

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: [CS/CS/HB 47](#)

TITLE: Child Care and Early Learning Providers

SPONSOR(S): McFarland

COMPANION BILL: [CS/SB 738](#) (Burton)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Human Services](#)

18 Y, 0 N, As CS



[Health Care Budget](#)

12 Y, 0 N, As CS



[Health & Human Services](#)

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The Department of Children and Families is responsible for licensure and regulation of child care providers in Florida, which includes establishing the minimum licensing standards that child care providers must comply with. The bill modifies existing child care licensure standards, including standards regarding background screenings and training of child care personnel, implementation of abbreviated inspections, and standards regarding the health and safety of children in child care facilities. The bill exempts from licensure certain entities operating a child care facility solely attended by its employees' children. The bill modifies existing exemptions from special assessments levied by municipalities to include preschools. The bill also requires county commissions to annually affirm continued services for locally managed licensing of child care facilities. Further, the bill prohibits the cancellation, denial, or nonrenewal of residential property insurance solely on the basis that certain child care services are provided at the residence.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill will have a significant negative, indeterminate, fiscal impact on state government expenditures and a negative fiscal impact on local government revenues.

Contingent upon the bill's passage, anticipated fiscal impacts incurred by DCF as a result of implementing the bill will be addressed through the appropriations process and reflected in the General Appropriations Act.

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

Child Care Licensure Program

Under current law once a county designates a [local licensing agency](#) to regulate child care facilities and homes within the county, the designation remains in effect until the county relinquishes it. Counties are not required to affirm such designations.

The bill requires counties who have designated a local licensing agency to administer child care licensure to annually affirm the designation, by a majority vote of the county commission. (Section [3](#))

Child Care Licensure Standards

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is required to establish licensing standards for child care providers. Current law, specifies what these standards should address. The bill modifies current law to require [child care licensing standards](#) to address the health and nutrition, safety, developmental needs, and sanitary physical conditions for all children served by child care facilities. The bill also modifies existing licensure standards to authorize DCF to create up to three classification levels for violations that relate directly to the health and safety

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of a child. The bill specifies that a class three violation is the least serious in nature and must be the same incident of noncompliance that occurs at least three times within a 2 year period. (Section [2](#))

Child Care Personnel – Background Screening and Training Requirements

Currently, child care personnel must pass a level 2 [background screening](#) as a condition of employment at a child care facility or home in Florida. A current or perspective employee may not work at the child care facility or home while waiting for his or her background screening results, unless a provisional hire status is granted.

The bill requires DCF to complete the background screening for child care personnel and provide the results to the child care facility within three business days upon receipt of the criminal history record check. Upon failure to do so, the bill requires DCF to issue the current or prospective child care personnel a 45-day provisional hire status while all required information is being requested and DCF is awaiting results, unless DCF has reason to believe a disqualifying factor may exist. During the 45-day period, the current or prospective child care personnel must be under the direct supervision of a screened and trained staff member when in contact with children. (Section [2](#))

Currently, child care personnel are required to pay a fee to take the mandatory [40-clock-hour introductory](#) child care training courses. Child care personnel are also required to take competency examinations, upon completion of each course, in-person.

The bill requires the 40-clock-hour introductory course in child care that must be taken by child care personnel to include online training coursework that will meet the minimum training standards for child care personnel and be provided at no cost by DCF. The bill requires the child care personnel competency examination to be provided either online or in-person. The bill also removes the “interdisciplinary approach to the study of children” as a requirement for the introductory course in child care. (Section [2](#))

Other Child Care Licensure Standards

The bill modifies several [other child care licensing standards](#) relating to periodic health examinations of child care personnel, safety and sanitation, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation staff training requirements, annual notice requirements to parents and drop-in child care communications system requirements, written activities plan requirements for child care facilities, and [specialized child care facilities for the care of mildly ill children](#). The bill:

- Limits periodic health examinations to child care facility drivers.
- Removes obsolete language related to pagers and beepers related to drop-in child care.
- Removes the requirements for child care facilities to provide parents with information related to flu shots in the months of August and September and information related to leaving children in a vehicle during the months of April and September.
- Adds a requirement that minimum safety standards must include at least one staff person trained in person in cardiopulmonary resuscitation who is present at all times children are present;
- Removes a requirement for a program to be implemented periodically by a child care facility to assist in preventing and avoiding physical and mental abuse.
- Removes a requirement for the DCF to develop standards for specialized child care facilities for the care of mildly ill children. (Section [2](#))

Abbreviated Inspections

Current law does not require DCF and local licensing agencies to develop and implement plans to eliminate duplicative and unnecessary inspections or to develop and implement [abbreviated inspection](#) plans for family day care homes or large family child care homes. The bill requires DCF and the local licensing agencies to develop and implement plans to eliminate duplicative and unnecessary inspections for family day care homes and large family child care homes. The bill also requires DCF and the local licensing agencies to develop and implement an abbreviated inspection plan for child care facilities, family day care homes, and large family child care homes that:

- Have been licensed for at least two consecutive years.
- Have not had a Class I violation for at least two consecutive years.
- Have not had more than three of the same Class 2 violations for at least two consecutive years.
- Have received at least two full onsite renewal inspections in the most recent two years.
- Do not have any current uncorrected violations.
- Do not have any open regulatory complaints or active child protective service investigations.

