

**DCF 251.11 Licensing administration.****(1) GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL OF LICENSE.**

(a) A facility that provides care on a regular basis to 9 or more children under the age of 7 years shall be deemed to be providing care for compensation and shall be licensed as a group child care center.

(b) Prior to receiving a license, an applicant for a license under this chapter shall complete all application forms truthfully and accurately and pay all fees and forfeitures due to the department.

(c) The department may refuse to issue or continue a license if another center operated by the licensee is in substantial non-compliance with the licensing rules or has any outstanding fine or forfeitures.

(d) Persons licensed to operate a group child care center shall be responsible, mature individuals who are fit and qualified. In determining whether an applicant is fit and qualified, the department shall consider any history of civil or criminal violations or other offenses substantially related to the care of children by the applicant, owner, manager, representative, employee, center resident or other individual directly or indirectly participating in the operation of the group child care center. A determination of being unfit and unqualified includes substantiated findings of child abuse or neglect under ch. 48, Stats., or substantiated abuse under ch. 50, Stats., or under similar statutes in another state or territory whether or not it results in a criminal charge or conviction.

(e) The department shall issue a group child care license to an applicant within 60 working days after receipt and department approval of a properly completed application, satisfactory department investigation and determination that the applicant is fit and qualified. Continued licensure requires a licensee to remain fit and qualified.

(f) If the department has reason to believe that the physical or mental health of any person associated with the care of children at the center or any household resident of the center might endanger children in care, the department may require that a written statement be submitted by a physician or, if appropriate, by a licensed mental health professional that shall certify the condition of the individual and the possible effect of that condition on the group child care center or the children in care.

(g) The department may deny or revoke the license if the examination specified under par. (f) gives the department reasonable concern for the care of children.

(h) The department may not process an application for a license if the applicant has had a license or certification to operate a child care center revoked or denied within the last 2 years. An applicant is deemed ineligible to submit an application for a license and a licensee may not hire an employee within 2 years from the date an applicant or employee had a child care license revoked or denied.

(i) The department shall consider a licensee who fails to submit any of the materials described in sub. (3) or (4) by the expiration or continuation date of a license to have surrendered his or her license and to no longer hold title to the license. The former licensee may not continue to operate the child care center.

**(2) INITIAL APPLICATION FOR A PROBATIONARY LICENSE.**

(a) An applicant for a license shall participate in pre-licensing technical assistance towards the completion of the initial licensing study checklist with a representative of the department prior to submitting an application for a license.

**Note:** 1. Information on how to obtain pre-licensing technical assistance is available from the appropriate Division of Early Care and Education regional office in Appendix A. The department will provide the application form to a license applicant upon completion of the pre-licensing technical assistance.

2. An initial licensing study checklist includes a list of those licensing rules that must be met before a license can be issued. A copy of the checklist is available from a representative of the department or from the appropriate regional office in Appendix A.

**251.11(2)(b)**

(b) An applicant for a license shall submit an application at least 60 days before the date proposed for the center to begin operating.

(c) An applicant for an initial license shall include all the following with the application form:

1. The license fee required under s. 48.65 (3) (a), Stats.
  2. a. A background check request form completed by the applicant.  
b. If the applicant is a limited liability company, background check request forms completed by all members of the limited liability company.  
c. If the center is or will be located in a residence, background check request forms completed by all household members 10 years of age and above.
  3. A statement from a representative of the department that details the results of any pre-licensing technical assistance.
  4. A statement from the applicant that indicates the center is in compliance with all applicable items in this chapter.
  5. A copy of all the policies required under s. DCF 251.04 (2) (h) and a completed copy of the group child care policy checklist provided by the department.  
**Note:** Information on how to obtain a copy of the Group Child Care Policy Checklist is available on the department's website, <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov>, or from any regional licensing office in Appendix A.
  - 5g. The articles of incorporation and by-laws if the licensee is organized as a corporation, association or cooperative. If the licensee is a limited liability company, articles of organization and the operating agreement, if applicable, shall be submitted.
  - 5r. A written delegation of administrative authority signed by the licensee. The delegation of administrative authority shall describe the organizational structure of the center and identify by position or name, those persons on the premises who are in charge of the center for all hours of operation.
  - 5u. Results of water tests if the center has a private well.
  - 5x. Results of a vehicle safety inspection if the center will transport children.
  6. Any other materials determined by the department as necessary to complete the department's licensing investigation.
- (d) Upon submission of a complete application, the department shall conduct an investigation to determine whether the applicant is eligible for a license.
- (e) If the department determines that the applicant is eligible for a license, the department shall issue a probationary license having a 6-month duration. A probationary license may be renewed for one 6-month period.
- (f) If the department determines that an application does not comply with the applicable requirements of this chapter or the department's investigation determines that the applicant is not eligible for a license, the department may deny the application.

