



# Child Care Regulation Modernization Projects

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# Child care regulation modernization projects

- The 2021 Legislature allocated federal funding to support regulation modernization projects for both family child care and child care centers
- The Family Child Care Task Force (2019-2021) recommended a modernization project in their final report
- The regulation modernization projects support the development of:
  - New licensing standards
  - Risk-based tiered violation systems
  - Abbreviated inspections

# Child care regulation modernization projects

- DHS has a three-year contract with the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA) to conduct these projects
  - NARA has experience with other states doing similar work
- NARA will develop and implement a stakeholder engagement process that solicits input from parents, licensed child care providers, county licensors, staff from DHS, and experts in child development

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- NARA will work with DHS to put together a report and proposed legislation to implement the new licensing models and new licensing standards
  - The report will be submitted to the legislature by February 1, 2024
- Pilot projects will allow DHS, licensors, and providers to have an opportunity to identify technical or policy issues and make necessary changes before final implementation **(dependent on legislative authorization)**
- New licensing standards, risk-based tiered violation systems, and abbreviated inspections will need to be adopted into statute or administrative rule before they will take effect

# Child care regulation modernization projects: New licensing standards

- Relying on its experience in other states, NARA will draft updated licensing standards for family child care and child care centers over the next three years
- NARA will navigate DHS, child care providers, county licensing agencies and other stakeholders through the process of developing the new updated standards by:
  - Collecting stakeholder input on current licensing standards
  - Drafting proposed revisions to licensing standards
  - Developing a pilot project to implement revised standards **(dependent on legislative authorization)**
  - Reviewing and revising draft standards with stakeholders

# Child care regulation modernization projects: Risk-based tiered violation systems

- With stakeholder input, NARA will develop a tiered enforcement framework that is weighted to reflect the level of risk that a violation poses to children
- NARA will:
  - Gather data and input from DHS, family child care providers, child care centers, county licensing agencies, and other stakeholders
  - Collect and analyze data to determine when various enforcement mechanisms would be used
  - Use data analysis and stakeholder input to develop a weighted risk assessment system
  - Develop a pilot project to implement the risk-based tiered violation system (**dependent on legislative authorization**)
  - Develop materials to help licensors, providers, and the public understand the new system

# Child care regulation modernization projects: Abbreviated inspections

- Abbreviated inspections will include a subset of standards known as key indicators, which statistically predict compliance with the entire list of standards
- NARA will:
  - Identify which standards should be included in abbreviated inspections
  - Work with stakeholders to determine eligibility criteria for an abbreviated inspection
  - Develop materials to help licensors, providers, and the public understand abbreviated inspections and when they would be used

# Child care regulation modernization projects: Status update

- DHS has executed a contract with NARA in March 2022
- DHS has hired three licensing policy analysts to support the work of these projects and onboarding is underway



# Alternate child care licensing models

- Overview:
  - DHS, in consultation with counties, child care providers, and other relevant stakeholders, will review child care models that are not currently in state statutes, including standards related to age, group size, and capacity.
  - This project will consider whether any models could address the state's child care needs while protecting children's safety, health, and well-being and make recommendations for implementing the models that meet these criteria.
  - DHS will report recommendations to the legislature by January 1, 2023.
- Update:
  - Contract for this project is complete and executed. Wilder Research is the facilitator for this project,