Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014\(^1\) and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program Final Rule (2016)\(^2\), require states and territories to have health and safety requirements in 11 different topic areas, as well as preservice and ongoing training on those topics, for all providers that receive payment from the CCDF subsidy program.\(^3\) This brief, one in a series of eleven, provides an overview of the prevention and control of infectious diseases.

Licensing and CCDF Administrators may find the brief helpful as they consider revisions to state standards for both licensed and license-exempt providers. It may also be of value to early childhood and school-age care programs and family child care providers in understanding and improving the health and safety of their learning environments.

What Are the Basic Requirements?

*Caring for Our Children Basics: Health and Safety Foundation for Early Care and Education* (CFOCB) represents the minimum health and safety standards experts believe should be in place where children are cared for outside of their homes. The following list contains links to the basic requirements for the prevention and control of infectious diseases:

### Health Promotion and Protection

- **3.2.2.1 Situations That Require Hand Hygiene**
- **3.3.0.1 Routine Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting**
- **3.2.3.4 Prevention of Exposure to Blood and Bodily Fluids**
- **3.6.1.1 Inclusion/Exclusion/Dismissal of Children**
- **3.6.1.4 Infectious Disease Outbreak Control**

### Infectious Diseases

- **7.2.0.1 Immunization Documentation**
- **7.2.0.2 Unimmunized Children**
- **7.2.0.3 Immunization of Caregivers/Teachers**

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\(^2\) Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. § 98.41 (2016).

\(^3\) Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. § 98.44 (2016).
Best practices, which exceed CCDF requirements, are found in Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, CFOC Standards Online Database (CFOC). You can learn more about best practice recommendations to prevent and control infectious diseases by exploring the CFOC links below:

♦ Chapter 3: Health Promotion and Protection
♦ Chapter 3.6: Management of Illness
♦ Chapter 7: Infectious Diseases

Why Is it Important to Children?

Young children are more susceptible to illnesses because their immune systems—the body's natural defenses against disease—are not yet built up. In their first year in a group setting, children at any age tend to get sick more than children who have less contact with other children. Contaminated hands are the most common means of transmission of infections in child care settings. Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps child care providers can take to avoid children and adults getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Child care programs can implement a variety of prevention techniques to reduce the spread of infectious disease such as developing policies and protocols for handwashing and sanitation practices, and how and when to exclude or isolate sick children and handle staff illness. Other precautions include documenting and reporting illness events thoroughly and consistently. And finally, programs need to have policies addressing immunizations.

National surveys document high vaccination coverage among preschool-aged children. This has resulted in historically low levels of most vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States. However, vaccine-preventable infections still occur among children who are not up-to-date with recommended vaccines. Routine immunizations at the appropriate age are the best means of protecting children against vaccine-preventable diseases. Immunization is particularly important for children in child care because preschool-aged children have the highest risk of complications from many vaccine-preventable diseases. View the CDC’s recommended vaccination schedule.

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How Do States Establish Requirements?

Key Findings from the 2017 Child Care Licensing Study

Findings from the 2017 Child Care Licensing Study, a large-scale research study of child care licensing requirements for child care centers, family child care homes (FCCH), and group child care homes (GCCH), reflect commonly found requirements related to the prevention and control of infectious diseases. ‘Percent of states’ and ‘states’ refers to data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

- More than 60 percent of states require children to have a physical exam to enroll in child care.
- Nearly all states require children to have immunizations to enroll in child care, but most allow exceptions with a written statement from the family or a physician.
- Eighty percent of states allow centers to exclude mildly ill children and about one-third include a list of symptoms that can be used to determine if a child should be sent home. Fewer states have requirements about excluding ill children for family and group child care homes.
- More than 90 percent of states require center staff and family and group child care home providers to wash their hands, with nearly all of them specifying times when staff and providers need to wash their hands.
- Nearly all states require children cared for in child care facilities to wash their hands, especially after using the toilet or eating.
- Approximately 70 percent of states require center staff or family or group home providers to have a physical exam or provide a health statement from a physician before working with children. More than half of states require staff or providers to have a screening for tuberculosis.

