, the visit is complete. The licensing representative is free to move to the next visit. Lack of compliance on a specified number of standards will “flip” the provider to a full annual review.

There is no additional penalty to the licensee for violating any of the key indicators and correction plans are developed for any and all violations, just as they would be for regular annual monitoring. There is also no penalty for facilities to not qualify for a key indicator-type annual monitoring—providers who do not meet eligibility criteria are subject to annual unannounced monitoring which observes their compliance on a number of licensing standards, both general, and specific to their own compliance history.

The sixth full year of using the Key Indicators to enhance annual unannounced monitoring provided fewer challenges for licensing representatives and supervisors alike. Eligibility for key indicator monitoring remains consistently steady between 45 and 50% of licensees. Supervisors agreed that the screening process for eligibility works well. The most common reason for being ineligible continues to be a newer provider with no previous renewal of their license.

Moving from a key indicator monitoring to a regular “full” monitoring because of cited violations remains fairly low—10 to 15 percent, depending upon facility type, with homes being more frequent to “flip” than centers. None of the licensees receiving a key indicator visit have been the subject of enforcement action. No region reports experiencing an increased number of complaints due to the abbreviated monitoring and none report increases in number or seriousness of violations at renewal after receiving key indicator annual monitoring.

Comments from users and supervisors indicate that overall, it reduces the time in the facility, especially in homes. The amount of reduction, however, varies between staff and facility type. Some report as much as 30-90-minute reductions in visit time, some report more or less, and some report no reduction especially if the visit must “flip” and the licensing representative must then conduct a more comprehensive “full” annual monitoring visit. Overall, centers report the most significant reductions, averaging between 45 to 60 minutes.

Key Indicators monitoring has been built into the mobile monitoring application, in that pre-set forms specific to each of the three facility types can be used whenever a key indicator monitoring is warranted. These forms are designed with the key indicator and non-negotiable standards pre-set, providing the functionality to select two “random” standards to prevent predictability, and once the limit of violations has been reached a warning is generated to the licensing rep that it is time to move to a full annual.

H. Percentage of complaints dispositioned within 30 days

Complaints on licensed facilities are either “concurrent,” which means there are allegations of abuse or neglect reports being investigated by the Division of Child Protection and the Licensing Division is also conducting investigations on violations of licensing standards. Then there are “licensing-only” complaint investigations which involve only allegations of the violation of one or more of the licensing standards and are investigated only by Day Care Licensing Representatives. The third type of complaint investigated by the Department involves allegations that a facility is operating without a license in violation of the Child Care Act.

Complaints can be made to the Department in many ways—mail, e-mail, phone, fax, in-person, DCFS HOTLINE, and will be taken with the complainant identified or anonymous. Upon receipt, they are assigned to a licensing representative to investigate. Usually, the same licensing representative who is assigned supervision of the license will be the representative assigned to the complaint investigation due to their familiarity with the facility, staff, and licensee’s history such as knowledge of any prior issues or repeat violations of a similar nature.

Number of complaints, per type, per quarter in FY 2025

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	FY 2025
Licensing Only	236	125	205	244	810
Concurrent	203	182	129	117	631
Unlicensed	49	40	28	43	160
Total	488	347	362	404	1601

Per rule, Licensing Representatives must complete the investigation within 30 days and make a determination whether the allegation is substantiated or not. This timeframe is self-imposed and not driven by any statute. Representatives are allowed an additional 30-day extension with supervisor approval. Most licensing-only complaints are completed within the 30-60-day range.

If the complaint is a concurrent investigation, the licensing representative is prohibited by DCFS Rule 383 from completing their licensing investigation until the Child Protective Investigator’s (CPI) recommendation has received with a final finding. If the CPI’s final finding is to indicate on child abuse or neglect allegations, citing additional licensing violations may be warranted. So, a pending child protection investigation can also cause Licensing’s own complaint investigation to be delayed beyond the initial 30-60 days. This delay and wait ensures Day Care Licensing has full and complete information upon which to substantiate or unsubstantiate any licensing violations arising from the incident.