The bill requires the abbreviated inspection plan to be updated every five years to maintain the validity and effectiveness of inspections. (Section [4](#))

Child Care Licensure Exemptions

Current law does not provide an [exemption from licensure](#) for a private business that operates a child care facility that provides child care services solely for the employees of that business. The bill exempts from licensure, except for the requirements regarding screening of child care personnel, a business that operates a child care facility that solely provides child care for the children of those employed by the business. This exemption will allow these business to qualify for the [child care tax credit](#) pursuant to [s. 402.261, F.S.](#)

Current law also does not provide an exemption for licensure for a child care facility or family day care home that is authorized by the [United States Department of Defense](#) (DoD) or the United States Coast Guard to provide child care services. The bill exempts from licensure a child care facility or a family day care home if the child care facility or family day care home is authorized by DoD or the United States Coast Guard to provide child care services and has completed background screening by DoD and received a favorable suitability and fitness determination. The exemption does not extend to a child care facility or family day care home that elects to serve children not eligible for care under the DoD Instruction 6060.02.

The bill requires any child care facility that meets the criteria for exemption, but desires licensure, to submit an application for licensure to DCF or, if applicable, the local licensing agency. The bill authorizes DCF and the local licensing agency to adopt rules to administer and implement the provisions regarding child care licensure exemptions, including but not limited to, any assessments for previous licensure history. (Sections and [5](#))

Special Assessments

Preschools are not exempt from any [special assessments](#) levied by municipalities in Florida. The bill exempts any public or private licensed preschools from special assessments levied by municipalities. (Section [1](#))

Insurance and Child Care Homes

Florida law does not prohibit the cancellation, denial, or nonrenewal of residential property insurance coverage of a residence where large family child care services are provided on the premises. Contractual liabilities that arise in connection with the operation of a large family child care home are also not excluded from residential property insurance policies.

The bill prohibits the cancellation, denial, or nonrenewal of residential property insurance solely on the basis that large family child care services are provided at the residence. The bill excludes contractual liabilities that arise in connection with a large family child care home from residential property insurance policies unless specifically included in coverage. The bill also specifies, for purposes of family day care and large family child care insurance, that a large family child care home is an occupied residence in which a child care is regularly provided for children from at least two unrelated families, which receives payments, fees, or grants for the children receiving care, whether or not operated for profit, and which has at least two full-time child care personnel on the premises during the hours of operation, one of whom must be the owner or occupant of the home. This definition of large family child care home is consistent with the definition in current law under the child care licensure statutes. (Section [6](#))

The bill makes conforming changes to update cross-references. (Section [7](#))

The bill is effective July 1, 2025. (Section [8](#))

RULEMAKING:

The bill authorizes the Department of Children and Families to adopt rules relating to inspections. The bill also authorizes the department to create classification levels for violations of licensing standards that directly relate to the health and safety of a child. The bill does not provide rulemaking authority to implement the classification levels for licensing violation. However, the department has sufficient rulemaking authority to implement the provisions. The bill authorizes DCF and the local licensing agencies to adopt rules to administer and implement provisions regarding child care licensure exemptions, including, but not limited to, assessments of previous licensure history.

Lawmaking is a legislative power; however, the Legislature may delegate a portion of such power to executive branch agencies to create rules that have the force of law. To exercise this delegated power, an agency must have a grant of rulemaking authority and a law to implement.

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill will have a significant negative indeterminate fiscal impact on state government. The bill requires DCF to provide online training coursework to child care personnel at no cost. DCF currently contracts with 13 training coordinating agencies (TCA) to administer and coordinate in-person courses and exams. TCAs receive training fees paid by child care personnel and through DCF contracts. TCAs received \$3 million in FY 2023-2024 from child care personnel for online coursework and \$838,062 through DCF contracts. If the TCAs no longer charge child care personnel for the courses, the cost of the contracts that DCF has with the TCAs could significantly increase.¹

The bill also requires DCF to offer competency exams for child care personnel online. DCF estimates that moving to an online exam will have a significant negative indeterminate fiscal impact on the agency due to the significant cost associated with the development, procurement and administration of testing. Unless the cost is passed onto the employee, DCF would be unable to absorb the cost through existing resources.²

