



Audit Leads to Action

- EEC investigated all 119 instances where a child care facility matched the address of a registered sex offender.
- EEC revoked the licenses of four child care providers where they knowingly withheld information of a sex offender living at the address of their facility.
- Fifty child care providers were discovered to operate in the same buildings as registered sex offenders. These facilities were required to develop additional safety plans with EEC, to ensure children are not in risk.
- EEC officials believe no children were harmed at any of the locations investigated.
- EEC has stated it will develop a statewide system to cross-check the addresses of all Level 2 and Level 3 sex offenders are cross-checked against licensed child care programs.
- EEC will enforce its policy and will conduct unannounced visits as required.

AUDIT FINDINGS

In March of 2013 Auditor Bump published an audit of the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) which found 119 instances where addresses listed for Level 2 or Level 3 sex offenders in the Massachusetts Sex Offender Registry matched those of EEC licensed child care provider.

While the audit was still in progress, Auditor Bump brought the matches to the attention of EEC, and the agency immediately began an investigation of all 119 instances.

There is no current requirement that EEC conduct any Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) checks of or matches of child care facility operators, workers, or people living in an at-home day care.

Other findings included:

- EEC was not ensuring that child care providers are performing the required CORI checks on their staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, Auditor Bump has issued a series of recommendations for Early Education and Care to improve its processes and to better ensure the safety of children in state licensed child care facilities. The recommendations include:

- Establish a policy requiring that applications for child care sites seeking initial or renewed EEC license approval their license be compared with the addresses of registered

Audit Highlights

EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE SAFETY AT CHILD CARE CENTERS

SPRING, 2013

Safety Reforms Needed at State Child Care Agency *Auditor Bump calls for improved scrutiny of day care staff*

“No parent who drops their child off at day care should have to worry about the safety of their son or daughter.”

State Auditor Suzanne Bump

- EEC policy does not requires background checks for all child care staff.
- ECC did not follow up on violations uncovered at child care centers in a timely manner. Some violations had not been followed up by EEC staff to determine if problems had been corrected for over two years after they were identified.
- EEC did not perform a single unannounced inspection of a residence-based family child care provider. Unannounced inspections are required by state law to be performed annually.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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- sex offenders. Any matches identified should be investigated and appropriate measures should be taken to ensure the safety of the children in the program.
- Ensure that CORI and SORI checks are completed for any child care provider employee who has or could have potential unsupervised contact with children
- Implement proper monitoring controls and evaluation procedures to ensure that criminal background record checks are performed prior to and during an individual’s employment.
- Conduct routine unannounced inspections for large family child care homes in compliance with the inspection requirements of Chapter 15D, Section 9(b), of the General Laws.
- Ensure that all violations found during facility inspections are remedied in a timely manner and documented as required by EEC policy.

- Ensure that provider checklists are properly completed, include all necessary information, and are maintained on file for review. Any missing or incomplete checklists should be noted as noncompliant and subject to corrective action.
- Revise child care provider license applications and renewal forms to clearly identify and document all providers using private well water and ensure that all private well water is properly inspected and approved and evidence of inspection reports is retained on file.

IN THE NEWS

Auditor Bump’s report on EEC drew state wide attention. Across the board, from lawmakers, the news media, and people on the street, people were shocked with the findings and expressed their desire for improvement.

“...perhaps the department’s next leader will use this audit as a road map for improvement.”

- Boston Herald

“Bump and her office have won our praise for getting answers that Early Education and Care already should have known.”

-Fitchburg Sentinel and Enterprise

“What the auditor’s report should do is spur officials at EEC to do their jobs, and child-care providers to comply fully with CORI requirements.”

- Worcester Telegram & Gazette



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