Percentage of Complaints Dispositioned within 30 days

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
Licensing only	66.5%	77.6%	46.3%	63.5%	63.5%
Concurrent	14.8%	30.8%	38.8%	75.2%	39.9%
Unlicensed	73.5%	82.5%	64.3%	44.2%	66.1%

The number of complaints, both licensing only and concurrent, appears to have slight increase this reporting year receiving a combined total for FY 25 (1601) Licensing only 810 A decrease in Concurrent 631 & Unlicensed 160. An increase between FY 25 of 286 from FY 22 (1315) Previous numbers aligning back to FY 2019. FY 21 (1098), FY 20 (1126) and FY 19 (1305) however these numbers remain higher than FY 17 (803). The difference from FY22 & FY 21 is 217. Anecdotal comments from supervisors remain that complaints are received more and more through social media and that sometimes one social media post will generate multiple complaints on the same facility. For concurrent investigations, the impact of the heavy workload of the Division of Child Protection to arrive at a final finding is clearly visible accounting for 100% of the concurrent investigations which could not be completed within 30 days of the initiation of the complaint. The Division of Child Protection again was/is heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic suffering a staffing crisis as well as heighten abuse and neglect investigations.

I. Average number of days a Day care center applicant must wait to attend a licensing orientation.

Orientation prior to submission of an application is voluntary. There is no requirement to attend an orientation session prior to applying for a license. However, orientation attendance is strongly encouraged as it is widely believed that attending orientation results in better-prepared, more engaged applicants. It also serves to provide a “connection” with DCFS licensing staff so that applicants have a point of contact to call or e-mail with questions about completing their application before it is ever assigned to a licensing representative for processing.

Applicants expressing interest in licensure wait no more than thirty days for center orientation since depending upon the number of inquiries or interest, group orientation sessions are held monthly by each team (Current due to the pandemic each staff are conducting individual orientations). If there is not enough interest from the community to warrant a monthly group session, orientations are arranged on a one-on-one basis at a mutually agreed-upon time convenient to both the inquirer and the assigned representative. For many teams, this is the only method used for day care center applicants, especially in rural areas where there is not enough interest to warrant a monthly group session. Because each center is different, individual sessions are believed to be more helpful and provide more targeted information to the proposed facility than broader group sessions.

In metropolitan areas, larger group orientations are often held monthly. Orientations for centers follow a statewide, standardized PowerPoint presentation. This is to ensure that all

inquirers receive the same basic information regarding application for licensure, information on rules and regulations, other agencies with which interaction will be necessary, and suggestions for the operation of a successful center.

Day Care Home Orientation has no real wait time and continues to be offered on-line via a web-based orientation, available 24 hours a day. Participants can schedule their own time and may stop and start again later if need be. Although not mandatory to receive a license, completion of any orientation will result in the participant receiving a certificate worth two hours of pre-service training credit, which can be used toward the mandatory 15 hours of pre-service training required prior to application for a day care home or group day care home license.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, group orientation could no longer be held at any location in person. However, staff are conducting one on one orientations as requested via mobile devices, virtually and in person.

J. Number of licensing orientation sessions available in the past year (in-person groups, virtual)

Group Orientation Sessions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FY 2025 Annual Totals
DCC	48	42	43	48	181
GDCH	65	20	20	102	207
DCH	101	130	85	165	481
Quarterly Totals	214	192	148	315	869

K. Number of Department Trainings related to licensing and child development available to providers this past year.

According to the DCFS Office of Workforce Development, in FY 2025, the Department provided online Mandated Reporter Training free of charge to New users. The training is not limited strictly to licensed childcare providers, but for schoolteachers, Head Start staff, Pre-K, Preschool for All, and other Early Learning educators. It is a required component of the 15 hours of mandatory pre-service training prior to the application for a DCFS-licensed day care or group day care home or for employment in a DCFS-licensed childcare facility.

In addition to the Mandated Reporter Training, DCFS Online Day Care Home Orientation was initiated by over 3,651 users during FY 2025. Of those that started the Orientation, 50% proceeded from the eligibility questionnaire to the actual training and over 1,000 completed the orientation. Users from Illinois and numerous other states or territories have taken advantage of the on-line orientation when deciding to pursue in-home day care licensure, despite it being relevant to only Illinois day care home applicants.