Contingent upon the bill's passage, anticipated fiscal impacts incurred by DCF as a result of implementing the bill will be addressed through the appropriations process and reflected in the General Appropriations Act.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The Revenue Estimating Conference estimated that the provision in the bill allowing municipalities to provide an exemption from special assessments on preschools will have a recurring negative impact on local government (municipal) revenues of \$5.9 million in FY 2025-26.³

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Child Care Licensure Program

¹ DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47 (2025)*, p. 11, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

² *Id.*

³ EDR, *Revenue Estimating Impact Conference (March 24, 2025)*, available at <https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/revenueimpact/archives/2025/pdf/page193-195.pdf> (last visited March 24, 2025).

Child care is the care, protection and supervision of a child for a period of less than 24 hours a day on a regular basis, which supplements parental care, enrichment, and health supervision for the child, in accordance with his or her individual needs, and for which a payment, fee, or grant is made for care.⁴ If a program meets the statutory definition of child care, it is subject to regulation by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or a local licensing agency, unless the statute specifically excludes or exempts it from regulation.

The child care licensing program is a component of the services provided by DCF. The purpose of the program is to ensure a healthy and safe environment for children in child care settings and to improve the quality of their care. The program is accountable for the statewide licensure of Florida's child-care facilities,⁵ large family child care homes,⁶ specialized child-care facilities for the care of mildly ill children,⁷ and the licensure or registration of family day care homes.⁸ Family day care homes must be licensed if the home is currently licensed under an existing county licensing ordinance or if the board of county commissioners passes a resolution that family day care homes be licensed. If not subject to licensure, a family day care home must register with DCF.⁹ Currently, there are 11,960 licensed child care providers in Florida, of those 9,629 are licensed by DCF.¹⁰

Under Florida law, any county whose child care licensing standards meet or exceed the minimum state standards may designate by ordinance a [local licensing agency](#) (LLA) in their county to license child care facilities.¹¹ A county choosing not to administer its own licensing program or whose minimum standards do not exceed the state minimum standards, would require DCF to administer child care licensing in that county.

Currently, DCF is responsible for the licensure and inspection of child care facilities and homes in 63 of the 67 counties within the state. Four counties have elected to designate a LLA to regulate licensing of child care facilities and homes in their areas; these counties include Broward, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and Sarasota.¹² There are currently 2,331 child care providers licensed by LLAs in Florida.¹³

Under current law:

- Child care facilities are child care centers or child care arrangements that care for more than five children unrelated to the operator and receive a payment, fee, or grant for the children receiving care, wherever the facility is operated and whether it is operated for profit or not for profit.¹⁴ A child care facility does not include: public schools and nonpublic schools and their integral programs, except as provided in [S. 402.3025, F.S.](#); summer day camps; bible schools normally conducted during vacation periods; and certain operators of transient establishments, that provide child care solely for the guests of their establishment or resort, provided the child care personnel background screening requirements are met.¹⁵
- Family day care homes are occupied residences in which child care is regularly provided for children from at least two unrelated families and which receive payments, fees, or grants for the children receiving care, whether or not operated for profit.¹⁶
- Large family child care homes are occupied residences in which child care is regularly provided for children from at least two unrelated families, which receive payments, fees, or grants for the children receiving care, whether or not operated for profit, and which has at least two full-time child care personnel, one of whom must be the owner or occupant of the home, on the premises during the hours of operation.¹⁷

⁴ S. [402.302\(1\), F.S.](#)

⁵ S. [402.305, F.S.](#)

⁶ S. [402.3131, F.S.](#) Also see ss. 402.301, F.S. through [402.319, F.S.](#)

⁷ S. [402.305\(17\), F.S.](#)

⁸ S. [402.313, F.S.](#)

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 3, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

¹¹ S. [402.306, F.S.](#)

¹² DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 2, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

¹³ DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 3, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

¹⁴ S. [402.302\(2\), F.S.](#)

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ S. [402.302\(8\), F.S.](#)

¹⁷ S. [402.302\(11\), F.S.](#)

- [Specialized child-care facilities for the care of mildly ill children](#) are child care facilities that provides child care for more than five mildly ill children unrelated to the child care operator, and receive a payment, fee, or grant for any of the children receiving care. Specialized child care facilities may provide care for mildly ill children in a facility specialized for this purpose or as a component of other child care services offered in a distinct and separate part of a regularly licensed child care facility.¹⁸ Child care for mildly ill children is the care of children with short term illness or symptoms of illness or disability, provided either as an exclusive service in a center specialized for this purpose, or as a component of other child care services offered in a distinct part of a regularly licensed child care facility, for a period of less than 24 hours per day. Such programs may accept children exhibiting illnesses or symptoms for which they would be excluded from child care provided for well children.¹⁹ Currently, there is only one child care program licensed as a specialized child care facility. However, no children are being actively served.²⁰

