

Report in Brief

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Why OIG Did This Audit

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG Act) of 2014 added new requirements for States that received funding from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to conduct comprehensive criminal background checks on staff members and prospective staff members of child care providers every 5 years. Criminal background check requirements apply to any staff member who is employed by a child care provider for compensation or whose activities involve the care or supervision of children or unsupervised access to children.

Our objective was to determine whether Rhode Island's monitoring of child care providers ensured provider compliance with State requirements related to criminal background checks established under the CCDBG Act.

How OIG Did This Audit

We analyzed and tested a population of 599 licensed child care centers and family homes that received CCDF funding during State fiscal year 2018. We used geographic area, total capacity, and total CCDF funding received to select 15 child care center providers and 15 family home providers. In total, we reviewed supporting documentation for 589 individuals who were current employees or household members at 30 different child care provider locations.

Rhode Island's Monitoring Did Not Ensure Child Care Provider Compliance With State Criminal Background Check Requirements at 18 of 30 Providers Reviewed

What OIG Found

Rhode Island's monitoring did not ensure provider compliance with State requirements related to criminal background checks at 18 of 30 child care provider locations we reviewed. We found that providers did not obtain or renew the required criminal background checks for 108 of 589 individuals. By not ensuring that all current employees or household members who supervised or had routine unsupervised contact with children passed all criminal background checks, Rhode Island potentially jeopardized the safety of the children in the care of the 30 selected child care providers.

What OIG Recommends and Rhode Island Comments

We recommend that Rhode Island: (1) conduct or renew all required criminal background checks for the 108 individuals we reviewed who did not have all required checks or who had expired background checks at the time of our data request and site visits, (2) determine whether it is feasible to develop a centralized process to monitor both family homes and child care centers, (3) determine whether it is feasible to increase the ratio of State licensing inspectors to child care providers to meet industry standards so that it can review all employee criminal background checks at all child care providers, and (4) require the State licensing agency to increase the number of current employees it reviews at all child care centers to ensure child care provider compliance with criminal background check requirements.

In written comments on our draft report, Rhode Island partially agreed with our findings, addressed each of our recommendations, and identified the actions it has taken or planned to take to improve compliance. Specifically, it said it would: (1) develop a more centralized process to monitor both family child care homes and child care centers, (2) add a sixth licenser to assist with caseloads, and (3) provide training to new licensors with a focus on monitoring. Lastly, Rhode Island said it has engaged in training with State and local police departments to standardize fingerprinting procedures.

On the basis of Rhode Island's comments on our draft report, we have adjusted our findings to remove 5 individuals from the total count of 113 errors identified in our draft, leaving 108 individuals who did not complete or renew 1 or more of the required background checks.