DCFS continues to work closely with the Illinois Network of Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA), the umbrella agency for the sixteen local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Not only is their staff involved in various workgroups, one Regional Administrator is Co-Chair of the Day Care Statewide Licensing Advisory Council's Training Subcommittee. INCCRRA continues to be a valuable source of information on available trainings, especially those related to the CCDBG-required increases in pre-service training. Current initiatives with INCCRRA and Gateways are a process to use the Gateways Professional Development as a tool to support transcript review to insure more accurate qualifications of day care center employees, support providers in accessing the IDHS-required training for CCAP providers, and work on recommendations for aligning day care licensing standards and Gateways Early Childhood Credentials.

INCCRRA also, through routine webinars, has worked diligently to keep DCFS Day Care Licensing staff updated on the latest news about ExceleRate, the state's voluntary quality ratings system for childcare providers. A licensee's participation in this voluntary system of Bronze, Silver, and Gold ratings is encouraged and supported by DCFS. The issuance of a DCFS day care facility license grants the licensee automatic "green" rating status. INCCRRA also provides a DCLR portal to the Gateways Training Registry so that member DCLRS can access training information on licensees and their staff to ensure compliance with licensing standards.

INCCRRA has also assisted with the development of mandated Trauma Training that requires all licensed day care home providers, licensed group day care home providers, and licensed day care center directors and classroom staff participate in at least one training

that includes the topics of early childhood social emotional learning, infant and early childhood mental health, early childhood trauma, or adverse childhood experiences. Current licensed providers, directors, and classroom staff were required to complete training by July 1, 2022, and shall participate in training that includes the above topics at least once every 3 years.

In late 2016, Day Care Licensing began conducting bi-annual “Provider Forums.” These forums are held during the same week in multiple, rotating locations in each of the four regions, using the same agenda and PowerPoint presentation. The purpose of the Forums is to provide news on Rule amendments, other timely information, and answers to any local questions. Forums are held separately for day care home licensees and Day care center directors and staff. The first round was held in October 2016 with additional Forums in 2017, March 2018, October 2018, March 2019, October 2019 and the Spring of 2023. We are extremely appreciative of the support and assistance that our community partners have provided—everything from handouts, guest speakers, even assistance with securing venues large enough to hold all the attendees. Judging from participant survey responses, these Forums are viewed as valuable, informative, and worth continuing. The next round of forums was scheduled for March of 2020 however due to the COVID pandemic this session had to be cancelled. We are anticipating the organization of a virtual forum in the upcoming months.

SECTION 5: EFFORTS TO COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AND THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CREDENTIALING ISSUES, AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING TRAINING REGISTRY, AND QUALITY RATINGS AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEMS (QRIS)

The Department continues to work closely with its community partners and agencies such as IDHS, ISBE, etc. The CCDBG reauthorization has been a prime example, as agencies worked together to ensure that Illinois application was accepted and then to ensure that the structures to support and implement necessary changes were in place. Many staff from IDHS, ISBE, INCCRRA, GOECD, IDPH, Head Start, etc., participate in various workgroups and committees devoted to licensing issues, such as training and professional development, Key Indicators and Weighted Violations, Statewide Emergency Preparation and Response, etc.

Department Licensing and the Division of Program Practice is also involved in the Inter-Agency Team (IAT), which meets monthly to share information, coordinate practice, and insure cooperation. This group was heavily involved with coordinating the planning and then implementation of the tasks involved in CCDB Reauthorization and is currently working to help coordinate statewide efforts with Public Act 100-0105 which prohibits the expulsion or suspension of children from day care or early learning facilities due to challenging behaviors.

The work of the Statewide Day Care Licensing Advisory Council and its five subcommittees has continued this year. The Advisory Council contains four subcommittees: Data, Communications, Training, and Systems Integration and Policy & Rules. All have been working diligently to meet goals set forth in strategic planning as well as to address newly identified challenges or tasks. This Council contains a robust mix of childcare and early learning partners from across the state, in addition to DCFS licensing staff and management, and has been successful in addressing such issues as provider immunizations, improving use of data, increasing effective communication with our providers, identifying training needs and opportunities, DCFS form translations, and working to develop language for proposed day care Rule amendments, etc.

