

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1908

71-1908. Act, how cited; legislative findings

<Text effective until July 1, 2014. See, also, text effective July 1, 2014.>

(1) Sections 71-1908 to 71-1923 shall be known and may be cited as the Child Care Licensing Act.

(2) The Legislature finds that there is a present and growing need for quality child care programs and facilities. There is a need to establish and maintain licensure of persons providing such programs to ensure that such persons are competent and are using safe and adequate facilities. The Legislature further finds and declares that the development and supervision of programs are a matter of statewide concern and should be dealt with uniformly on the state and local levels. There is a need for cooperation among the various state and local agencies which impose standards on licensees, and there should be one agency which coordinates the enforcement of such standards and informs the Legislature about cooperation among the various agencies.

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Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1909

71-1909. Purposes of act; legislative intent

(1) The purposes of the Child Care Licensing Act are to provide:

(a) Statewide licensure standards for persons providing child care programs; and

(b) The department with authority to coordinate the enforcement of standards on licensees.

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(2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the licensing and regulation of programs under the act exist for the protection of children and to assist parents in making informed decisions concerning enrollment and care of their children in such programs.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1910

71-1910. Terms, defined

For purposes of the Child Care Licensing Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) Department means the Department of Health and Human Services; and

(2)(a) Program means the provision of services in lieu of parental supervision for children under thirteen years of age for compensation, either directly or indirectly, on the average of less than twelve hours per day, but more than two hours per week, and includes any employer-sponsored child care, family child care home, child care center, school-age child care program, school-age services pursuant to section 79-1104, or preschool or nursery school.

(b) Program does not include casual care at irregular intervals, a recreation camp as defined in section 71-3101, a recreation facility, center, or program operated by a political or governmental subdivision pursuant to the authority provided in section 13-304, classes or services provided by a religious organization other than child care or a preschool or nursery school, a preschool program conducted in a school approved pursuant to section 79-318, services provided only to school-age children during the summer and other extended breaks in the school year, or foster care as defined in section 71-1901.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1911

71-1911. Licenses; when required; issuance; corrective action status; display of license

(1) A person may operate child care for three or fewer children without having a license issued by the department. A person who is not required to be licensed may choose to apply for a license and, upon obtaining a license, shall be subject to the Child Care Licensing Act. A person who has had a license issued pursuant to this section and has had such license suspended or revoked other than for nonpayment of fees shall not operate or offer to operate a program for or provide care to any number of children until the person is licensed pursuant to this section.

(2) No person shall operate or offer to operate a program for four or more children under his or her direct supervision, care, and control at any one time from families other than that of such person without having in full force and effect a written license issued by the department upon such terms as may be prescribed by the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the department. The license may be a provisional license or an operating license. A city, village, or county which has rules, regulations, or ordinances in effect on July 10, 1984, which apply to programs operating for two or three children from different families may continue to license persons providing such programs. If the license of a person is suspended or revoked other than for nonpayment of fees, such person shall not be licensed by any city, village, or county rules, regulations, or ordinances until the person is licensed pursuant to this section.

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(3) A provisional license shall be issued to all applicants following the completion of preservice orientation training approved or delivered by the department for the first year of operation. At the end of one year of operation, the department shall either issue an operating license, extend the provisional license, or deny the operating license. The provisional license may be extended once for a period of no more than six months. The decision regarding extension of the provisional license is not appealable. The provisional license may be extended if:

(a) A licensee is unable to comply with all licensure requirements and standards, is making a good faith effort to comply, and is capable of compliance within the next six months;

(b) The effect of the current inability to comply with a rule or regulation does not present an unreasonable risk to the health, safety, or well-being of children or staff; and

(c) The licensee has a written plan of correction that has been approved by the department which is to be completed within the renewal period.

(4) The department may place a provisional or operating license on corrective action status. Corrective action status is voluntary and may be in effect for up to six months. The decision regarding placement on corrective action status is not a disciplinary action and is not appealable. If the written plan of correction is not approved by the department, the department may discipline the license. A probationary license may be issued for the licensee to operate under corrective action status if the department determines that:

(a) The licensee is unable to comply with all licensure requirements and standards or has had a history of noncompliance;

(b) The effect of noncompliance with any rule or regulation does not present an unreasonable risk to the health, safety, or well-being of children or staff; and

(c) The licensee has a written plan of correction that has been approved by the department.

