

# WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE



Wisconsin Department of  
Children and Families

Division of Early Care and Education

**DCF 250**

**LICENSING RULES FOR FAMILY CHILD  
CARE CENTERS  
With Commentary**

*effective March 2023*

## PREFACE

### DCF 250 LICENSING RULES FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE CENTERS With Commentary

Register January 2024 No. 817

Section 48.65, Wisconsin Statutes, requires that persons operating child care centers, that provide care and supervision for 4 or more children under 7 years of age for less than 24 hours a day, be licensed by the Department of Children and Families. The statute also requires the department to establish rules which must be met in order to qualify for a license and which protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the children in a child care center.

Chapter DCF 250 is the administrative code governing family child care centers that provide care and supervision for 4-8 children for less than 24 hours a day.

Although prepared primarily as a tool for licensing specialists, the purpose of the DCF 250 Family Child Care Rules with Commentary is to help all users of DCF 250 understand the intent and application of the rule. An attempt has been made to offer commentary for those rules where experience indicates clarification would be helpful. However, commentary cannot be written to cover every situation encountered. Providers who require additional information should contact their regional licensing specialist.

The portion of this publication that is numbered and in regular print is the administrative code DCF 250. The portion of the publication that is within boxes and in *italicized print* is commentary that was prepared by staff of the Bureau of Early Care Regulation.

There is a header on each page that contains the rule cite for the portion of the rule beginning on that page. A table of contents and an index are also included, as are appendices that contain key statutes related to child care rules, a copy of DCF 13 (administrative rules governing child care background checks), and other appendices referenced in the rule.

This publication may be duplicated and is also available on the department's website:  
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules>

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please contact the Bureau of Early Care Regulation at [dcfclicreg@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dcfclicreg@wisconsin.gov) or (608) 421-7550. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department. For civil rights questions call 608-422-6889 (general) or the Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) 711.

DCF yog ib tus tswv hauj lwm thiab yog ib qhov chaw muab kev pab cuam muaj vaj huam sib luag rau sawv daws. Yog tias koj muaj ib tus mob xiam oob qhab thiab xav tau cov ntaub ntawv no ua lwm hom, lossis xav kom muab txhais ua lwm yam lus, hu rau BECR ntawm [dcfclicreg@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dcfclicreg@wisconsin.gov), 608-421-7550 (siv dav dav), lossis Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) 711. Rau cov lus nug txog neeg txoj cai hu rau 608-422-6889 (siv dav dav), lossis Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) 711.

DCF es un empleador y proveedor de servicios que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades. Si tiene alguna discapacidad y necesita acceso a esta información en un formato alternativo, o si necesita traducción a otro idioma, por favor comuníquese con BECR al [dcfclicreg@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dcfclicreg@wisconsin.gov), 608-421-7550 (general) o Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) 711. Para preguntas sobre derechos civiles, llame al 608-422-6889 (general) o Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) 711.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DCF 250.01 AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>DCF 250.02 APPLICABILITY</b> .....	<b>2</b>
(1) Included and excluded care arrangements .....	2
(2) Exception to the requirement .....	3
<b>DCF 250.03 DEFINITIONS. IN THIS CHAPTER:</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>DCF 250.04 OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
(1) Terms of license.....	9
(2) Administration.....	9
(3) Reports.....	12
(4) Parents.....	15
(6) Children’s records.....	16
(7) Confidentiality.....	20
(8) Reporting child abuse or neglect.....	21
<b>DCF 250.05 STAFF</b> .....	<b>23</b>
(1) Definition.....	23
(2) Staff records.....	23
(3) Qualifications of staff.....	25
(4) Staff development.....	28
<b>DCF 250.055 SUPERVISION AND GROUPING OF CHILDREN</b> .....	<b>31</b>
(1) Supervision.....	31
(2) Grouping of children.....	32
<b>DCF 250.06 PHYSICAL PLANT AND EQUIPMENT</b> .....	<b>35</b>
(1) Building.....	35
(2) Protective measures.....	37
(3) Emergency plans and drills.....	42
(4) Fire protection.....	42
(6) Water.....	45
(7) Exits, doors and windows.....	46
(9) Food preparation and service.....	48
(11) Outdoor space.....	50
(12) Swimming areas.....	52
<b>DCF 250.07 PROGRAM</b> .....	<b>56</b>
(1) Program planning and scheduling.....	56
(2) Child guidance.....	59
(3) Equipment and furnishings.....	60
(4) Rest periods.....	61
(6) Health.....	63
(7) Pets and animals.....	70
<b>DCF 250.08 TRANSPORTATION</b> .....	<b>71</b>
(1) Applicability.....	71
(2) Permission and Emergency information.....	71
(3) Required information for each trip.....	72
(4) Driver.....	72
(5) Vehicle.....	73
(6) Seat belts and child safety restraints.....	74
(7) Vehicle capacity and supervision.....	77
(8) Child care vehicle safety alarm.....	77

**DCF 250.09 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INFANT AND TODDLER CARE..... 79**

- (1) Applicability, qualifications and general requirements ..... 79
- (2) Daily program ..... 80
- (3) Feeding ..... 81
- (4) Diapering and toileting ..... 80

**DCF 250.095 LICENSEE NOT PROVIDING CARE AT LEAST 50% OF LICENSED HOURS ..... 82**

**DCF 250.10 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NIGHT CARE..... 83**

- (1) Applicability ..... 83
- (2) General requirements ..... 83
- (3) Program ..... 83
- (4) Preventive measures ..... 83
- (5) Feeding ..... 83
- (6) Sleep ..... 83

**DCF 250.11 LICENSING ADMINISTRATION..... 84**

- (1) Licensing requirement ..... 84
- (2) General conditions for approval of license ..... 84
- (3) Initial application for a probationary license ..... 85
- (4) Obtaining a regular license ..... 85
- (5) Continuing a regular license ..... 88
- (6) Amending a license ..... 88
- (7) Additional license ..... 89
- (8) License denial or revocation ..... 89
- (9) Effect of notice to deny or revoke a license ..... 90
- (10) Summary suspension of a license ..... 90
- (11) Appeal of decision to deny or revoke a license ..... 91

**DCF 250.12 COMPLAINTS, INSPECTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS. .... 90**

- (1) Complaints ..... 90
- (2) Inspection ..... 90
- (3) Enforcement action ..... 90

**APPENDIX A REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION... 91**

**APPENDIX B KEY STATUTES RELATED TO LICENSING OF CHILD CARE CENTERS..... 92**

**APPENDIX C DCF 13 BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS..... 112**

**APPENDIX D RESOURCES LIST ..... 121**

**INDEX ..... 120**