



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
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Testimony Re: S-3024 – Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing Inspectors

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

March 12, 2026

Leanne Barrett, Director of Early Childhood Policy and Strategy

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT supports passage of Senator Bissailon's bill, S-3024, which would require the RI Department of Human Services to have enough child care licensing inspectors to meet [national caseload standards \(50-60 programs per inspector\) for child care licensing inspection staff.](#)

Based on a national review of state Child Care and Development Block grant plans in October 2025, **Rhode Island has among the highest caseload for child care licensing inspector in the U.S. with 135-140 programs per inspector.** See attached data.

The findings from the [Inspector General's 2025 audit of child care program compliance with health and safety standards](#) highlights the need for the state to adopt child care licensing best practices. The audit found 232 health and safety violations and 920 documentation failures for the 15 child care centers and 15 family child care homes selected.

Child care licensing inspection is the foundation of quality and is necessary to ensure basic health and safety standards are met, including adequate staffing in child care, early learning, and out-of-school time programs.

We would ask that as this requirement is added, that you **add language into state law that requires DHS to conduct at least two unannounced inspections of licensed child care programs per year** with the expectations that inspections will increase, as needed, to ensure protections are in place and satisfactory compliance is obtained. This is the current practice in Rhode Island for child care centers. At least two unannounced inspections per year are recommended by the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) with additional visits recommended, especially when needed to ensure compliance.

We'd also **recommend that language be added into statute along with the caseload per inspector requirement that requires DHS child care licensing inspectors meet the definition of highly qualified and trained licensing staff** and that DHS has practices and supports are in place to ensure licensing activities are carried out in a professional and consistent manner as recommended by NARA.

We also ask **that statutory language be added to require that DHS investigate any complaints or reports of child care programs that are operating illegally or are out of compliance with any critical health and safety standards immediately or within 5 days**, to include program-reported or staff-reported incidents with classrooms out of compliance with

staff: child ratios. This is also recommended by NARA.

All substantiated complaints and licensing actions taken to address critical health and safety non-compliance and violations (e.g., temporarily shutting down classrooms due to inadequate staffing) should be documented and shared with parents and the public along with the findings from routine licensing inspections as is recommended by NARA and required under federal law.

State child care licensing regulations and monitoring and enforcement policies help provide a baseline of protection for the health and safety of children enrolled in child care, early learning programs, and out-of-school time programs and provides an essential service for working parents.

Effective, robust child care licensing prevents harm to children. It mitigates the risk of injury or death from fire, hazards, and inadequate staff oversight and training. It helps to prevent children's developmental delays and behavioral challenges that can result from the lack of healthy relationships with caregivers or developmentally inappropriate expectations or activities. It can also help to reduce staff turnover in child care programs when programs are monitored to ensure staff: child ratios and other critical health and safety standards are met by child care program owners and operators.

As required under federal law, Rhode Island reports that from 2022 to 2024, there were 24 incidents of serious injury to a child and 16 incidents of child abuse and/or neglect in a licensed child care program. Thankfully, there were no reported deaths of children in a licensed child care program.

States manage the child care licensing process through the application and enforcement of regulations and **adequate staffing is needed to ensure basic standards are met in licensed programs.**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT thanks Senator Bissaillon for sponsoring this bill and we urge passage to strengthen our health and safety infrastructure for child care, early learning, and out-of-school time programs.

State Child Care Plans Submitted to the Administration for Children and Families
 State Child Care Inspections and Inspector Ratios
 October 2025

Child Care Program Inspections & Inspector Caseload Ratios			
State	Section 5.5.6 Caseload Ratios Child Care Centers	Section 5.5.6 Caseload Ratios Family Child Care Homes	FY2025-FY2027 CCDF State Plans
Alabama	61 - 63	62 - 63	https://dhr.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Draft-2025-2027-CCDF-State-Plan-Final.pdf
Alaska	50	50	https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/Attachment.aspx?id=148401
Arizona	99	99	https://des.az.gov/sites/default/files/media/Submitted-Draft-CCDF-State-Plan-FFY-2025-2027.pdf?time=1723896256200
Arkansas	52	52	https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/2025-2027 CCDF State Plan Final 4.26.24.1REV OEC.pdf
California	51	99	https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/CCDD/2025-27%20CCDF%20State%20Plan.submitted%2006.27.24.pdf
Colorado	80	80	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zaT-E7tSLFKir9ANtSBRxy0f3T5sm-li/view?usp=sharing
Connecticut	115	115	https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2025-2027-Draft-CCDF-State-Plan_MASTER_ODv2.pdf
Delaware	55	55	https://www.mychildde.org/wp-content/uploads/5.17.24-CCDF-State-Plan-of-Today-FFY25-27_DRAFT-FOR-PUBLIC-COMMENT.pdf
District of Columbia	47	47	https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/Draft%20DC%20FFY2025-2027%20CCDF%20Plan.pdf
Florida	60	60	https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20628/urlt/2025-2027CCDFStatePlan.pdf