(5) Operating licenses issued under the Child Care Licensing Act shall remain in full force and effect subject to annual inspections and fees. The department may amend a license upon change of ownership or location. Amending a license requires a site inspection by the department at the time of amendment, except that for amendment of a family child care home I license, an inspection shall occur within sixty days. When a program is to be permanently closed, the licensee shall return the license to the department within one week after the closing.

(6) The license, including any applicable status or amendment, shall be displayed by the licensee in a prominent place so that it is clearly visible to parents and others. License record information and inspection reports shall be made available by the licensee for public inspection upon request.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1911.01

71-1911.01. Fees

(1) For a license to operate a program for fewer than thirty children, each applicant for a license and each licensee shall pay to the department, at the time of initial application and annually thereafter, a license fee of twenty-five

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dollars.

(2) For a license to operate a program for thirty or more children, each applicant for a license and each licensee shall pay to the department, at the time of initial application and annually thereafter, a license fee of fifty dollars.

(3) If the department denies an application for a license and has not completed an inspection prior to such denial, the department shall return the license fee to the applicant.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1911.02

71-1911.02. Application; contents

(1) An applicant for a license to operate a program required to be licensed under the Child Care Licensing Act shall file a written application with the department. The application shall be accompanied by the license fee pursuant to section 71-1911.01 and shall set forth the full name and address of the program to be licensed, the full name and address of the owner of such program, the names of all household members if the program is located in a residence, the names of all persons in control of the program, and additional information as required by the department, including affirmative evidence of the applicant's ability to comply with rules and regulations adopted and promulgated under the act. The application shall include the applicant's social security number if the applicant is an individual. The social security number shall not be public record and may only be used for administrative purposes.

(2) The application shall be signed by (a) the owner, if the applicant is an individual, a partnership, or the sole owner of a limited liability company or a corporation, (b) two of its members, if the applicant is a limited liability company, or (c) two of its officers, if the applicant is a corporation.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1911.03

71-1911.03. Applicant; liability insurance

<Section effective July 1, 2014.>

An applicant for a license under the Child Care Licensing Act shall provide to the department written proof of liability insurance coverage of at least one hundred thousand dollars per occurrence prior to issuance of the license. A licensee subject to the Child Care Licensing Act on July 1, 2014 shall obtain such liability insurance coverage and provide written proof to the department within thirty days after July 1, 2014. Failure by a licensee to maintain the required level of liability insurance coverage shall be deemed noncompliance with the Child Care Licensing Act. If the licensee is the State of Nebraska or a political subdivision, the licensee may utilize a risk retention group or a risk management pool for purposes of providing such liability insurance coverage or may self-insure all or part of such coverage.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1912

71-1912. Department; investigation; inspections

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(1) Before issuance of a license, the department shall investigate or cause an investigation to be made, when it deems necessary, to determine if the applicant or person in charge of the program meets or is capable of meeting the physical well-being, safety, and protection standards and the other rules and regulations of the department adopted and promulgated under the Child Care Licensing Act. The department may investigate the character of applicants and licensees, any member of the applicant's or licensee's household, and the staff and employees of programs by making a national criminal history record information check. The department may at any time inspect or cause an inspection to be made of any place where a program is operating to determine if such program is being properly conducted.

(2) All inspections by the department shall be unannounced except for initial licensure visits and consultation visits. Initial licensure visits are announced visits necessary for a provisional license to be issued to a family child care home II, child care center, or preschool program. Consultation visits are announced visits made at the request of a licensee for the purpose of consulting with a department specialist on ways of improving the program.

(3) An unannounced inspection of any place where a program is operating shall be conducted by the department or the city, village, or county pursuant to subsection (2) of section 71-1914 at least annually for a program licensed to provide child care for fewer than thirty children and at least twice every year for a program licensed to provide child care for thirty or more children.

(4) Whenever an inspection is made, the findings shall be recorded in a report designated by the department. The public shall have access to the results of these inspections upon a written or oral request to the department. The request must include the name and address of the program. Additional unannounced inspections shall be performed as often as is necessary for the efficient and effective enforcement of the Child Care Licensing Act.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1913

71-1913. Fire and health inspections

(1) The department may request the State Fire Marshal to inspect any program for fire safety pursuant to section 81-502. The State Fire Marshal shall immediately notify the department whenever he or she delegates authority for such inspections under such section.

