



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

PO BOX 004
CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor
Gene Herman
(609) 777-2600

TRENTON, NJ 08625
RELEASE: September 17, 1997



Gov. Whitman Signs Bill Requiring Child Abuse Record Information

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed legislation requiring child abuse record information checks for child care center employees.

"Parents should have the comfort that the people to whom they have trusted their children have been checked for prior abusive or neglectful behavior," said Gov. Whitman.

The bill requires that staff members employed at child care centers must undergo checks by the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) to determine if an incident of child abuse or neglect has been substantiated against them. The check must be conducted within two weeks after an individual is hired. If the check reveals a substantiated incident of child abuse or neglect, the individual must be terminated.

DYFS will not issue a license renewal or approval to a child care center until it determines that no staff member at the center has a record of child abuse or neglect. Child care centers undergo licensing every three years.

The bill allows DYFS to charge a fee to defray the cost to the state to provide the information check. The cost of the check is borne by the staff member, but the bill allows child care centers to reimburse their employees if they choose.

During her administration, Gov. Whitman has made a number of improvements to the child care system. The Governor's Bright Beginnings initiative, which received an award from the National Governor's Association, will help licensed child care centers expand, increase the number of registered family child care providers, train child care professionals, and educate parents on their options for child care.

Also, as part of the state's revamping of child care, this month the Division of Youth and Family Services began inspecting licensed child care centers a minimum of once every 18 months instead of once every three years as previously required.

ACS for 1243 was sponsored by Assembly Members Joseph Azzolina (R-Middlesex/Monmouth) and Marion Crecco (R- Essex/Passaic).

####

njhome