



Arkansas Child Care Licensing Regulations + Process Revisions



This project builds on past analysis of Arkansas's licensing regulations and implementation process

The LEARNS Act required the Arkansas Department of Education Office of Early Childhood to, in coordination with other state agencies, to “reduce any burdensome, unnecessary rules for the licensing of childcare facilities.”

Pillars Research + Strategy supported OEC in performing this analysis and writing a report on the recommendations for the General Assembly.

The analysis showed that, while there are many strengths within the system, the licensing regulations and implementation process can be **complex, unclear, and disincentivize prospective providers from participating.**

In this phase of work, Pillars will build on our initial analysis and propose a series of recommendations that address these licensing challenges.

Pillars will produce deliverables that identify concrete, actionable steps to evolve licensing regulations and process

- 1 Rewritten licensing regulations for registered child care family homes, licensed homes, and licensed child care centers
- 2 Recommended revised child care licensing process, including updated staffing structure and strategies for implementation of proposed process
- 3 External, provider-facing document synthesizing revised licensing process
- 4 Profiles of licensing regulations and processes in target states

Taken together, these deliverables will give Arkansas the information and guidance necessary to create an environment **conducive to provider, family, and child success**

Our objective is to develop recommendations that address the identified regulatory and process challenges

Regulations

- Prioritize baseline program **health and safety standards**
- Shift **comprehensive quality expectations** out of licensing
- Balanced approach to **flexibility and prescriptive** requirements

What **must be true** of a facility for a provider to operate a **safe and secure** early care and education environment **for all children**?

Process

- **Efficient and reliable** monitoring and implementation process
- **Transparent** communication with providers and the field
- **Consistent interpretation** of regulations across OEC

What process ensures that providers and licensing specialists are **spending their limited time** on the components that are most important for children and families?

Our analysis is based first and foremost on the perspectives of Arkansas experts, complemented with expertise nationally and from target states

Arkansas experts

- Providers: focus groups, interviews, Advisory
- OEC licensing unit
- ADE legal team
- TA and quality support
- Advocates, intermediaries

National experts

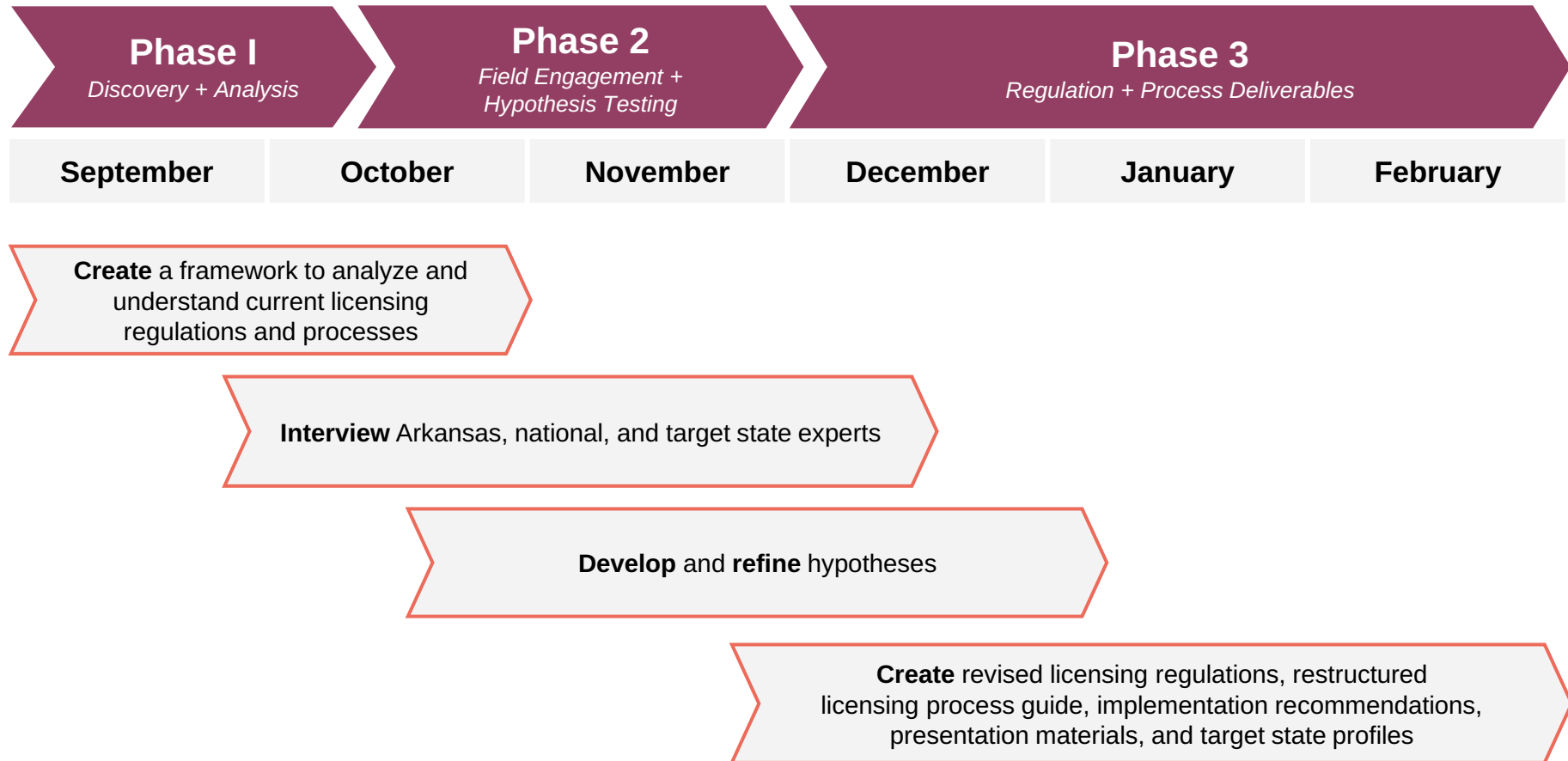
- Subject experts: employer sponsored, pedagogical models, home-based care
- TA and quality support
- Evolution of licensing
- Diverse political views

State leaders

- Current and past state licensing administrators
- Target states: Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, as identified

Pillars research and analysis, grounded in our past work in licensing and in Arkansas, will undergird these perspectives

We'll complete this work by the end of February, with deliverables shared along the way



Opportunities to Engage

Between now and the end of February 2025, there will be several different opportunities to engage in this work.

If you are interested in contributing to this work, please consider...

- Participating in a virtual or phone focus group or interview
- Answering questions via survey or form
- Providing written feedback on recommendations

To sign up to participate, please complete [this form](#)

We're looking forward to learning from you!