(2) The department may investigate all facilities and programs of licensed providers of child care programs as defined in section 71-1910 or applicants for licenses to provide such programs to determine if the place or places to be covered by such licenses meet standards of sanitation and physical well-being set by the department for the care and protection of the child or children who may be placed in such facilities and programs. The department may delegate this authority to qualified local environmental health personnel.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1913.01

71-1913.01. Immunization requirements; record; report

(1) Each program shall require the parent or guardian of each child enrolled in such program to present within thirty days after enrollment and periodically thereafter (a) proof that the child is protected by age-appropriate immunization against measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, haemophilus influenzae type B, and invasive pneumococcal disease and such other diseases as the department may from time to time specify

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based on then current medical and scientific knowledge, (b) certification by a physician, an advanced practice registered nurse practicing under and in accordance with his or her respective certification act, or a physician assistant that immunization is not appropriate for a stated medical reason, or (c) a written statement that the parent or guardian does not wish to have such child so immunized and the reasons therefor. The program shall exclude a child from attendance until such proof, certification, or written statement is provided. At the time the parent or guardian is notified that such information is required, he or she shall be notified in writing of his or her right to submit a certification or written statement pursuant to subdivision (b) or (c) of this subsection.

(2) Each program shall keep the written record of immunization, the certification, or the written statement of the parent or guardian. Such record, certification, or statement shall be kept by the program as part of the child's file, shall be available onsite to the department, and shall be filed with the department for review and inspection. Each program shall report to the department by November 1 of each year the status of immunization for children enrolled as of September 30 of that year, and children who have reached kindergarten age and who are enrolled in public or private school need not be included in the report.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1913.02

71-1913.02. Immunization reports; audit; deficiencies; duties

(1) The department shall perform annually a random audit of the reports submitted under section 71-1913.01 to check for compliance with such section on an annual basis and such other audits and inspections as are necessary to prevent the introduction or spread of disease. Audit results shall be reported to the department.

(2) If the department discovers noncompliance with section 71-1913.01, the department shall allow a noncomplying program thirty days to correct deficiencies.

(3) The department shall develop and provide educational and other materials to programs and the public as may be necessary to implement section 71-1913.01.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1913.03

71-1913.03. Immunization; department; adopt rules and regulations

The department shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations relating to the required levels of protection, using as a guide the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, and the methods, manner, and frequency of reporting of each child's immunization status. The department shall furnish each program with copies of such rules and regulations and any other material which will assist in carrying out section 71-1913.01.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1914

71-1914. Department; serve as coordinating agency; local rules and regulations; report of violation

(1) The department shall be the state's coordinating agency for licensure and regulation of programs in this state in

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order to (a) provide efficient services pursuant to the Child Care Licensing Act, (b) avoid duplication of services, and (c) prevent an unnecessary number of inspections of any program. The department may request cooperation and assistance from local and state agencies and such agencies shall promptly respond. The extent of an agency's cooperation may be included in the report to the Legislature pursuant to section 43-3402.

(2) A city, village, or county may adopt rules, regulations, or ordinances establishing physical well-being and safety standards for programs whether or not the persons providing such programs are subject to licensure under section 71-1911. Such rules, regulations, or ordinances shall be as stringent as or more stringent than the department's rules and regulations for licensees pursuant to the Child Care Licensing Act. The city, village, or county adopting such rules, regulations, or ordinances and the department shall coordinate the inspection and supervision of licensees to avoid duplication of inspections. A city, village, or county shall report any violation of such rules, regulations, or ordinances to the department. The city, village, or county may administer and enforce such rules, regulations, and ordinances. Enforcement of provisions of the Child Care Licensing Act or rules or regulations adopted and promulgated under the act shall be by the department pursuant to sections 71-1919 to 71-1923.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1914.01

71-1914.01. Unlicensed child care; investigation

When the department receives a complaint of allegedly improper unlicensed care, the department shall investigate the claim and shall go to the premises of the alleged unlicensed program to ascertain if child care is being provided there which must be licensed according to the Child Care Licensing Act. If unlicensed child care is occurring in violation of the act, the person providing the unlicensed care shall have thirty days to either become licensed or cease providing unlicensed child care. The department shall visit the program again after such thirty-day period. If the person has not initiated action to become licensed or ceased providing unlicensed child care, the department may involve law enforcement and may proceed under sections 71-1914.02 and 71-1914.03.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1914.02

