



DENVER
CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS

Streamlining Local Childcare Licensing

Health & Safety Committee

June 17, 2026

Agenda

- State of Childcare in Denver
- Childcare Licensing Work Group
- Removing Redundancy
- DDPHE Enforcement and Additional Updates
- Anticipated Impact
- Next Steps
- Questions



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Proposed Change

Remove Denver childcare business licensing requirement and unnecessary language while retaining DDPHE's enforcement authority for health, sanitation, & safety inspections.



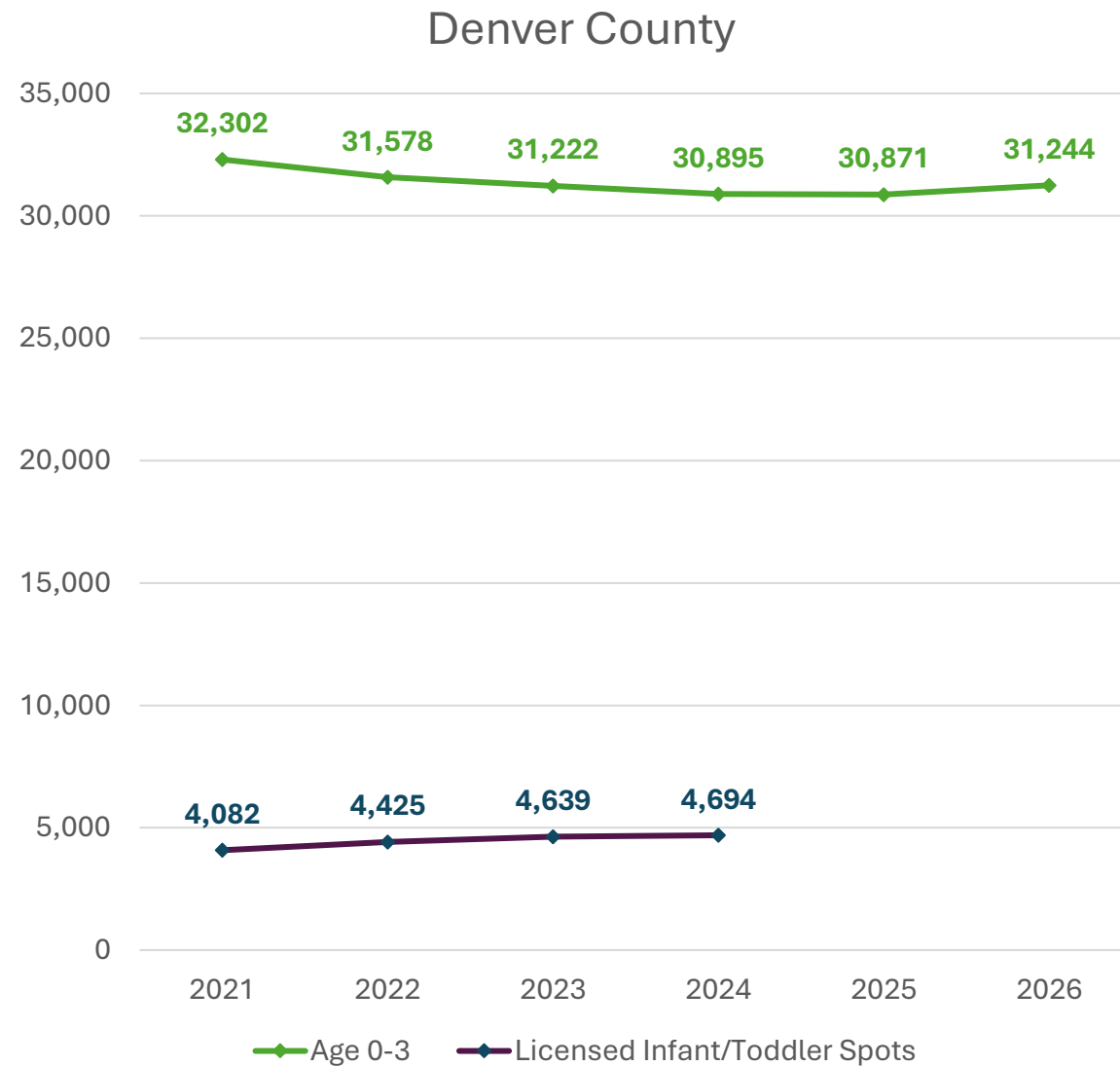
State of Childcare in Denver

Average Cost of Infant Care: ~\$20K Annually

Average Percentage of family income: 18-25%

Rate of Childcare Inflation from 2020-2024: 29%

Colorado is the 7th most expensive childcare State in the US



2026 Citywide Goals - Child Friendly

CHILD FRIENDLY

» GOAL

