

Office of Early Childhood

Field Immigration Guidance

In response to recent concerns about changes to federal immigration policy and enforcement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) provides the following guidance in a FAQ format.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS¹

- Q1: If an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent comes to my home, do I have to open the door?
- A1: No, you do not need to open the door. To enter your home, an ICE agent must have a warrant issued by a court and signed by a judge, unless you invite them in. You do NOT have to invite an ICE agent into your home. You can ask the ICE agent to pass the warrant under the door or perhaps display through a window (if available). Please see pictures of sample warrants and other legal orders on page 5 of this guidance.
- Q2: What should I do if an ICE agent doesn't have a warrant, but tries to force his/her way into my home?
- A2: You can respond: "I do not consent to your entry." I want to speak to a lawyer, and I choose to remain silent, but do NOT physically resist. Your safety is most important; you should not physically (or otherwise) attempt to obstruct or interfere with an ICE agent. Obstructing or otherwise interfering with certain ICE activity can be a crime.

You may provide a response along the following lines:

I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution. I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door. I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings based on my 4th Amendment rights.²

- Q3: Who do I contact if an ICE agent comes into my home or childcare center program and detains an adult or child?
- A3: If an ICE agent appears at your home or childcare center while you are providing care for children, you should notify parents (particularly if an ICE agent is present during drop-off or pick-up time). "ICE Detained Parents Directive" also provides some useful information.

¹ OEC attorneys are unable to provide legal advice to anyone other than OEC staff; accordingly, this guidance does not constitute legal advice. There is also a list of other helpful resources and links to additional resources included at the end of this guidance.

² This language is provided by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, "Red Cards."

- Q4: Will any detained family member have the right to a hearing?
- A4: Yes, any person detained by an ICE agent will receive a hearing before an immigration judge.
- Q5: As a licensed childcare provider, will I lose my license if ICE detains me?
- A5: No, you will not lose your license solely because an ICE agent detains you. OEC does not collect any information regarding a provider's immigration status. Any license revocation proceeding is based on statutory or regulatory violations and includes a right to an administrative hearing before a hearing officer (not employed by OEC). However, an extended period of detainment may create an enforcement issue if OEC is unable to communicate with a licensed provider to conduct inspections or investigations.
- Q6: If detained by ICE, do I have a right to legal representation; if so, and if I can't afford one, do I have the right to an appointed lawyer?
- A6: Yes, if detained by an ICE agent, you have a right to consult with a lawyer, and should state your request to call one, but you do NOT have a right to a free, court-appointed lawyer. However, you do have the right to remain silent and not answer any questions, including questions about your birthplace and your immigration status, see response to Q1.
- Q7: Will I be "cited" for failing to notify OEC if I'm detained and not able to communicate with anyone?
- A7: See the response to Q5, above. For family providers, it is important to have an emergency caregiver available during customary business hours should you need to leave the family childcare home unexpectedly. You should also have parents' contact information readily accessible so the emergency caregiver can call parents to pick up their children immediately (if necessary).³
- Q8: Are childcare centers considered "sensitive" locations?
- A8: Yes, childcare centers and schools (including preschools), Head Start programs, places of worship, and hospitals are considered "sensitive" locations. However, the new administration has lifted the prohibition against ICE enforcement in "sensitive" locations and substituted a new directive that specifies a "common-sense" enforcement approach.
- Q9: Given legitimate concerns providers have about ICE agents, can OEC staff call upon their arrival during this time?

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³ Excerpts of the applicable regulations, R.C.S.A. section 19a-87b-8(c), governing emergency caregivers provides in pertinent part: Each provider shall identify to the Office at least one emergency caregiver who shall be available and on call during customary business hours to provide childcare only for unscheduled, unforeseen emergencies. The emergency caregiver shall be a responsible person who is twenty years of age or older and known to the provider. The provider shall list at least one potential emergency caregiver with the Office [of Early Childhood] but may use others as necessary. The emergency caregiver shall be able to arrive at the family childcare home not more than fifteen minutes after being summoned by the provider and shall immediately notify parents of all children present of the emergency.

- A9: No, OEC licensing specialists are not able to call upon their arrival. However, when conducting licensing inspections or investigations, OEC staff will arrive in a state vehicle that displays a State of Connecticut license plate with the State emblem. OEC staff will also be carrying and displaying a state-issued identification, which displays the State of Connecticut emblem, the name of our agency, Office of Early Childhood, the staff member's name and his/her photograph. Staff are required to show official identification when conducting state business. In addition to these safeguards, Operators may also confirm the identity of the OEC staff and purpose of the visit with supervisors or management. Once confirmed, OEC must be given immediate access to the childcare facility. Failure to do so may subject the provider's licenses to suspension or revocation proceedings. Generally speaking, providers must also allow parents and alternate pick-up persons listed on the enrollment form immediate access to the facility and their children.
- Q10: Does OEC keep records of providers and family members that are undocumented?
- A10: No, OEC does NOT collect any information about a provider's or family member's immigration status.
- Q11: Does OEC's Background Check Information System (BCIS) keep records showing if providers or staff are undocumented?
- A11: No, neither OEC's BCIS nor any other OEC department collects or maintains information about a provider's immigration status.
- Q12: Will Early Start CT or any other OEC program begin collecting information about immigration status?
- A12: No, Early Start CT will not collect information about immigration status. The Care for Kids subsidy program does require children served to be U.S. citizens or legal aliens.
- Q13: Licensing Specialists have changed, if providers see a new person, they may not open the door out of fear. Can OEC blast an update on the change in inspectors? The names of the new specialists don't have to be provided, but perhaps at least identify the towns and cities that have changed Licensing Specialists.
- A13: Please see the response to Q 9 above.
- Q14: Are providers required to have a policy that addresses visits by ICE?
- A14: No, but OEC also recommends, as a best practice, that Operators develop a policy that addresses visits by an ICE agent to help protect the well-being of children, parents, and staff.

The OEC recognizes that providers, parents and children may experience additional stress during this time, OEC hopes this information is helpful.

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This State of CT document has a "childcare plan" incorporated into the family plan, and available in 9 languages:

https://portal.ct.gov/governor/-/media/office-of-the-governor/immigration-resources-family-preparedness-plan/family-preparedness-plan-english-version-july-2019.pdf?rev=b919c29164b8400ba5bad09ac868078e&hash=29FBF84E82D4FB1B5735C7441CCD2708

Aforementioned link is found via the following page:

https://portal.ct.gov/governor/immigration-resources-family-preparedness-plan?language=en_US

Some helpful tips are also on the ACLU CT website, the below website has a wealth of helpful immigration-related information.

https://www.acluct.org/en/know-your-rights/immigrants-rights



Some additional resources and links:

- Immigration Advocates Network <u>https://www.immigrationadvocates.org</u>
- Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (CIRI) https://cirict.org
- Immigration/Naturalization Legal Services https://cirict.org/immigration-legal-services/
- Immigrant Defense Project, Practice Advisory, Rights and Obligations of Noncitizens During ICE Car Stops <u>https://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020.04.29-car-stops-advisory-formatted_final.pdf</u>
- Also attached is guidance from a publication entitled "When Immigration Officials Arrive at Your Workplace: A Know Your Rights Toolkit for Public Sector [CA] Workers." <u>The sample legal orders on</u> <u>page 5 of this guidance is taken from this publication. https://media.nwica.org/know-yourrights.pdf</u>
- The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) also published a document entitled "AGuide to Creating Safe Space Policies For Early Childhood Programs" for the child care industry, please see attached link. <u>CLASP Publication</u>
- The CT State Department of Education also published guidance, see attached link, SDE guidance

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