

1 AN ACT relating to licensed child-care centers.

2 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

3 ➔Section 1. KRS 199.896 is amended to read as follows:

4 (1) No person, association, or organization shall conduct, operate, maintain, or
5 advertise any child-care center without obtaining a license as provided in KRS
6 199.892 to 199.896.

7 (2) The cabinet may promulgate administrative regulations pursuant to KRS Chapter
8 13A relating to license fees and may, in the administrative regulations, establish
9 standards of care and service for a child-care center, criteria for the denial of a
10 license if criminal records indicate convictions that may impact the safety and
11 security of children in care, and procedures for enforcement of penalties which are
12 not in contravention of this section.

13 (3) Each initial application for a license shall be made to the cabinet and shall be
14 accompanied by a fee that shall not exceed administrative costs of the program to
15 the cabinet and shall be renewable annually upon expiration and reapplication when
16 accompanied by a renewal fee that shall not exceed administrative costs of the
17 program to the cabinet. Regular licenses and renewals thereof shall expire one (1)
18 year from their effective date.

19 (4) No child-care center shall be refused a license or have its license revoked for failure
20 to meet standards set by the secretary until after the expiration of a period not to
21 exceed six (6) months from the date of the first official notice that the standards
22 have not been met. If, however, the cabinet has probable cause to believe that an
23 immediate threat to the public health, safety, or welfare exists, the cabinet may take
24 emergency action pursuant to KRS 13B.125. All administrative hearings conducted
25 under authority of KRS 199.892 to 199.896 shall be conducted in accordance with
26 KRS Chapter 13B.

27 (5) If, upon inspection or investigation, the inspector general finds that a child-care

1 center licensed under this section has violated the administrative regulations,
2 standards, or requirements of the cabinet, the inspector general shall issue a
3 statement of deficiency to the center containing:

4 (a) A statement of fact;

5 (b) A statement of how an administrative regulation, standard, or requirement of
6 the cabinet was violated; and

7 (c) The timeframe, negotiated with the child-care center, within which a violation
8 is to be corrected, except that a violation that poses an immediate threat to the
9 health, safety, or welfare of children in the center shall be corrected in no
10 event later than five (5) working days from the date of the statement of
11 deficiency.

12 (6) The cabinet~~for Health and Family Services~~, in consultation with the Office of the
13 Inspector General, shall establish by administrative regulations promulgated in
14 accordance with KRS Chapter 13A an informal dispute resolution process through
15 which a child-care provider may dispute licensure deficiencies that have an adverse
16 effect on the child-care provider's license.

17 (7) A child-care center shall have the right to appeal to the cabinet~~for Health and
18 Family Services~~ under KRS Chapter 13B any action adverse to its license or the
19 assessment of a civil penalty issued by the inspector general as the result of a
20 violation contained in a statement of deficiency within twenty (20) days of the
21 issuance of the action or assessment of the civil penalty. An appeal shall not act to
22 stay the correction of a violation.

23 (8) In assessing the civil penalty to be levied against a child-care center for a violation
24 contained in a statement of deficiency issued under this section, the inspector
25 general or the inspector general's designee shall take into consideration the
26 following factors:

27 (a) The gravity of the threat to the health, safety, or welfare of children posed by

1 the violation;

2 (b) The number and type of previous violations of the child-care center;

3 (c) The reasonable diligence exercised by the child-care center and efforts to

4 correct the violation; and

5 (d) The amount of assessment necessary to ensure[assure] immediate and

6 continued compliance.

7 (9) Upon a child-care center's failure to take action to correct a violation of the

8 administrative regulations, standards, or requirements of the cabinet contained in a

9 statement of deficiency, or at any time when the operation of a child-care center

10 poses an immediate threat to the health, safety, or welfare of children in the center,

11 and the child-care center continues to operate after the cabinet has taken emergency

12 action to deny, suspend, or revoke its license, the cabinet or the cabinet's designee

13 shall take at least one (1) of the following actions against the center:

14 (a) Institute proceedings to obtain an order compelling compliance with the

15 administrative regulations, standards, and requirements of the cabinet;

16 (b) Institute injunctive proceedings in Circuit Court to terminate the operation of

17 the center;

18 (c) Institute action to discontinue payment of child-care subsidies; or

19 (d) Suspend or revoke the license or impose other penalties provided by law.

20 (10) Upon request of any person, the cabinet shall provide information regarding the

21 denial, revocation, suspension, or violation of any type of child-care center license

22 of the operator. Identifying information regarding children and their families shall

23 remain confidential.

