



Early Childhood All Provider Meeting

Office of Child Care Licensing
September 2026



All-Provider Meeting Ground Rules

1. There are many providers on this call. To ensure we remain on schedule, please feel free to utilize the chat for questions. We will provide the appropriate contact information and send a follow up email.
2. Please refrain from asking individualized questions/concerns that are not pertinent to the larger group. These can be handled offline by DHS Office of Child Care
3. We understand you may have topics you would like to discuss that are not on the agenda. Please refrain from asking but feel free to put the items in the chat for a future meeting.

Today's Agenda:

Today, the Office of Child Care will be focusing on specific agenda items.

01

Update on Child Care Licensing Staff

02

Updates on Child Care Licensing Regulations



Office of Child Care Licensing



Updates to Staff

Licensing Staff Update

- Stephanie Lutrario: promoted to Licensor 2 position
 - She will continue to conduct unannounced monitoring visits while supporting the team by completing the following:
 - Continue supporting providers by completing out of state background checks
 - Continue supporting the team with new staff onboarding
 - Continuing to conduct provisional, compliant, and probationary visits as needed
 - Continue supporting the ongoing professional development and reliability training of the Child Care Licensing team

- New Licensors!

- Louise Richardson
- Andra Davis
- Marlene Ocasio (bilingual)
- Pandora Jenkins



Licensing Staff Update (continued)

- Employees on Leave:
 - Berta León and Teresa Castillo-Bakr
- Team Priorities
 - While the DHS brings on new staff and fills vacancies, the assignment of providers to a specific licensor has been temporarily suspended.
 - As a provider, this means you may see different licensors during each visit.
 - During this transition period, please use the general Child Care office email address for any questions you may have: DHS.ChildCareLicensing@dhs.ri.gov
- Once caseload reassignment is complete, the Office of Child Care will contact all providers via email to let you know who your new licensor is. We appreciate your patience during this process and, as always, we welcome your feedback.



Updates to Child Care Licensing Regulations

Reasons DHS updates regulations?

Regulation updates are made regularly for a variety of reasons. Some of these include:

- To add clarifying language based off provider feedback
- To update regulations as recommended by other state agencies
- To include language around new systems or policies;
 - This is very relevant for these regulation updates. RISES did not exist as the licensing system of record when we last updated both child care center and family child regulations.



Implementation Timeframe

Overview:

- Child Care Center regulations went live 7/7/2026.
- Family Child Care regulations went live 8/11/26
- DHS is currently updating monitoring reports and creating updated guidance documents to support providers.
- Anticipated that DHS will start monitoring on these new regulations as of 10/1/2026
- As a reminder, RISES requirements have been in place since DHS stopped accepting paper applications and documentation as of 9/1/2025.
- Changes to staff requirements will be implemented prior to 10/1/26



Administrative/Technical Updates



Administrative/Technical Updates

- Added Rhode Island General Law Chapter 42-72.11:
 - This is a statute that has always been in effect but not previously referenced in regulations.
 - This statute allows DHS to issue fines to providers for noncompliance and/or operating without a license.
 - This adds an additional layer of DHS enforcement between provisional licensure and program closure
 - It allows providers to operate while facing a consequence that is more significant than provisional status but less severe than closure



Administrative/Technical Updates

- **Removed links throughout the regulations.** Links change frequently. Removing them but leaving the agency they are connected to allows the user to search that agency without worry about accessing an old link with old/incorrect information
- **Definitions for "Corrective Action Plan" and "Probationary License" were updated to include the RI General Law referenced in the last slide**
- **Added language to the definition of "Probationary License":** "may affect a program's eligibility for federally funded quality initiatives during the probationary period." also notes that this
- **Added a definition for RISES**
 - *RISES means the Rhode Island Starts Early System, the State's integrated early childhood data and information system, administered by DHS that is used to manage child care licensing, workforce registry information and provider applications.*



Administrative/Technical Updates (continued) *

- **A definition for over-the-counter medications has been added:** any medication that can be purchased without a medical prescription
- **Additional regulations regarding medication transported between the program and the family;** if medication is provided to the program on a daily basis, there must be a written plan to log the medication upon receipt and it's subsequent return to the parent at the end of the day
- **A regulation regarding children with special health needs has been added:** There must be documentation of a health care plan for the child, signed by the physician, the parent or guardian and the program administrator.
- **Vaping and other controlled substances have been added to the regulations regarding prohibited practices.**
- **Added the requirement that Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans must be on the DHS developed form:** This ensures the plan meets all requirements as outlined by ACF



Updates Related to RISES



Updates Related to RISES

- Integrated RISES requirements into:
 - Initial applications/License renewals/Program closure requests/Program change requests (Variance/Waiver requests will also eventually be found in RISES)
 - Paper applications have not been accepted since 9/1/2025. This put the requirement into regulations.
 - Workforce Registry Participation
 - **Added language:** *“Each staff who work with children or on site when children are present must have a completed workforce registry profile in RISES that includes: Name, date of birth, personal email address, home address, phone, education and any child care/education relevant work experience”*

