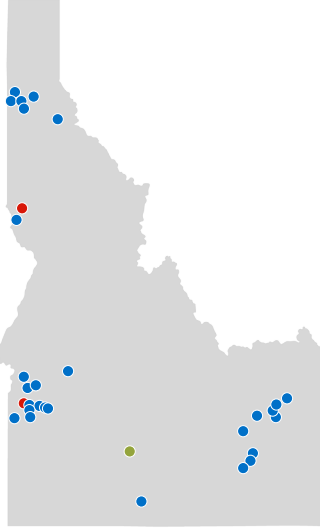


State Oversight of Children's Residential Care

Report highlights

June 2025

The entities responsible for keeping children safe in residential care face coordination and process challenges that impede safety.



Idaho had **30** residential care facilities, **2** of which provide psychiatric care. There is **1** therapeutic outdoor program.

Only **10 of 271** Licensing surveys from 2016 to 2024 led to enforcement actions.

The state spent **\$30 million** on residential care placements for children in foster care in fiscal year 2024.

216 children in foster care lived in facilities in December 2024.

The proportion of youth in foster care with facility placements increased from **8 to 17%** from fiscal years 2017 to 2024.

The department does not investigate abuse in facilities the same way it does in homes.

The department does not have processes for investigating abuse in facilities or including facility staff on Idaho's Child Protection Central Registry. Case workers are not required to respond to safety issues for children in facilities as quickly as for other children in foster care.

Children do not have their rights enumerated and communicated.

Idaho lacks a set of rights for children in facilities. A set of rights would let children and families understand when their rights are being violated and who to contact if their rights are violated.

Children placed out of state have less oversight.

Department staff visit out-of-state facilities and children less frequently and less in person. The department has no formal process to discover licensing violations for out-of-state facilities.

The new state-run facility faces oversight concerns.

From May to December 2024, 53 youth in foster care were placed at the Payette Assessment and Care Center. The facility is not overseen by contract monitors the same way other facilities are. After licensing violations, it was issued a provisional license in November 2024.



Key considerations for the Legislature

- 1) Assign an entity responsible for investigating abuse in facilities
- 2) Amend statute to require that facilities follow, post, distribute, and interpret a bill of rights for children



Key recommendations for the department

- 1) Require at least one annual unannounced Licensing site visit
- 2) Develop a department-wide protocol to define communication and issue escalation across divisions



View the report at
www.legislature.idaho.gov/ope