24 (11) The cabinet shall provide, upon request, public information regarding the

25 inspections of and the plans of correction for the child-care center within the past

26 year. All information distributed by the cabinet under this subsection shall include a

27 statement indicating that the reports as provided under this subsection from the past

1 five (5) years are available from the child-care center upon the parent's, custodian's,
2 guardian's, or other interested person's request.

3 (12) All fees collected under the provisions of KRS 199.892 to 199.896 for license and
4 certification applications shall be paid into the State Treasury and credited to a
5 special fund for the purpose of administering KRS 199.892 to 199.896 including the
6 payment of expenses of and to the participants in child-care workshops. The funds
7 collected are hereby appropriated for the use of the cabinet. The balance of the
8 special fund shall lapse to the general fund at the end of each biennium.

9 (13) Any advertisement for child-care services shall include the address of where the
10 service is being provided.

11 (14) All inspections of licensed and unlicensed child-care centers by the cabinet~~{for~~
12 ~~Health and Family Services~~} shall be unannounced.

13 (15) All employees and owners of a child-care center who provide care to children shall
14 demonstrate within the first three (3) months of employment completion of at least
15 a total of six (6) hours of orientation in the following areas:
16 (a) Basic health, safety, and sanitation;
17 (b) Recognizing and reporting child abuse; and
18 (c) Developmentally appropriate child-care practice.

19 (16) All employees and owners of a child-care center who provide care to children shall
20 annually demonstrate to the department completion of at least six (6) hours of
21 training in child development. These hours shall include but are not limited to one
22 and one-half (1.5) hours one (1) time every five (5) years of continuing education in
23 the recognition and prevention of pediatric abusive head trauma, as defined in KRS
24 620.020. Training in recognizing pediatric abusive head trauma may be designed in
25 collaboration with organizations and agencies that specialize in the prevention and
26 recognition of pediatric head trauma approved by the secretary~~{of the Cabinet for~~
27 ~~Health and Family Services~~}. The one and one-half (1.5) hours required under this

1 section shall be included in the current number of required continuing education
2 hours.

3 (17) The cabinet~~for Health and Family Services~~ shall make available either through
4 the development or approval of a model training curriculum and training materials,
5 including video instructional materials, to cover the areas specified in subsection
6 (15) of this section. The cabinet shall develop or approve the model training
7 curriculum and training materials to cover the areas specified in subsection (15) of
8 this section.

9 (18) Child-care centers licensed pursuant to this section and family child-care homes
10 certified pursuant to KRS 199.8982 shall not use corporal physical discipline,
11 including the use of spanking, shaking, or paddling, as a means of punishment,
12 discipline, behavior modification, or for any other reason. For the purposes of this
13 section, "corporal physical discipline" means the deliberate infliction of physical
14 pain and does not include spontaneous physical contact that is intended to protect a
15 child from immediate danger.

16 (19) Child-care centers that provide instructional and educational programs for
17 preschool-aged children that operate for a maximum of twenty (20) hours per week
18 and that a child attends for no more than fifteen (15) hours per week shall:

19 (a) Notify the cabinet in writing that the center is operating;
20 (b) Meet all child-care center licensure requirements and administrative
21 regulations related to employee background checks;
22 (c) Meet all child-care center licensure requirements and administrative
23 regulations related to tuberculosis screenings; and
24 (d) Be exempt from all other child-care center licensure requirements and
25 administrative regulations.

26 (20) Child-care centers that provide instructional and educational programs for
27 preschool-aged children that operate for a maximum of twenty (20) hours per week

1 and that a child attends for no more than ten (10) hours per week shall be exempt
2 from all child-care licensure requirements and administrative regulations.

3 (21) Instructional programs for school-age children that offer, whether free or for a fee,
4 recreational, educational, sports training, or vacation programs that include but are
5 not limited to martial arts and dance programs to children under eighteen (18) years
6 of age, that a child attends outside the presence of his or her parent or legal
7 guardian, shall be exempt from all child-care licensure administrative regulations if
8 the following criteria are met:

9 (a) The program provides primary instruction in a skill, talent, ability, expertise,
10 or proficiency;

11 (b) The program operates outside the time period when school is in session,
12 including before or after school hours, holidays, school breaks, teaching
13 planning days, or summer vacation;

14 (c) The program does not advertise or otherwise represent that the program is a
15 licensed child-care center or that the program offers child-care services;

16 (d) The program informs the parent or guardian:

17 1. That the program is not licensed by the cabinet; and

18 2. About the physical risks a child may face while participating in the
19 program; and

20 (e) The program conducts the following background checks for all program
21 employees and volunteers who work with children:

22 1. Check of the child abuse and neglect records maintained by the cabinet;
23 and

24 2. In-state criminal background information check from the Justice and
25 Public Safety Cabinet or Administrative Office of the Courts.

