



## PARENTS' GUIDE TO LICENSED CHILD CARE

### ◆ Choosing care for your child is a significant decision.

When you entrust the care of your child to another person, you are making an important decision. Visit, ask questions and carefully compare several programs. Licensed care includes child care homes, group homes and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.



### ◆ Licensing is a key to quality child care.

Licensing promotes good care by setting basic standards. Before a center or home is granted a child care license, it must meet minimum health, safety, and program requirements (see summary below). A licensing representative from the Department of Health and Social Services visits and inspects the facility and investigates complaints. The goal of licensing is to prevent risks to children; however, licensing cannot guarantee that a facility meets all requirements at all times.

### ◆ You as an informed parent are a key to quality child care.

Parents are responsible for choosing and monitoring their child's care. Licensors generally visit once a year, but you visit each time you take your child. Visit unexpectedly sometimes or in the middle of the day. Keep an eye on the quality of care. What do you see when you visit? Is the environment safe? Are caregivers capable and nurturing? How many children are present? Are meals nutritious? Are activities appropriate? Watch how your infant responds to the program and listen to what your child says. You are the person best able to decide whether child care meets your standards for safety, health, and quality.

### ◆ If you have questions or concerns about your child's care.

Discuss concerns with your caregiver. Talk to the caregiver if you observe health or safety problems or if you feel the program needs improvement. If you are still concerned, or if you believe children may be in danger or a standard is violated, contact your local licensing office. The licensing program will investigate your complaint. Address and phone of your local licensing office:

Department of Health and Social Services  
Child Care Licensing Program  
150 Third Street, Suite 106  
PO Box 110640  
Juneau, AK 99811-0640  
Phone - 907-465-4756  
Fax - 907-465-6982

### HOW MANY CHILDREN MAY HOMES AND CENTERS CARE FOR? (Children under the age of 12, including children related to caregivers)

#### CHILD CARE HOMES

- No more than 8 children total
- No more than 5 children without Fire Marshal approval
- No more than 3 children under 30 months
- No more than 2 non-walking children
- At least 1 adult caregiver
- No more than 5 children in nighttime care

#### CHILD CARE GROUP HOMES

- No more than 12 children total
  - No more than 5 children under 30 months
  - No more than 4 non-walking children
  - No more than 5 children in nighttime care
  - 2 caregivers required
- Exception: one caregiver may care for
- 8 children if meets home requirements
  - 10 children if all are over 30 months, 12 children if all are school aged **AND**
  - caregiver has completed one year of licensed home child care or the equivalent or
  - caregiver meets the college credit or CDA credential requirements

#### CHILD CARE CENTERS

- 13 or more children
- 1 caregiver for every 5 infants (birth through 18 months)
- 1 caregiver for every 6 toddlers (19 months up to 36 months)
- 1 caregiver for every 10 preschool children (3 and 4 year olds)
- 1 caregiver for every 14 kindergarten children (5 and 6 year olds)
- 1 caregiver for every 18 school aged children (7 through 12 years old)

## SUMMARY OF STATE CHILD CARE LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

### PARENTS

- Are responsible for selecting safe, appropriate care for their child
- Are responsible for monitoring their child's care
- Provide current emergency information and immunization records for their child, and update it quarterly
- Are encouraged to visit their child anytime the child is in care
- Receive written child care policies

### LICENSING

- Child care license is required if more than 4 children (not related to caregivers) are in care
- License must be renewed every 2 years
- Facility (including building, staff and program) is assessed before a license is issued
- Complaints are investigated
- Licensing files are open to public review

### CAREGIVERS

- Are required to care for children in a safe, healthy way
- May not have physical, health, mental health, or behavior problems that might be a risk to children
- May not have domestic violence or substance abuse problems that might be a risk to children
- Administrator, employees of a facility and those 16 or over having contact with children in the facility must submit a criminal information report
- Administrator, employees of a facility and those 16 or over having contact with children in the facility must be fingerprinted
- Caregivers meet early childhood training requirements
- Caregivers know the whereabouts of children at all times

### SAFETY

- Children are always supervised by an adult
- Caregiver with First Aid and CPR training is always present
- Facility is free of hazards, inside and out
- Medicine and poisons are stored safely and out of reach
- Electric outlets have child proof cover caps if children under age 5 are in care
- Emergency information is kept for each child
- Facility must meet specific requirements for transporting children

### HEALTH

- Facility meets sanitation and safety standards
- Meals and snacks are nutritious
- Children are immunized or have a valid exemption
- Parents are notified if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease
- Facility must meet regulations if caring for mildly ill children
- Facility may not care for a seriously ill child unless a medical provider approves attendance
- Drinking water is safe
- Smoking is not allowed
- Medicine is given only with parent permission
- Food preparation and handling are sanitary

### EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Furniture and equipment are safe and durable
- Infant walkers are not allowed
- Toys are adequate and varied
- Children have storage space for their belongings
- Children under 5 have a cot/mat/ bed and bedding that is clean and sanitary
- Infants must sleep in a safe crib or playpen without materials that could increase the risk of suffocation

### PROGRAM

- Promotes children's healthy development
- Includes quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities
- Program includes minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours facility is open between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- TV, video and DVD viewing and computer and video game playing are limited to children's programs and do not exceed 1½ hours in a 24 hour period
- Computer learning activities do not exceed 2 hours a day
- High risk activities are not allowed
- Parent permission is required for moderate risk activities (for example, field trips)

### BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

- Is positive, and never cruel, humiliating, or damaging to the child
- Sets realistic expectations and clear, consistent limits
- Is not related to eating, napping, toileting, or removing from other children for more than 10 minutes
- No corporal punishment is allowed (Corporal punishment means "the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for a disapproved behavior. It includes shaking, spanking, delivering a blow with a part of the body or an object, slapping, pinching, pulling or any other action that seeks to induce pain.")

### FIRE SAFETY

- Facility meets fire safety standards
- Emergency evacuation plan is practiced monthly and documented