71-1914.02. Unlicensed child care; restraining order or injunction; department; powers

The department may apply for a restraining order or a temporary or permanent injunction against any person violating the Child Care Licensing Act by providing unlicensed child care when a license is required. The district court of the county where the violation is occurring shall have jurisdiction to grant such relief upon good cause shown. Relief may be granted notwithstanding the existence of any other remedy at law and shall be granted without bond.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1914.03

71-1914.03. Unlicensed child care; violations; penalty; county attorney; duties

(1) Any person violating the Child Care Licensing Act by providing unlicensed child care when a license is required is guilty of a Class IV misdemeanor. Each day the violation continues shall be a separate offense.

(2) The county attorney of the county in which any provision of unlicensed child care in violation of the act is

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occurring shall, when notified of such violation by the department or a law enforcement agency, cause appropriate proceedings under subsection (1) of this section to be instituted and pursued in a court of competent jurisdiction.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1915

71-1915. Department; emergency powers; injunction

(1) Whenever the department finds that an emergency exists requiring immediate action to protect the physical well-being and safety of a child in a program, the department may, without notice or hearing, issue an order declaring the existence of such an emergency and requiring that such action be taken as the department deems necessary to meet the emergency. The order may include an immediate prohibition on the care of children by the licensee other than children of the licensee. An order under this subsection shall be effective immediately. Any person to whom the order is directed shall comply immediately, and upon application to the department, the person shall be afforded a hearing as soon as possible and not later than ten days after his or her application for the hearing. On the basis of such hearing the department shall continue to enforce such order or rescind or modify it.

(2) The department may petition the appropriate district court for an injunction whenever there is the belief that any person is violating the Child Care Licensing Act, an order issued pursuant to the act, or any rule or regulation adopted and promulgated pursuant to the act. It shall be the duty of each county attorney or the Attorney General to whom the department reports a violation to cause appropriate proceedings to be instituted without delay to ensure compliance with the act, rules, regulations, and orders.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1916

71-1916. Department; administrative procedures

(1) The department shall adopt and promulgate such rules and regulations, consistent with the Child Care Licensing Act, as necessary for (a) the proper care and protection of children in programs regulated under the act, (b) the issuance and discipline of licenses, and (c) the proper administration of the act.

(2) The department shall adopt and promulgate rules and regulations establishing standards for the physical well-being, safety, and protection of children in programs licensed under the Child Care Licensing Act. Such standards shall insure that the program is providing proper care for and treatment of the children served and that such care and treatment is consistent with the children's physical well-being, safety, and protection. Such standards shall not require the use of any specific instructional materials or affect the contents of any course of instruction which may be offered by a program. The rules and regulations shall contain provisions which encourage the involvement of parents in child care for their children and insure the availability, accessibility, and high quality of services for children.

(3) The rules and regulations shall be adopted and promulgated pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act, except that the department shall hold a public hearing in each geographic area of the state prior to the adoption, amendment, or repeal of any rule or regulation. The department shall review and provide recommendations to the Governor for updating such rules and regulations at least every five years.

(4) The rules and regulations applicable to programs required to be licensed under the Child Care Licensing Act do not apply to any program operated or contracted by a public school district and subject to the rules and regulations

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of the State Department of Education as provided in section 79-1104.

(5) Contested cases of the department under the Child Care Licensing Act shall be in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1917

71-1917. Repealed by Laws 2006, LB 994, § 162

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1918

71-1918. Complaint tracking system

The department shall maintain a complaint tracking system for licensees under the Child Care Licensing Act.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1919

71-1919. License denial; disciplinary action; grounds

The department may deny the issuance of or take disciplinary action against a license issued under the Child Care Licensing Act on any of the following grounds:

- (1) Failure to meet or violation of any of the requirements of the Child Care Licensing Act or the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated under the act;
- (2) Violation of an order of the department under the act;
- (3) Conviction of, or substantial evidence of committing or permitting, aiding, or abetting another to commit, any unlawful act, including, but not limited to, unlawful acts committed by an applicant or licensee under the act, household members who reside at the place where the program is provided, or employees of the applicant or licensee that involve:
 - (a) Physical abuse of children or vulnerable adults as defined in section 28-371;
 - (b) Endangerment or neglect of children or vulnerable adults;
 - (c) Sexual abuse, sexual assault, or sexual misconduct;
 - (d) Homicide;
 - (e) Use, possession, manufacturing, or distribution of a controlled substance listed in section 28-405;