DCFS management staff and licensing representatives also continue to serve as members of workgroups and subcommittees that cross all manner of early childhood platforms, from Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) to statewide Emergency Preparation and Response committee, Early Learning Council, Statewide Quality Ratings Technical Assistance Team, Interagency Committee, and many others.

- Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD): DCFS and OECD staff work closely on such projects as Preschool Expulsion and Suspension prevention, Workforce Development issues, Credentialing and alignment of qualifications across various early learning platforms, and other issues. Their generosity in securing Race-to-the-Top funds for Licensing made several technological advances and the Key Indicators/Weighted Violations system possible. Their support and encouragement have been crucial in the many improvements to Day Care Licensing these past few years, including improved communication with our licensees and streamlining monitoring practices.
- Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM): DCFS works with the OSFM to coordinate OSFM fire safety inspection of some day care homes and all-day care centers. OSFM reports that they are short staffed, and Fire Inspections may take longer wait time to schedule.
- Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA): DCFS partners frequently with INCCRRA and is dependent upon them for the Gateways to Opportunity Registry, pre- and in-service training for applicants and licensees and their staff, delivery and oversight of the Child Care Subsidy program via the 16 local R&Rs, and much more. Presently, the primary work with INCCRRA and Gateways revolve around transcript review and the use of the Professional Development Record, increased acceptance of credentials as means for teacher and director positions within centers and informing providers on CCAP-required trainings. INCCRRA staff are also members of the Advisory Council and its subcommittees and play a significant role in assisting the Department with coordinating sites for bi-annual Provider Forums.
- Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH): DCFS has worked with IDPH staff in previous years on provider and employee immunizations, swimming pool safety issues, training requirements for food handlers, influenza and other disease outbreaks, etc. IDPH, as well as the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, has been a major source of support and guidance in drafting the required Rule changes and policies focusing on mandatory water testing of all homes and centers built before 1-1-2000.
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE): Legislation regarding the exemption of school-age-only childcare facilities and Adult and Child Care Food Program nutritional guidelines have been two areas of cooperative work between DCFS and ISBE this past year. The most significant work, this year has been surrounding the required rulemaking between our two agencies to ensure compliance with Public Act 100-0105, the Preschool Suspension and Expulsion prevention.
- Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS): Day Care Licensing works extremely closely with IDHS regarding CCDBG requirements and implementation, background checks for license-exempt providers, Child Care Assistance program

(CCAP, aka: subsidy), federal audits, Head Start, exemption status determinations and unlicensed facilities and statewide Emergency Planning and Response, etc.

A major accomplishment between our two agencies this year has been the ongoing work on the protocol for those facilities requesting documentation of their exempt status to support their application for CCAP funding, specifically facilities now exempt under Child Care Act Section 2.09 (j) for school-age only programs.

Impact of CCDBG Reauthorization

The impact of the federal Child Care Development Block Grant reauthorization (CCDBG) has had significant consequences for day care licensing. Rule changes remain pending to consider aligning all licensees with the CCDBG requirements for pre-service training to cover the original ten specific health and safety topics (of which 3 are already rule provisions), to provide a 90-day grace-period for submission of medical examination reports by identified homeless children enrolling in licensed facilities, and to increase the scope of background checks.

As discussed previously, CCDBG reauthorization has demanded significant shift in childcare-related background check processing by the Department. Prior to the change, DCFS requested FBI checks only for individuals who had “hits” (identified criminal history) in Illinois and/or who lived outside of Illinois in the past five years. CCDBG mandated the costly additional step of FBI checks for ALL adults tied to a day care license. DCFS implemented this requirement on July 1, 2016, in an effort to spread out the impact and continues to work towards the goal of updating all clearances for every licensee, adult household member, or employee of a licensed facility. The additional work has strained resources in the Department’s Background Check Unit and caused delays, which are being addressed by temporarily increasing background clearance unit staff.

