

A photograph of several children sitting on a light blue floor in a classroom, engaged in an art or craft activity. They are surrounded by various supplies like paint, brushes, and paper. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a window in the background.

# The Monitoring Process for Child Care Programs in Indiana

## TYPES OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS:

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There are 4 types of regulated child care programs, as defined by Indiana statutes, which are licensed, registered or certified by the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning:

- LICENSED CHILD CARE HOMES
- LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS
- UNLICENSED REGISTERED CHILD CARE MINISTRY
- LEGALLY LICENSED EXEMPT CHILD CARE HOME / CENTERS (LLEP)

## Purpose of Monitoring

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Monitoring is important because not only does it allow the consultant to see a true picture of how the program is functioning on any given day, but it provides an opportunity for technical assistance and consultation which helps build a positive working relationship between the licensee and their consultant.

Monitoring is a process whereby compliance on some, most, or all licensing laws, rules, standards, and policies are assessed. In almost all instances, monitoring is unannounced, meaning the licensee does not know when their licensing representative will visit. All licensees are subject to unannounced monitoring, at least annually or bi-annually for Unlicensed Registered Ministries. A licensee's failure to cooperate with monitoring, or any visit of any type, may be grounds for enforcement.

- Upon arrival to the inspection the Child Care Licensing consultant will introduce themselves, explain the purpose of the visit, and may ask for a space to conduct the paperwork review.
- All areas used for child care or areas accessible to children may be assessed.
- Documentation required to be maintained by the program, which includes postings, child and adult files, and historical records, may be reviewed.
- An exit interview will be conducted to review the licensing inspection report including findings and appropriate corrective actions, if applicable.
- Once the inspection is completed, the program will receive a copy of the inspection report and a customer service survey via email.

# THE MONITORING PROCESS FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN INDIANA

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN INSPECTION IS COMPLETED?

If the program is found to be out of compliance with items, the consultant prepares and sends a Plan of Correction or a Plan of Improvement to the program. The Director/ Provider/ Licensee receives the plan and has 10 days to respond on the plan with how they have or will correct the non-compliance. Programs that are cited for CCDF non-compliances will have 21 days to respond with how they have corrected the non-compliance. Programs are expected to maintain compliance at all times.

**Federal law requires states and territories to post the results of child care monitoring and inspection reports online. For Indiana these can be found at Child Care Finder or at the following link: <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/>**

## Pre-Licensing Inspection:

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This type of announced inspection occurs at least once prior to the issuance of a license, registration, or certificate and is conducted by appointment at the convenience of all parties involved. Compliance is assessed according laws and rules for the program auspice type and the licensee's ability to pass an on-site inspection in regards to the following: building structure and design, toilet and handwashing facilities, equipment, materials, personnel and children files, polices, required training, educational requirement, intake forms, kitchen, nutrition and health program (if required) and a compliance inspection with Department of Homeland Security's State Fire Marshal (if required).

Center Pre-Licensing Checklist

Center Inspection Checklist

Home Child Care Inspection Checklist

Unlicensed Registered Ministry Inspection Checklist

## Technical Assistance

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Licensing consultants serve a dual role as regulator and consultant. At times a program may require technical assistance to add regulated space, inspect renovated rooms, etc. Technical assistance is based on professional experience or expert knowledge/information and the focus is to support the program with the maintenance of minimum licensing rules. As such, the first provisional inspection for Homes and Centers should be more of a technical assistance inspection.

## Provisional Inspection:

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As used in this rule, "provisional license" means a license issued to a child care center or family child care home licensee whose services are needed, but who is not able to demonstrate compliance with a rule because the child care program is not in full operation. A provisional license may be issued for a period not to exceed twelve (12) months and is subject to review every three (3) months.

# THE MONITORING PROCESS FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN INDIANA

These unannounced visits will be entered as “Provisional”, and the focus will be on making sure the program understands the rules and laws and knows how to comply.

During a first “provisional inspection” licensing consultant should be making time to go through some of the other important areas of compliance with the provider - things like file organization and retention, fire drills, medication storage and documentation, making sure they know how to use I-LEAD, look at their curriculum, field trips, transportation. The consultant will leave a non-compliance for anything that is a major concern or a risk to the health, safety, and wellbeing of children and/or staff.

The second provisional inspection will be conducted similar to an Annual Inspection where the consultant is ensuring compliance with minimum standards for health, safety, and administration of the child care programs.

