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Child Care Centers

Lead Teacher Qualifications



Child Care Challenge

Arlington County child care centers have reported challenges complying with **both** local code and state standards governing child care centers, as well as difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. In the 2018 Center-Based Child Care Program Survey, **40%** of Arlington’s center directors stated that recruiting high-quality staff members was one of their biggest operational challenges when first establishing their business, and **33%** cited this as a barrier to expansion.

Background Information

- Most center-based child care programs are subject to the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers.
- Arlington County is the only Virginia jurisdiction that may also regulate center-based child care programs.
- Chapter 52 of the Arlington County Code governs the operations of most center-based programs in Arlington, including child care centers, preschools, nursery schools, Parent’s-Day-Out programs, and cooperative preschool programs.
- Most center-based child care programs operating in Arlington must comply with **both** Chapter 52 and the VDSS Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers.

CCI Action Plan

Availability Action Step 5. Increase the supply of child care workers.

- Develop a plan to increase the supply of trained child care workers. The plan could consider providing regular and off-hour CDA and ESOL training, and using the County’s and APS’s communication network to promote opportunities.

Quality Action Step 5. Examine local child care regulations.

- Consider aligning local codes with VDSS Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers, and submit proposed recommendations for revisions to local codes and processes (e.g., Chapter 16, Chapter 52, and Chapter 59).

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Lead Teacher Qualifications (cont.)

Existing State Standards and Local Code

	Arlington County Chapter 52 Lead Teacher Qualifications*	VDSS Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers Program Leader Qualifications**
Minimum Educational Requirements	Two (2) years college, including 15 credit hours of child development and/or early childhood education coursework	High School Diploma (or equivalent)
Minimum Experience Requirements	-	Six (6) months supervised programmatic experience
Minimum Training Requirements	-	24 hours of training related to the care of children within six (6) months prior to, or one month following, hire/promotion*

*In addition to Lead Teacher qualifications, Chapter 52 also includes qualifications for Directors, Assistant Teachers, and Teacher's Aides.

** In addition to Program Leader (i.e., Lead Teacher) qualifications, the VDSS Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers also include qualifications for Program Directors and Aides.

Alternative Regulations

Below are two alternatives to the existing local requirements. The second option includes the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) as the minimum educational requirement, which is the most widely recognized credential in early childhood education in the United States. CDA candidates must complete 120 clock hours of professional early childhood education, have at least 480 hours of relevant work experience, complete a professional portfolio, be subject to classroom observation, and pass a written test. The third option is the existing local requirements. *Use the table below to think about which option you will choose to place your dot at the end of the evening.*

OPTIONS	CHOICE (check one)
1. Amend Chapter 52 to align with the VDSS Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers Program Leader (i.e., Lead Teacher) qualifications.***	
2. Amend Chapter 52 to require the following Lead Teacher qualifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Development Associate Credential • 480 hours of relevant work experience (met through attainment of CDA credential) • CPR & First Aid 	
3. Do not change Chapter 52's current Lead Teacher qualifications.	

***The VDSS Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers are in the process of being revised. In the February 5, 2018 Virginia Registrar of Regulations, VDSS advertised possible changes to the existing Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers. The advertised changes included the addition of a mandatory VDSS-sponsored orientation course for all staff covering such topics as medication administration, emergency preparedness, SIDS prevention and safe sleep practices, shaken baby syndrome prevention, and prevention of/response to allergic reactions.