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- (f) Property crimes, including, but not limited to, fraud, embezzlement, and theft by deception; and
- (g) Use of a weapon in the commission of an unlawful act;
- (4) Conduct or practices detrimental to the health or safety of a person served by or employed at the program;
- (5) Failure to allow an agent or employee of the department access to the program for the purposes of inspection, investigation, or other information collection activities necessary to carry out the duties of the department;
- (6) Failure to allow state or local inspectors, investigators, or law enforcement officers access to the program for the purposes of investigation necessary to carry out their duties;
- (7) Failure to meet requirements relating to sanitation, fire safety, and building codes;
- (8) Failure to comply with or violation of the Medication Aide Act;
- (9) Failure to file a report of suspected abuse or neglect as required by sections 28-372 and 28-711;
- (10) Violation of any city, village, or county rules, regulations, or ordinances regulating licensees;
- (11) Failure to pay fees required under the Child Care Licensing Act; or
- (12) Failure to comply with the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1920

71-1920. Disciplinary action; types; fines; disposition

- (1) The department may impose any one or a combination of the following types of disciplinary action against a license issued under the Child Care Licensing Act:
- (a) Issue a probationary license;
 - (b) Suspend or revoke a provisional, probationary, or operating license;
 - (c) Impose a civil penalty of up to five dollars per child, based upon the number of children for which the program is authorized to provide child care on the effective date of the finding of violation, for each day the program is in violation;
 - (d) Establish restrictions on new enrollment in the program;

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(e) Establish restrictions or other limitations on the number of children or the age of the children served in the program; or

(f) Establish other restrictions or limitations on the type of service provided by the program.

(2) A person who has had a license revoked for any cause other than nonpayment of fees shall not be eligible to reapply for a license for a period of two years.

(3) Any fine imposed and unpaid under the Child Care Licensing Act shall constitute a debt to the State of Nebraska which may be collected in the manner of a lien foreclosure or sued for and recovered in any proper form of action in the name of the State of Nebraska in the district court of the county in which the program is located. The department shall, within thirty days after receipt, remit fines to the State Treasurer for credit to the permanent school fund.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1921

71-1921. Disciplinary action; considerations

(1) In determining what type of disciplinary action to impose, the department shall consider:

(a) The gravity of the violation, including the probability that death or serious physical or mental harm will result, the severity of the actual or potential harm, and the extent to which the provisions of applicable statutes, rules, and regulations were violated;

(b) The diligence exercised by the program in identifying or correcting the violation;

(c) The degree of cooperation exhibited by the licensee in the identification, disclosure, and correction of the violation;

(d) Any previous violations committed by the program; and

(e) The financial benefit to the program of committing or continuing the violation.

(2) If the licensee fails to correct a violation or to comply with a particular type of disciplinary action, the department may take additional disciplinary action as described in section 71-1920.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1922

71-1922. Denial of license; disciplinary action; notice; final; when

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(1) If the department determines to deny the issuance of or take disciplinary action against a license under the Child Care Licensing Act, the department shall send to the applicant or licensee, by certified mail to the address of the applicant or licensee, a notice setting forth the determination, the particular reasons for the determination, including a specific description of the nature of the violation and the statute, rule, regulation, or order violated, and the type of disciplinary action which is pending. A copy of the notice shall also be mailed to the person in charge of the program if the licensee is not actually involved in the daily operation of the program. If the licensee is a corporation, a copy of the notice shall be sent to the corporation's registered agent.

(2) The denial or disciplinary action shall become final fifteen days after the mailing of the notice unless the applicant or licensee, within such fifteen-day period, makes a written request for a hearing. The license shall continue in effect until the final order of the department if a hearing is requested. If the department does not receive such request within such fifteen-day period, the action of the department shall be final.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1923

71-1923. Voluntary surrender of license

A licensee may voluntarily surrender the license issued under the Child Care Licensing Act at any time, except that the department may refuse to accept a voluntary surrender of a license if the licensee is under investigation or if the department has initiated disciplinary action against the licensee.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1952

71-1952. Act, how cited

Sections 71-1952 to 71-1964 shall be known and may be cited as the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1953

