



Caregiver Background Unit
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Division of Early Care and Education
Bureau of Early Care Regulation

April 3, 2019

BECR Memo 2019-08

To: **Licensed Group Child Care Providers**

From: Mark E. Andrews, Director
Bureau of Early Care Regulation

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark E. Andrews".

RE: Child Care Background Checks

PREVIOUS MEMOS

In the last year, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) has released multiple memos outlining the various steps we have taken to address the changing federal requirements attached to the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). These memos are located here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/memos> and should be reviewed if you are unfamiliar with the recent changes.

BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR CURRENT LICENSEES, HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS, CAREGIVERS AND NONCAREGIVER EMPLOYEES BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2019

Starting on January 1, 2019, DCF began conducting fingerprint-based background checks on all existing child care licensees, household members, caregivers, and noncaregiver employees who began working or living at a center before October 1, 2018. To ensure timely processing of the large number of anticipated background checks, DCF is conducting them in small batches. Group child care providers will receive two notices up to 60 and 30 days prior to receiving the fingerprint instruction letter outlining steps their licensees, household members, caregivers, and noncaregiver employees must follow to undergo the required background checks.

PROVIDERS WHO HAVE NEVER HAD A FINGERPRINT-BASED BACKGROUND CHECK

Providers who have not participated in YoungStar or who have not received Wisconsin Shares were not required to undergo a fingerprint-based background check prior to October 1, 2018. As all caregivers and noncaregiver employees are now required to undergo fingerprint-based background checks per the CCDBG, this will be the first group of current providers to undergo the new background check process. Providers will receive two notices up to 60 and 30 days before the background checks begin. They will then receive a fingerprint instruction letter outlining the next steps individuals need to take to begin the background check process.

PROVIDERS WHO HAVE HAD A FINGERPRINT-BASED BACKGROUND CHECK

Once DCF has completed running background checks on providers who have not had a fingerprint-based background check, we will move on to the remaining regulated child care providers in the state. All remaining providers will receive a letter from DCF informing them that we have moved on to the phase of background checks that impact them. When they are selected, all providers will receive two notices up to 60 and 30 days prior to their fingerprint-based background checks being ran. The intent with all related correspondence is to allow child care providers as much time as possible to prepare for the changes.

STUDENT OBSERVERS AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

After listening to the feedback of providers and higher education entities, DCF has decided to not require background checks on some students who are performing observation in a care program for their education. In order for DCF to waive the background check requirement for a student the following prerequisites must be met:

- The student may not: provide any caregiving service, supervise children, or be responsible for meeting any needs of children,
- The student must always be in the direct presence of a caregiver or teacher who has been found eligible to provide childcare by a DCF ran background check,
- The observation period may not be considered part of a practicum, student internship or student teaching requirement for the sake of a student's education.

DCF will continue to waive the requirement for any high school students who are participating in a DPI course that requires observation hours in order to obtain certification to work as a child care assistant teacher.

Please Note: All students in practicum, student teachers and student interns must have a DCF ran fingerprint-based background check before being active in a child care setting.

4K COLLABORATION AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

Many programs collaborate with local 4K programs to provide service in their center. If the 4K teacher is employed by the provider then they do need a background check as they are considered a caregiver. If the 4K teacher is district-employed, they need a background check unless they meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Contract and/or center policies specify that district-employed teachers are not to have unsupervised access to children in the center,
- District-employed teachers are not used to meet staff-to-child ratios in accordance with requirements under DCF 251
- District-employed teachers work under the supervision of an individual who has completed a DCF background check and received final eligibility.

THE CHILD CARE PROVIDER PORTAL MAKES BACKGROUND CHECKS EASIER

DCF strongly urges all child care providers to gain access to the Child Care Provider Portal. The Child Care Provider Portal makes processing, reviewing, and validating background check information much simpler and greatly decreases the time it takes to receive eligibility results from the DCF run fingerprint-based background check. Provider Portal access is free, and can be acquired in a few simple steps. Instructions and links for obtaining access can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/provider-portal/ccpp-access>.

INDIVIDUALS WITH PROSPECTIVE STATUS IN THE CHILD CARE PROVIDER PORTAL

As more and more child care providers use the Child Care Provider Portal to request background checks for their employees, DCF noticed an increase in individuals who are never moved from “prospective” status when their final eligibility determination is made. It is important that providers change an individual to either “Current” when hired, or “Not Employed” and add an end date if they decide not to hire the individual. This is important for two reasons:

1. The individual’s eligibility only lasts if they have been attached to a facility in the last 180 days. If they never leave prospective status, they will lose eligibility 180 days from their final eligibility determination.
2. Providers will still be charged for annual checks on individuals attached to their center with “Prospective” status.

These problems can only be avoided if an individual is set to the proper status by the programs they are attached to. DCF asks that providers please double check that the individuals in their Provider Portal profile have been set to the proper status.

HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

DCF has developed a web page that contains information on the new background checks process. We encourage licensed child care operators to visit the web page frequently to learn more about the coming changes. The web page can be found here:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/cbc-updates>

Checklists with step-by-step instructions for performing background checks can be downloaded from the “Information and Training Materials” tab located here:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/cbc>

An updated FAQ answering common questions from providers has been created here:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/backgroundcheckfaq>

More information will be coming as we continue to perform background checks. If you have not yet signed up to receive DCF emails, you can subscribe here:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/email-signup>