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For more information about background checks, visit [www.del.wa.gov/requirements/new/background.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/requirements/new/background.aspx)

**Background checks fast facts:**

In October 2011, 3,380 DEL background checks were processed:

- 130 fingerprint checks
- 3,241 name/date-of-birth checks

**What's the process for getting a background check?**

A background check is required for individuals who may have unsupervised access to children in a child care setting. Background checks are processed for DEL applicants through the Department of Social and Health Service (DSHS) Background Check Central Unit.

Background checks are important to protect the safety and welfare of children. Reviewing employees, volunteers and household members to help ensure they do not have a history of criminal activity or child abuse/neglect is a basic but important step DEL takes to promote safe and healthy child care.

The name/date-of-birth background check process is:

- Applicant completes, submits paper application form to local DEL office.
- Form is entered into web application, submitted to DSHS for processing (includes criminal history check, inquiries into state court data system, sexual offender registry, and other state agency indices around site and professional licensing histories).
- DSHS returns results to DEL via web application.
- DEL licensing staff review applicant's character and suitability by reviewing FamLink system child abuse/neglect information.
- Individual is cleared or disqualified.

Anyone who has lived in Washington for fewer than three years also complete have a fingerprint check. DEL contracts with a private company that collects electronic fingerprints and sends them to the Washington State Patrol (WSP), which works with the FBI to process the fingerprints, and sends results to DEL.

The fees for a fingerprint-based background check are:

- \$46.75 for licensees, employees and household members
- \$42.75 for volunteers

**The move to portable background checks**

House Bill 1903, passed in 2011 session, directs DEL to create a portable background check registry by July 1, 2012. Individuals will pay for and "own" their three-year portable background check clearance card. Licensed providers may cover the cost for employees if they choose. The cost will include a small fee to DEL to cover the cost of maintaining the background check registry.

Potential benefits of a portable background check include:

- Those who have been cleared may work in multiple child care settings without having to apply for another background check. The past system linked individual background checks to the work site, and RCW required the employer to pay for the costs of background checks.
- Child care licensees may no longer need to "double-staff" while waiting for a staff member's background check application to clear so they can have unsupervised access to children.

- All individuals who begin child care employment will be required to be fingerprinted as well as have a national name/date of birth clearance, regardless of how long they have lived in Washington. This extra measure increases the safety for children in care, while maintaining the robust background check provided by the DSHS and DEL systems.

To help ensure safety, licensed child care providers will be required to report resignation or termination of employees to DEL within 24 hours if it involves negative actions and/or criminal history.