**(3) OBTAINING A REGULAR LICENSE.**

(a) At least 30 days before the expiration date of a probationary license, an applicant for license renewal shall submit to the department the following materials:

1. A completed license application.
3. The license renewal fee under s. 48.65 (3) (a), Stats., applicable fees for child care background checks, and any unpaid forfeiture under s. 48.715 (3) or 49.155 (7m) (a) 3., Stats., and any penalty under s. 48.76, Stats.
4. Any changes to center policies, if not previously submitted.
5. Any changes to the delegation of administrative authority if not previously submitted.
6. Any other materials determined by the department as necessary to complete the department's licensing investigation.

**251.11(3)(b)**

(b) If the department determines that the applicant has met the minimum requirements for a license under this chapter, and if the applicant has paid the applicable fees under ss. 48.65 and 48.686, Stats., any unpaid forfeiture under s. 48.715 (3) (a) or 49.155 (7m) (a) 3., Stats., and any unpaid penalty under s. 48.76, Stats., the department shall issue a regular license.

**(4) CONTINUING A REGULAR LICENSE.**

(a) A regular license shall be valid indefinitely, unless suspended or revoked by the department or surrendered by the licensee. The department shall review a regular license every 2 years after the date of issuance.

(b) At least 30 days before the continuation review date of the license, an applicant for license renewal shall submit to the department the following materials:

1. A completed license continuation application.
3. The license renewal fee under s. 48.65 (3) (a), Stats., applicable fees for child care background checks under s. 48.686, Stats., and unpaid forfeiture under s. 48.715 (3) or 49.155 (7m) (a) 3., Stats., and any unpaid penalty under s. 48.76, Stats.
4. Any changes to center policies, if not previously submitted.
5. Any changes to the delegation of administrative authority if not previously submitted.
- 5g. Results of water tests if the center has a private well.
- 5r. Results of a vehicle safety inspection if the center will transport children.
6. Any other materials determined by the department as necessary to complete the department's licensing investigation.

**Note:** The department will supply a copy of the form, License Application – Group Child Care Centers, prior to the continuation date of the license.

(c) If the department determines that the licensee has met the minimum requirements for a license under this chapter., has paid the applicable fees under ss. 48.65 and 48.66, Stats., any unpaid forfeiture under s. 48.715(3)(a) or 49.155(7m)(a)3., Stats., and any unpaid penalty under s. 48.76, Stats., the department shall continue the license for an additional 2 years.

**(5) AMENDING A LICENSE.**

(a) A licensee shall submit to the department a written request for an amendment to the license if the licensee wishes to change any of the following aspects of the license:

1. A change in the licensed capacity of the center.
2. The age range of the children.
3. The hours of the center's operation.
4. The days of the week the center is in operation.
5. The months of the year the center is in operation.
6. The name of the center.

(b) A licensee may not make a change that affects a condition of the license under par. (a) without the prior written approval of the department.

(c) A licensee may not move the center to a new location or change ownership of the center without notifying the department at least 30 days prior to the change. A new application and license is required when a center moves or changes ownership.

**Note:** The department's form, License Application – Group Child Care Centers, is used to apply for a new license. The department will provide an application when notified by the licensee that the center will move to a new location.

(d) A licensee proposing to increase the licensed capacity of a center shall demonstrate compliance with this chapter in the operation of the existing center and compliance with rules for any other facility licensed by the department and operated by the licensee.

**251.11(6)**

(6) **ADDITIONAL LICENSE.** A licensee applying for a license for an additional center location shall demonstrate compliance with this chapter in the operation of the existing center he or she operates and compliance with rules for any other facility licensed by the department and operated by the licensee. The licensee shall pay any fines, forfeitures or other fees due and owing under s. 48.715, Stats., or s. 48.65, Stats., on other facilities licensed by the department before the department issues an additional license.

(7) **LICENSE DENIAL OR REVOCATION.**

(a) The department may deny, revoke or suspend a license, initiate other enforcement actions specified in this chapter or in ch. 48, Stats., or place conditions on a license if the applicant or licensee, a proposed or current employee, a volunteer or any other person having regular contact with the children, has or has been any of the following:

1. The subject of a pending criminal charge for an action that substantially relates to the care of children or activities of the center.

2. Convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or other offense or action that substantially relates to the care of children or activities of the center.

3. Determined to have abused or neglected a child pursuant to s. 48.981, Stats., or has been determined to have committed an offense which substantially relates to the care of children or the activities of the center.

4. The subject of a substantiated finding of misconduct in the department's nurse aide registry under s. DHS 129.10.

5. The subject of a court finding that the person has abandoned his or her child, has inflicted sexual or physical abuse on a child or has neglected or refused, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter for his or her child or ward or a child in his or her care so as to seriously endanger the physical health of the child.

6. Had a child care license or certification revoked or denied within the last 5 years.

7. Violated any provision of this chapter or ch. 48, Stats., or fails to meet the minimum requirements of this chapter.

8. Made false statements or withheld information.

**Note:** Examples of charges and offenses the department will consider in making a determination under this paragraph that an act substantially relates to the care of children are: abuse or neglect of a child; sexual assault; abuse of a resident of a facility; a crime against life and bodily security; kidnapping; abduction; arson of a building or of property other than a building; robbery; receiving stolen property from a child; a crime against sexual morality, such as enticing a minor for immoral purposes or exposing a minor to harmful materials; and interfering with the custody of a child. The list is illustrative. Other types of offenses may be considered.

