



201 East Washington Avenue, Room E200
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916
Telephone: 608-421-7550
Fax: 608-422-7156
WRS: 711

Governor Tony Evers
Secretary Emilie Amundson

Division of Early Care and Education
Bureau of Early Care Regulation

April 24, 2020

BECR Memo 2020-02

To: License Exempt Public School Programs

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark E. Andrews".

RE: Revisions to DCF 251 – Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers

The permanent rules for DCF 251 went into effect on April 1, 2020. The primary purpose of the rule changes was to ensure that the department's licensed group child care rules comply with the health and safety requirements found in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. The rule also regroups the licensed group rules that address the same topics in different places, eliminates duplicative revisions, corrects errors, incorporates state statutory requirements, and clarifies language where needed to ensure proper implementation and administration of the health and safety requirements.

Summary of DCF 251 Licensing Changes

This memo does not include every repeal, revision, or addition to DCF 251 and should not be used as a substitute for a thorough review of the revised licensing rules.

Staffing and Supervisions Rule Changes:

1. Rules regarding staff files and staff qualifications have been reorganized.
2. Directors of 50 or fewer children and teacher experience requirement has been modified from 80 full days or 120 half days to 320 hours.
3. CPR and automated external defibrillator (AED) training must be completed within 3 months of beginning to work with children in care.
4. Qualifications for staff that work exclusively with school-age children have been expanded to include additional types of allowable education and experience.

Transportation Rule Changes:

1. All vehicles requiring alarms must have a DCF inspection of the vehicle alarm annually, regardless of whether the vehicle is owned by the center.
2. Children under 8 years of age shall be restrained in a child safety restraint system that is appropriate for the height and weight of the child in accordance with s. 347.48 Stats., and ch. Trans 310.

Other Rule Changes:

1. Emergency plans must include procedures that address evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, lock-down; ensuring that the needs of children under age 2 and children with disabilities are met; communication with parents; connecting children with their parents if the center is required to evacuate the building.
2. Rules will be consolidated and grouped with other similar rules, such as personal hygiene (handwashing), medical log books, children's records, and staff files.
3. Time-outs may not exceed 3 minutes.

4. Rules regarding safe sleep environments have been updated. No soft or loose objects are allowed in cribs or playpens for children under 1 year of age, including blankets, flat sheets, and pacifiers with attached soft objects. Swaddling with a blanket is prohibited, but wearable sleep garments, including wearable swaddles, are allowed.

Additional Information

The department has reviewed and updated, where necessary, all licensing forms, publications, and webpages to reflect changes in the rule. Please be sure to use the most recent version of each form available on the department's website.

The Revisor's Version of the permanent rules are available electronically on the department's website at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/rules>. Printed rule books will be sent to each licensed location in early summer and commentary manuals will also be updated and available on the department's website in early summer.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the department will not be offering in-person trainings on the new rules at this time. However, we have created a PowerPoint and spreadsheet identifying which rules were added, modified, or deleted that are available on the department's website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccadminrule>.

If you have questions or require assistance in accessing information or forms on the DCF website, please contact your regional licensing office. Licensing contact information can be found at the following website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/contacts>.

To receive email updates from the Department, please sign up for the Child Care Listserv here: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/email-signup>.

Thank you for the important role you play in the lives of children and families across Wisconsin.