Deliver a comprehensive citywide framework to expand affordable, reliable childcare, and connect 5,000 more young people to quality out-of-school programming and work opportunities

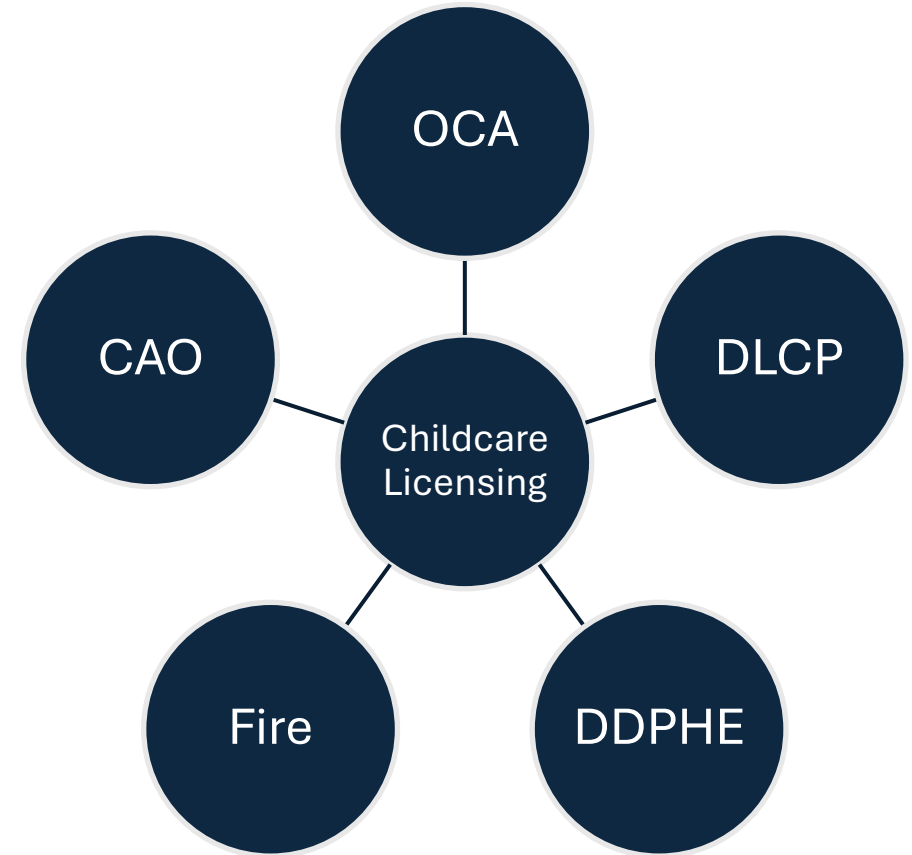


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Childcare Licensing Working Group

- Mission: Identify opportunities to reduce barriers and streamline the process to open a childcare business
- Multi-agency working group of relevant city agencies
- Ensure consensus and alignment from all City and State partners



Work Group Objectives

1

Reduce barriers to
open/operate childcare
business in Denver

2

Streamline process for
maximum efficiency

3

Streamline processes
without compromising
health & safety.



Child Care Licensing Overview

Childcare Center

Facility that is maintained for the whole or part of a day but for less than 24-hour care of 5+ children from the ages of 6 weeks through 16 years old.

Childcare Home

Private residence providing care and education for less than 24 hours for up to 12 children.

