

DEL child care licensing complaint inspections

What is a complaint?

Anyone who believes there has been a child care licensing violation or that a child has been abused and/or neglected should call

1.866.END.HARM to share their concerns.

Complaints are documented and assigned to the appropriate DEL licensing office. DEL licensurers then inspect the child care facility to determine if any licensing violations occurred.

If the complaint includes allegations of child abuse and/or neglect in a child care facility, it is also assigned to the DSHS Division of Licensed Resources/Child Protective Services (DLR/CPS) for investigation.

What happens during a complaint inspection?

The licensurer will conduct a thorough and unbiased licensing inspection. The licensurer may:

- Interview staff, witnesses and others who may have information related to the complaint.
- Make unannounced site visits to the facility to review paperwork and/or inspect the environment.
- Evaluate the facts and determine the validity of the complaint.

If your licensurer determines the complaint is



valid, he or she will work with you to create a facility licensing compliance agreement and/or a safety plan to bring you into compliance with state

licensing rules.

If, at any time, serious licensing violations are found, DEL may take licensing action to protect the safety and health of the children in your care.

How long does it take to investigate a complaint?

DEL strives to complete complaint inspections in a timely manner.

Licensing-only complaints—complaints about licensing violations that do not involve child abuse or neglect—may take up to 45 days to complete.

Complaints that involve DLR/CPS and/or law enforcement may take 90 days or more to complete. After DLR/CPS and/or law enforcement complete their investigations, your licensurer will complete the complaint inspection.

What are findings?

Once the complaint inspection is complete, your licensurer will review the facts and determine whether licensing violations occurred. Your licensurer will issue one of two findings for each allegation in the complaint:

- A valid finding, which means licensing regulations were violated.
- A not valid finding, which means licensing regulations were not violated.

You will be notified in writing of the findings.

What if I don't agree with a valid finding?

Child care licensees may request a supervisory review of valid complaint findings. The licensing supervisor will review the complaint and inspection information and determine if the facts support the finding.

You can request a supervisory review by contacting your licensurer within 10 business days after the complaint finding is issued. Requests for supervisory review will be declined if DEL has taken legal action against the licensee.

If health and safety issues are noted during a complaint inspection, the licensurer may develop an immediate safety plan that must be followed during the supervisory review process.

A valid complaint finding is not subject to a formal appeal process. Only actions taken against a license are subject to the appeals process, such as summary suspension, revocation or denial.



Washington State Department of
Early Learning