Statewide Provider Count as of January 2, 2025 ²¹			
	DCF	LLA	Statewide
Facilities	7,697	1,820	9,517
Family Day Care Homes	1,601	433	2,034
Large Family Child Care Homes	330	78	408
Mildly Ill Facilities	1	0	1
Total	9,629	2,331	11,960

[Child Care Facility Licensure Standards](#)

DCF is responsible for establishing the licensing standards that each licensed child care facility must meet. These standards must address:²²

- The health, sanitation, safety, and adequate physical surroundings for all children in child care.
- The health and nutrition of all children in child care.
- The child development needs of all children in child care.

[Child Care Personnel – Background Screening and Training Requirements](#)

DCF establishes minimum licensing standards for child care personnel, including training and background screening of personnel.²³ Child care personnel includes all owners, operators, employees, and volunteers working in a child care facility.²⁴ Background screening must be conducted for all child care personnel using level 2 standards of screening. Elements of the background screening include:²⁵

- FDLE criminal history background check;
- FBI criminal history background check;
- Criminal background check of any prior states resided within the past five years;
- Sex Offender Registry check (in Florida & any prior states resided within past five years);
- Child Abuse & Neglect check (in Florida & any prior states resided within past five years);
- Attestation of Good Moral Character; and

¹⁸ Rule 65C-25, F.A.C.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 8, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

²¹ *Id.*

²² S. [402.305, F.S.](#)

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ S. [402.302\(3\), F.S.](#)

²⁵ Ss. [402.302\(15\), F.S.](#), and [435.04, F.S.](#)

- Previous five-year employment history check.

A level 2 background screening typically takes a few business days to complete. However, the process may take longer if additional out-of-state records are needed, there is incomplete information, or due to variations in agency processing times,²⁶ which can delay employment of child care personnel while waiting for screening results.

DCF establishes the minimum training standards for child care personnel. DCF has adopted the Child Care Facility Handbook to describe these requirements in detail.²⁷ The minimum standards for training must ensure that all child care personnel take an approved [40-clock-hour introductory course](#) in child care covering the following topic areas:²⁸

- State and local rules and regulations which govern child care.
- Health, safety, and nutrition.
- Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.
- Child development, including typical and atypical language, cognitive, motor, social, and self-help skills development.
- Observation of developmental behaviors, including using a checklist or other similar observation tools and techniques to determine the child's developmental age level.
- Specialized areas, including computer technology for professional and classroom use and early literacy and language development of children from birth to 5 years of age, as determined by the DCF, for owner-operators and child care personnel of a child care facility.
- Developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder and Down syndrome, and early identification, use of available state and local resources, classroom integration, and positive behavioral supports for children with developmental disabilities.²⁹

Mandatory training courses are currently offered online and in-person. Child care personnel are responsible for payment of each online or instructor-led course. Each online course is \$10. The cost of instructor led courses ranges from \$1 to \$10 per instructional hour.³⁰ Completion of the training is shown through passing competency exams for each course taken. Competency examinations are administered in-person.

[Other Child Care Licensure Standards](#)

DCF is also responsible for establishing the minimum licensing standards for the following:

- Periodic health examinations for child care personnel.³¹
- Sanitary and safety conditions, first aid treatment, emergency procedures, and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The minimum standards must require that at least one staff person trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, as evidenced by current documentation of course completion, must be present at all times that children are present.³² The sanitary and safety standards also require child care facilities to provide parents of children who are in drop-in care with a communications system, such as a pager or beeper, to ensure the immediate return of the parent to the child, if necessary.³³

²⁶ When the background screening is initiated, fingerprints are sent to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). Results from FDLE and the FBI are typically available within 24 to 48 hours; however, FDLE standards require results within 72 hours. See DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 5, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

²⁷ Florida Department of Children and Families, *Child Care Facility Handbook, October 2021*, available at https://www.myflfamilies.com/sites/default/files/2022-12/FacilityHandbook_0.pdf (last visited March 21, 2025).

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ Section [402.305, F.S.](#)

³⁰ DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 5, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

³¹ S. 402.305(2)(f), F.S.

³² S. 402.305(7), F.S.

³³ S. 402.305(7)(c), F.S.