26 (22) Directors and employees of child-care centers in a position that involves
27 supervisory or disciplinary power over a minor, or direct contact with a minor, shall

1 submit to a criminal record check in accordance with KRS 199.8965.

2 (23) A director or employee of a child-care center may be employed on a probationary
3 status pending receipt of the criminal background check. Application for the
4 criminal record of a probationary employee shall be made no later than the date
5 probationary employment begins.

6 (24) The cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS
7 Chapter 13A to:

8 (a) 1. Require that a child-care center have a minimum of thirty-five (35)
9 square feet of indoor space per child enrolled at the center; and
10 2. Require that a child-care center that provides care for school-aged
11 children as described in KRS 158.030 and is granted a waiver under
12 subsection (25) of this section have a minimum of thirty-five (35)
13 square feet of indoor space per school-age child enrolled, including
14 classroom storage and bathrooms that are exclusively used by children
15 enrolled at the child-care center and on the same level as the school-
16 age classrooms; and

17 (b) Identify emergency care providers who provide essential child-care services
18 during an identified state of emergency.

19 (25) The cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS
20 Chapter 13A to establish a waiver process, including an on-site inspection by the
21 Division of Regulated Child Care. The cabinet shall begin accepting waiver
22 applications by June 15, 2026, exclusively for the square footage requirements
23 established in subsection (24) of this section for school-age child care. The waiver
24 process shall include but not be limited to the following:

25 (a) Allowing the cabinet to deny a waiver on the basis of health and safety
26 concerns identified during the on-site inspection and associated with the
27 requested square footage calculation deviation;

1 **(b) Allowing the cabinet to establish an application fee not to exceed two**

2 **hundred fifty dollars (\$250) to cover the expenses associated with waiver**

3 **administration and the required on-site evaluation;**

4 **(c) Establishing that the waiver application shall be limited to the allowable**

5 **square footage to include classroom storage and bathrooms only, but not**

6 **hallways or other common areas;**

7 **(d) Establishing that the waiver shall prohibit the enrollment of more than ten**

8 **(10) additional school-aged children beyond what is allowable under the**

9 **standard indoor space requirements in subsection 24(a) of this section and**

10 **shall not allow waiver applicants to exceed the maximum group size**

11 **established for type I child-care centers;**

12 **(e) Establishing that waiver applicants shall be from a licensed child-care**

13 **provider in Kentucky that has been operating for at least five (5) years, is**

14 **rated as high quality in Kentucky's quality-based graduated early childhood**

15 **rating system, and has no prior substantiated safety violations within the**

16 **last five (5) years from the date of application;**

17 **(f) Establishing that if any substantiated safety violation occurs after a waiver**

18 **is granted, the waiver is effectively and immediately revoked;**

19 **(g) Requiring that waiver recipients apply for a new waiver within forty-five**

20 **(45) days of programmatic changes occurring regarding facilities or spaces,**

21 **enrollment, staffing, and other factors relevant to the existing waiver. If**

22 **programmatic changes are not reported within forty-five (45) days, the**

23 **wavier is effectively and immediately revoked; and**

24 **(h) Requiring the cabinet to review and render a decision on waiver**

25 **applications within forty-five (45) days of receipt of an application. The**

26 **waiver applicant shall not increase enrollment until the cabinet has issued a**

27 **final determination on the waiver application.**

1 ~~(26)~~~~(25)~~ Notwithstanding any state law, administrative regulation, executive order, or
2 executive directive to the contrary, during the 2020 or 2021 state of emergency
3 declared by the Governor in response to COVID-19, including but not limited to
4 any mutated strain of the COVID-19 virus, the cabinet shall not establish any
5 restrictions on capacity for class or group size or the ability to combine classes and
6 groups for capacity limits in the morning or afternoon that is below the number that
7 was in effect on February 1, 2020.

8 ➔Section 2. Whereas it is essential that the General Assembly promptly provide
9 for the safety and well-being of children in the Commonwealth, an emergency is declared
10 to exist, and this Act takes effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or upon
11 its otherwise becoming a law.