



Family Child Care Homes in Virginia

- ✗ There is no state regulation for small family child care homes in Virginia.
- ✗ Providers can care for up to five children, not including their own, before licensing is required.
- ✗ Background checks for providers in large family child care homes do not include a fingerprint check against state and federal records or a check of the sex offender registry.

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 America
703-341-4100
www.usa.childcareaware.org



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 of sitters. 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. After further investigation, the Lafkins found out that the child care provider had methamphetamine and marijuana in the home, as well as 6 children (which exceeded the state limit for operation without a license).

The provider denied that the drugs were hers, but was later found to have 2 felonies *including drugs*, money laundering and fraud. Elly and Cameron were unable to find out any of this information prior to taking Camden to her house, because the name check they conducted did not identify the provider’s alias names. Elly and Cameron are now strong advocates for comprehensive background checks, including fingerprint checks against state and federal records, for all child care providers to ensure that no family has to suffer the tragedy that has 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 America’s Policy Recommendation:

- Reauthorize the Child Care and Development Block Grant so that working parents have access to safe, quality and affordable child care.
- 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.
- Require all child care providers to have a minimum of 40 hours of initial training in child development and basic health and safety (such as first aid/CPR and safe sleeping practices to prevent SIDS) prior to working with children, and 24 hours of annual training.

Elly Lafkin
540-560-3696
Elizabeth.lafkin@gmail.com

Child Care Aware of Virginia
Sharon Veatch
804-285-0846
sharonv@va.childcareaware.org