[Center Inspection Checklist](#)

[Home Child Care Inspection Checklist](#)

[Unlicensed Registered Ministry Inspection Checklist](#)

## Annual Inspection:

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Licensed child care centers / homes, and legally licensed exempt programs receive at least one unannounced inspection annually to ensure compliance with minimum standards for health, safety, and the administration of child care programs. Unlicensed Registered Ministries receive at least two unannounced inspections annually. Additional inspections may occur at any time. Both licensed and license-exempt programs are required to have annual sanitation, health and fire inspection if applicable.

[Center Annual Inspection Checklist](#)

[Home Child Care Annual Inspection Checklist](#)

[Unlicensed Registered Ministry Annual Inspection Checklist](#)

## Renewal Inspection:

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Prior to the approval of a license/registration or certificate renewal application, the licensed child care centers / homes, unlicensed registered ministry or legally licensed exempt programs must receive a satisfactory inspection report after a full on-site renewal inspection. A renewal inspection is an on-site unannounced inspection which may include: a file review of all personnel and children’s files, kitchen, medication, fire drills, transportation, building, and playground/s.

A satisfactory renewal inspection should not have any outstanding items upon issuance of license/ registration or certification.

[Center Renewal Inspection Checklist](#)

[Home Child Care Renewal Inspection Checklist](#)

[Unlicensed Registered Ministry Renewal Inspection Checklist](#)

## Complaint Inspection

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A complaint inspection is an on-site investigation conducted as a result of a report that a child care provider may have violated child care law/rule or standards. The purpose of the complaint

investigation is to determine whether the allegations can be verified. A complaint inspection generally, includes only those items on the standard checklists that relate to the complaint allegations, unless additional non-compliance items are observed during the inspection. In that case, additional non-compliances may be added to the complaint investigation, or a full routine inspection may be conducted.

## Follow-up Inspection

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A follow-up inspection may be conducted as a result of a non-compliance found during a previous inspection. A follow-up is required to ensure that the corrective action plan for the non-compliant standard has been completed and followed. A follow-up generally includes only those items that were found non-compliant during the previous inspection, unless additional non-compliant items are observed.

When this occurs, the licensing consultant will issue a Plan of Correction for new items observed if needed.

## Provider Eligibility Standards / CCDF

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The Child Care and Development Fund is a federal program that helps low-income families obtain child care so that they may work, attend training or continue their education. The purpose of CCDF is to increase the availability, affordability and quality of child care.

A Legally Licensed Exempt Provider receives an on-site unannounced inspection during which compliance with all applicable items on the Provider Eligibility Standard checklist is verified. When a Legally Licensed Exempt Provider has non-compliances, a follow up inspection may be conducted.

All programs must have documentation that demonstrates they have met the CCDF provider eligibility requirements including, Registered Ministries who choose to become CCDF eligible. Once in compliance, the program may be issued a CCDF certificate to display in their programs. This is an additional certificate to be posted for registered ministries. Providers are required to post the certificate in a place that is visible for parents to see in the home/facility.

[CCDF/ PES legally Licensed Exempt Annual Inspection Checklist](#)

# THE MONITORING PROCESS FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN INDIANA

## Enforcement

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Enforcement refers to the full range of actions, both positive and negative, taken to maintain compliance with licensing statutes and rules. More commonly, enforcement is the mechanism to monitor compliance through supervisory visits. Enforcement includes the process initiated upon the determination of noncompliance to require the program to come into compliance with the licensing rule(s).

## Probationary Inspection

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A probationary license may be issued when the licensee/ applicant is temporarily unable to comply with a rule if the noncompliance does not present an immediate threat to the health and well-being of the children. Thus, the licensee/ applicant is not in substantial compliance with the rules as a whole and the program puts in place an acceptable plan of corrective action for each area of noncompliance.

A probationary license is valid for not more than six (6) months (may be for a period of 3 months at a time) and may be extended for one (1) additional period of three (3) months at a time and is not to exceed 12 months consecutively in total. Deadlines for compliance may be set sooner than the expiration date of the license when appropriate.

## Variance / Waiver Request

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A provider may request a variance/ waiver when they **cannot** comply with a child care regulation, as complying with the specified regulation (rule) would **create an undue hardship**, but it cannot be averse to the health, safety or welfare of any child receiving services and they are offering an alternative method of compliance. A variance / waiver can be submitted on forms offered by the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning for Center, Homes and VCP programs.

[Application for Child Care Home Variance or Waiver](#)  
[Application for Child Care Center Variance or Waiver](#)