

Child Care Services Advisory Committee and Early Childhood Services Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 20, 2025

Room 327B, Judicial Wing, State Capitol

Meeting called to order - Senator Kyle Davison, chair

- 9:00am CT, 11/20/25

Roll Call – Senator Kyle Davison, chair

- Child Care Services Advisory Committee
 - Present: Rep. Macy Bolinske, Rep. Brandy Pyle, Sen. Todd Beard, Sen. Kyle Davison, Debra Beard, Kenzie Brown, Keely Ihry, Verla Jung, Kari Kapp, Kaila Wentz
 - Absent: Lorrie Thoenke
- Early Childhood Services Advisory Board
 - Present: Rhoda Elmi, Kirsten Hopp, Catherine Heyd
 - Absent: Linda Schroeder, Shelby Short, Ashlynn Gafford, Tania Zerr

Welcome and Introductions, Senator Kyle Davison, chair

- Committee members introduced themselves and shared their background in early childhood
- Senator Davison introduced the study and shared the charge of the committee. The timeline for the child care licensing study and actions that may be taken as a result were reviewed.
- Joint meeting of the two groups will include today's introduction and background information on child care licensing in North Dakota. Future meetings may possibly include a January meeting to present the North Dakota Child Care Licensing Crosswalk Study that HHS commissioned in 2024 and HHS' proposal presented to 69th legislative assembly to streamline licensing, a meeting in April to review statewide provider input and begin drafting recommendations, as well as a meeting in May to finalize recommendations.
- A member of the committee will present recommendations to Interim Human Services Committee in June 2026 after which the Interim Human Services Committee will consider drafting legislation for 2027-2029.
- HHS will hold in-person and virtual listening sessions with child care providers beginning in early January 2026 and concluding in mid-March 2026. Compiling the input to share at the April committee meeting.
- HHS will draft Admin Rules based on Child Care Services Advisory Committee recommendations and potential legislation. The potential effective date for Admin Rules based on Laws passed during the legislative session and Child Care Services Advisory Committee recommendation is likely January or April 2028

Welcome from HHS

- Kay Larson, HHS Early Childhood Director, provided a welcome and overview of the presentations that her team would be sharing with the committees.

Overview of Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) as they relate to child care licensing

- Presentation provided by Ms. Mariah Hill, HHS CCDF administrator. The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) explicitly connect licensing and subsidy as interdependent elements of the same system. The law and federal regulations (45 CFR Part 98) make clear that licensing is both a safeguard for children and a condition for receiving public child care funds (child care assistance). The CCDBG and CCDF provide federal guidelines that states must follow to establish child care licensing requirements, ensuring health and safety standards for child care providers. States have the flexibility to create their own regulations within these federal frameworks, which helps improve the quality and accessibility of child care services.

Overview of Caring for Our Children Basics and Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Standards

- Presentation provided by Ms. Sarah Myers, Child Care Aware® of North Dakota Health and Safety Coach. Caring for Our Children Basics is a set of recommendations that the Office of Child Care refers to - intended to create a common framework to align basic health and safety standards across all early childhood settings.

Overview of Century Code, Administrative Rule, and Policy

- Presentation provided by Ms. Carmen Traeholt, HHS Early Childhood Licensing Administrator. Ms. Traeholt provided a breakdown of each and how they relate to one another in terms of authority and function related to child care licensing. She also shared examples of how citizens and legislative actions play a role.

Overview of current License Types

- Presentation provided by Ms. Coreen Ruona, HHS Early Childhood Licensing Supervisor. Ms. Ruona shared that North Dakota has 7 Administrative Rule books and 9 provider types: family, group in a home, group in a facility, center, preschool, school-age, multiple licensed program (group/preschool or center/preschool), self-declaration, and in-home provider.

Overview of Licensing Process

- Presentation provided by Ms. Kelsey Dobitz, HHS Early Childhood Licensing Supervisor. Ms. Dobitz shared information about the licensing application process and documents that interested individuals need to complete as part of the process.

Overview of Provider Monitoring and Inspections

- Presentation provided by Ms. Jazmin Schmidt, HHS Early Childhood Licensing Specialist. MS. Schmidt shared information about the monitoring schedule and checklists, corrective action, compliance plans, and suspension and revocation of licenses.

Overview of recent OCC Monitoring Findings in ND's State CCDF Plan related to child care licensing

- Presentation provided by Ms. Mariah Hill, HHS co-CCDF Administrator. Ms Hill shared recent Office of Child Care Monitoring findings related to child care licensing that North Dakota has brought into compliance and highlighted those items that need to be brought into compliance when administrative rules are opened for revision again.

Overview Provider Input Plan

- Presentation provided by Ms. Kay Larson, HHS Early Childhood Director. Ms. Larson shared the draft dates and locations for upcoming child care provider listening sessions and solicited feedback from the committee about the plan. The committee is welcome to attend and participate in the sessions. The committee questioned if providers would be more open to offering feedback if they helped facilitate the meetings and suggested piggy-backing on meetings or events that might be scheduled in the coming months.

Committee Discussion

- Throughout the meeting, committee members made note of a variety of topics including, some of which may be discussed at future meetings, if they pertain to the work of this group:
 - Immunization standards
 - Pediatric CPR/1st aid cost for providers
 - Child Care Assistance Program – different rates for different provider types, why isn't preschool eligible for CCDF
 - Background check process

Wrap up, next steps – Senator Davison, chair

- Begin planning the January provider listening sessions

Meeting adjourned - Senator Kyle Davison, chair

- 2:45pm CT, 11/20/25