Examples of State Licensed Child Care Requirements

The charts below provide links to state licensing requirements from Delaware, Oklahoma, Illinois, and Washington that support the prevention and control of infectious diseases, including immunization requirements. These examples do not include all states that have these requirements but are meant to represent a range of approaches states have taken in their regulations.

Links to the full text of state and territory licensing regulations for child care centers, family child care homes, and group child care homes are found in the National Database of Child Care Licensing Regulations.
Child Care Center Requirements

Washington
Chapter 110-300 WAC; Foundational Quality Standards For Early Learning Programs (November 2019)
https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=110-300&full=true#110-300-0200

110-300-0200 Handwashing and hand sanitizer.
110-300-0205 Child, staff, and household member illness.
110-300-0210 Immunizations and exempt children.

Family Child Care Home Requirements

Illinois
Part 406 Licensing Standards for Day Care Homes (January 2019)

Section 406.14 Health, Medical Care and Safety

Oklahoma
Licensing Requirements for Family Child Care Homes and Large Child Care Homes (January 2018)

Section 90. Child Health
Section 90a. Immunizations
Section 90c. Ill Children
Section 90d. Cleanliness

Examples of State License-Exempt Child Care Requirements

States have exemptions in law or regulation that define the types of center-based facilities and home-based providers that are not required to obtain a state license to operate legally. Most states allow some exempt providers to receive CCDF funding. And while exempt providers are not subject to the regulatory requirements set forth by the licensing agency, the CCDF Program Final Rule\textsuperscript{10} requires states and territories to have health and safety requirements in 11 different topic areas for all providers participating in the CCDF subsidy program, as well as preservice and ongoing training on those topics.\textsuperscript{11}

The following excerpts, taken from Iowa and West Virginia requirements for license-exempt programs, are examples of requirements supporting the prevention and control of infectious diseases, including immunizations. These examples do not include all states that have these requirements but are meant to represent a range of approaches states have taken in establishing requirements for license-exempt programs.

License-Exempt Child Care Requirements

Iowa
Chapter 120, Child Care Homes, Iowa Administrative Code (November 2019)
https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/ACO/chapter/441.120.pdf

441—120.9(237A)(2)(g) Children’s files
441—120.10(237A)(1) Professional development

\textsuperscript{10} Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. § 98.41(a)(1)(i)(C) (2015).
\textsuperscript{11} Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. § 98.44(b)(2)(i) (2015).
License-Exempt Child Care Requirements

West Virginia
Legislative Rules Title 78, Series 20, Informal and Relative Family Child Care Home Registration Requirements (March 2018)


Where Can I Find More Information?

Healthy States: Health and Safety Training Toolkit

The Healthy States: Health and Safety Training Toolkit, from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness, provides up-to-date research- and science-informed resources, including online modules, webinars, and materials, to inform and train program-level staff in all early childhood education settings.

The toolkit also gives a summary of the health and safety requirements in the CCDBG Act of 2014 and provides links to CFOCB and CFOC.

Additional Resources

- Caring for Our Children Basics Health and Safety Standards Alignment Tool for Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes (2016), by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, provides a simple format for states and territories to compare their current early childhood program requirements and standards against the recommended health and safety standards in CFOCB.
- Developing and Revising Child Care Licensing Requirements (2017), by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, presents steps for developing and revising child care licensing requirements based on several states’ successful practices.
- Trends in Child Care Licensing Requirements and Policies for 2017 (2020), by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, is a series of research briefs that describe changes in licensing requirements and policies for child care centers, family child care homes, and group child care homes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance (ECQA Center) supports state and community leaders and their partners in the planning and implementation of rigorous approaches to quality in all early care and education settings for children from birth to school age. The ECQA Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.