Technology Upgrades for Day Care Licensing

1. Online Application

The online application project, which was slated to begin for day care during this fiscal year, was tabled due to the Department’s adoption of the coming CCWIS (Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System). This system will significantly change and improve information and data technology for the Department. Expending existing resources on modifying the current system, which will become obsolete soon, was thought to be inefficient or cost prohibitive.

2. Hand-Held Devices and Mobile Monitoring Software Application

In mid-2016, the Department entered into a contract with TCC Inc., of Indianapolis, Indiana to develop a mobile monitoring application to use on the HP ProX-2 tablets that were purchased in 2015 for day care licensing representatives and supervisors through

Race-To-The-Top funds. This software allows for significant reductions in pre-visit preparation, data entry by clerical, and costly follow-up mailings. In December 2017, a cadre of “Super Users” were trained and have been testing the application and data exchanges between TCC and DCFS. At present, we are implementing the statewide rollout and have begun planning minor system enhancements. The “tap and go” design will allow DCLRS to pick and choose any or all of the licensing standards to be reviewed, will be able to host the pre-set list of Key Indicators, and will allow enhanced use of tablet features, such as signature capability. It will also automatically upload some information to the IMSA computer system, thus reducing data-entry by Licensing clerical. It is a huge step in enhancing our work in the field and embracing technology.

3. Update of the DCFS Sunshine Website page

In addition to the Key Indicators/Weighted Violations and mobile monitoring enhancements, the Office of Early Childhood Development graciously provided additional Race-to-the-Top funding for improvements to the DCFS Day Care Licensing page of the Illinois Sunshine Project website. Initially this page provided only a look-up feature for viewing licensed providers’ cited violations. The project, which was completed in late September 2016, ensures that The Department meets its reporting obligations for violations, monitoring, data on injuries, fatalities and indicated abuse/neglect reports in licensed facilities, and provides childcare resources, news and information for providers, parents and the public alike. The website can be found at the address below.

<https://sunshine.dcf.illinois.gov/Content/Help/News.aspx>

In 2018, legislation passed which required the Department to add additional information to the DCFS Sunshine provider look-up feature. Now the feature will additionally identify not just active licensees, but those licensees who have surrendered their licenses with cause, have had their license revoked, refused renewal, or who have surrendered their licenses while under investigation.

Sunshine site suggested changes and additional information to provide even more resources to our providers and their consumers have been made and enhancements are continually being made. These recommendations will be reviewed ongoingly at the end of each year and requests for change or additions will be made accordingly through our Office of Communications.

Day Care Licensing Representative I & II
Current Education & Experience Qualifying Criteria

DCLR I & II Class Specification Education Requirements:

- Requires Bachelor's Degree from accredited college/university with specialization in early childhood education or child development.

DCLR Educational Pathways:

- DCLR I / II applicants can meet the class specification education requirement by means of any of the following five pathways:
 - 1) Bachelor's degree with a specialization in Early Childhood Education or Child Development.
 - 2) Bachelor's degree with declared major in Social Work or Human Services field (which consists of Early Childhood Development, Human Services Administration, Psychiatry, Social Science, Guidance & Counseling, Human Services, Pastoral Counseling, Psychology, Social Services, Home Economics - Child & Family Services, Master of Divinity, Psychiatric Nursing, Public Administration, Sociology, Therapeutic Recreation, Child, Family and Community Services, Human Development Counseling, Marriage and Family Therapy, Mental Health Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling) **plus** 18 semester hours of directly related coursework;
 - 3) Bachelor's degree with declared major in non-human services field **plus** 20 semester hours in directly related coursework **and** 2 years full-time experience in programs for children from birth to eight years of age.
 - 4) Bachelor's degree in any field **plus** valid IL teaching license **plus** 1 year teaching in programs for children from birth through Grade 3 or 2 years working in programs for children from birth to 8 years of age.
 - 5) Master's degree with declared major in Early Childhood Education or Child Development.
- Directly related coursework (referred to in Pathways (2) and (3)) is presented below.
Note: Only this coursework is considered and as directly related experience, and the coursework is strictly interpreted via a review of official college transcripts.

