

Youth Justice & Child Welfare

Create a publicly accessible database containing licensure information for all child care agencies defined under TCA § 37-5-501, to enhance transparency and accountability in placements.

WHY

Families, caseworkers, and advocates need access to clear, up-to-date information about the facilities where children are placed. A publicly accessible database would increase transparency, promote accountability, and support informed decision-making across the child welfare and youth justice systems.

Providing clear, accessible information on which agency is responsible for licensing or approving a facility, along with the type of license it holds, helps families, caseworkers, and advocates understand the specific standards and expectations governing each placement. This clarity reduces confusion, ensures accountability, and makes it easier to identify whether facilities are meeting the requirements intended to protect children and support their well-being.

This tool empowers communities to advocate for safe, high-quality care environments. It also reinforces the state's commitment to oversight and continuous improvement in child-serving systems. When information is accessible and trust is built through transparency, children are safer and outcomes improve.

The database should include:

- The entity responsible for licensing or approving the facility
- The type of license held
- Current status of the license or approval
- Date and type of any adverse licensing action
- Date of most recent inspection
- The results of the inspection and any requested corrective action

In August 2025, there were approximately 195 Congregate Care facilities with an active placement of a DCS custodial youth.¹

Michigan and Wisconsin both have online and publicly available information about the licensure status of their child welfare placements.^{2,3}

Child Care Agency (TCA 37-5-501)⁴

includes:

Child Abuse Agency
Child Caring Institution
Child Placing Agency
Detention Center

Family Boarding Home
or Foster Home
Group Care Home
Maternity Home
Temporary Holding Resource

"Child care" means the provision of supervision, protection and the basic needs of a child for twenty-four (24) hours a day including the provision of such temporary services to a child awaiting placement in permanent care. Care for a child of less than twenty-four (24) hours duration is licensed by the Department of Human Services pursuant to TCA 71-3-5.