



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Idaho Public Health Districts

# Idaho Public Health Districts

March 2015

## Ensuring Quality Care of Idaho's Youngest Residents



Idaho's children are undeniably some of our state's most vulnerable residents. For parents who work outside of the home, this often means entrusting their most precious possessions to others for care. Idaho's seven local health districts work diligently to

ensure that licensed childcare providers – both centers and home-based settings – are safe and healthy environments for children while away from their parents' care.

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare contracts with Central District Health Department who in turn subcontracts with the state's other local public health districts to provide inspections to approximately 1,500 child care providers who are licensed or participate in the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) for low income families. Local public health districts take an educational approach to gain child care provider compliance with the health and safety regulations that govern the child care programs.

Each ICCP provider receives at least one inspection by their local public health district every year. Providers who are licensed by the state or cities but do not participate in ICCP are also inspected, but the frequency varies from city to city.

With a focus on safety, an in-depth inspection is performed to examine practices in sanitation, food safety, emergency evacuation plans, children-to-staff ratio compliance, and up-to-date immunization record keeping. Licensed Environmental Health professionals work side-by-side with the provider during an inspection to evaluate each item on the 29-point report. Any violations encountered during an inspection must be corrected at the time of inspection when possible. However, in some cases, a follow-up inspection is necessary, or the inspector will require documentation of the correction within a specified timeframe.

In addition to these routine inspections, health district staff respond to complaint investigations that may include concerns about illegal facilities, children-to-staff ratios, or any other health-related issue. Investigations of these complaints are conducted within three days of the complaint being received.

### Beyond the Inspection

Effective and positive working relationships with child care providers extend beyond the inspection. Local public health districts work to help educate providers through communication on timely public health topics and training opportunities. Recently, the health districts distributed information to child care providers on measles prevention, encouraging them to examine immunization records of children in their care, as well as staff members, and advising them of the protocols for exclusion if a measles case were to be confirmed in their home or facility.

In addition to their work of making child care environments healthier and safer day-to-day, the health districts are focused on long-term policy change by working closely with cities to support their more stringent child care provider requirements. For example, the Central District Health Department, which represents Ada, Boise, Elmore and Valley counties, worked with Boise City leaders to pass a child care ordinance to help reduce childhood obesity through increased playtime, breastfeeding support, less screen time and providing healthy food options.

From face-to-face inspections and outreach to rule-changing policy work, the role of the local public health districts is crucial to ensuring safe and healthy environments in which Idaho's youngest residents can thrive.

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### HEALTHY PEOPLE IN HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT (1)	PUBLIC HEALTH - IDAHO NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT (2)	SOUTHWEST DISTRICT HEALTH (3)	CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH (4)	SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT (5)	SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH (6)	EASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH (7)
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