

Report in Brief

Date: April 2020

Report No. A-01-18-02504

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Why OIG Did This Audit

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG Act) of 2014 added new requirements for States that receive funding from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) to conduct comprehensive criminal background checks on staff members and prospective staff members of childcare providers every 5 years. Criminal background check requirements apply to any staff member who is employed by a childcare provider for compensation or whose activities involve the care or supervision of children or unsupervised access to children.

Our objective was to determine whether New Hampshire's monitoring of childcare providers ensured provider compliance with State requirements related to criminal background checks established under the CCDBG Act.

How OIG Did This Audit

We analyzed and tested a population of 463 licensed childcare centers and family homes that received CCDF funding during State fiscal year 2018. We used geographic area, total capacity, and total CCDF funding received to select 15 childcare center providers and 15 family home providers. In total, we reviewed supporting documentation for 614 individuals who were current employees or household members at 30 different childcare provider locations.

New Hampshire's Monitoring Did Not Ensure Childcare Provider Compliance With State Criminal Background Check Requirements at 21 of 30 Providers Reviewed

What OIG Found

New Hampshire's monitoring did not ensure provider compliance with State requirements related to criminal background checks at 21 of 30 childcare provider locations we reviewed. We found that 98 of 614 individuals did not obtain or renew 1 or more of the required criminal background checks. By not ensuring that all current employees or household members who supervised or had routine unsupervised contact with children passed all criminal background checks, New Hampshire potentially jeopardized the safety of the children in the care of the 30 selected childcare providers.

What OIG Recommends and New Hampshire Comments

We recommend that New Hampshire (1) conduct or renew all required criminal background checks for the 98 individuals who did not have all required checks or who had expired background checks at the time of our data requests and site visits; (2) develop a system that provides notifications to providers, employees, and department staff when criminal background checks need to be renewed or information to complete the required checks has not been submitted; (3) determine whether it is feasible to increase the ratio of State licensing inspectors to childcare providers to meet industry standards so that it can review all employee criminal background checks at all childcare centers; and (4) require the State's Child Care Licensing Unit to increase the number of current employees it reviews at all childcare centers to ensure childcare provider compliance with criminal background check requirements.

In written comments on our draft report, New Hampshire concurred with recommendations one, two, and four and said it partially concurred with our third recommendation. New Hampshire also explained the actions it has taken and plans to take to improve compliance. Specifically, the State agency will be implementing a new system no later than September 2020 that will allow for notifications to providers, individuals, and State agency staff when background checks need to be renewed, additional checks need to be completed, or information is missing.