

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 and educational homes and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.
- ◆ **Licensing is a key to quality child care.**
It promotes good care by setting basic standards. Before a center or home is granted a child care license, it must meet health, safety, and program requirements.
A Child Care Licensing Specialist from the Municipality of Anchorage 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 code 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. Licensing specialists visit one to four times 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 the local licensing office. The licensing office will investigate your complaint. Address and phone of the local licensing office:

Municipality of Anchorage
Child Care Licensing Program
825 L Street, 3rd floor
P. O. Box 196650
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650
(907) 343-4758

Website: <http://www.muni.org/Departments/health/community/Pages/Child.aspx>
Recent facility inspection reports can be viewed at: <http://hhs.muni.org/cac/>

- ◆ **Additional information regarding the location of child care facilities licensed by the Municipality of Anchorage can be found online at:** <http://neighborhood.muni.org>

HOW MANY CHILDREN MAY BE IN CARE?

Licensed Child Care Homes <i>(Including children related and unrelated to caregivers)</i>	Licensed Child Care Centers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than 8 children total • No more than 6 children total if only one door exit. • 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 (including provider's own children) (10 PM – 6 AM) • Children who live in the household under the age of 12 count in the total 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 or more children • 1 caregiver for every 4 infants (6 weeks thru 11 months) • 1 caregiver for every 5 toddlers (12 thru 18 months) • 1 caregiver for every 6 toddlers (19 thru 35 months) • 1 caregiver for every 10 children (3 thru 12 years) • At least 2 adults on premises

SUMMARY OF CHILD CARE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

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
- 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 prior to expiration (annually or biennially)
- Facility (including building, staff and program) is evaluated before a license is issued and is periodically monitored thereafter
- 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
- Complete child care training each year
- Are at least 18 years of age
- Junior helpers may only assist the administrator and are under direct supervision
- Persons 16 and older have a criminal background check including submitting fingerprint cards
- Meet early childhood training requirements

SAFETY

- Children are always supervised by an adult
- Caregivers know the whereabouts of children at all times
- Caregiver(s) with First Aid and CPR training are present
- Facility is free of hazards, inside and out
- Gates are required at accessible stairways if children under 36 months are in care.
- Medicine and poisons are stored safely
- Electrical outlets have child proof cover caps if children under age 5 are in care
- Emergency information is kept for each child and is reviewed and updated quarterly

HEALTH

- Facility meets sanitation and safety standards
- Meals and snacks are nutritious
- Children are immunized or exemptions are on file
- Parents are notified if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease
- If it chooses, a child care home may care for mildly ill children
- Seriously ill child may not be in care without a medical provider's written approval
- 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 years have a cot/mat/ bed and individual blanket
- Infants must sleep in a safe crib or playpen without materials that would increase the risk of suffocation

PROGRAM

- Promotes children's healthy development
- Includes quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities
- Limits TV and video to children's programs and limited to no more than 1&1/2 hours in a 24 hour period
- Does not allow high risk activities
- Requires parent permission for moderate risk activities (for example, swimming, ice skating, trips by vehicle)
- Provides a minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours the child is in care between 7 am and 7pm

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
- Does not use corporal punishment (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