

## Talking Points on Family Child Care Home Threshold Issue

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- Over Labor Day weekend, the Washington Post reported that there have been 60 deaths in child care over the past couple of years. In the past month, 3 additional children have died (2 in Lynchburg and 1 in Midlothian as a result of fires in unlicensed child care home settings).
- These deaths are a tragedy. It is an even greater tragedy to know that many could have been prevented.
- Virginia is one of 8 states that do not license child care until 6 unrelated children are in a home. In many communities, this means that parents can't find licensed care. And, most of the deaths that have occurred in child care, have happened in unlicensed settings.
- Licensing makes a difference. It means that a provider has had a background check, some minimum training in health and safety, some planning related to emergency preparedness and at least two annual inspections to make sure children are not endangered.
- Some individuals have expressed concern about the cost of licensing – as if it's too expensive.

### The reality is:

- The licensing fee charged by the Virginia Department of Social Services is **\$14 per year** for an individual who wants to operate a child care business out of her home.
- Costs related to a background check against state criminal records and a check of the state child abuse registry together cost **less than \$50 once every three years**.
- **The state does not charge a fee for orientation training** and maintains a training calendar called TIPS (Training Information for Provider Success) which lists statewide training opportunities that offer many options for free training.
- The issue is about child safety. Parents can't police child care settings when they are at work. That's not realistic.
- Many parents want a small group setting, but small group settings, where providers care for 5 or fewer children, offer parents the least security since they are unlicensed.
- When individuals receive compensation to regularly care for unrelated children, they are operating a business. We're not talking about relatives. We're not talking about a Saturday night babysitter. We are talking about people who operate child care programs out of their home caring for unrelated children on a regular basis.
- In Alexandria, Arlington, and Fairfax County, as soon as a provider is paid to care for 1 unrelated child every week as a business, a license or permit is required.
- The licensing threshold is a legislative loophole that puts children at-risk. We can prevent tragic deaths of children by closing the child care loophole. It's time to protect children. Working parents depend on child care and Virginia's economy depends on working parents.