

Report in Brief

Date: August 2020

Report No. A-05-19-00012

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 receive 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 Indiana'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 2,052 licensed child care centers and family homes that received CCDF funding during the period October 1, 2018, through February 5, 2019. 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 499 individuals who were current employees or household members at 30 different child care provider locations.

Indiana's Monitoring Did Not Ensure Child Care Provider Compliance With State Criminal Background Check Requirements at 17 of 30 Providers Reviewed

What OIG Found

Indiana's monitoring of child care providers did not ensure provider compliance with State requirements related to criminal background checks established under the CCDBG Act at 17 of 30 child care provider locations we reviewed. Although we identified errors at 17 of the child care providers, the errors related to only 56 of the 499 employees and household members who were not in compliance with State-required background checks. Additionally, one of the employees was disqualified from working as a child care employee and was onsite at the time of our visit. Despite annual unannounced inspections and other processes in place, these errors occurred because the State agency either did not effectively monitor the child care providers or did not ensure that providers turned in background check paperwork on a timely basis. By not ensuring that all current employees met all criminal background checks, Indiana potentially jeopardized the safety of children in the care of the 30 selected child care providers.

What OIG Recommends and State Agency Comments

We recommend that Indiana (1) conduct all required criminal background checks for the 56 individuals we reviewed who did not have all required background checks at the time of our data requests and site visits, (2) verify that the disqualified employee was terminated and not allowed onsite, (3) conduct the required criminal background checks on all new employees and new household members, and (4) develop a system that regularly notifies providers to initiate required background check procedures for all new employees and notifies providers when background check applications have not been received or fully processed.

In written comments on our draft report, Indiana partially agreed with the reported findings and responded to our recommendations. Indiana verified that it had conducted all required background checks and determined that the disqualified employee completed all required checks and is qualified to work in child care. Regarding required criminal background checks on all new employees and new household members, Indiana's current policy allows for licensing citations to be issued if caregivers are working at a facility before completing the required background check, and the citation requires followup to ensure compliance. Indiana launched a new portal for providers to apply for a child care license and submit caregiver consent for a background check.