



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Instructional Leaders

FROM: Matthew Ferguson, Ed.D., Esq.
Deputy Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer
Division of College, Career, and Military Readiness

Amber Gillum, M.P.A.
Deputy State Director, Economic Services
South Carolina Department of Social Services

DATE: August 5, 2024

RE: DSS Licensing Requirements for Programs Serving Children Four Years of Age and Under

This memo clarifies important licensing requirements from the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) for programs operated by public schools that serve children four years of age and under.

All South Carolina child care programs are required to be licensed, registered, approved, or legally exempt ([S.C. Code Ann. §43-1-80 43-1-80 and 63-13-180 et seq](#)). Proviso 1.47 explicitly exempts Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP) classrooms from child care licensure. However, all other child care programs operating in public schools for more than four hours per day must be licensed by DSS unless an exemption applies.

Historically, DSS and SCDE operated under a mutual agreement that 3K and non-CERDEP 4K programs operated by public schools were not subject to child care licensing requirements. Due to continued statutory developments and program expansion across the state, adjustments to this agreement are necessary to resolve ambiguities highlighted recently in a report by the State Inspector General.

Both agencies are committed to bringing programs into compliance with state child care licensing requirements while minimizing any potential disruptions to children, parents, and districts. **To facilitate this, all districts are directed to complete a survey to notify DSS of**

their child care programs by October 15. This survey will allow us to identify all relevant programs and streamline the compliance process: [SURVEY LINK](#)

DSS will focus on the licensure of classrooms during the 2024-25 school year. If DSS determines your program does not meet an exemption, its Child Care Licensing staff will work with you to complete the licensure process. Programs will be provided adequate time to become licensed, with compliance deadlines determined in phases, beginning with classrooms serving children ages three and under.

For further details on the licensing process and to access DSS regulations, please visit the [SC Child Care Services](#) website.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Consistent compliance with licensing requirements is a critical factor for the improvement and maintenance of the well-being and development of the children in programs across South Carolina.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Cynthia Lara at Cynthia.Lara@dss.sc.gov or Wendy Burgess at wburgess@ed.sc.gov.