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14-542-58

Graeff, Melissa

From: Christie Balka <Christie.Balka@Phila.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 13, 2018 1:56 PM
To: Ferguson, Tamula
Subject: Proposed Regulation No. 14-542
Attachments: 11.13.18 proposed PA Cert Regs final Scanned.pdf

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2018 NOV 16 P 12:30

Tamula Ferguson,

Attached are comments from the City of Philadelphia about proposed rules changes (Regulation No. 14-542) to Pennsylvania's child care certification regulations. I would appreciate confirmation from your office that these have been received during the public comment period and will be considered. If you have any questions or need additional materials, please contact me at the email address above. Thank you,

Christie Balka

Christie Balka
Director, *A Running Start-Early Learning*

Mayor's Office of Education
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215-686-7507

**please note new phone number*



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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Otis Hackney
Chief Education Officer

Tamula Ferguson
Bureau of Certification Services
Office of Child Development and Early Learning
Department of Human Services
333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17105

Via email: tferguson@pa.gov

Re: Reference Regulation No. 14-542

Dear Ms. Ferguson,

The City of Philadelphia ("the City") supports many of the proposed rules published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on October 13, 2018 concerning child care facilities. The changes will align Pennsylvania's child care regulations with current scientific understanding, bringing the state into compliance with requirements established when the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant was reauthorized in 2014.

With more than 50,000 young children in care each day, the City welcomes the annual unannounced child care inspections outlined in Chapters 3270.24(d), 3280.23(d) and 3290.21(d) of the Pennsylvania Code. These, combined with pre-certification inspections proposed in 3270.24(e), 3280.23 (e) and 3290.21(e), technical assistance, and information about quality improvement, can prevent problems that result in disruptive child care closures, injuries, and death. We urge the state to allocate sufficient resources to support technical assistance and information for providers about Keystone STARS.

The City also favors the expanded pre-service orientation for certified child care programs proposed in Chapters 3270.11(b-d), 3280.11(b-d) and 3290.11(a-f). Given the rate at which new scientific evidence impacts child health, safety, and development, this training is essential, as is

the inclusion of pediatric first aid and CPR proposed in Chapters 3270.33(d), 3280.33(c) and 3290.32(d).


Earlier this year the City of Philadelphia Commission on Regulatory Reform convened 25 child care stakeholders and surveyed 120 additional providers about their priorities. Eighty-five percent cited the need for uniform code language and processes across family, group, and center-based care. The City supports the changes proposed in 3290.3(d), 3290.11(a-p), 3290.12, and 3290.13(a) as an important step in this direction. These changes will also improve health equity for children enrolled in family child care.

The Regulatory Review Commission also heard widespread concern from child care providers that all certified programs do not receive annual fire safety inspections. The lack of an annual inspection makes emergency plans and fire drills with the additions proposed in Chapter 3270.27(a, f), 3280.24(a, d), and 3290.24 (a-e) essential. However, the City questions the rationale for 3270.27(f), 3280.26(f), and 3290.24(g), which would require programs to send copies of their emergency plans to local municipalities, as the latter are not tasked with state enforcement. The City of Philadelphia does not have the capacity to receive or monitor these plans.

While we recognize the importance of providers having timely health information about children in their care, we are also concerned about implementation of the proposed changes to Chapter 3270.131(a), 3280.131(a), and 3290.131(a). Many providers will have difficulty obtaining health reports within the proposed 30-day window. This is especially true of providers who serve children living in poverty, including homeless children and those who lack access to health care. For example, depending on a child's zip code, appointments for non-emergency care at public health centers can take several weeks to several months. We encourage the Commonwealth to develop implementation plans that do not penalize providers for serving children at risk.

With the exception of the window in which providers are required to obtain health reports, the proposed changes to the Pennsylvania Code balance the health and safety needs of young children with sensitivity to the requirements imposed on child care providers, which are primarily small businesses. We urge the Commonwealth to approve these sensible changes with the modifications suggested.

Sincerely,



Otis Hackney
Chief Education Officer
City of Philadelphia