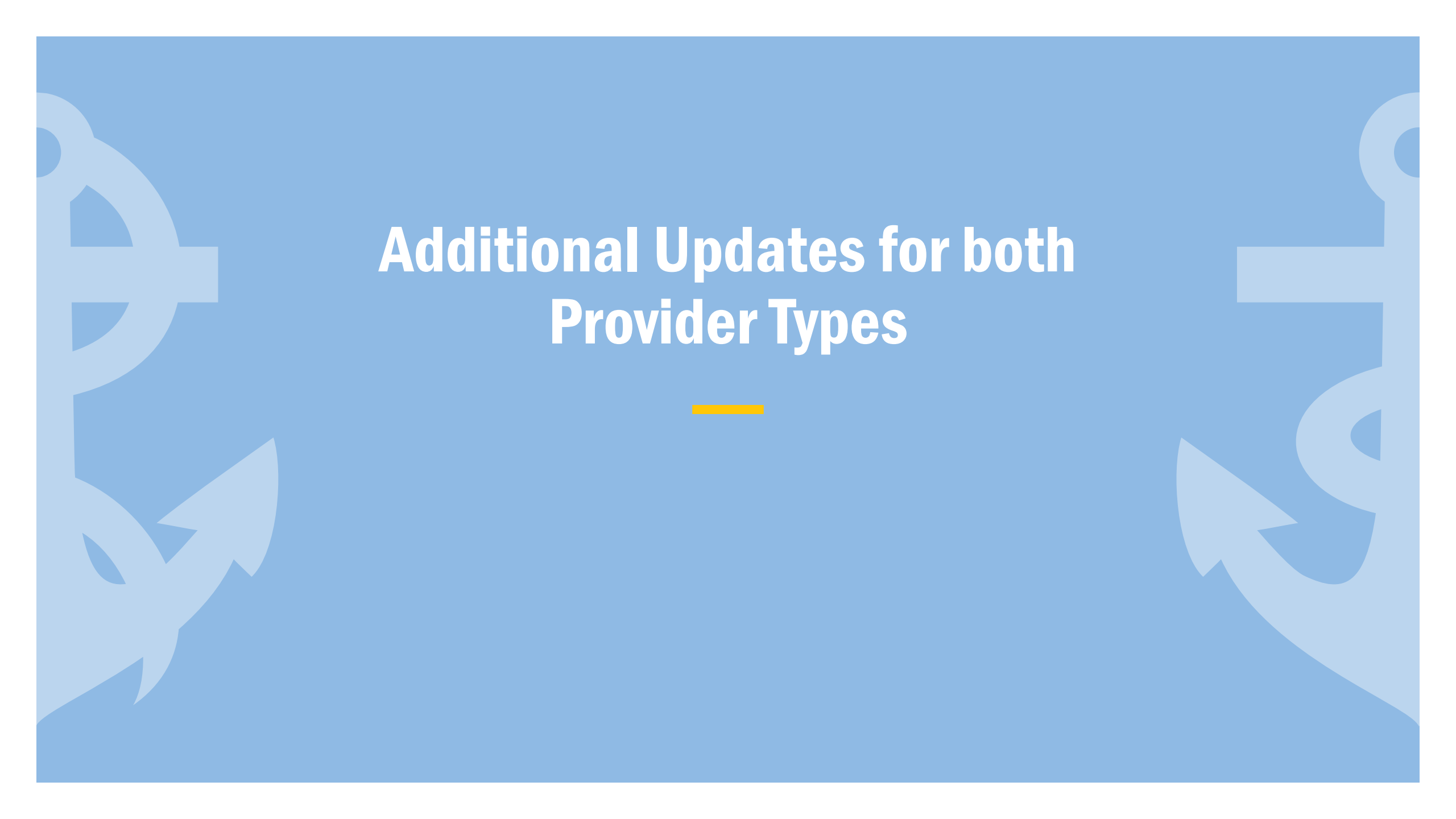


Updates Related to RISES *

- Regulatory Approvals/Notification of Regulatory Changes
 - Includes Administrators/Directors, Education Coordinators, Site and Nighttime Coordinators and Family Child Care Assistants
 - DHS understands that there is a time constraint in hiring people. We encourage you to ensure all potential applicants have a Workforce Registry Profile as part of your interviewing process. This ensures that 1) we can review ahead of hiring should you have any questions/concerns regarding qualifications 2) when the request for association is received, there are no delays in our approval
 - Added language: *“All Program Leadership and Regulatory Roles listed below must receive Department approval in RISES before they may be associated with the program. Programs that make changes to regulatory roles without prior Department approval may be subject to licensing action.”*