- Admissions and recordkeeping, which must include requirements for preadmission and periodic health examinations, requirements for immunizations, and requirements for maintaining emergency information for health records of all children.
 - During the months of August and September of each year, each child care facility must provide parents of children enrolled in the facility detailed information regarding the causes, symptoms, and transmission of the influenza virus and the importance of immunizing their children.
 - During the months of April and September of each year, the facility must notify parents of the potential for a distracted adult to fail to drop off a child at the facility and instead leave the child in the adult's vehicle upon arrival at the adult's destination.³⁴
- A plan of activities that ensures that each child care facility has and implements a written plan for the daily provision of varied activities and active and quiet play opportunities appropriate to the age of the child.³⁵ The written plan must also include a program, to be implemented periodically for children of an appropriate age, to assist children in preventing and avoiding physical and mental abuse.³⁶
- Specialized child care facilities for the care of mildly ill children.³⁷

[Inspections of Child Care Providers](#)

DCF conducts inspections of all licensed child-care providers to determine initial and renewal licensure. DCF also conducts on-going inspections to periodically assess continued compliance with licensing standards.³⁸ To ensure consistent regulation throughout the state, DCF's current enforcement model utilizes three classification levels for violations of licensing standards.³⁹

- Class 1 violations are the most serious in nature, pose an imminent threat to a child including abuse or neglect and which could or does result in death or serious harm to the health, safety, and well-being of a child.
- Class 2 violations are less serious in nature than Class 1 violations and could be anticipated to pose a threat to the health, safety, or well-being of a child, although the threat is not imminent.
- Class 3 violations are less serious in nature than either Class 1 or Class 2 violations and pose a low potential for harm to children.

Under current law, DCF may impose disciplinary actions, including, denial, suspension, or revocation of license, converting license to probational status, and assessing fines, if a child care provider fails to meet licensing standards. DCF may impose an administrative fine, up to \$100 per violation per day or if the violation could or does cause death or serious injury, the agency may impose a fine up to \$500 per violation per day, in lieu of or in addition to any other disciplinary action taken.⁴⁰

There were 16,405 licensing inspection violations recorded during the 2023-2024 FY. Of these violations, 75 percent were classified as Class 3 violations and 803 child care providers accumulated five or more Class 3 violations during the fiscal year.⁴¹

Inspection Violations for 2023/2024 FY	
Class 1	145
Class 2	3,908
Class 3	12,352
Grand Total	16,405

³⁴ S. 402.305(9), F.S.

³⁵ S. 402.305(13), F.S.

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ S. 402.305(17), F.S.

³⁸ [S. 402.308, F.S.](#) and [402.311, F.S.](#)

³⁹ S. [402.310, F.S.](#) and Rule 65C-22.010, F.A.C. Also see DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 3, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

⁴⁰ S. [402.310, F.S.](#)

⁴¹ DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 3, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.

DCF utilizes the disciplinary sanctions outlined in [s. 402.310, F.S.](#), and in Rules 65C-22.010(2) and 65C-20.012(3), F.A.C. The disciplinary sanction matrix outlines the procedure for consistent enforcement of continued violations of licensing standards over a two-year period. Child care providers receive technical assistance whenever a violation occurs, regardless of its class (Class 1, 2, or 3). This assistance involves providing recommendations to help the provider comply with licensing standards. For Class 1 violations, technical assistance is offered simultaneously along with an administrative fine with the first violation. For Class 2 violations, technical assistance is offered with the first violation. When a second Class 2 violation of the same standard occurs, technical assistance is offered along with the administrative fine. For Class 3 violations, technical assistance is offered for the first and second instances of the same standard of a Class 3 violation. The provider is only subject to an administrative fine after the third occurrence of the same Class 3 violation. Subsequent Class 3 violations of the same standard would result in a per day administrative fine.⁴²

[Abbreviated Inspections](#)

Under current law, DCF and the local licensing agencies are required to develop and implement a plan to eliminate duplicative and unnecessary inspections of child care facilities.⁴³ Both entities are also required to develop and implement an abbreviated inspection plan for child care facilities that have had no Class 1 or Class 2 deficiencies for at least 2 consecutive years. The abbreviated inspection must include those elements identified by DCF and the local governmental agencies as being key indicators of whether the child care facility continues to provide quality care and programming.⁴⁴ Current law does not require abbreviated inspection plans for family day care homes or large family child care homes.

However, in 2022, DCF amended its agency rules (Rule 65C-20, F.A.C.) to expand the eligible provider types for abbreviated inspections to include family day care homes and large family child care homes.⁴⁵ The rules require abbreviated inspections for family day care homes and large family child care homes that:

- Have been licensed for at least two consecutive years.
- Have had no Class 1 violations or Class 2 violations for at least two consecutive years.
- Have received at least two full onsite renewals in the most recent two years.
- Have no current uncorrected violations.
- Have no open regulatory complaints or active child protective services investigations.