Georgia	50	50	https://www.dec.al.ga.gov/documents/attachments/CCDFStatePlan25-27.pdf
Hawaii	48	48	https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ACF-118-CCDF-FY-2025-2027-For-Hawaii.pdf
Idaho	See note	See note	https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/providers/child-care-providers/child-care-resources
Illinois	117	117	https://www.dhs.state.il.us/OneNetLibrary/27897/documents/Child%20Care/DISTCCDF_Plan_for_State_Territory_FFY_20252027FinalPreprint_ILLINOIS_DIST_DRAFT5.6.24_a11y.pdf
Indiana	See note	See note	https://www.in.gov/fssa/files/ACF-118-CCDF-FY2025-2027-IN.pdf
Iowa	139	260	https://hhs.iowa.gov/media/13429/download?inline=
Kansas	75	75	https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/Child_Care/Child-care-and-early-education.aspx
Kentucky	50	50	https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dCBS/dcc/Documents/preliminaryccdfstateplan25.pdf
Louisiana	67	See note	https://doe.louisiana.gov/early-childhood/early-childhood-center-directors/early-childhood-poicy-guidance
Maine	75 - 100	75 - 100	https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/ACF-118%20CCDF%20FFY%202025-2027%20For%20Maine.pdf
Maryland	?	?	https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/MarylandCCDF
Massachusetts	83	83	https://www.mass.gov/doc/draft-2025-2027-state-plan-for-public-comment/download

Michigan	91	91	https://www.michigan.gov/mileap/-/media/Project/Websites/mileap/Documents/Early-Childhood-Education/Child-Development-and-Care/2024-docs/partner-files/ACF-118-CCDF-FFY-2025-2027-For-Michigan.pdf?rev=33f332ef4a774db3b494c5e4ae0750dd&hash=676D6FCE9CBDC45BE96DA93655200840
Minnesota	80	75	https://dcyf.mn.gov/sites/default/files/2025-02/25_27_Plan_Approved_version_111224.pdf
Mississippi	50	50	https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2025-2027-CCDF-State-Plan-5-28-2024.pdf
Missouri	67 - 82	67 - 82	https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/2025-2027-ccdf-state-plan-draft
Montana	120	120	https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/ecfsd/childcare/documentsandresources/MontanaCCDFStatePlan.pdf
Nebraska	125	55	https://dhhs.ne.gov/Child%20Care%20Documents/2025-2027%20CCDF%20State%20Plan%20(draft)%20FINAL.pdf
Nevada	80	80	https://dwss.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dwssnvgov/content/Home/Features/2025-2027%20CCDF%20State%20Plan.%20For%20Remediation%206.18.24.pdf
New Hampshire	60 - 75	60 - 75	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt476/files/inline-documents/sonh/draft-ccdf-ffy-2025-2027-plan.pdf
New Jersey	52	52	https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/providers/grants/public/publicnoticefiles/DRAFT_CCDF_State_Plan_for_New_Jersey_FFY25-27.pdf
New Mexico	60	60	https://api.realfile.rtsclients.com/PublicFiles/d4a60d4c4e7149c9830debd01dbe554/12d83618-129f-4917-9a7f-c582f2f55c2c/FFY2025-2027%20DRAFT%20Child%20Care%20and%20Development%20Fund%20State%20Plan.pdf
New York	50 - 60	50 - 60	https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/stateplan/assets/2025-plan/FFY2025-2027-CCDF-Plan.pdf
North Carolina	50 - 60	50 - 60	https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/C/CCDF_2025-2027_State_Plan_Final_Draft_1_Public%20He