- Child Care
- Child Care Center/Early Childhood Administration
- Child Development
- Child Psychology
- Childhood Education
- Children's Literature
- Communications Techniques (geared towards serving children)
- Creative Dramatics
- Cultural Diversity (in programs for children)
- Curriculum Development/Early Childhood Programs
- Development Psychology
- Development Through Play
- Early Childhood Education
- Educational Psychology
- Effective Teaching Methods for Young Children
- Exceptional Child
- First Aid & Safety
- Health & Nutrition
- Home Day Care Management
- Human Behavior and Social Environment
- Toddler Care
- Interpersonal/Intergroup Relationships
- Legislation & Public Policy (services geared towards children & families)

- Management/Supervision/Staff Development
- Math & Science for the Young Child
- Methods of Instruction at the Pre-Primary Level
- Parenting
- Pediatric Nursing
- Recreation of School Age
- Screening, Assessment & Evaluation of Young Child
- School Age-Programming
- Theory of Learning

Any course with one or more of the following in the title (or content description):

- Piaget
- Erickson
- Montessori
- Vygotsky
- Reggio Emilia

DCLR I & II Class Specification Experience Requirements:

- DCLR I: Requires one-year professional experience in early childhood, day care center or kindergarten or field related to day care licensing.
- DCLR II: Requires two years professional experience in early childhood, day care center, kindergarten, or day care licensing program.

DCLR Experience Pathways:

- DCLR I / II applicants can meet the class specification experience requirement (DCLR I = 1 year experience; DCLR II = 2 years' experience) by means of any of the following six pathways:
 - 1) Day Care Licensing Representative (only if employed by Illinois DCFS).
 - 2) Day Care/Early Childhood Teacher (only those positions responsible for developing/implementing educational, activity, or infant stimulation programs – experience gained after receiving a Bachelor's degree);
 - 3) Early Childhood Associate Teacher/Child Care Worker (responsible for developing/implementing educational, activity or infant stimulation programs – experience gained if applicant has completed at least 2 years of college).
 - 4) Teacher in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten or Grades 1-3.
 - 5) Day Care Center Director (must report supervision of a minimum of 5 full-time or 10 part-time employees in a center with a minimum enrollment of 15 children; experience only credited if applicant has completed at least 2 years of college);
 - 6) Graduate Internship/practicum from semi-related Master's program which was completed in an environment which provided educational and activity programs for young children (examples – Head Start, School District, Day Care Center, etc.) Master's degree considered semi-related would be those listed as related human services fields presented in Item 2 under **DCLR Educational Pathways** on the previous page).
- Credit is assigned for the following types of experience at a maximum of 1 year:
 - Child Welfare Associate Specialist
 - Child Welfare Specialist
 - Child Protection Associate Specialist
 - Child Protection Specialist

Prepared by: CMS Division of Examining & Counseling (8.28.2013)