Inspections for FY 2023-2024	(July 23 – June 24)
Total Inspections Statewide	33,717
Abbreviated Inspections	2,044
Percentage of Inspections That Were Abbreviated	6%

[Child Care Licensure Exemptions](#)

Under current law, a child care facility that is an integral part of a church or parochial school, and is accredited by, or is a member of, an organization that publishes and requires compliance with its standards for health, safety, and sanitation is exempt from the child care licensure requirements.⁴⁶ However, though exempt from licensure the facility must meet the child care personnel background screening requirements.⁴⁷ If the child care facility desires licensure, the facility must notify DCF to obtain a license. Once licensed, the child care facility may not withdraw its licensure and continue to operate.⁴⁸

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ [S. 402.3115, F.S.](#)

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 7, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee. Also see Rule 65C-20, F.A.C.

⁴⁶ [S. 402.316, F.S.](#)

⁴⁷ [S. 402.305, F.S.](#) and [s. 402.3055, F.S.](#)

⁴⁸ [S. 402.316\(3\), F.S.](#)

Any county or city with state or local child care licensing programs that were in existence on July 1, 1974, are authorized to continue to license the child care facilities covered under such programs until and unless the licensing agency makes a determination to exempt the child care facility from licensure.

In Florida, a business that operates an eligible child care facility that provides child care solely for the children of the employees of the business is eligible to take a [child care tax credit](#).⁴⁹ The credit may be taken against the business' tax liability due for several different taxes, including corporate income tax and insurance premium tax.⁵⁰ To be an eligible child care facility, the facility must be a licensed child care facility or be exempt from licensure pursuant to [s. 402.316, F.S.](#) Section [402.316, F.S.](#), only provides licensure exemptions for child care facilities with religious affiliations. The statute does not provide an exemption for a private business that operates a child care facility that provides child care services solely for the employees of that business.

Military-Operated Child Care Programs

The Department of Defense (DoD) and the U.S. Coast Guard have very similar requirements for child care provider certifications, including background screening and training.⁵¹

DoD certifies four types of child care programs to provide care for children of military families.⁵²

- **Child Development Centers** are centers located on military installations/bases that provide child care services for infants, pretoddlers, toddlers, and preschoolers. They operate Monday through Friday during standard work hours, and depending on the location offer full-day, part-day, and hourly care.
- **Family Child Care (FCC)** programs provide home based child care. Services are provided by qualified child care professionals in their homes on or off the military installation. FCC programs are designed for infants through school agers. Each FCC provider determines what care they offer, which may include full-day, part-day, school year, summer camp, 24/7, and extended care. Some FCC providers offer flexible operating hours, and are able to adjust their hours to accommodate requests from parents.
- **24/7 Centers** provide child care for infants through school age children in a home-like setting during both traditional and non-traditional hours on a regular basis. The program is designed to support watch standers or shift workers who work rotating or non-traditional schedules (i.e., evenings, overnights, and weekends), while other families may use a 24/7 Center if space is available; priority is given to sponsors who require 24/7 care.
- **School Age Care (SAC)** programs provide facility-based care for children from the start of kindergarten through the end of the summer after seventh grade. This program type operates Monday through Friday during standard work hours. SAC programs provide both School Year Care and Summer Camp.

All military child care providers must be licensed professionals who have obtained favorable background checks and a DoD Certificate to Operate. Each installation's child care program ensures all providers complete a comprehensive training program that promotes developmentally appropriate intellectual, social, emotional, and physical learning.⁵³

DoD child care certification and screening standards are typically more stringent than state child care licensing standards. Required screenings, inspections, and checks for all military operated child care programs include:⁵⁴

⁴⁹ S. [402.261, F.S.](#)

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ Military Childcare.com, *Military-Operated Child Care Programs*, available at <https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mcc-central/mcchome/military-operated-child-care-programs>, and United States Coast Guard, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Child Development Services (CDS)*, available at <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Human-Resources-CG-1/Health-Safety-and-Work-Life-CG-11/Office-of-Work-Life-CG-111/Child-Care/>, (last visited March 21, 2025).

⁵² Military Childcare, *Military-Operated Child Care Programs*, at <https://public.militarychildcare.csd.disa.mil/mcc-central/mcchome/military-operated-child-care-programs> (last visited March 21, 2025).

⁵³ *Id.*

⁵⁴ *Id.*

- Criminal history background checks for all individuals who have regular contact with children in DoD child care programs;
- Annual inspections for fire, safety, sanitation, and health;
- Multi-disciplinary team inspections that includes a parent representative; and
- Military-service headquarters inspections.

