



Child Care in Virginia

- ✗ Fingerprint background checks do not comply with federal law.
- ✗ Virginia could be subject to a \$5 million penalty, which means a federal funding cut for child care.
- ✗ There are 14 categories of “license-exempt” care in Virginia. This means no background checks, no training, no inspections for child safety.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the “Back to Sleep” campaign:

- Always place infants on their backs to sleep
- Place infants on a firm mattress with a fitted sheet
- Actively observe sleeping infants

Child Care Aware® of Virginia
<http://va.childcareaware.org/>



Promoting Cami’s Law



Elly Lafkin and her husband, Cameron, decided to put their infant daughter, Camden, in a family child care home after a referral from two friends who had both been using her child care services for over a year. The Lafkins ran a VA court run, public knowledge background check, and nothing suspicious was found (since alias names are not required to be listed). Without the knowledge of unlisted alias names, they trusted the court system and felt confident with the safety of their choice. After only 4 weeks, they received the call no parent wants to hear. Their daughter was found unresponsive while in the provider’s care and following CPR efforts, was pronounced dead. When the police investigated and conducted a fingerprint-based background check, the Lafkins learned that the provider had 5 alias names and a criminal history including drug offenses. At the time of Camden’s death, the provider was on felony probation. The police found methamphetamine and marijuana in the home, as well as 6 children (which exceeded the state limit for operation without a license).

Elly and Cameron were unable to find out about the provider’s criminal past because the name check they conducted did not identify the provider’s alias names. Elly and Cameron are now strong advocates for fingerprint checks against state and federal records to ensure that no family has to suffer the tragedy that happened to them. Fingerprint checks are the only effective means to stop those who wish to use an alias from circumventing a screening.

Child Care Aware® of Virginia’s Policy Recommendations:

- Require all paid child care providers caring for unrelated children to have a license.
- Require a comprehensive background check on all child care providers – a fingerprint check against state and federal criminal records, a check of the sex offender registry, and a check of the child abuse registry.
- Adopt the recommendations from the license-exempt task force to promote child safety in license-exempt care (e.g., require registration for license-exempt providers, background checks for staff, CPR certification for at least one adult on site or with the children, and safe sleeping practices for babies).

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