

Updating DEL's Rules & Regulations

Weighted standards to clarify relative risk and enforcement

All licensing rules provide a foundation of protection for children. Each rule is designed to provide for the health, safety, and development of children in licensed care.

However, a violation of some standards poses a greater risk to children than others.

The process of "weighting" licensing standards will identify those rules that are most important for keeping children safe.

Weighting standards will create an enforcement system that matches up with the level of risk to children. DEL will ensure that enforcement of these rules is both timely and consistent. DEL will also provide more information and clarity about the risk of each standard and the consequences for violations.

DEL is getting feedback from a wide variety of people with experience and knowledge of licensing for this project. National experts, Thrive Washington, and the Early Learning Regional Coalitions are supporting DEL with this work.

Goals for the standards weighting process:

- Focus the state's licensing resources;
- Support increased provider and consumer understanding;
- Reduce variance in decision-making; and
- Facilitate taking the right licensing action at the right time.

DEL's process is rooted in the experience and expertise of Washington providers and builds on national best practice. Several states have already created a weighted standards process including Georgia, Texas, and Illinois. Rather than reinvent the wheel, we're depending on this best practice model for reducing harm to children. At the same time, we will tap into the huge store of knowledge of Washington providers to identify which rules should be weighted and to create the actual weights.

Standards Weighting Process

Assess the relative risk of all standards

Assign initial weights to all standards

Identify an enforcement approach

Pilot and test for validity

Learn more about DEL's standards alignment process by visiting www.del.wa.gov/government/standards-alignment



Washington State Department of
Early Learning