71-1953. Purposes of act

The purposes of the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act are to (1) provide accountability for public funds invested in child care and early childhood education programs, (2) provide a path to higher quality for child care and early childhood education programs, (3) provide parents a tool by which to evaluate the quality of child care and early childhood education programs, and (4) improve child development and school readiness outcomes.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1954

71-1954. Terms, defined

For purposes of the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act:

(1) Applicable child care and early childhood education programs include:

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(a) Child care programs licensed under the Child Care Licensing Act which serve children from birth to kindergarten-entrance age;

(b) Prekindergarten services and prekindergarten programs established pursuant to section 79-1104; and

(c) The federal Head Start programs, 42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq., and Early Head Start programs, 42 U.S.C. 9840a; and

(2) Fiscal year means the fiscal year of the State of Nebraska.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1955

71-1955. Quality rating and improvement system; State Department of Education; Department of Health and Human Services; duties

The State Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services shall collaborate (1) to develop, implement, and provide oversight for a quality rating and improvement system for participating applicable child care and early childhood education programs, (2) to establish quality rating criteria for the system as provided in sections 71-1956 and 71-1958, (3) to use the quality rating criteria to assign quality scale ratings to participating applicable child care and early childhood education programs as provided in sections 71-1956 and 71-1958, and (4) to provide incentives and support, including professional development, training, and postsecondary education opportunities, to participating applicable child care and early childhood education programs as provided in section 71-1961.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1956

71-1956. Child care and early childhood education program; rating; quality rating criteria

(1) Each applicable child care and early childhood education program which applies under section 71-1957 to participate in the quality rating and improvement system developed pursuant to section 71-1955 shall be rated on a quality scale using ratings labeled steps one through five and based on quality rating criteria.

(2) Quality rating criteria shall be used to assign a quality scale rating as appropriate for the specific step. The criteria shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) Licensing requirements as specified in the Child Care Licensing Act;

(b) Facility safety and management;

(c) Child development and school readiness outcomes;

(d) Program curriculum, learning environment, and adult-child interactions;

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(e) Professional development and training;

(f) Family engagement;

(g) Program administration;

(h) Standards used by nationally recognized accrediting bodies approved by the State Department of Education; and

(i) Other standards as required by the State Department of Education for prekindergarten services and prekindergarten programs established pursuant to section 79-1104 and federal performance standards for Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1957

71-1957. Participation in quality rating and improvement system

Application to participate in the quality rating and improvement system shall be voluntary for applicable child care and early childhood education programs with the following exceptions:

(1) Beginning July 1, 2014, and not later than December 31, 2014, each applicable child care or early childhood education program that received over five hundred thousand dollars in child care assistance pursuant to section 68-1202 for FY2011-12 shall apply to participate in the quality rating and improvement system and shall be assigned a quality scale rating as provided in sections 71-1956 and 71-1958;

(2) Beginning July 1, 2015, and not later than December 31, 2015, each applicable child care or early childhood education program that received over two hundred fifty thousand dollars in child care assistance pursuant to section 68-1202 for FY2011-12 shall apply to participate in the quality rating and improvement system and shall be assigned a quality scale rating as provided in sections 71-1956 and 71-1958; and

(3) Beginning July 1, 2016, each applicable child care or early childhood education program that received over two hundred fifty thousand dollars in child care assistance pursuant to section 68-1202 in the preceding fiscal year shall, not later than December 31 of the applicable year or six months after actual receipt of such assistance, whichever is later, apply to participate in the quality rating and improvement system and shall be assigned a quality scale rating as provided in sections 71-1956 and 71-1958.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1958

71-1958. Quality scale rating; application; assignment of rating

(1) Quality rating criteria shall be used as provided in this section to assign a quality scale rating to each applicable child care or early childhood education program if the program applies under section 71-1957 to participate in the quality rating and improvement system developed pursuant to section 71-1955.

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(2) Licensure under the Child Care Licensing Act for a program which serves children from birth to kindergarten-entrance age shall be sufficient criteria to be rated at step one.

(3) Meeting criteria established by the State Department of Education for a prekindergarten service or prekindergarten program established pursuant to section 79-1104 and reporting to the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System created under section 71-1962 shall be sufficient criteria to be rated at step three.

(4) Meeting performance standards required by the federal government for a federal Head Start program or Early Head Start program and reporting to the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System created under section 71-1962 shall be sufficient criteria to be rated at step three.

(5) Accreditation by a nationally recognized accrediting body approved by the State Department of Education and reporting to the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System created under section 71-1962 shall be sufficient criteria to be rated at step three.

