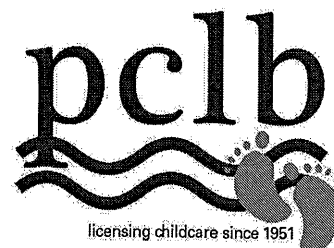


Pinellas County License Board for Children's Centers & Family Day Care Homes

Our mission is to protect and promote the health, safety, and mental development of children cared for in children's centers and family child care homes in Pinellas County

Patsy Buker, Executive Director
Vicki Conolly, Chairperson



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PROVIDERS IN PINELLAS COUNTY

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE ARE STATEWIDE DCF CHANGES THAT WE MUST COMPLY WITH

#1 FOR STAFF/OWNERS/DIRECTORS WORKING UNDER AN EXEMPTION

Child care personnel (including directors and owners) currently working under an exemption for background screening clearance due to a disqualifying offense must undergo a rescreening by August 1, 2016 to determine ongoing eligibility to continue to work in child care. Chapter 2016-98, Law of Florida changes Chapter 435.07, Florida Statute to identify felony and misdemeanor disqualifying offenses for which the Department of Children and Families can no longer grant an exemption for background screening for an individual to work in child care. DCF will notify each individual and the assigned employer via a certified letter explaining the rescreening process and the timeframe for completion. **PLEASE DO NOT RESCREEN STAFF PRIOR TO JULY 1st, 2016.** DCF will advise the individual and the employer of the process and when to conduct the rescreening. Conducting the rescreening prior to July 1st, 2016 will result in the screening not being accepted/used.

#2 BACKGROUND SCREENING CHANGES FOR EVERYONE

Also, effective July 1, 2016 the background screening process for child care personnel is changing to include specific processes and additional elements. All potential child care personnel must submit a full set of fingerprints through the Background Screening Clearinghouse. **EVERYONE SHOULD BE ENROLLED IN AND USING THE CLEARINGHOUSE BY NOW.** In order for DCF Background Screening to deem an individual eligible to work in child care, DCF must in addition to the national and state criminal history check, conduct a search of the criminal history records, sexual predator and sexual offender registry and the child abuse and neglect registry for any state in which the applicant has resided during the preceding 5 years. These checks must occur prior to DCF issuing an eligible to work in child care determination. Individuals who were screened and employed prior to July 1st, 2016 will be subject to rescreening by DCF by November, 2017. Stay tuned for more information on this process.

#3 NEW FIVE YEAR EMPLOYMENT HISTORY CHECK REQUIREMENT

Any child care personnel hired on or after July 1, 2016 is required to have a 5 year employment history check. Employment history checks must include documented attempts to contact each employer where the individual was employed within the preceding 5 years.

#4 SCHOOL READINESS PROVIDERS ONLY-NEW REQUIREMENTS

In an effort to meet the Child Care Development Fund 2014 Reauthorization requirements, Florida's Office of Early Learning (OEL) must ensure children are being cared for in quality child care settings. OEL will establish health and safety checklist standards, pre-service and in-service training requirements, standards for emergency preparedness plans, group sizes and ongoing monitoring requirements to ensure compliance. These requirements will be monitored by the Child Care Licensing Program on an annual basis during the children's center renewal inspection. The monitoring results will be shared with the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County. Stay tuned – DCF, OEL and Child Care Licensing will be hosting provider meetings in our area to share this information. **Please note, that if Licensing Regulation Governing Children's Centers in Pinellas County exceed any of these requirements, they must continue to be met.**

Although these are big changes, they support increased quality in child care settings. The Child Care Licensing Program will work closely with providers to ensure understanding of these changes, and compliance. Please contact our office at (727) 507-4857 should you have any questions.

Thank you for continuing to partner with us by providing healthy, safe and quality environments for children in care.