

Department of Family Services

LOB #122:

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND PROVIDER SERVICES

Purpose

Community Education and Provider Services regulates family child care homes in Fairfax County, administers the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program and provides professional development opportunities for child care professionals throughout the County.

CEPS issues family child care permits to individuals who care for up to five children in their homes. CEPS supports family child care providers to offer quality child care programs that promote the health, safety and education of children in their care. Regular monitoring visits, technical assistance and professional development opportunities are provided by the CEPS staff to assist family child care providers to reach quality standards.

The USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program provides reimbursement to family child care providers and Fairfax County sponsored child care centers for meals and snacks provided to children in care. CEPS staff provide regular monitoring visits and nutrition training and guidance to ensure children receive meals that meet the USDA guidelines.

Description

Community Education and Provider Services promotes and protects the health and safety of children who are cared for in family child care homes. Chapter 30 of the Fairfax County Code requires that persons in Fairfax County obtain a Family Child Care Permit if they are caring for up to five children (other than their own) in their homes. Office for Children (OFC) staff ensures compliance with the ordinance by assessing, monitoring, training and providing technical assistance to new applicants and applicants that renew their permit each year.

The Home Child Care Facilities ordinance was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1990, and comprehensively revised in 2001 and 2013. The Board of Supervisors revised the ordinance to reflect current health and safety regulations, practices and codes; best practices in the field; updated state home child care regulations; and reorganized and reworded the ordinance for clarity.

Family child care providers who are issued a Child Care Permit are required to attend sixteen hours of training annually. To assist providers in meeting these requirements, and to support quality care in child care centers and preschools, OFC offers a wide variety of professional development opportunities for the early childhood workforce, including courses and workshops on health and safety, child development, programming, curriculum and other topics related to quality child care.

Community Education and Provider Services also administers the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program for family child care homes, School-Age Child Care centers, and Greater Mount Vernon Community Head Start classrooms. CACFP funding provides partial reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children in care, as well as nutrition training, monitoring and technical assistance for family child care providers and centers in the program.

CEPS staff are located at and provide services in the Pennino Building. Child care specialists provide technical assistance and support during permit and food program visits in family child care homes. Professional development opportunities are provided at locations throughout the County.

Bilingual staff is available to work with families and providers; all staff has access to the County's simultaneous translation services to assist those who speak a primary language other than English.

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Benefits

The work of Community Education and Provider Services provides many benefits that support the Board of Supervisors' strong investment in early childhood education and affordable, safe child care options for families. Regulating family child care providers who take care of five or fewer children ensures that family child care providers in Fairfax County are adhering to safety and health standards. In addition, CEPS also works with providers to improve the quality of care in the family child care home through professional development and technical assistance. CEPS is also the sponsor of the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program, and in this capacity, works with both state licensed and County permitted providers to support providers in their efforts to provide healthy and nutritious meals to children and to promote physical health.

CEPS supports permitted family child care providers as small business owners. Professional development opportunities in business, marketing, recruitment and working with families help providers improve different aspects of their child care business. CEPS has a partnership with the Women's Business Center to provide resources to providers in the area of business development.

For families in Fairfax County, CEPS helps to ensure that families have child care options that meet their families' needs and support children's school readiness and ongoing success. Families can be assured that providers who are permitted with the County have passed health, safety and fire inspections annually, and have appropriate background checks for all adult residing in the family child care home. CEPS also supports families in their search for regulated child care options through Child Care Central.

CEPS relates strongly to the vision element of 'Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities'. CEPS is essential to protecting the health and safety of children in family child care homes. Through the regulation of family child care providers, CEPS helps to ensure that young children in care are in safe environments which support their healthy growth and development. Per Section 30-3-1 of the Fairfax County Code, the Home Child Care Facilities permit is to be issued by the Office for Children. The ordinance includes multiple requirements, such as those addressing provider qualifications, background checks, health and safety, physical facilities and fire safety.

CEPS relates strongly to the vision element of 'Maintaining Healthy Economies'. Being a permitted family child care provider offers individuals the opportunity to be a small business owner, earn an income for their families, and contribute to the County economy. Family child care providers increase the availability of child care in communities across the County, allowing families with young children to work.

CEPS relates to the vision element of 'Exercising Corporate Stewardship' in ongoing support and partnership with other County programs, including those within the Department of Family Services and the Health Department. In addition, CEPS ensures compliance with federal and state USDA CACFP grant requirements.