Additional Updates for both Provider Types



Renewals

- Reinforced that Renewal Applications must be submitted via RISES
 - Documented that providers receive notification of license expiration starting at 90 days prior to expiration and continuing until application is approved
- Licensing action for failure to renew in a timely fashion
 - Providers who have not had their renewal approved by DHS prior to their license expiration date will receive an automatic 3 month Probationary due to Non-Renewal license.
 - Any program that fails to submit a renewal application prior to expiring faces closure
 - Added language *It is the programs responsibility to track expiration dates and maintain an active license at all time the program is operating.*



Postings and Inspections

- **Choke Saving Poster Posting:** added language *“must be visible by staff sitting with children while eating”*
- **Clarified fire inspection type to include:** *“Life Safety Fire Inspection completed by the State Fire Marshal”*
- **Update lead requirements:** *“if a building is built after 1978, evidence of this must be provided”*
 - This allows both provider types to provide this evidence in order to be exempt from getting a lead inspection vs. having to have the inspection in order to document



Child Care Center Specific



Alignment to Family Child Care Regulations

- Requirement that new owners (those who do not already own a licensed child care center) complete an Orientation and First Steps process
- Added language regarding infant feeding including what should be included in a feeding plan.
 - *A feeding plan is established and followed for each infant and Toddler prior to admission. The feeding plan must include:*
 - *A plan for introducing age appropriate solid foods, developed in partnership with the child's parent/guardian and informed by documentation from the child's primary health provider if possible*
 - *A policy for ensuring infants are not fed beyond the point of satiety; allow infants to stop feeding when they indicate they are full*
 - *A requirement that infants are not fed formula mixed with cereal, fruit juice or other foods unless the program has received written authorization from the child's primary health care provider*
 - *Providers shall encourage and support breastfeeding and the feeding of breast milk by making arrangements for parents to feed their children on-site*
 - *Infants who are not ready for self-feeding are held and fed by an individual staff member on a one-to-one basis*
 - *Infants must be held while bottle feeding in a caregiver's arm or sitting up on lap.*



Additional Updates

- Prohibition of nap rooms for any new programs/changes to already existing programs
- Clarifying language around digital/electronic attendance documentation: *“If this documentation is kept electronically/digitally through a child care online portal, the Department must have access while on site to review and confirm that the platform meets the requirement.”*
- Updated options for educational requirements for School Age Site Coordinator/Night Time Coordinator: *“The individual must have a minimum of a High School diploma, and one (1) year of professional experience working within the licensed school age program. This option includes a requirement of three months of technical assistance from a school age technical assistance specialist upon assuming the role or a Department approved online School Age specific training .”*
- Staff prohibited from using personal devices to communicate with families or to complete digital attendance
- Clarifying language for serious injury: *“injury requiring outside medical attention”*



Family Child Care Specific

Group Family Child Care Homes and Substitutes

- To streamline the regulations and reduce confusion, regulations specific to Group Family Child Care was added to Family Child Care regulations.
 - No changes were made to group regulations
- **Removed the word “*substitute*”:** This was initially added when there was a family child care substitute pool. That no longer exists
 - *Assistants continue to be able to be used as a substitute in the absence of a family child care provider.*



Additional Updates

- Added language about attempted visits:
 - *“If the Department is not able to access the program and/or the provider is not home, this will be considered an attempted visit.*
 - *If, after two attempted visits, the Department is not able to make contact with the provider and/or not able to access the program, the license will be suspended or revoked until a visit is able to be completed*
 - *This may require the provider to complete an initial application dependent upon the closure length*
- New state wide legislation was passed that aligns town/city zoning requirements to allow for a provider who meets all other requirements to increase to 12 children.
- A capacity change request must be completed and approved via RISES before increasing the licensed capacity. All documents must be reviewed before submitting this request. There are very specific requirements regarding space, education level, and staffing needed to obtain a license for more than eight children.



Additional Updates (continued) *

- Updated language around family child care providers meeting personal hygiene needs
 - Under supervision, the following language was added: *"Exceptions may be made in order for the provider or assistant to attend to personal hygiene needs: Provider and assistant(s) must ensure that infants and toddlers are placed in a safe location during the this time"*



Support and Resources for Meeting the New Requirements

- **Updated guidance documents**
 - DHS is actively working to update guidance documents prior to the October 1 implementation date
 - Once updated, these documents will be available at <https://dhs.ri.gov/programs-and-services/child-care/child-care-providers-staff-resources/handbooks-forms>
- **Posting of this presentation**
 - This presentation will be posted on the same website, under the section titled **All Provider Meeting Resources**
- **Emailing the child care licensing email**
 - Should you have questions prior to these being posted, please reach out to the general child care licensing email dhs.childcarelicensing@dhs.ri.gov
- **Please note that DHS will not be implementing fines at this time.** Additional information will be shared with providers once this timeframe has been developed.