(b) The department may deny, revoke, refuse to renew or suspend a license, initiate other enforcement actions specified in this chapter or in ch. 48, Stats., or place conditions on the license if the applicant or licensee is not fit and qualified as determined under sub. (1).

**Note:** See DCF 251.03 (11g) for the definition of "fit and qualified." Examples of charges, actions or offenses the department will consider in making a determination under this paragraph that an act substantially relates to the care of children include the following: abuse or neglect of a child; sexual assault; abuse of a resident of a facility; a crime against life and bodily security; kidnapping; abduction; arson of a building or of property other than a building; robbery; receiving stolen property from a child; a crime against sexual morality, such as enticing a minor for immoral purposes or exposing a minor to harmful materials, interfering with the custody of a child. The list is illustrative. Other types of offenses may be considered.

**251.11(7)(c)**

(c) The department shall deny or refuse to continue or revoke a license if the applicant or licensee has failed to pay court-ordered payments of child or family support, maintenance, birth expenses, medical expenses or other expenses related to the support of a child or former spouse or for the failure of the applicant or licensee to comply, after appropriate notices, with a subpoena or warrant issued by the department or a county child support agency under s. 59.53 (5), Stats., and related to paternity or child support proceedings, as provided in a memorandum of understanding entered into under s. 49.857, Stats. Notwithstanding s. 48.72, Stats., an action taken under this subsection is subject to review only as provided in the memorandum of understanding entered into under s. 49.857, Stats., and not as provided in s. 48.72, Stats.

(d) The department shall deny an application for the issuance or continuation of a license or revoke a license if the department of revenue certifies under s. 73.0301, Stats., that the applicant or licensee is liable for delinquent taxes. An action taken under this subsection is subject to review only as provided under s. 73.0301(5), Stats., and not as provided in s. 48.72, Stats.

**(8) EFFECT OF NOTICE TO DENY OR REVOKE A LICENSE.**

(a)1. If the department decides under sub. (7) to deny the grant of a license or to revoke a license, the department shall notify the applicant or licensee in writing of its decision and the reasons for that decision.

2. If the department revokes a license, the effective date of the revocation shall be either immediately or 30 days after the date of the notice, based on the criteria under s. 48.715 (4m) (a) and (b), Stats., unless the decision is appealed under sub. (10).

(b) Upon receipt of the notice in par. (a) and during any revocation or denial procedures that may result, a group child care center may not accept for care any child not enrolled and in care as of the date of receipt of the notice without the written approval of the department.

**(9) SUMMARY SUSPENSION OF A LICENSE.**

(a) Under the authority of s. 227.51 (3), Stats., the department shall summarily suspend a license and close a group child care center when the department finds that the public health, safety or welfare requires emergency action and incorporates a finding to that effect into its order. A finding of a requirement for summary suspension of the license may be based on any of the following:

1. Failure of the licensee to provide environmental protections for the children, such as heat, water, electricity or telephone service.

2. The licensee, an employee, a volunteer or any other person in regular contact with the children in care has been convicted of or has a pending charge for a crime against life or bodily security.

3. The licensee, an employee, a volunteer or any other person in regular contact with the children in care has been convicted of a felony, misdemeanor or other offense that substantially relates to the care of children or activities of the center or has a pending charge that substantially relates to the care of children or activities of the center.

4. The licensee, employee, volunteer or any other person in regular contact with the children in care is the subject of a current investigation for alleged child abuse or neglect pursuant to s. 48.981, Stats., or has been determined by a child protective services agency or law enforcement agency to have abused or neglected a child.

5. The licensee or a person under the supervision of the license has committed an action or has created a condition relating to the operation or maintenance of the child care center that directly threatens the health, safety or welfare of any child under the care of the licensee.

**251.11(9)(b)**

(b) An order summarily suspending a license and closing a group child care center may be a verbal order by a licensing representative of the department. Within 72 hours after the order takes effect, the department shall either permit the reopening of the center or proceed under sub. (7) or (8) to revoke the license. A preliminary hearing shall be conducted by the department of administration's division of hearings and appeals, within 10 working days after the date of the initial order to close, on the issue of whether the license shall remain suspended during revocation proceedings.

**(10) APPEAL OF DECISION TO DENY OR REVOKE A LICENSE.** Any person aggrieved by the department's decision to deny a probationary or regular license or to revoke a license may request a hearing on that decision under s. 227.42, Stats. The request for a hearing shall be in writing and submitted to the department of administration's division of hearings and appeals. The request for a hearing shall be sent to the division of hearings and appeals within 10 days after the date of the notice under sub. (8).

**Note:** A request for a hearing may be mailed to Division of Hearings and Appeals, P.O. Box 7875, Madison, WI 53707-7875 or faxed to (608) 264-9885. A copy of the request should be sent to the appropriate regional licensing office listed in Appendix A.