

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 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 Colorado's monitoring process ensured provider compliance with State requirements related to criminal background checks established under the CCDBG Act.

How OIG Did This Audit

Our audit covered 1,023 child care providers (child care centers and family homes) that received CCDF funding during State fiscal year 2018. We reviewed 15 child care centers and 15 family homes (we conducted unannounced site visits at the family homes). For both types of child care providers, we worked with Colorado to identify those individuals requiring a background check who had a completed criminal background check.

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

What OIG Found

Colorado's monitoring process did not ensure provider compliance with State requirements related to criminal background checks for 18 of the 30 child care providers we reviewed. We found that 107 of 679 individuals requiring a background check did not obtain 1 or more of the required criminal background checks. Although Colorado reviewed required background checks during its annual inspections of child care providers, the providers did not always inform the State and properly obtain background checks when hiring individuals or when new individuals began to reside in family homes. Furthermore, Colorado did not retain criminal background check records for child care center individuals who required background checks and instead relied on the child care centers to retain these documents. Moreover, Colorado did not require child care providers and associated individuals to receive training on background check requirements. By not ensuring that all individuals who supervised or had routine unsupervised contact with children had passed all criminal background checks, Colorado potentially jeopardized the safety of children at these child care providers.

What OIG Recommends and Colorado's Comments

We recommend that Colorado: (1) conduct all required criminal background checks for the 107 individuals in our sample who did not have the required checks at the time of our audit (if still employed), (2) ensure that child care providers and associated individuals requiring a background check receive training on background check requirements, and (3) ensure that all required background checks are completed and retain these records until the background check expires.

Colorado concurred with all of our recommendations and described corrective actions that it had taken or planned to take. Specifically, Colorado said that it had conducted background checks for those individuals still employed in child care and added that noncompliant providers were cited and were required to submit compliance plans. Colorado also stated that it was in the process of developing training for child care providers and, for our third recommendation, described ongoing efforts to develop and modernize data systems that, when completed, would allow the State to store individual background check information for all licensed child care providers.