

**Office of Child Care - LICENSING BRANCH - How Far We Have Come
MSCCA Symposium Theme “Partners in Progress”**

In 2007 the Office of Child Care (OCC) relocated from the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). At MSDE, OCC co-existed with the Early Learning Branch which together ultimately became the Division of Early Childhood Development. Over the years, OCC has streamlined operations and increased the use of data systems to improve efficiency to benefit both MSDE and Child Care Providers. Following are notable changes made in the Office of Child Care’s Licensing Branch since the relocation from DHR to MSDE:

While at DHR	At MSDE 2007 - 2014	2014 Present
<p>1. The following services were provided to child care providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regulation manuals provided for all child all facilities. b. Survey cards given to providers during each inspection. c. Message on all phones with reference to contact Ombudsman if no response received within 48 hours. d. Central Office Licensing staff attended child care organization conferences. e. Regional office staff worked closely with provider associations. f. “Partners” newsletter developed by Licensing Branch to inform providers of new information. g. Some regional offices prepared newsletters. 	<p>1. Recession hit- massive State budget cuts. Loss of licensing staff. Certain services to providers were discontinued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Regulation manuals no longer issued to child care providers. b. Survey cards were no longer printed. c. No “Ombudsman” in place. d. Central office licensing staff were no longer required or requested to attend child care organization meetings/conferences, etc. Director of OCC attended. e. Regional office staff continue to work closely with provider associations. f. “Partners” newsletter expanded to include information from the Early Learning Branch, such as, the Judy Centers, and Credentialing and Excels branches were included. g. Regional office newsletters ceased. 	<p>1. Due to technology, the following services were reinstated for child care providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Child Care Center regulation manuals posted on website. Others to follow. b. On-line survey conducted. c. “Ombudsman” identified. d. Central office licensing staff invited to attend child care organization meeting/conferences, and a formal meeting structure between management and provider organizations developed. e. Regional office staff continue to work closely with provider associations. f. Publication of expanded “Partners” newsletter continues. g. Each regional office of child care sends relevant information via email to majority of providers, and use US mail for those without email.
<p>2. US mail and faxes used to deliver documents, reports, etc.</p>	<p>2. Scanned documents, reports, etc. sent via email to limited number of providers who had email.</p>	<p>2. Email is the major method of communication used to provide new and important information to child care providers quickly.</p>
<p>3. 1st and 2nd Orientations offered to individuals.</p>	<p>3. Orientations reduced to 1.</p>	<p>3. Orientations placed on Licensing website.</p>
<p>4. Applications, forms, resource material distributed during orientation sessions and sessions varied in content and duration.</p>	<p>4. All orientation sessions were conducted using power point software. Individuals interested in becoming licensed or registered were directed to use the website to obtain appropriate forms.</p>	<p>4. Links to applications, forms, resource material, etc. are provided on- line. The on-line orientation directs individuals to those links.</p>
<p>5. Application processing was time consuming for Licensing Specialists which interfered with the timeliness of inspections. (This is critical due to legislative audit process.)</p>	<p>5. In the larger regions, one licensing staff person collects all required forms for Family Child Care applications and assigns applicant to Licensing Specialist after all pertinent information is received.</p>	<p>5. Process continues.</p>

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6. Licenses and registrations were renewed.	6. Non expiring licenses and registrations implemented.	6. Non expiring licenses and registrations continue.
7. Inspection process lengthy often inconveniencing child care providers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff conducted 3 inspections every two years. Licenses and Registrations were renewed. Immunization records were reviewed in depth. Entire percentage of staff records were reviewed in depth. Staff “continued training” records pieced together throughout the year. 	7. Inspection process streamlined. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One unannounced inspection conducted annually. Immunization records receive cursory review – a record simply must exist with immunizations noted. Review files of individuals in various staff positions until 1st violation is found. If no violations are found, no more than 50% of staff files are reviewed. Previous year’s Professional Development Plan reviewed – if at credential level 2 or higher the plan is not reviewed. 	7. Same process continues.
8. Used paper inspection reports.	8. Implemented Electronic Inspection Reports	8. Use Electronic Inspection Reports (ELIS)
9. Much of the technical assistance provided by licensing staff during inspections was limited.	9. Developed process with R&R Network to provide increased technical assistance for providers in need.	9. Same process continues.
10. Made several trips to conduct different types of inspections as only 1 type of inspection was conducted at a time.	10. May conduct complaint and unannounced inspections during the same visit, and may conduct unannounced and conversion inspections during the same visit.	10. Same process continues.
11. Made too many attempts to conduct inspections when provider was not home.	11. No more than 2 attempts are made. Card is left for provider to contact OCC.	11. Same process continues.
12. Case Management time consuming. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Paper and Excel tracking systems. Provider records organized differently throughout regions. Supervisory record review process time consuming for license/registration approval Communicating important information to providers was limited to “Partners” newsletter, mass mailings, and roundtables; and licensing staff personally delivering regulations, forms, etc. to providers. License/registration conversion and 24-month maintenance processes cumbersome. 	12. Case Management tools improved. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented Child Care Automated Tracking System (CCATS) and Electronic Licensing Inspection system (ELIS) management tools. Standardized organization of provider records. Supervisory review process streamlined. Provider communication tree established using email, and providers were able to send documents and correspondence via email to licensing staff. The use of universal letters implemented for conversion and 24month maintenance processes. 	12. Case management tools continue to be improved. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> CCATS and ELIS are the major systems used for case management. CCATS public portal modification. Public portal currently used by Subsidy Branch, parents and providers. Will be used soon for license application processing and submitting documents. All providers are required to have email accounts.
13. Significant costs for licensing staff to travel for staff development training.	13. Gradually moved to use of computer system for group meetings and training sessions.	13. Use Webex for meetings, and the State HUB for staff development training.

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<p>14. Internal communication among staff limited and costly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. State employees communicated largely by phone with each other. b. Staff had to be in the office to read and respond to emails. c. Staff traveled to several meetings. 	<p>14. Internal communication improved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Email emerged as the major form of communication among state employees. b. State employees may use internet to respond to emails. c. Management staff issued phones for fast and easy access to staff, email and internet. 	<p>14. Improvement continues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Webex and teleconferencing are encouraged in lieu of traveling to meetings. b. Virtual Personal Network (VPN) approval increased which allows one to work from home.

Finally, improvement in the area of Customer Service is ongoing.

We follow the principles of Governor Hogan’s “Customer Service Promise” which all State employees are committed to honor:

THE CUSTOMER SERVICE PROMISE

The State of Maryland pledges to provide constituents, businesses, customers, and stakeholders with services in the following manner:

- **Friendly and Courteous:** We will be helpful and supportive and have a positive attitude and passion for what we do.
- **Timely and Responsive:** We will be proactive, take initiative and will try to anticipate your needs.
- **Accurate and Consistent:** We will always aim for 100% accuracy, and be consistent in how we interpret and implement State policies and procedures.
- **Accessible and Convenient:** We will continue to simplify and improve access to information and resources.
- **Truthful and Transparent:** We will advance a culture of honesty, clarity and trust.
- **Resolution:** We will inform constituents clearly and concisely and provide assistance in a timely manner.

Many improvements have been made, and we will continue to work with **YOU**, our “Partners in Progress”, to ensure that all children in licensed/registered child care facilities receive safe, developmentally appropriate care, and are given the best opportunity to enter school ready to learn!

For more information about the Office of Child Care, Licensing Branch, go to:

http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/licensing_branch_brochure_-_final_8-8-16.pdf

For additional information, please contact:

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