



Types and Frequency of Required Background Checks in 2011 Child Care Centers

Comprehensive background checks are a basic safeguard essential to protect the safety of children in child care and minimize children’s risk of abuse and neglect. Parents need to know that child care providers and others who come into contact with their children do not have a record of violent offenses, sex offenses, child abuse or neglect, or have not engaged in other behaviors that should disqualify them from caring for children. In an Information Memorandum to State, Territorial, and Tribal Lead Agencies administering child care programs under the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the Office of Child Care (OCC) recommends that all child care providers undergo comprehensive criminal background checks prior to working with young children.¹

The following table includes information about the types of criminal background checks that States require staff working in **child care centers** to have in their licensing regulations. The table also shows the required frequency of background checks for center staff. For the purpose of categorizing the types of child care settings States regulate, the following definition of **child care center** from section 98.2 of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule² is used:

Child care centers are defined as child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)’ work.

This information was compiled from the *National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) Licensing Programs and Policies Survey for 2011*. This study of licensing requirements was conducted as a joint effort between the Office of Child Care’s National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement (NCCCQI) and the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA).

State ¹	Types of Background Checks Required for Center Staff					Frequency of Background Checks
	Criminal History Records	Child Abuse and Neglect Registry	Fingerprints	Sex Offender Registry	Signed Statement About Criminal Status	
AK	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility and every 6 years
AL	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility

¹ Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (September 20, 2011). *Information Memorandum CCDF-ACF-IM-2011-06: Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Background Checks, Health and Safety Requirements, CCDF Plan* <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/im2011-05>

² “Part 98 Child Care and Development Fund” in *Title 45 Public Welfare and Human Services* is available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title45-vol1/pdf/CFR-2011-title45-vol1-part98.pdf>

State ¹	Types of Background Checks Required for Center Staff					Frequency of Background Checks
	Criminal History Records	Child Abuse and Neglect Registry	Fingerprints	Sex Offender Registry	Signed Statement About Criminal Status	
AR	X	X			X	Prior to working in a facility; child abuse and neglect registry checks are conducted every 2 years, and criminal history records checks are conducted every 5 years
AZ	X		X		X	Prior to working in a facility; fingerprint cards renewed every 6 years
CA	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility; and as needed, such as when there is notification of a new criminal record
CO	X	X	X	X	X	Checks must be submitted within 10 days of the first day of employment
CT	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility
DC	X	X	X			Prior to working in a facility
DE	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility
FL	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility and every 5 years
GA	X		X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility
HI	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility and annually
IA	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility and every 2 years
ID*						Facility not licensed
IL	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility
IN	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility and annually
KS	X	X			X	Prior to working in a facility and every 3 years
KY	X	X		X		Prior to working in a facility
LA	X					Prior to working in a facility

State ¹	Types of Background Checks Required for Center Staff					Frequency of Background Checks
	Criminal History Records	Child Abuse and Neglect Registry	Fingerprints	Sex Offender Registry	Signed Statement About Criminal Status	
MA	X	X		X	X	Prior to working in a facility and every 2 years
MD	X	X	X			Prior to working in a facility
ME	X	X		X	X	Prior to working in a facility
MI	X	X	X	X		Prior to working in a facility and every 2 years
MN	X					Prior to working in a facility
MO	X	X		X		Prior to working in a facility and every 2 years
MS	X	X	X	X		Every 5 years
MT	X	X				Prior to working in a facility and annually
NC	X		X		X	Prior to working in a facility and every 3 years
ND	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility and annually
NE		X			X	No information provided
NH	X	X	X	X		Prior to working in a facility and every 3 years
NJ	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility and every 3 years
NM	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility
NV	X	X	X		X	Every 6 years
NY	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility
OH	X		X		X	Prior to working in a facility and every 4 years
OK	X	X		X	X	Prior to working in a facility and child welfare check annually
OR	X	X			X	Prior to working in a facility and every 2 years with renewal application

State ¹	Types of Background Checks Required for Center Staff					Frequency of Background Checks
	Criminal History Records	Child Abuse and Neglect Registry	Fingerprints	Sex Offender Registry	Signed Statement About Criminal Status	
PA	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility
RI	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility
SC	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility and every 2 years
SD	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility
TN	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility
TX	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility and every 2 years
UT	X	X			X	Prior to working in a facility and annually
VA	X	X			X	Prior to working in a facility and every 3 years
VT	X	X			X	Annually
WA	X	X	X	X	X	Prior to working in a facility and every 3 years
WI	X	X		X	X	Prior to working in a facility and annually
WV	X	X	X		X	Prior to working in a facility and every 5 years
WY		X		X	X	Prior to working in a facility
Number of States	48	44	33	24	40	

¹**States** includes the District of Columbia for a total of 51 entities.

***Idaho:** At the time of data collection, Idaho did not have licensing requirements for child care centers at the state level. Idaho enacted state requirements for child care centers after these data were collected. Additional information is available at <http://nrckids.org/index.cfm/resources/state-licensing-and-regulation-information/idaho-regulations/>.

The Office of Child Care's National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement does not endorse any non-Federal organization, publication, or resource.