



**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN,
YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

DCYF Updates

House Children and Families Committee - February 18, 2026

Child Welfare IT Modernization

Jennifer Sommerfeld, Government Relations Director

Planning and Readiness Activities – Since July 1, 2025



Next Steps



Finalize RFP,
requirements, and
IAPD – submit for
federal review



Data clean-up and
ongoing data
conversion
readiness work



Organizational
change readiness
work with local
agencies, and
business processes
evaluation

Electronic Attendance Records

Jennifer Sommerfeld, Government Relations Director

Electronic Attendance Records – Timeline to Today

- **2019:** Study and report on possible electronic record keeping processes. The report identified the need to centralize provider registration before implementing electronic attendance records.
- **2023:** Information technology updates and statutory authorization for the state to centralize CCAP provider registration that was being conducted by counties across the state.
- **2025:** Funding and statutory authority to implement electronic attendance records.

Current Activities

- ***Current activity.*** DCYF is currently working with the software vendor to implement.
- ***Roll-out.*** It is anticipated that the system will begin to roll out in June 2026. At that time, DCYF will begin requiring some child care providers that receive CCAP payments to submit electronic attendance records.
- ***Expected outcome.*** The electronic attendance record system will be able to flag abnormalities and cross-check records, making regular compliance checks substantially easier and allowing for increasing oversight and more comprehensive investigations.

Child Care Licensing Modernization

Randy Keys, Inspector General

Licensing: First Step to Higher Quality

- ***Role of Licensing.*** To establish foundational health and safety standards, setting a baseline for programs to legally operate that ensures children are safe, protected and their development is supported in healthy, enriching environments.
- ***Role of Quality Improvement Supports.*** DCYF provides supports to help programs go beyond the baseline set by Licensing, providing a framework for best practices in early care and education that optimize children's development and families' experiences.

Quality improvement supports include:

- Parent Aware, Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Accreditation Fee Reimbursement
- Training, Coaching, Higher Education Scholarships, and Grants

Child care regulation modernization directive

Weighted Risk System will:

- Structure violations based on level of risk
- Assign licensing sanction severity based on risk level

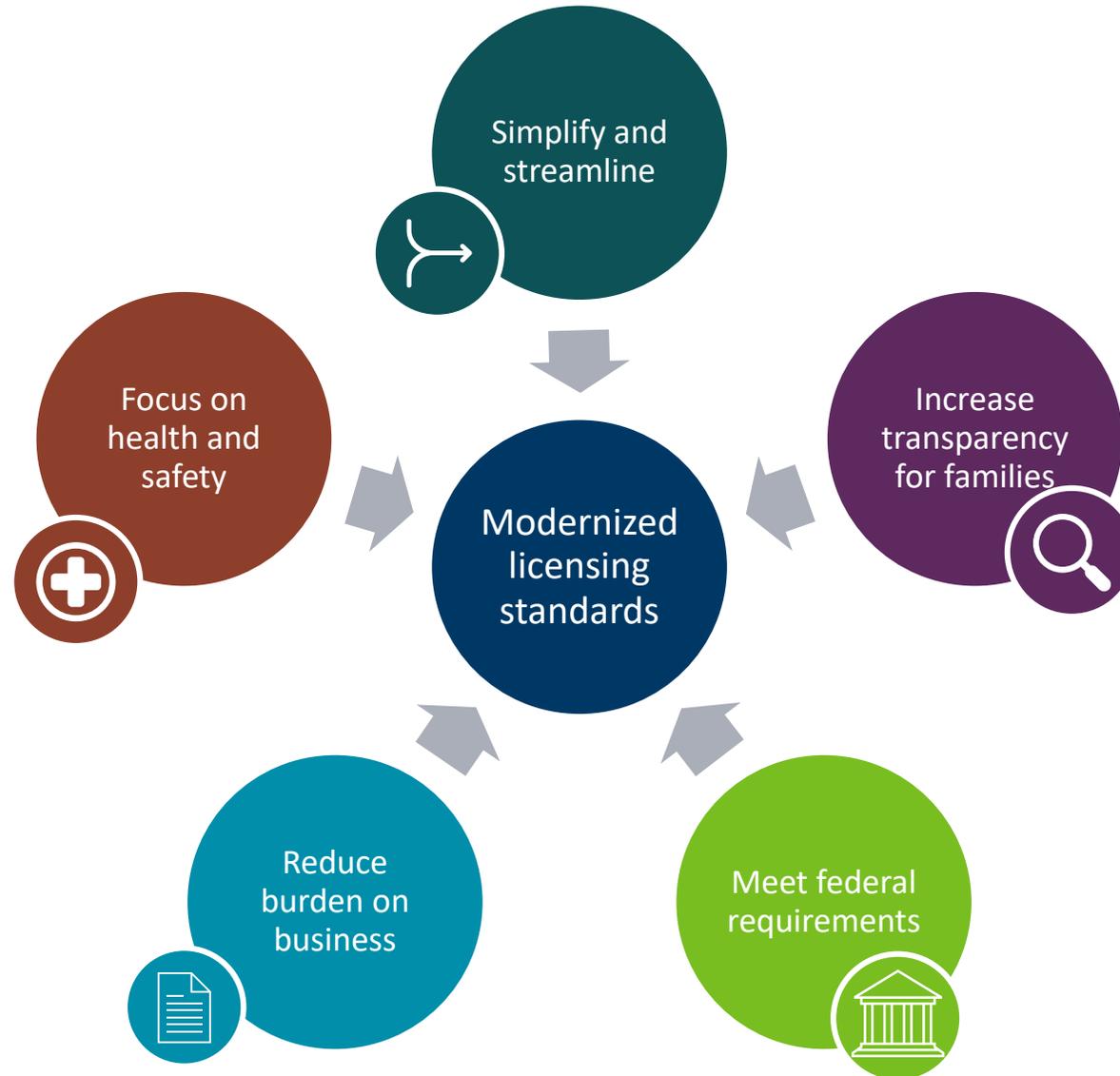
Abbreviated inspections will:

