



Tinian Town Hall Meeting Synopsis

The Tinian Town Hall meeting was held on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at Tinian Elementary School. In attendance were 17 providers and individuals, including two senators from the Tinian senatorial district.

The Tinian town hall meeting was moderated by Rita A. Sablan and discussions were facilitated by Gordon B. Salas, Child Care Licensing Program Supervisor and Herman T. Guerrero. The purpose of the town hall meeting was to provide a forum for public discussion on the Child Care Standards Act of 1985. The intent is to update the Northern Mariana Islands Administrative Code; T-55 Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, Subchapter 55-40.

The attendees raised the following questions and comments:

Question: How many active centers are there in Tinian?

Response: There are 2 licensed Family Home Center, 1 Day Care Center, and 1 After School Center.

Reference: Part 200: Day Care Center & Group Child Care Homes, Before and After School Program Subpart C: Staffing Requirements.

§55-40.1-226 Staff Training, Experience and Personal Qualification.

(d). All applicants, their employees, and anyone else at the facility whose activities involve the care or supervision of children or unsupervised access to children shall provide a criminal background check. The criminal background check shall include the following: 1) National background check; 2) In-state (CNMI) background check, 3) Inter-state (out of the CNMI) background check.

Question: Is the comprehensive background check for applicants seeking employment in the centers?

Response: Yes.

Reference: Part 001 – General Provisions

§55-40.1-001 Definitions

(m) “Child Care Licensing Fee Revolving Fund” means where all license fees collected shall be deposited in to for the specific purpose of regulating and enforcing the provisions of the Child Care Licensing Program and shall not be reprogrammed for any other purposes.

Question: Why is the revolving fund in the general provisions when it is not in the statutory authority of the Child Care Licensing Program?

Response: This comment was received from an earlier meeting in consideration of the Child Care Licensing program to efficiently and effectively implement the functions of the child care licensing program activities.

Additional Comment: There is a proposed plan to submit an amendment to also update Public Law 04-67 which was enacted in 1985 to keep up with the current research and best practices of early childhood care and program activities of CCLP. The input we gather from the community will not only update the NMIAC but also enable the opportunity to amend Public Law 04-67 of 1985.

Reference: Part 200: Day Care Center & Group Child Care Homes, Before and After School Program Staffing Requirements

§55-40.1-226 Staff Training, Experience, and Personal Qualifications

(a). Each caregiver shall be qualified through training, experience, and personal qualities for the age group for which the person works. All child care service staff must annually participate in at least 15 hours of training as approved and monitored by the Child Care Licensing Program.

Question: Will your office accept preservice hours from the 30 hours of staff development required by CCDF? And can these staff development requirements be taken once every three years instead of annually?

Response: CCLP requires 15 hours of staff development hours which can cross over with the 30 hours of staff development completed under CCDF. Completion of these hours must still be approved by the CCLP. Staff training offered by CCDF is under their jurisdiction relative to federal requirements, therefore, it is our suggestion for you to share your idea with CCDF.

Question: Where is NMC in the training and can we include virtual/online or face-to-face?

Response: We understand that there are courses available through NMC and certain courses made available by CCDF through Evergreen and Texas A&M. Some are available at no cost, while others must be paid by the providers. Comment to include these courses via virtual/online or face-to-face is well taken.

Reference: Part 001 – General Provisions

§55-40.1-001 Definitions

(ee). Family care home or family child care means child care in any private home maintained by an individual which provides care to no more than six children during any part of a twenty-four hours day.

Comment: This section conflicts with PL4-67, Section 3. Definitions (f) family day care means day care in any private home maintained by an individual which provides care for five or more children during any part of a 24 hours day and where the relationship of the child and family day care provider is not by blood or marriage.

Response: This has been updated to enable family care home to provide care to not exceed six children at a ratio of 1 caregiver to 6 children for health and safety reasons. However, a large family care home may have up to 12 children whose ages ranged from 9 to 12 years old. Part 300 – Family Care Homes, Friends, Family and Neighbor Care Home clarifies this further. An additional amendment will be made to PL4-67 to cap the care of family child care in any private home to no more than six children.

Reference: Part 200: Day Care Center & Group Child Care Homes, Before and After School Program
Subpart D Health Standards for Children

§55-40.1-242 Admission of Children with Disabilities

Question: How long can children with disabilities be enrolled in the child care program?

Response: The rules and regulations in reference to §55-40.1-242 Admission of Children with Disabilities does not stipulate the time frame of how long children with disabilities are to be enrolled in the child care program. However, the rules and regulations in reference to §55-40.1-202 Age of Children in Care is six weeks and older (up to age 13).

Reference: Part 200: Day Care Center & Group Child Care Homes, Before and After School Program
Subpart G Physical Facilities Standards

§55-40.1.272 Building Codes and Space Requirements

Question: Are centers compliant to fire code requirements?

Answer: Yes, all child care facilities are required to conform to the fire codes including the building codes and health and sanitation standards of the CNMI.

Question: Can we add Tinian Health Center and Rota Health Center where there is reference to the Commonwealth Health Care Corporation?

Answer: Yes, we will reference Tinian Health Center and Rota Health Center where appropriate.

Question: Do the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services render services to the centers?

Answer: Yes, the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services provide services to the centers. The rules and regulations under §55-40.1-115 requires that all centers must be inspected by the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services prior to the original license being issued, following renovation of the facility, and at least every 2 years thereafter.

Question: Are fees categorized by type of facility and size?

Comments from providers indicated that fees ranged from \$150.00 to \$300.00 based on their operations. These fees are quite high and a challenge to providers.

Response: We are not sure how fees are categorized, but this information can be accessed through the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The CCLP program understands the fees can be burdensome, but these are fees charged by regulatory agencies that we have no control of.

Question: What exemptions after promulgation of published rules and regulations?

Response: At least 30 to 60 days.