

## Maine Child Care Licensing

Child Care Licensing's primary mission is to ensure the health and safety of children and to support preventive, protective, and quality child care services. Child Care Licensing meets this mission through monitoring, providing technical assistance, and establishing partnerships with providers, parents, and the child care stakeholder community.



The Department's Child Care Licensing Unit provides oversight and support of licensed Child Care Facilities and Family Child Care Providers with 18 Child Care Licensing Specialists and 3 Licensing Supervisors. All children and families, regardless of age, ethnicity, cultural background, gender, socioeconomic status, or ability, are afforded the same protections under law and regulations for child care services.

### *What is the Monthly Message?*

Child Care Licensing's Monthly Message is being sent to all of you, Maine's valuable licensed child care providers! We'll be including general updates, reminders, and bite size interpretive guidelines. As a reminder, our goal over the course of this year is to create a single comprehensive interpretive guide for each child care licensing rule. Think of this as a compliance guide that allows for a shared understanding of the requirements, the intent/rationale, and for some requirements a description of how the rule is measured. We hope that these monthly bite size interpretive guidelines will immediately increase understanding, trust, and compliance.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

##### **Rising Stars for ME**

Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Quality for ME will be transitioning to Rising Stars for ME effective March 27, 2023.

The transition from Quality for ME into Rising Stars will occur automatically on the evening of March 26, 2023. Rising Stars for ME certificates will be sent to each program that is enrolled in Quality for ME by mail on March 27, 2023.

Programs currently enrolled in Quality for ME will be automatically categorized into the Star Rating equivalent to current Step Level.

All programs will have six months to meet all new standards to maintain their new Star Rating. Programs that do not meet the new standards after the six-month timeline will be moved to the Star Rating that reflects the standards the program has met.

OCFS and MRTQ PDN will be providing outreach, support, and technical assistance to all programs prior to the transition into the new Rising Stars for ME System. Programs can also contact OCFS or MRTQ PDN for individual support as needed.

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Child Care Licensing Specialist Elizabeth Burnham, who currently covers parts of Androscoggin and Cumberland counties, will be making a transition to Hancock and Washington Counties.

### **Updates/ Reminders**

- Often there is more than one rule that pertains to a particular topic, to identify all related rules we recommend doing a keyword search in an electronic version of the rule.
- Section 1. Definitions in both 10-148 C.M.R Chapter 32 and 10-148 C.M.R Chapter 33 have information that is helpful to understand the requirements of rule, please be sure to read through the definition section thoroughly.
- Ch. 32 8(B)(3) and Ch 33 8(A)(4) requires training in prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID), Shaken Baby Syndrome, and safe sleep practices. This training can be accessed at no cost and on demand through Maine Roads to Quality at <https://mrtq.org/health-and-safety-training>. This training must be completed within the first 90 days of employment and annually thereafter.
- Ch. 32 and Ch. 33 14(L)(2). Bassinets should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions and only for infants up to five months of age within appropriate weight limits. In addition, bassinet use must be discontinued when an infant can independently lift their chest off the sleep surface.

### **Interpretive Guidelines**

**(Please refer to 10-148 C.M.R Ch. 32 and Ch. 33 for a complete review of all requirements)**

- Ch. 32 18(E)(4) and Ch. 33 18(D)(4). Swaddling is prohibited at all times. It does not matter if a Child is awake or being held, they cannot be swaddled at any time.
- Ch. 32 and Ch. 33 14(L)(3). Infants 12 months and under cannot have a blanket or other soft or loose bedding, stuffed toys etc. in a crib or play yard with them. In addition, pacifier clips and pacifiers with a stuffed animal attached are also not allowed in a crib or play yard.
- Ch. 32 and Ch. 33 14(L)(3). In lieu of a blanket for infants 12 months and younger, a wearable sleep sack can be used. The sleep sack cannot be weighted or restrict Children's arms, such as those that include a swaddling component. This includes but is not limited to: Baby Merlin's Magic Sleep Suit, Nested Bean, or Zipadee-Zip. If you have a question as to whether a particular sleep sack is approved, please reach out to your Child Care Licensing Specialist.

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- Ch. 32 and Ch. 33 14(L)(3). Cribs, play yards and bassinets cannot have an extra mattress or cushioning in addition to what comes with the equipment.
- Ch. 32 and Ch. 33, Section 14(L)(1)(a). If you have a set of twins and parents want them to sleep together, they cannot, but a play yard specifically made to accommodate twins can be used. Example below:



- Ch. 32 and Ch. 33 14(L)(1)(e). Privacy tents or black out tents can be used if they allow a child to stand in any part of the play yard or crib. Example below:

Not acceptable:



Acceptable:



- Ch. 32 and Ch. 33 14(L)(3)(c). A solid divider includes plexiglass or other non-porous materials. Cardboard, foam board, blankets, sheets etc. are not considered a solid divider.

*Thank you for all that you do for Maine children and families.*