

237A.2 Licensing of child care centers.

1. A person shall not establish or operate a child care center without obtaining a license under the provisions of [this chapter](#). A center may operate for a specified period of time, to be established by rule of the department, if application for a license has been made. If the department denies an application for an initial license, notwithstanding [section 17A.18](#), the applicant center shall not continue to provide child care pending the outcome of an evidentiary hearing. The department shall issue a license if it determines that all of the following conditions have been met:

a. An application for a license or a renewal has been filed with the department on forms provided by the department.

b. The center is maintained to comply with state health and fire laws.

c. The center is maintained to comply with rules adopted under [section 237A.12](#).

2. a. A person denied a license under [this section](#) shall receive written notice of the denial stating the reasons for denial and shall be provided with an opportunity for an evidentiary hearing.

b. A license issued under [this chapter](#) shall be valid for twenty-four months from the date of issuance. A license shall remain valid unless it is revoked or suspended in accordance with the provisions of [section 237A.8](#) or is reduced to a provisional license under [subsection 3](#). The department may inspect a licensed center at any time. A record of the license shall be kept by the department.

c. The license shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the center and shall state the particular premises in which child care may be offered and the number of individuals who may be received for care at any one time. A greater number of children than is authorized by the license shall not be kept in the center at any one time.

3. The department may reduce a previously issued license to a provisional license or issue a provisional license for a period of time not to exceed one year if the center does not meet standards required under [this section](#). A provisional license shall not be renewable in regard to the same standards for more than two consecutive years. A provisional license shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the center as provided in [this section](#). If written plans to bring the center up to standards, giving specific dates for completion of work, are submitted to and approved by the department, the provisional license shall be renewable as provided in [this subsection](#).

4. A program which is not a child care center by reason of the exceptions to the definition of child care in [section 237A.1](#), [subsection 2](#), but which provides care, supervision, and guidance to a child may be issued a license if the program complies with all the provisions of [this chapter](#).

5. If the department has denied or revoked a license because the applicant or person has continually or repeatedly failed to operate a licensed center in compliance with [this chapter](#) and rules adopted pursuant to [this chapter](#), the person shall not own or operate a child care center for a period of twelve months from the date the license is denied or revoked. The department shall not act on an application for a license submitted by the applicant or person during the twelve-month period. The applicant or person shall be prohibited from involvement with child care unless the involvement is specifically permitted by the department.

[C75, §237A.2, 237A.3; C77, 79, 81, §237A.2]

90 Acts, ch 1005, §4; 91 Acts, ch 232, §12; 92 Acts, ch 1163, §54; 99 Acts, ch 192, §2; 2002 Acts, ch 1142, §9, 10, 31; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §54; 2003 Acts, ch 81, §2; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §739, 740

Child care provider minimum age and child care center staffing ratios, see 2022 Acts, ch 1135, §2, 3