			aring_5_8_24.pdf?ver=dWYuvkNQ-irDCI7IOPJ8xg%3d%3d
North Dakota	45	45	https://www.hhs.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/EC/Admin/CCDF/2025-27CCDFStatePlan.pdf
Ohio	76	76	https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/v1720530796/childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/For%20Providers/CCDF/CCDF_FFY_2025-2027_For_Ohio.pdf
Oklahoma	37	37	https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/okdhs/documents/okdhs-pdf-library/child-care-services/CCDF%20FFY%202025-2027%20For%20Oklahoma%20draft.pdf
Oregon	60 - 70	60 - 70	https://www.oregon.gov/delc/about-us/Documents/FY_2025-2027_Oregon_CCDF_StatePlanDraftForPublicComment.pdf
Pennsylvania	52	52	https://www.pakeys.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Draft_FY_2025-2027_CCDF_State_Territory_Plan_for_30_Day_Public_Comment_Period_with-responses_3.25.24.pdf
Rhode Island	135 - 140	135 - 140	https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://dhs.ri.gov/media/7311/download%3Flanguage%3Den&ved=2ahUKEwjR1sH3qN-JAxWIFvkFHehXOtAQFnoECCoQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3YZFP17UQ7LeNxnOxW8DYp
South Carolina	42	42	https://www.scchildcare.org/media/cr5dc51w/submitted-version-of-the-ccdf-ffy-2025-2027-for-south-carolina-as-of-7-1-24pdf.pdf
South Dakota	See note	See note	https://dss.sd.gov/childcare/stateplan/default.aspx
Tennessee	See note	See note	https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/Proposed%20FFY%202025%E2%80%932027%20Tennessee%20CCDF%20State%20Plan%20Draft_05-01-2024.pdf

Texas	See note	See note	https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/ogc/mtg24/commission-meeting-material-041624-item17b-draft-ccdf_state-plan-ffy-2025-2027-twc.pdf
Utah	100	130	https://jobs.utah.gov/occ/ccdfplan.pdf
Vermont	87	87	https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/CDD/Reports/CCDF-Plans/CCDF-State-Plan-2025-2027-Draft.pdf
Virginia	60	60	https://www.childcare.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/55566/638555147786470000
Washington	65	65	https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2025-2027-CCDF-Current-Plan.pdf
West Virginia	50 - 55	50 - 55	https://dhhr.wv.gov/bfa/policyplans/Documents/2025-2027%20CCDF%20Proposed%20State%20Plan%20Complete%205%203%202024.pdf
Wisconsin	79	79	https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/205.pdf
Wyoming	?	?	https://dfs.wyo.gov/services/family-services/child-care/
NARA Recommendation			https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/new-occ/resource/files/e-2_keeping_children_safe.pdf

Source: FY2025-2027 CCDF State Plans and Child Care Licensing Regulations
October 3, 2025

Notes: States also conduct inspections based on complaints and as follow up to violations on initial inspections.

Idaho: The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) has a statewide contract with Central District Health

Department, which subcontracts to each subsequent health district to appropriately administer and monitor health and safety inspections throughout Idaho for all child care providers who are licensed and/or participate with the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP). Per the contractual requirements, "The Contractor shall maintain a sufficient inspector to provider ratio to ensure timeliness of all inspections per contract requirements." The number of needed inspectors varies by region as the inspectors may share duties or conduct other types of inspections.

Indiana: Caseloads are reviewed annually as are the completion rates for annual and semiannual monitoring visits, complaint inspections and other necessarily follow-up visits are completed as needed. In the event that caseloads are too high to ensure that such visits are occurring and are occurring timely, Consultants will alert managers when their caseload has significantly increased or decreased so that adjustments can be made. The Lead Agency will request additional consultants through the Indiana State Personnel Department.

Maryland: The link to the state plan does not work (10/3/25).

South Dakota: The current ratio of inspectors to programs is 1:30 for the DPS inspectors and 1:55 for child care licensing specialists.

Tennessee: Lead Agency staff average caseloads between 20 to 25 cases allowing Licensing Consultants to conduct quarterly monitoring visits as well as required monitoring visits based on complaints and compliance history.

Texas: CCR has created a weighted points system to assist with caseload management. Caseloads are based on the weighted points system that has been designed to consider the following factors: Numbers and type of child care operations; Investigations (forecasted); Applications (forecasted); and all other inspections. CCR derives forecasting formulas by using a weighted moving average model that is based on 10 years of historical data. CCR then uses the state's average time at inspections to determine the weight assigned to each factor to calculate the points correlated to a specific child care operation. CCR assigns each county points and divides workloads with a targeted set of points per inspector.

Wyoming: The current FY2025-2027 CCDF State Plan is not posted.