The military-service headquarters inspection covers the following programmatic areas:

- Resource management and administration;
- Personnel management;
- Background checks;
- Oversight and inspections;
- Facility;
- Fire and safety;
- Health and sanitation;
- Nutrition and food service;
- Child maltreatment and reporting;
- Supervision of children;
- Parent involvement, participation and communication; and
- Learning activities and interactions with children.

DoD required screening, inspections, and checks for FCC providers include:⁵⁵

- Criminal history background checks for the applicant and all residents over 18 years old;
- Health screening and proof of immunizations for the provider and residents;
- Home inspections for fire, safety, sanitation, and preventative medicine;
- Monthly visits by an FCC staff member to observe, mentor and provide support;
- Pet certificate if the provider has a pet to show that it has the appropriate vaccinations and is safe to be around children; and
- Proof of liability insurance.

DoD Child Care Training Requirements

DoD requires all child care providers and direct care personnel to complete 40 hours of orientation prior to working with children, with the full 40 hours completed within the first 90 days of employment. The orientation includes:⁵⁶

- Working with children of different ages, including developmentally appropriate activities and environmental observations;
- Age-appropriate guidance and discipline techniques;
- Applicable regulations, policies, and procedures;
- Child safety and fire prevention;
- Child abuse prevention, identification, and reporting;
- Parent and family relations;
- Health and sanitation procedures, including blood-borne pathogens, occupational health hazards for direct care personnel, and recognizing symptoms of illness;
- Emergency health and safety procedures, including pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid;
- Safe infant sleep practices and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention;
- Nutrition, obesity prevention, and meal service;
- Working with children with special needs;
- Accountability and child supervision training;

⁵⁵ Id.

⁵⁶ Washington Headquarters Services, *Department of Defense Instruction*, at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/portals/54/documents/dd/issuances/dodi/606002p.pdf> (last visited March 21, 2025).

- For FCC providers only, infant and child (pediatric) CPR and first aid must be completed prior to accepting children for care. Training shall be updated as necessary to maintain current certifications; and
- Training in business operations.

DoD Background Screening Requirements

DoD policy dictates that all individuals who have regular contact with children under 18 years of age in DoD sanctioned child care services programs must undergo a criminal history background check, an Installation Records Check, and annually self-report changes to their criminal histories.⁵⁷ DoD also conducts an FBI fingerprint criminal history background check.

DoD initiates a Tier 1 Investigation (Child Care National Agency Check and Inquiry). Elements of the investigation include:

- FBI criminal history background check;
- State criminal history repository check of any former states of prospective employee;
- State child abuse and neglect repository check; and
- State sex offender registry check.

An installation records check reviews the applicant's relevant and accessible past records, with a minimum coverage of 2 years prior to the date of application, and includes:

- Installation law enforcement or security records;
- Family Advocacy Program records; and⁵⁸
- Alcohol, drug, and substance abuse records (including pre-employment records and the results of any random drug testing).

Special Assessments

There are 67 county governments and over 400 municipal governments in Florida. Municipalities levy and collect special assessments to fund capital improvements and municipal services including but not limited to: fire protection, emergency medical services, garbage disposal, sewer improvement, street improvement and parking facilities. Small municipalities with a population fewer than 100 persons may use special assessments to fund special security and crime prevention services and facilities.⁵⁹

Property owned or occupied by a religious institution, a public or private elementary, middle, or high school, or by a governmentally financed, insured or subsidized housing facility that is used primarily for persons who are elderly or disabled are exempt from any special assessments levied by a municipality.⁶⁰ Currently, no specific exemption exists for preschools.

Child Care Tax Credit

Under Florida law, a business may qualify for a child care tax credit if the business establishes or operates an eligible child care facility for its employees or pays an eligible child care facility on behalf of its employee for child care.⁶¹ An eligible child care facility is a child care facility that is licensed under Florida's child care licensing

⁵⁷ Washington Headquarter Services, *DoD Manual 1402.05 Background Checks on Individuals in Department of Defense Child Development and Youth Programs*, January 24, 2017, at https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodm/140205_dodm_2017b.pdf (last visited March 4, 2025).

⁵⁸ A Family Advocacy Program is a DoD program designated to address domestic abuse, child abuse and neglect, and problematic sexual behavior in children and youth. FAP works on every military installation where families are assigned, and supports service members and their spouses, partners and families to prevent abuse, promote victim safety and offer treatment and rehabilitation for healing after a traumatic event has occurred. See Washington Headquarters Services, *DoD Instructions 6400.01 Family Advocacy Program (FAP)*, May 1, 2019, at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/640001p.pdf> (last visited March 21, 2025).

⁵⁹ S. 170.201, F.S.

⁶⁰ S. 170.201(2), F.S.

