



## SB 99: Military Child Care

### SUMMARY

SB 99 will allow family child care (FCC) providers who are already certified by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to operate without a state license, provided that they care only for military families and follow California's health and safety requirements for licensed FCCs.

### BACKGROUND

There is a critical [shortage](#) of child care options across California and the rest of the country. Not only must parents find a spot available for their children, but they must also find one that is affordable, high quality, in a convenient location, and with opening hours that align with work schedules.

The struggle to find child care is even greater for military families. Service members and their families typically [move](#) every two to four years, which means starting the search (and waitlists) all over again. Many children of military personnel face additional [challenges](#) related to parental deployments. This can result in sleep disturbances, toileting issues, feelings of fear and anxiety, and more. They need additional understanding and encouragement from their child care providers and the support of other children who have faced similar hardships.

Recognizing that affordable, quality child care is essential for morale, mission readiness, retention, and overall national security, the U.S. [military](#) offers several options, including operating and regulating on- and off-base child care services.

A popular option is [FCC](#), where up to six children are watched at the home of a provider; [87%](#) of these providers are military spouses. However, deficits in the number of DOD-certified FCC providers results in very long wait lists.

This leads military families to civilian child care options, which are often more expensive and increase already long waiting lists for everyone.

### PROBLEM

State licensing requirements are often duplicative of those for DOD certification; for example, both require providers to pass stringent background checks. DOD certification and California licensure both require FCC homes to be inspected before child care can be provided. While it takes between two and four weeks for the military to complete the initial fire inspection, it can take the California Department of Fire Protection up to three months.

DOD-certified providers are also inspected more frequently (monthly compared to every three years) and have lower adult-to-child ratios than required by the State of California for licensure.

Further, DOD-certified providers are likely to have operated in multiple states; collecting the work history information required for state licensure adds additional time. With DOD certification, that information follows the provider across states, meaning providers can reopen much faster after moving.

California's redundant state licensure requirements are often seen as too burdensome for DOD-certified FCC providers. In fact, this extra burden discourages many from providing FCC care in California, knowing that they will likely be relocated out of state in a few short years.

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## SOLUTION

Several [states](#) — including Connecticut, Alaska, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, Virginia, Maryland, and New Hampshire — already accept DOD certification in lieu of state licensing.

California law already exempts several types of child care from state licensure, including community care facilities, public recreation programs, and school-operated extended care programs, which are all governed by other areas of law. This bill adds DOD-certified FCC providers as exempt from state licensure because they are already certified by the DOD.

While these FCCs will not be required to hold a state license, they still must follow California's health and safety requirements. Additionally, the Department of Social Services will retain the right to inspect, even without notice, exempt FCCs.

Without sacrificing quality or safety, SB 99 will ensure that FCC providers who are already certified by DOD and exclusively serve children of eligible federal personnel can offer critically needed child care services in California without the need for, or delay in getting, a duplicative license.

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## SUPPORT

U.S. Department of Defense (Sponsor)

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