

Differential monitoring in child care licensing

DEL licenses almost 6,000 child care centers, family home child care providers and school-age programs in Washington. We monitor these programs for health and safety, which is the foundation of a high-quality program.

In 2011, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 5625, which created a non-expiring child care license and gave DEL guidance on considering whether a child care program is in good standing when determining the most appropriate approach for monitoring.

Since then, DEL has implemented a “differential monitoring” process to help ensure efficiency while keeping children in licensed care safe. DEL will monitor family homes, centers and school-age programs at least once a year. However, providers with a non-expiring license may get an abbreviated DEL monitoring visit if since the last visit:

- There have been no valid complaints,
- There has been no pattern of non-compliance, and
- There are no pending or incomplete responses to compliance agreements.

DEL licensors begin the monitoring visit for these providers by using an abbreviated checklist. If during the visit, the provider fails to meet key indicators on the abbreviated checklist, the licensor moves to a full checklist. See full and abbreviated checklists on DEL’s website at: www.del.wa.gov/publications/licensing/.

In addition to monitoring, DEL licensors offer technical assistance to providers, conduct orientations for licensing applicants, conduct background checks, inspect licensing complaints, handle unlicensed child care complaints, and offer information and resources to providers, families and community members.

Number of facilities requiring a full checklist out of total facilities monitored in State Fiscal Year 2014