- Base eligibility on past compliance history
- Allow shorter licensing inspections

Licensing standards must:

- Protect the health and safety of children
- Be child centered
- Be family friendly
- Be fair to providers

Balancing multiple goals for licensing standards



Feedback Process

- October 2022: DHS's first stakeholder survey
- March 2023 – April 2024: NARA initial draft refinement
- April – August 2024: Draft 1
 - 23 Listening sessions
 - Statewide survey
 - Individual provider interviews
 - 6 County licenser focus groups
- Feb – July 2025: Draft 2
 - 50 In-person and virtual events
 - Statewide survey
 - 12 Licensor focus groups
- January 2026: Legislative Report/Proposed Standards
 - Sent to over 20,000 recipients



Proposed statutory structure

Before

Child care centers – MN
Rule 9503 – Repeal

Family child care – MN
Rule 9502 – Repeal

MN Ch. 142B – Repeal
sections



After

Child care centers – MN
Statute Ch. 142H

Family child care – MN
Statute Ch. 142I

MN Ch. 142B revised to focus
on DCYF's responsibilities

Key changes for both service types

- ⊕ **Safety.** Created new attendance tracking requirement and revised language on "hazardous materials."
- 🔍 **Transparency.** Required parental information on radon testing, required notice of presences of animals and notification of injury, and added requirement for policy on social media and image sharing.
- ⊕ **Supportive Development.** Established stronger language on child behavior guidance and revised language around support for children with special needs.

Key changes – Child care centers

-   **Staff.** Reduced and simplified qualifications and reduced hours of annual in-service training.
-  **Activities and equipment.** Simplified and clarified language.
-   **Health.** Removed requirements to collect annual physicals and a child's dental provider information, reduced frequency of health consultant visits for programs serving infants, and clarified food allergy requirements.
-  **Outdoor play and fall zones.** Established fall zone safety requirements and expectations for daily outdoor activities.
-  **Facilities.** Established fire inspections every 5 years.

Key changes – Family child care

-   **Process.** Streamlined the number of license classes and moved variance approval to DCYF for consistency.
-  **Capacity.** Expanded capacity in several licensing classes.
-  **Activities.** Clarified rules around activities and equipment while maintaining flexibility.
-   **Training.** Reorganized training requirements to increase clarity, reduced number of continuing education hours, and added fire prevention training requirements every 5 years.
-  **Overnight care.** Added and clarified requirements.
-   **Transparency.** Required parental notification of the presence of firearms.

Potential Legislative Timeline

February 17– Legislative session begins

Legislature potentially considers proposed language

Legislature may modify proposal

Must pass before implementation planning can start



May 18 – Session ends

Final legislative action known

Department begins implementation planning



July 1, 2027 – Tentative effective date

Date recommended by DCYF – Legislature may change

Additional engagement and training will occur before effective date

Thank You