Day Care Licensing Staff Expenditures FY16-FY25

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25
# of Employees	152	156	165	158	154	142	135	147	137	137
Salary	\$11,629,484.00	\$11,629,380.00	\$11,888,520.00	\$11,310,660.00	\$10,934,280.00	\$10,151,316.00	\$9,978,516.00	\$10,898,592.00	\$10,784,304.00	\$12,881,072.00
OT	\$10,095.50	\$80,787.31	\$25,093.15	\$35,956.48	\$26,868.92	\$43,975.86	\$62,587.58	\$164,922.95	\$150,000.00	\$164,224.83
Bilingual	\$47,376.00	\$51,936.00	\$51,936.00	\$60,528.00	\$60,528.00	\$47,474.00	\$33,266.00	\$51,391.00	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
Longevity	\$238,300.00	\$216,025.00	\$216,025.00	\$160,200.00	\$160,200.00	\$107,100.00	\$82,000.00	\$73,500.00	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00
Special Pay(Shift Dif,6th Day,Stand By,TA,Vacator	\$23,186.54	\$5,541.61	\$44,559.32	\$20,000.00	\$5,678.90	\$24,102.80	\$28,468.32	\$12,290.56	\$17,000.00	\$4,498.80
PS	\$11,948,422.04	\$11,963,689.92	\$12,226,133.47	\$11,587,343.48	\$11,187,553.82	\$10,373,968.66	\$10,184,837.90	\$11,200,696.51	\$11,076,304.00	\$13,154,795.63
SS	\$914,054.29	\$915,220.75	\$935,299.21	\$886,431.78	\$874,279.78	\$793,608.60	\$770,140.10	\$856,853.28	\$847,337.26	\$1,006,341.87
PS&R*	\$12,862,476.33	\$12,878,890.67	\$13,161,432.68	\$12,473,775.26	\$12,061,833.58	\$11,167,577.26	\$10,963,978.00	\$12,057,549.79	\$11,923,641.26	\$14,161,137.50
Overhead 35.07%	\$1,977,008.88	\$1,976,994.60	\$2,021,048.40	\$1,798,394.94	\$1,649,882.85	\$1,531,833.58	\$1,505,758.06	\$1,644,597.53	\$3,563,134.04	\$4,510,377.95
Travel	\$262,762.03	\$284,910.43	\$289,403.31	\$306,318.91	\$195,596.00	\$182,861.52	\$278,883.36	\$283,536.18	\$285,000.00	\$250,000.00
DCFS Total	\$15,102,247.24	\$15,140,801.70	\$15,471,884.39	\$14,578,489.11	\$13,907,412.43	\$12,892,272.37	\$12,748,619.42	\$13,985,683.51	\$15,771,775.30	\$18,921,515.45
**Health Care (State Paid)	\$3,496,000.00	\$3,588,000.00	\$3,795,000.00	\$3,634,000.00	\$3,696,000.00	\$3,763,000.00	\$3,172,500.00	\$3,454,500.00	\$3,520,900.00	\$4,288,100.00
***Retirement (State Paid)	\$5,448,241.48	\$5,331,968.41	\$6,603,701.47	\$5,980,691.46	\$5,849,971.89	\$5,688,150.76	\$5,720,721.60	\$5,965,266.95	\$5,832,449.40	\$6,732,624.40
Total DCFS & State Cost	\$24,046,488.72	\$24,060,770.11	\$25,870,585.86	\$24,193,180.57	\$23,453,384.32	\$22,343,423.12	\$21,641,841.02	\$23,405,450.45	\$25,125,124.69	\$29,942,239.85

*Total PS&R will tie to the bottom line on sheet 2

**Health Care cost per emp for FY10-FY12 was \$14,500. In FY13-FY19 it was \$23,000, FY20 \$24,000, FY21 \$26,500, FY22-FY23 \$23,500, FY24 \$25,700, FY25 \$31,300

*** Retirement percentages were as follows

FY10 %28.77	FY18 %54.013
FY11 %27.988	FY19 %54.014
FY12 %34.190	FY20 %52.290
FY13 %40.312	FY21 %54.831
FY14 %40.312	FY22 %56.169
FY15 %42.339	FY23 %53.258
FY16 %45.598	FY24 %52.657
FY17 %44.568	FY25 %51.180

FFY 2017		QE 12-31-16	QE 3-31-17	QE 6-30-17	QE 9-30-17	FFY 2017
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,030,915	6,621,763	7,145,295	6,721,032	27,519,004
Background Checks		158,762	123,550	160,117	156,840	599,269
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		6,872,153	6,498,213	6,985,177	6,564,192	26,919,735
Allocation Percentage		62.53%	62.33%	63.08%	62.79%	62.68%
Total CCDF Claim		4,297,278	4,050,340	4,406,314	4,121,341	16,875,272

FFY 2018		QE 12-31-17	QE 3-31-18	QE 6-30-18	QE 9-30-18	FFY 2018
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,142,207	6,783,442	6,931,481	6,291,704	26,148,833
Background Checks		168,712	164,063	173,971	201,597	708,343
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		5,973,495	6,619,379	6,757,510	6,090,107	25,440,490
Allocation Percentage		62.54%	62.68%	63.11%	62.44%	62.69%
Total CCDF Claim		3,735,835	4,148,808	4,264,441	3,802,940	15,952,024

