

237A.3A Child development homes.

1. Registration.

a. A person shall not establish or operate a child development home unless the person obtains a certificate of registration. The department shall issue a certificate of registration upon receipt of a statement from the person or upon completion of an inspection conducted by the department or a designee of the department verifying that the person complies with applicable rules adopted by the department pursuant to [this section](#) and [section 237A.12](#).

b. The certificate of registration shall be posted in a conspicuous place in the child development home and shall state the name of the registrant, the registration category of the child development home, the maximum number of children who may be present for child care at any one time, and the address of the child development home. In addition, the certificate shall include a checklist of registration compliances.

c. The registration process for a child development home shall be repeated every twenty-four months as provided by rule.

d. A licensee or an approved kinship caregiver under [chapter 237](#) shall register as a child development home provider in order to provide child care.

2. *Revocation or denial of registration.* If the department has denied or revoked a certificate of registration because a person has continually or repeatedly failed to operate a registered or licensed child care facility in compliance with [this chapter](#) and rules adopted pursuant to [this chapter](#), the person shall not operate or establish a registered child development home for a period of twelve months from the date the registration or license was denied or revoked. The department shall not act on an application for registration submitted by the 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.

3. Rules.

a. Three categories of standards shall be applicable to child development homes. The initial designations of the categories, which may be revised by the department, shall be “A”, “B”, and “C”, as ranked from less stringent standards and capacity to more stringent standards and capacity. The “C” registration category standards shall require the highest level of provider qualifications and allow the greatest capacity of the three categories. The department shall adopt rules applying standards to each category specifying provider qualifications and training, health and safety requirements, capacity, amount of space available per child, and other minimum requirements. The capacity requirements shall take into consideration the provider’s own children, children who have a mild illness, children receiving part-time child care, and children served as a sibling group in overnight care.

b. The rules shall allow a child development home to be registered in a particular category for which the provider is qualified even though the amount of space required to be available for the maximum number of children authorized for that category exceeds the actual amount of space available in that home. However, the total number of children authorized for the child development home at that category of registration shall be limited by the amount of space available per child.

c. In consultation with the director of the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing, the department shall adopt rules relating to the provision of fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and two exits accessible to children in a child development home.

d. The rules shall require a child development home to be located in a single-family residence that is owned, rented, or leased by the person or, for dual registrations, at least one of the persons who is named on the child development home’s certificate of registration. For purposes of this paragraph, a “*single-family residence*” includes an apartment, condominium, townhouse, or other individual unit within a multiple unit residential dwelling, but does not include a commercial or industrial building that is primarily used for purposes other than a residence.

e. If the department adopts rules establishing a limitation on the number of hours for which substitute care may be utilized by the provider, such a limitation shall not apply to or incorporate substitute care utilized when the provider is engaged in jury duty or in official

duties connected with the provider's membership on a state board, committee, or other policy-related body.

f. The department shall adopt rules to allow registered child development homes providing care to school-aged children to exceed the child-to-staff ratio for school-aged children when a school-aged child's school starts late, is dismissed early, or is canceled due to inclement weather, a public health emergency, or structural damage regardless of whether the child development home provider is able to be assisted by a department-approved assistant or co-provider, provided the child is currently enrolled at the registered child development home and the registered child development home does not exceed the child development home's registration capacity.

4. *Number of children.*

a. In determining the number of children present for child care at any one time in a child development home, each child present in the child development home shall be considered as being provided child care unless the child is described by one of the following exceptions:

(1) The child's parent, guardian, or custodian operates or established the child development home and the child is attending school or the child is provided child care full-time on a regular basis by another person.

(2) The child has been present in the child development home for more than seventy-two consecutive hours and the child is attending school or the child is provided child care full-time on a regular basis by another person.

b. For purposes of determining the number of children present for child care in a child development home, a child receiving foster care from a child development home provider shall be considered to be the child of the provider.

97 Acts, ch 151, §3; 98 Acts, ch 1127, §1, 2, 6; 99 Acts, ch 192, §4 – 11, 37; 2001 Acts, ch 135, §4; 2002 Acts, ch 1142, §12, 31; 2003 Acts, ch 81, §4; 2008 Acts, ch 1084, §12; 2008 Acts, ch 1187, §120; 2010 Acts, ch 1192, §81; 2020 Acts, ch 1097, §1; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §741, 1645; 2025 Acts, ch 135, §29

Referred to in §237A.1, 237A.3, 237A.19, 237A.20
Subsection 1, paragraph d amended