

Key Message

In many cases, in-home child care providers who live off a military installation must be licensed by both the state and the Defense Department, even when only caring for eligible DOD-affiliated children. By exempting in-home child care providers certified by the DOD from state licensure requirements, states can improve access to family child care for military families.

Discussion Points

1. Family child care providers offer military families reliable, personalized and high-quality care in a homelike setting, on and off installations. These providers, the majority of whom are military spouses (87% in fiscal year 2021), operate as independent business owners, contributing to the financial stability of their families.
2. The military services maintain training and background records for FCC providers, allowing providers to seamlessly reestablish their child care services at a new duty station. The installation commander at the new duty station is responsible for conducting required home inspections and verifying certification.
3. States, however, require licensure or registration for some off-installation FCC providers – which is duplicative of the military service certification process. This can delay a provider from providing child care, which can create financial hardship for a military spouse who needs to reestablish a business after a military move.
4. By exempting FCC providers already certified through the military service process, states enhance the quality of life and economic security of both the providers and military families seeking quality child care options.
5. Installation commanders and Family Child Care program managers implement the military service certification of FCC providers in accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 6060.02, “Child Development Programs.” Additional information can be found at <https://militarychildcare.com>.



There were 858 certified family child care providers as of December 2024. The military services are seeking to increase the number of providers to help meet the child care demands of military communities.