Mandates

Chapter 30 of the Fairfax County Code requires that persons in Fairfax County obtain a Home Child Care Facilities Permit if they are caring for up to five children (other than their own) in their homes.

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Trends and Challenges

Family child care providers are an important component of the County's child care system. The care they provide is critical to meeting the child care needs of working families, including those working non-traditional schedules. In addition, family child care providers help to meet the demand for child care for families with babies and toddlers. There is a continued demand for quality child care and some areas of the County would benefit from additional child care options. In an effort to address this, and to bring additional family child care providers into the regulatory system, the Office for Children works on an ongoing basis to recruit and retain permitted family child care providers. In order to help ensure that children whose families have low income receive nutritious meals while in care, CEPS is working to bring providers caring for children in the child care subsidy program into the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.

CEPS also works to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse population of early childhood professionals in the County by providing professional development, technical assistance and resources in multiple languages. CEPS continues its work of promoting quality care, supporting children's school readiness and ongoing success, and advancing the professional growth and development of the child care workforce.

Community Education and Provider Services has seen a slight decline in the number of permitted family child care providers over the past two years. Some County permitted providers have become state licensed, and are now able to care for more children, while others have moved out of the County. There have also been some uniquely challenging reasons for the decrease, including providers having to stop providing care due to homeowner association bylaws or landlord contracts which prevent home child care businesses.

In the coming year, staff will be monitoring the effect of recently passed legislation that decreases the threshold for state licensure for family child care providers from six to five children, not including resident children. This change, which becomes effective July 1, 2016, will affect some locally permitted family child care providers who will need to determine whether or not they will apply for a state license in order to continue to care for five children.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #122: Community Education and Provider Services			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$1,814,821	\$2,265,869	\$2,522,226
Operating Expenses	468,491	273,358	271,649
Total Expenditures	\$2,283,312	\$2,539,227	\$2,793,875
General Fund Revenue	\$35,404	\$33,314	\$160,695
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$2,247,908	\$2,505,913	\$2,633,180
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	33 / 33	33 / 33	33 / 33
Total Positions	33 / 33	33 / 33	33 / 33

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Number of permitted family child care homes	1,863	1,835	1,753	1,648	1,516
Average cost per childcare slot in permitted care	\$140.52	\$135.49	\$161.11	\$176.01	\$240.59
Percent of survey respondents satisfied with service received from CEPS	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Monthly average number of children served by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program by family child care providers	4,555	4,559	4,705	4,705	4,705
Percent of permitted providers in the childcare subsidy program who also participate in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program	NA	NA	54%	55%	56%

In FY 2015, the number of family child care providers permitted by the County declined by 82 providers. The decrease in the number of permitted providers can partly be attributed to a natural attrition in the number of permitted providers from one year to the next. Some County permitted providers have become state licensed, and are now able to care for more children, while others have moved out of the County. There have also been some uniquely challenging reasons for the decrease, including providers having to stop providing care due to homeowner association bylaws or landlord contracts which prevent home child care businesses.

With recent state legislative changes effective July 1, 2016, a state license will be required for family home child care providers who care for five or more children. This will impact the capacity for permitted providers in Fairfax County, which will decrease from five to four children. The program anticipates that some permitted providers may choose to seek a state license to continue to care for five children. This will impact the number of County permitted providers in FY 2017.

Metric #4 illustrates the number of children who benefit from the healthy snacks and meals served by providers participating in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. The support and resources that CEPS provides to family child care providers in the CACFP, and the increased efforts in recruitment of providers to participate in the CACFP, is reflected positively in the three percent growth in this metric.

In addition, metric #5 notes the percent of permitted providers in the child care subsidy program, Child Care Assistance and Referral, who also participate in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. CEPS is committed to increasing the number of providers who participate in both programs as this helps to ensure that children in care who may not otherwise have access to nutritional foods have healthy meal experiences while in care.

Grant Support

FY 2016 Total Projected Funding: Federal/state funding of \$5,029,185 will support 8/8.0 FTE grant positions. There is no Local Cash Match associated with this award.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides partial reimbursement for snacks served to children in family day care homes, the School-Age Child Care program and Greater Mount Vernon Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Funds also provide nutrition training, monitoring and technical assistance.