- DRMC Chapter 11 – Child Care Establishments
- DRMC Chapter 32, Article II – License Fees
- [6 CCR 1010-7](#) – Health and Sanitation of Child Care Facilities in the State of Colorado



2025 License Fee Revenue: Homes vs. Centers

License Type	1-8 children (\$25)	9-25 children (\$100)	26+ children (\$200)	Annual fee revenue
Childcare home	44	17	0	\$2,800
Childcare center	3 (1 fee waiver)	48 (18 fee waivers)	357 (229 fee waivers)	\$28,650
			Total	\$31,450

Business Licensing

- Denver requires a license for businesses and occupations that require additional oversight and agency coordination to protect public health and safety.
- Typically, Denver does not require a local license for businesses or occupations that are licensed by the state.
 - Exceptions include marijuana businesses, some liquor businesses, tobacco retailers, natural medicine healing centers, and childcare facilities.
- The last time Denver repealed a business license was the taxi license in 2016 due to duplicative state licensing requirements.

City vs. State Requirements

Requirement	City	State
Zoning Approval		
County Health Inspection (must be obtained prior to state license)		
Fire Safety Inspection		
CDEC Childcare License		
City Childcare Business License		
Early Childhood Teacher to Child Ratios		
Qualifications for Center Staff (Director, Early Childhood Teacher, Infant Nursery Supervisor)		
Educational Requirements for Center Staff (first aid, CPR, Standard Precautions, abuse/neglect mandated reporting training, Infant Safe Sleep, Shaken Baby/Abusive Head Trauma)		
CBI & FBI Criminal Background Checks		
Colorado and National Abuse/Neglect Checks for Center Staff		
Minimum Square Footage Requirements in Rooms Specific to Age		
Age-Appropriate Materials and Equipment, Safe and Free of Hazards		



Changes to Chapter 11 - Child Care Establishments

- Update Definitions and Remove Inapplicable Standards for Child Care Establishments
 - Wooden structures
 - Definitions of childcare facility types don't align with State
- Retain explicit authority for DDPHE enforcement of health and sanitation
- Remove language regarding Denver License requirement





This change would...

1. Remove a significant step in the process to open a childcare facility.
2. Reduce costs associated with opening a facility.
3. Bring local processes up to date and aligned with the State.

“I want to do jumping jacks I’m so excited about this possibility.”

-CDEC Licensing Specialist

This Change Does NOT...

1. Does not compromise health & safety of children in any way.
2. Does not drastically reduce the time it takes to obtain or open a childcare facility.
3. Does not solve the childcare supply challenge.





Our Engagement Process

Multiple Internal Reviews

Engagement with Denver Preschool Program

Engagement with Denver Early Childhood Council

Held a Provider Town Hall

Continued partnership with CDEC & CDHS



What's Next?

- Continue to work with providers and families to understand their needs
- Continue multi-agency efforts to streamline processes
- Identify additional opportunities to reduce barriers at the municipal level

A photograph of three children standing in front of a chain-link fence. The fence is covered in colorful graffiti, including blue and purple handprints, flowers, and abstract shapes. On the left is a young girl with brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt with a pink heart and grey pants. In the center is a young girl with pigtails, wearing a colorful patterned jacket over a pink shirt and dark pants. On the right is a young boy with glasses, wearing a green t-shirt with a graphic, grey pants, and a brown jacket draped over his shoulders. The word "Questions?" is written in large black text across the middle of the image.

Questions?



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Appendix

How Common is Dual Licensing?

State + Local License

- Marijuana business licenses (required by statute)
- Some types of liquor licenses (required by statute)
- Natural medicine healing centers
- Childcare licenses
- Tobacco retailers

State License Only

- Some types of liquor licenses
- Pharmacies
- Health facilities
- Nursing homes and assisted living facilities
- Gaming businesses
- Firearm dealers
- Auto industry dealers
- Marijuana business employees
- Massage therapists
- Barbers, estheticians, hair stylists, nail technicians, cosmetologists

Local License Only

- Retail food businesses
- Cabarets
- Massage businesses
- Private security employers and security guards
- Body art businesses and body artists
- Short-term rentals
- Residential rentals
- Lodging facilities
- Parking lots
- Pedal cab companies and drivers

