

Background Studies Update for Family Child Care Providers

4/9/2020

Temporary modification of DHS background studies and a suspension of enhanced background studies requirements for licensed family child care providers

The Department of Human Services is temporarily modifying certain statutory background study procedures for most providers during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to the peacetime state of emergency. The changes are necessary because completing studies that meet current state and federal requirements has become increasingly difficult due to closures of public fingerprinting sites and a lack of responses to requests for records from other states. These changes will assist licensed family child care providers who need to add individuals to their license (household members, substitutes or other caregivers who need a study). DHS is also suspending the rollout of enhanced studies for providers that were in the process of getting the new fingerprint-based studies.

The temporary changes to background study procedures are effective April 6, 2020, and will assist health and human services providers quickly respond to changing workforce needs and are permitted under the Governor's Executive Order 20-12 and the authority granted to the Human Services commissioner.

What the changes mean for licensed family child care providers who need to add a household member, caregiver, substitute or paid helper to their license

- You should continue to contact your county licensor to report any changes that require someone to have a background study.

- The county licensor will help you begin the process of submitting a background study using the NETStudy 2.0 system, based upon name and date of birth.
- The fee for these modified background studies is \$20, the lowest fee allowed for any DHS study.
- The person can begin residing in the home or caring for children immediately upon submitting the temporarily modified background study, and there is no need to wait for the clearance letter.
- The modified background studies process will end after the Governor declares that the peacetime state of emergency is over. Individuals who had received a modified background study during this pandemic emergency will need to submit a new, enhanced child care study with fingerprints.
- DHS will continue to process any enhanced child care background study applications with fingerprints that have been submitted through the NETStudy 2.0 system as of April 6, 2020.

What this means for family providers and county child care licensing agencies working to complete enhanced fingerprint background studies on the schedule developed by DHS

DHS has been in the process of ensuring that all child care providers comply with new enhanced fingerprint requirements for background studies. For providers who were licensed when the new studies took effect, DHS was implementing the enhanced studies statewide in various stages and the process was scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2020. These efforts were interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the peacetime state of emergency. With the temporary modifications to background study requirements, DHS is suspending the rollout of enhanced studies.

DHS is working on a transition plan to resume the enhanced studies after the peacetime emergency ends. More details will be provided at a later date.

Thank you for your commitment to serving Minnesota's families and communities during this challenging time.