FFY 2019		QE 12-31-18	QE 3-31-19	QE 6-30-19	QE 9-30-19	FFY 2019
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,930,925	6,820,056	7,164,541	6,648,627	27,564,149
Background Checks		133,156	148,659	163,170	140,558	585,543
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		6,797,769	6,671,397	7,001,371	6,508,069	26,978,606
Allocation Percentage		61.77%	61.67%	63.22%	63.53%	62.55%
Total CCDF Claim		4,199,067	4,114,553	4,426,057	4,134,860	16,874,537

FFY 2020		QE 12-31-19	QE 3-31-20	QE 6-30-20	QE 9-30-20	FFY 2020
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,957,633	7,049,643	6,923,479	6,897,975	27,828,730
Background Checks		179,711	214,060	110,123	194,970	698,864
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		6,777,921	6,835,584	6,813,357	6,703,005	27,129,866
Allocation Percentage		64.76%	64.54%	63.54%	63.57%	64.10%
Total CCDF Claim		4,389,465	4,411,719	4,329,137	4,260,947	17,391,267

FFY 2021		QE 12-31-20	QE 3-31-21	QE 6-30-21	QE 9-30-21	FFY 2021
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,717,081	6,388,558	6,747,942	6,999,398	26,852,979
Background Checks		198,817	188,623	176,579	175,519	739,538
	Adjusted Day Care Licensing	6,518,264	6,199,935	6,571,363	6,823,879	26,113,441
Allocation Percentage		62.72%	64.51%	62.25%	62.15%	62.91%
Total CCDF Claim		4,088,308	3,999,378	4,090,621	4,240,944	16,419,252

FFY 2022		QE 12-31-21	QE 3-31-22	QE 6-30-22	QE 9-30-22	FFY 2022
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	6,746,895	6,579,068	6,999,664	7,513,820	27,839,447
Background Checks		193,569	234,477	248,692	258,952	935,689
	Adjusted Day Care Licensing	6,553,327	6,344,591	6,750,971	- 7,254,868	26,903,758
Allocation Percentage		62.37%	60.80%	64.58%	65.63%	63.35%
Total CCDF Claim		4,087,387	3,857,575	4,359,888	4761,535 -	17,066,385

FFY 2023		QE 12-31-22	QE 3-31-23	QE 6-30-23	QE 9-30-23	FFY 2023
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,481,679	7,003,808	6,853,246	8,715,067	31,259,184
Background Checks		210,760	263,503	237,540	205,533	977,337
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		7,210,919	6,740,305	6,615,706	8,509,533	30,281,847
Allocation Percentage		66.03%	66.87%	68.14%	69.09%	67.53%
Total CCDF Claim		4,761,528	4,507,464	4,507,464	5,878,839	20,463,524

FFY 2024		QE 12-31-23	QE 3-31-24	QE 6-30-24	QE 9-30-24	FFY 2024
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,749,363	7,404,509	7,570,088	8,522,119	31,246,079
Background Checks		188,053	152,359	163,012	144,848	648,272
Adjusted Day Care Licensing		7,561,310	7,252,150	7,407,076	8,377,271	30,597,807
Allocation Percentage		71.04%	69.92%	70.92%	71.51%	70.85%
Total CCDF Claim		5,371,851	5,070,534	5,253,359	- 5,990,806	21,686,549

FFY 2025		QE 12-31-24	QE 3-31-25	QE 6-30-25	QE 9-30-25	FFY 2025
DCFS Day Care Licensing Expenditures	DHS Claim Day Care Licensing	7,906,523	8,131,777	8,484,398		24,522,698
	Background Checks	163,289	195,938	350,209		709,436
	Adjusted Day Care Licensing	7,743,234	7,935,839	8,134,188	-	23,813,262
	Allocation Percentage	71.53%	72.28%	72.67%		72.16%
	Total CCDF Claim	5,538,415	5,736,270	5,911,049	-	17,185,733

DCFS Day care Licensing Division would like to express our gratitude to the Governor's office for their support and guidance, especially throughout this pandemic period, the leadership, vision and support of our Director Heidi Mueller, Chief of staff Jassen Strokosch, Office of Legislative affairs and Chief Legislative Liaison Vivian Anderson, our legal staff and many legislators for their feedback and support. We, the Day care licensing leadership team genuinely appreciate all the support, guidance, and direction.