



Child Care Background Unit
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Governor Tony Evers
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Division of Early Care and Education
Bureau of Early Care Regulation

November 1, 2019

BECR Memo 2019-26

To: **All Regulated Child Care Providers**

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark E. Andrews", with a horizontal line underneath.

RE: Child Care Background Checks

BACKGROUND CHECK ANSWERS AND UPDATES

On October 1, 2018, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families began to implement the new background check requirements for regulated child care providers detailed in Wisconsin statute 48.686. Throughout the last year, there have been concerns and questions from child care providers about how to comply with these requirements. The following memo has been created to give child care providers guidance towards compliance and answer the most common questions.

ALL CAREGIVERS AND NONCAREGIVER EMPLOYEES MUST UNDERGO A DCF RUN BACKGROUND CHECK

Over the last year DCF has implemented the new background check process in phases. These phases are now all complete. This means that all certified and licensed child care providers are now required to have all household members, *caregivers* and *noncaregiver employees* active at their location undergo a DCF run fingerprint-based FBI background check to establish eligibility to reside or work in a child care setting. The definitions of *caregiver* and *noncaregiver employee* can be found at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/background-check>

INDIVIDUALS THAT WERE FINGERPRINTED PRIOR TO 10/1/2018

Even if someone has had a fingerprint-based background check in the last five years, it does not mean they meet the new background check requirements. For a background check to establish an individual's eligibility to reside or work in child care, DCF must have been the agency that received the background check results and made an eligibility determination. If any of the following is true about a background check, it DOES NOT meet the new background check requirements:

- The background check was not performed through Fieldprint.
- The background check results were provided to the child care provider.
- The background check results were provided to a certification agency, or other third party.
- Someone other than DCF made the determination about whether an individual's background made them eligible to reside or work in a child care setting.

These requirements mean that almost all *caregivers* and *noncaregiver employees* who were employed or residing at a child care location prior to October 1, 2018 will need the new DCF run fingerprint-based background check.

INDIVIDUALS ACTIVE PRIOR TO 10/1/2018 MAY CONTINUE TO WORK UNTIL FINAL ELIGIBILITY IS DETERMINED

Individuals active prior 10/1/2018 still must go through the new DCF run fingerprint-based background check process, however, DCF will not send them a preliminary eligibility letter. Instead, these individuals and the facilities they are attached to will receive one of the following:

- A preliminary ineligibility letter,
- A final eligibility letter, or
- A final ineligibility letter.

As long as an individual has completed the fingerprinting appointment and is waiting for a DCF eligibility decision, they may continue to function as they did prior to 10/1/2018 until one of the previously mentioned letters are received. This only applies to employees active prior to 10/1/2018. All employees hired after that date must have eligibility before residing or working in a child care setting as a caregiver or noncaregiver employee.

BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

In response to feedback from provider surveys, DCF has made many improvements to the background check process this year. These improvements are all available in the Child Care Provider Portal (CCPP), which is why DCF encourages all child care providers to get access to the CCPP. More information about the CCPP can be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/provider-portal/info>. These improvements include:

Same Day Fingerprint Letter - Fingerprint instruction letters are now available immediately upon submittal of a Background Check Request Form in the Child Care Provider Portal. They can be accessed by selecting “Fingerprint Code” under “Individual Details.”

Documents Now Sortable by Individual - Under an individual’s “Details” section, any background check document can be found by selecting “Individual Documents.”

Search and Sort by Name – You can now search for individuals in your portal by selecting the arrow next to the “Name” column in “Individuals” list.

VERIFY INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION

Providers must make sure that all individual information (e.g. home address, aliases, etc.) is accurate and complete in the CCPP or on the paper Background Check Request form submitted. If this information is not complete or a Background Check Request form is not submitted, then no fingerprint code will be generated, and the fingerprint instruction letter will not be mailed out.

UPDATE PROSPECTIVE STATUS

DCF has noticed an increase in individuals who are never updated from “prospective” status in the CCPP 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 because Providers will still be charged for annual checks on individuals attached to their center with “Prospective” status.

This 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.

UPCOMING INFORMATION SESSIONS AND OUTREACH

November 15, 2019 – Wisconsin Early Childhood Association Conference: DCF will be giving an update on background checks, licensing and background check rule changes and YoungStar changes. Registration is required to attend this event. Individuals can register here: <https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/conference/registration-and-lodging/>

HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

DCF has developed a web page with information and tools for going through the new background check process. We encourage all child care providers to visit the web page frequently to learn more about the process.

Our newly updated web page can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck>

The new iChildCare Portal, which allows individuals to request their own background check can be found at: <https://ichildcare.wisconsin.gov>

It is important to stay updated. If you have not yet signed up to receive DCF emails, you can subscribe at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/email-signup>