



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

## **Guidance Related to COVID-19: Child Care Licensing and Compliance**

(April 1, 2020)

### **Background**

As part of the District of Columbia Government's response to coronavirus (COVID-19), the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is sharing guidance regarding compliance with child care licensing regulations and requirements during the current public health emergency.

### **Scope**

This document contains guidance regarding compliance with child care licensing requirements during the District's modified operating status due to public health actions.

### **Date Issued**

This guidance was issued on April 1, 2020 and will remain in effect until further notice.

### **Guidance**

#### ***License Inspections***

All licensing inspections for childcare facilities in the District of Columbia will be postponed until the end of the public health emergency. This includes initial, unannounced monitoring, annual, renewal, validation visits and follow up inspections. If you have outstanding deficiencies from prior inspections, please continue to submit documents and pictures to your licensing specialist to the extent that you are able. If your facility is closed and an Unusual Incident Report (UIR) was submitted, your facility will be given a 120-day extension for the following:

- Corrective Action Plans;
- Deficiency Correction;
- Immunization compliance;
- Fire renewals; and
- Any other outstanding matters as determined and communicated by your OSSE licensing specialist.

#### Existing Licenses

##### **Expiring Licenses:**

In the event your license expires or will be expiring within the next 120 days, the license will be automatically extended for 120 days. A new license will not be issued during the period of extension. All deadlines attached to the applications and related documents will be flexible.

##### Restricted Licenses:

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If you have a restricted license and have not abated deficiencies, the restricted license will be automatically extended for 90 days, or until you have abated the required deficiencies, whichever is sooner.

Initial Licenses:

If you have received all inspections, abated all deficiencies, submitted complete payment and all required documentation for an initial license, your license will be issued via US mail.

License Applications and Payments:

If you have submitted a licensing application and have not completed the process, please work with your assigned license specialist to complete as much of the process as possible. OSSE will hold applications that cannot be completed due to the public health emergency in abeyance until the end of the public health emergency.

License applications and payments for renewals, amendments and new licenses can be submitted via US mail to:

Licensing and Compliance Unit  
1050 First St. NE, 6th Floor Washington, DC 20002

As noted above, all initial application inspections are postponed. OSSE will not deny an application on the sole basis of an applicant failing to provide a complete app in 90 days and penalty fees will not be assessed during this time.

If you have questions about your license, please contact your assigned licensing specialist or Clement Idun at [Clement.Idun@dc.gov](mailto:Clement.Idun@dc.gov) or (202) 442-4733.

***Complaint and Unusual Incident Report (UIR) Investigations***

Complaints:

Complaints that are received alleging imminent danger will be investigated within 24 hours. All other investigations will be conducted off-site until further notice. Complaint disposition documents will be issued for all complaints that are investigated during this time.

Unusual Incident Report (UIR):

Please continue to submit unusual incident reports as required to [osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov](mailto:osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov).

***Criminal Background Checks***

Please be advised that all criminal background checks will be processed without delay. Expiring background checks must be renewed on time.

Fingerprints:

Processing of criminal background checks through Fieldprint will continue without interruption. Professionals should continue to complete the criminal background check (CBC) process using Fieldprint. [Read more information here.](#)

Child Protection Register:

Professionals can visit the Child and Family Service Administration website at [www.CFSA.dc.gov](http://www.CFSA.dc.gov) to review the new online child protection registry (CPR) application submission process. Once OSSE receives the

CBC and the CPR, the suitability letters will be emailed to the child care providers. (Remember: child care providers should continue to use the Box to securely submit the CPR registry clearance results to OSSE).

If you have questions about criminal background checks, please contact Carolyn Taylor at [Carolyn.Taylor@dc.gov](mailto:Carolyn.Taylor@dc.gov) or (202) 727-8140.

### ***Potential Exposure and COVID-19 Reporting***

If you believe the facility has been exposed to coronavirus (COVID-19), the facility should follow the existing procedures for filing an [Unusual Incident Report](#). Child care providers who believe their community may have been exposed and are seeking guidance on the potential need for closure should also contact the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) at (202) 727-5707 or [DME.DismissalAdvice@dc.gov](mailto:DME.DismissalAdvice@dc.gov). When contacting the DME, providers will be asked to share the following information:

- Name, location of your child care facility, and direct contact information
- Details about the circumstances involving potential or confirmed exposure – who, contact with infected person/people and exposure to your facility
- What communications you have shared with your community to date

The District continually monitors all emergencies and will issue additional guidance as circumstances change.

In the event you decide to close your facility, please remember to submit an [Unusual Incident Report](#) to [osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov](mailto:osse.childcarecomplaints@dc.gov) or your designated licensing specialist. We are grateful for your ongoing patience, flexibility and cooperation as we manage the dynamic nature of this event. As we approach the next few weeks, we ask for continued patience and trust as the District navigates this unique situation.

### ***Questions?***

If you have questions relating to this guidance please contact Eva Laguerre, interim assistant superintendent of early learning and director, licensing and compliance, division of early learning at (202) 741-5942 or [Eva.Laguerre@dc.gov](mailto:Eva.Laguerre@dc.gov).

### ***Related Regulations***

- CCDBG Act and its implementing regulations, 45 C.F.R. Parts 98 and 99, as administered by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;
- District of Columbia's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan, current version;
- Child Development Facilities Regulation Act of 1998, effective April 13, 1999 (D.C. Law 12-215; D.C. Official Code §§ 7-2031 *et seq.* (2012 Repl. & 2017 Supp.)) ("Facilities Act");
- Day Care Policy Act of 1979, effective September 19, 1979 (D.C. Law 3-16; D.C. Official Code §§ 4-401 *et seq.* (2012 Repl. & 2017 Supp.)) ("Day Care Act")
- Chapter 1 of Title 5-A of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (5-A DCMR § 100 *et seq.*)