(6) A participating applicable child care or early childhood education program operating under a provisional license shall have a quality scale rating at step one even if it meets other quality rating criteria. If a participating applicable child care or early childhood education program is at a quality scale rating higher than step one and the program's license is placed on corrective action status, disciplinary limitation, probation, or suspension, such program shall have its quality scale rating changed to step one. If an applicable child care or early childhood education program's license is revoked, the program is not eligible to participate in or receive a quality scale rating under the quality rating and improvement system until the program has an operating license which is in full force and effect.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1959

71-1959. Quality scale rating review; reevaluation

(1) An applicable child care or early childhood education program participating in the quality rating and improvement system developed pursuant to section 71-1955 may apply no more than once each fiscal year to have its quality scale rating reviewed.

(2) A participant shall meet all of the quality rating criteria for a step-two rating prior to applying for a step-three, step-four, or step-five rating. To meet quality rating criteria for a step-three, step-four, or step-five rating, a participant shall be independently evaluated based upon the quality rating criteria.

(3) A participant with a quality scale rating at step two through step four shall be reevaluated at least once every two fiscal years but no more than once in any fiscal year, including any review pursuant to subsection (1) of this section. A participant with a quality scale rating at step five shall be reevaluated at least once every five years but no more than once in any fiscal year. If a participant has achieved accreditation and is being reevaluated by a nationally recognized accrediting body approved by the State Department of Education, the state shall make reasonable efforts to conduct its reevaluation in the same fiscal year that the accrediting body is reevaluating the program.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1960

71-1960. License under Child Care Licensing Act; denial of license or disciplinary act authorized

Revised Statutes of Nebraska Annotated _Chapter 71. Public Health and Welfare _Article 19. Care of Children _ (b) Child Care Licensure

The Department of Health and Human Services may deny the issuance of or take disciplinary action against a license issued under the Child Care Licensing Act to a participating applicable child care or early childhood education program for failure to comply with the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1961

71-1961. Quality rating and improvement system incentives and support

Quality rating and improvement system incentives and support under the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act shall include, but not be limited to:

- (1) Tiered child care subsidy reimbursements as provided in section 68-1206 based upon quality scale ratings of step three or higher that reflect the cost of higher quality programs and promote affordability of high-quality child care and early childhood education programs for all families;
- (2) Incentive bonuses given to providers of child care and early childhood education programs upon completion of specific requirements of step two ratings or higher to improve quality based upon the quality rating criteria established pursuant to sections 71-1956 and 71-1958;
- (3) Professional development, training, and scholarships developed in collaboration with community-based organizations, postsecondary education representatives, and other stakeholders;
- (4) Support that expands family engagement in and understanding of high-quality early childhood education in ways that are inclusive and respectful of diversity of families and children with special needs; and
- (5) Other incentives as necessary to carry out the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1962

71-1962. Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System; creation and operation; State Department of Education; duties

- (1) Not later than March 1, 2014, the State Department of Education shall create and operate the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System. The system shall be designed in order to:
 - (a) Establish a data base of Nebraska's early childhood education workforce;
 - (b) Verify educational degrees and professional credentials held and relevant training completed by employees of participating applicable child care and early childhood education programs; and
 - (c) Provide such information to the Department of Health and Human Services for use in evaluating applications to be rated at a step above step one under section 71-1961.

Revised Statutes of Nebraska Annotated _Chapter 71. Public Health and Welfare _Article 19. Care of Children _ (b) Child Care Licensure

(2) When an applicable child care or early childhood education program participating in the quality rating and improvement system developed pursuant to section 71-1955 applies under section 71-1961 to be rated at a step above step one, the child care or early childhood education program shall report the educational degrees and professional credentials held and relevant training completed by its child care and early childhood education employees to the Nebraska Early Childhood Professional Record System for the program to be eligible for a quality scale rating above step one.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1963

71-1963. Quality scale ratings available on web site; when

By July 1, 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services in collaboration with the State Department of Education shall make the quality scale ratings of participating applicable child care and early childhood education programs under the quality rating and improvement system developed pursuant to section 71-1955 available on a publicly accessible web site to provide parents a tool by which to evaluate the quality of child care and early childhood education programs and to promote accountability for public funding of such programs.

Neb.Rev.St. § 71-1964

71-1964. Rules and regulations

The State Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act.