⁶¹ S. 402.261, F.S.

requirements or a child care facility that is exempt from licensure due to its religious affiliation, pursuant to [S. 402.316, F.S.](#)⁶²

The child care tax credit may be taken against the following Florida taxes:

- Corporate income tax;
- Excise tax on liquor, wine, and malt beverages;
- Gas and oil production tax (up to 50% of the tax due on each return);
- Insurance premium tax; and
- Use tax due under a direct pay permit.⁶³

A business that operates an eligible child care facility may receive a credit of 50 percent of the startup costs of the facility for the taxable year in which the facility begins operating. The maximum amount of credit that may be granted is based on the number of employees as follows:

- One to nineteen employees, the maximum credit is \$1 million.
- Twenty to two hundred fifty employees, the maximum credit is \$500,000.
- Two hundred fifty-one or more employees, the maximum credit is \$250,000.⁶⁴

A business that operates an eligible child care facility for the taxpayer's employees may receive a credit of \$300 per month for each eligible child enrolled in the facility. The maximum amount of credit that may be granted is based on the number of employees as follows:

- One to nineteen employees, the maximum credit is \$50,000.
- Twenty to two hundred fifty employees, the maximum credit is \$500,000.
- Two hundred fifty-one or more employees, the maximum credit is \$1 million.⁶⁵

A business that makes payment to an eligible child care facility in the name and for the benefit of an employee of the taxpayer is allowed a credit of 100 percent of the payment up to \$3,600 per child. The maximum amount of credit that may be granted is based on the number of employees as follows:

- One to nineteen employees, the maximum credit is \$50,000.
- Twenty to two hundred fifty employees, the maximum credit is \$500,000.
- Two hundred fifty-one or more employees, the maximum credit is \$1 million.⁶⁶

Insurance and Child Care Homes

Homeowners' insurance is a specific type of property insurance. Homeowners' insurance covers damage or loss by theft and against perils which can include fire, and storm damage. It also may insure the owner for accidental injury or death for which the owner may be legally responsible. Mortgage lenders usually require homeowners' insurance as part of the mortgage terms.⁶⁷

While homeowners' insurance can specifically refer to the insurance of a house, it also encompasses the insurance of other types of structures associated with personal residences, including tenants (renters) and condominium unit owners.⁶⁸

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ Florida Office of Insurance Regulation, *Homeowners' Insurance*, available at <https://florid.com/Sections/PandC/Homeowners/default.aspx>, (last visited March 21, 2025).

⁶⁸ *Id.*

Florida recognizes that family day care homes fulfill a vital role in providing child care and that residential property insurance coverage should not be canceled, denied, or fail to be renewed solely on the basis of the family day care services at the residence. The potential liability of residential property insurers is substantially increased by the operation of child care services on the premises. Contractual liabilities that arise in connection with the operation of the family day care home are excluded from residential property insurance policies unless they are specifically included in such coverage.⁶⁹

In addition to family day care services, there are also over 400 large family day care services in Florida.⁷⁰ A large family day care home is an occupied residence in which child care is regularly provided for children from at least two unrelated families where there is payment for the care provided and which has at least two full-time child care personnel on the premise during hours of operation.⁷¹ The insurance protections for family day care homes do not extend to large family day care homes.⁷²

RECENT LEGISLATION:

YEAR	BILL #	HOUSE SPONSOR(S)	SENATE SPONSOR	OTHER INFORMATION
2024	CS/CS/HB 635	McFarland	Grall	Died in House
2023	CS/CS/CS/HB 1021	McFarland	Grall	Died in Senate

⁶⁹ S. [627.70161, F.S.](#)
⁷⁰ DCF, *Agency Bill Analysis HB 47* (2025), p. 3, on file with the Health and Human Services Subcommittee.
⁷¹ S. [402.302\(11\), F.S.](#)
⁷² S. [627.70161, F.S.](#)

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Human Services Subcommittee	18 Y, 0 N, As CS	3/4/2025	Mitz	Curry
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires DCF to provide background screening results to child care facilities within three business days upon receipt of the criminal history record check.• Requires DCF and local licensing agencies to develop and implement abbreviated inspections for family day care homes and large family child care homes.• Removed DCF authority to adopt rules and policies based on recommendations of required reporting.• Exempts from licensure child care facilities and family day care homes that are authorized to provide child care services by the DoD or the U.S. Coast Guard and have completed DoD background screening and received a favorable suitability and fitness determination.• Authorizes DCF and the local licensing agencies to adopt rules to administer provisions relating to child care licensure exemptions, including, but not limited to, assessments of previous licensure history.			
Health Care Budget Subcommittee	12 Y, 0 N, As CS	3/26/2025	Clark	Smith
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The changes made by the amendment were exclusively technical and did not alter the substance or policy intent of the bill.			
Health & Human Services Committee				

THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.
