FAQ on Lead Testing for Day Care Centers, Day Care Homes and Group Day Care Homes:

What:
Lead testing of water in licensed day care centers, day care homes and group day care homes constructed on or before January 1, 2000.

Why:
Recent legislation (225 ILCS 10/5.9; PA 99-0922) requires lead testing of water for all day care centers, day care homes and group day care homes that serve children ages birth to six years that were constructed on or before January 1, 2000. The Department of Children and Family Services was required to develop new licensing rules to implement this new law.

Across the state, several agencies have been working to address this very serious problem. Health experts have determined that there is NO acceptable level of lead contamination for children. Check out Illinois Department of Public Health’s Lead Information website for more information:

http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/environmental-health-protection/lead-in-water

When:

Test results must be submitted to your DCFS licensing representative (or his/her supervisor) on or before 11-30-18. Since the damage caused by lead exposure has life-altering effects and impacts very young children most significantly, DCFS must identify facilities where children are being exposed to high lead levels as soon as possible.

The attached survey form must be returned to the department. You must complete and return the survey regardless of how old your home or center is. It is important that for the health and safety of the day care children, as well as your own, that you are diligent in researching your home’s construction date and provide accurate information. Failure to do so may result in a recommendation to change the status of your day care home license.

All facilities required to test their drinking water shall submit test results to their DCFS licensing representative and shall post the results in a location where parents can easily see them.

How do I test my water?
Labs will be able to provide you with specific instructions on their methods and preferences for how to collect samples and how to return your samples to the lab for testing. You will be drawing two samples from each water source. There will be a first draw taken after “stagnation” (a specific, lengthy period of no water running at all) and then one or more samples taken after “flushing” (running the water for a specified period
of time). You will submit the samples from each source of drinking water—kitchen faucet, bathroom faucets are most common. Don’t forget your refrigerator’s ice/water dispenser. You will not be expected to submit samples from bathtubs, showers or outside faucets unless they are routinely used to dispense drinking water.

If your facility is located in a school building which ISBE has oversight, testing results from the school may be submitted as long as it is clear that the locations for drinking water for the day care program have been tested and results of 2.0 ppb or less were found.

Lead in Water Mitigation Strategies for Daycares:
There are numerous mitigation strategies that you can undertake. In any of your samples, if lead is detected by the laboratory, a mitigation plan will be required.

Mitigation strategies depend on many variables and daycares may need to implement various and multiple steps to mitigate lead in water hazards. Please understand that your DCFS day care licensing representative cannot answer any specific questions on mitigation. Illinois Department of Public Health, regional IDPH lead specialists, your local health department or certified experts may be able to provide you with answers or recommendations.

The following are common mitigation strategies when lead in water lab results are positive for lead, these are not intended to be all inclusive:

- Immediate mitigation steps, use:
  - Distilled water
  - Water produced by reverse osmosis
  - Bottled water
  - Point-of-use filters, approved by NSF

- Remove Problem Fixtures
  - Replace any fixtures in the daycare that test positive for lead.
  - Fixtures include:
    - Kitchen sink faucet
    - Bathroom faucets
    - Any potable water sources

- Manual Flushing
  - Flushing is a method whereby fresh water may be delivered from the water main
  - Flush an adequate amount of water through the plumbing system in order to maintain fresh (safe) drinking water at all times
  - Lead concentrations increase the longer the water is in contact with the pipes or plumbing fixtures that contain lead
  - Reducing the water age (how long water ‘sits’ in the pipes) will reduce lead levels in the water
  - Flushing can increase the amount of orthophosphate in the pipes
- The orthophosphate coating on the pipes reduces interaction between lead pipes and water
  - **How to Flush:**
    - Locate the fixtures farthest from the point of entry of the water service to the building and flush them for 10 minutes each morning
    - Open all fixtures used for cooking and drinking and run the water for 2 minutes or until the water temperature becomes cold
  - **Lead Service Line Replacement**
    - Replacing the lead service line to the home to reduce amounts of lead in the water

Reminder: Only use cold water when cooking; hot water heaters can have elevated levels of lead and other particulates.

**Illinois Certified Labs for Lead in Drinking Water**
The link below will direct you to a list of laboratories currently certified in Illinois to test lead in drinking water. The current list is also attached to the end of these FAQ’s.

http://www.epa.illinois.gov/Assets/iepa/citizens/IL%20Certified%20Labs%20Analysis%20of%20Lead%20in%20Drinking%20Water-Aug%202017.pdf