

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?

Staff Highlights

There is a New Child Care Data Management System Coming!

The Office of Child and Family Services is actively working to build a new Child Care Data Management System. We are excited to announce that this system will include the following:

- A Licensing Management System with a Mobile Inspection App.
- A Child Care Provider Portal
- A Child Care Subsidy Management System
- A Subsidy Family Portal

There is much more information to come to ensure effective go-live readiness at implementation.

Children’s Licensing and Investigation Services (CLIS) is pleased to recognize Child Care Licensing Specialist, Bethany Callnan. Bethany has been with CLIS since 2012. Prior to joining CLIS Bethany worked as a Family Service Worker and Center Director in a Head Start program in Southern Aroostook County. Bethany has an Associate’s Degree from Northern Maine Community College and a Family Development Credential from Cornell University. One of Bethany’s strengths is providing technical assistance and a variety of ideas regarding how programs can maintain compliance with the rules. A big thank you to Bethany for her commitment to her work and to our team.

Reminder cold and flu season is here!

If you have questions about illnesses such as colds, flu, COVID - 19, and RSV in your child care program you can consult the CDC’s [website](#) for up to date guidance. You can also reference the Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools manual that was distributed to all licensed programs this year.

Winter Safety Tips

Keeping Children safe in cold weather from Child Care Aware of America:

- Children should wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing.
- Children should wear a hat, coat, waterproof boots and gloves/mittens. Encourage families to send an extra set of clothing in case items get wet during outdoor play and have extras of your own on hand.
- Child Care Staff Members should check children's extremities for normal color and warmth at least every 15 minutes.
- Child Care Staff Members should monitor the weather, especially in the winter, to know what precautions to take to keep children safe outside. You can also reference the [Child Care Weather Watch](#).

Outdoor Play in the Winter:

- Children benefit from playing outdoors in all weather other than the most extreme conditions. Taking children outdoors daily as required by rule, even in the winter, is safe when clothing is appropriate. If you plan and prepare to keep yourself and children in your care safe and warm, everyone can benefit from the physical and mental health benefits of being outside and active year-round. The length of outdoor time may need to be reduced due to the cold, so it will be important to make sure children continue to participate in physical activities inside.
- Keep in mind that some play equipment may not be safe in cold weather. If the ground or playground surfacing is frozen, or if the equipment is slippery from ice or snow, it can pose safety hazards for children.
- Active play will also keep children warmer while outside in the winter.



Sledding Safety Tips from the National Institutes of Health:

- Make sure the handholds on the sled are secure.
- Never use a sled with sharp or jagged edges.
- Have children sit up on a sled. Lying down increases the risk of head, spine and abdominal injuries.
- Never sled on or near roadways.
- Look for shallow slopes that are free of trees fences, or any other obstacles.
- Avoid sledding on crowded slopes.

Winter Holiday Safety:

It is important to remember that holiday decorations must be used safely, as they can pose a threat to children. Here are some safety tips from the Mayo Clinic and the National Fire Protection Association to remember when preparing for the holidays:

- Keep decorations out of reach of children.
- Any objects small enough to fit through a toilet paper tube can obstruct the airway of a child.
- Use power strips with built-in circuit breakers.
- Avoid putting too many plugs into one electrical outlet.
- Keep cords secured and inaccessible to children and insert electrical covers into any unused outlets.
- Closely supervise children who are helping to decorate.
- Let children decorate within their reach with non-breakable items.
- Use lights that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufacturer's instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Use clips, not nails to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.

Use of Live Christmas Trees:

The State Fire Marshal's Office has updated its [policy](#) regarding the use of live Christmas Trees. In Family Child Care and Small Child Care Facilities serving 12 or fewer children cut trees are permitted as long as they are well watered. In Child Care Facilities serving 13 or more children cut trees are permitted in programs with a sprinkler system or if the tree is balled. Any natural tree must be removed from a building immediately upon evidence of any dryness. Artificial/flame retardant trees are allowed in all program types.

Balled and burlapped tree



These have large field-dug root balls bundled in burlap or other fabric.

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