

YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY IN LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE



Licensing family child care helps protect the Health and safety of children by requiring that certain minimum standards of care be met. While your county plays an important role as the Licensing agency, you, as a parent, are in the best position to ensure your children's safety.

Ultimately, it is your responsibility to make sure your children are safe and well cared for. The more that you know about licensing requirements, the better prepared you will be to work with your provider to ensure your child is safe.

This brochure highlights some of these requirements and provides information about what you should do if you have questions or concerns.

Detailed information about these licensing requirements can be found on the Internet at: www.dhs.state.mn.us or www.revisor.state.mn.us . **You also may contact Benton County Social Services, your child care licensing department at (320) 968-5087 or 1-800-530-6254** or the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), Licensing Division, at 1-800-627-3529.

The Family Child Care Provider

Your family child care provider should enjoy being with children. Your provider should know how to talk to children and respect them. Your provider should discuss behavior guidance with you and follow your instructions. Your provider should be willing to listen to your concerns and work to resolve them.

Your licensed family child care provider **must:**

- Be an adult and physically able to care for children
- Pass a physical exam at the time when first being licensed
- Pass a background study that reviews the criminal records of all caregivers and household members (except children) and also checks for any record of abuse or neglect.
- Complete six to nine hours of training in a combined course of child-related first aid and CPR and six hours of training in child development and child care within one year of initial licensure. All adult caregivers must receive six hours of training annually. All caregivers for infants must be trained on reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Meet additional experience or educational requirements if they are licensed to care for more than 10 children and have a specialized license.
- Undergo a physical, mental health or chemical dependency or abuse evaluation if required by DHS or the county, based on reasonable cause. This applies to any caregiver or resident who is present during the hours of care.

Your family child care provider should:

- Communicate with you regularly about your child and the child care program
- Show you a copy of his or her policies
- Post his or her child care license
- Welcome your visits at any time

The family child care home

Children's health and safety is the basic reason for child care licensing. Licensed family child care is provided in the license holder's residence or someone else's residence where the provider is the primary caregiver. The child care home should be comfortable, safe and inviting.

Safety

Providers must meet minimum requirements for:

- Amount of indoor and outdoor space
- Fire code inspections
- Two means of escape from every room
- Heating, venting and temperature
- Electrical service
- Safety equipment, including smoke detectors and fire extinguishers

Hazards

Providers must:

- Make toxic substances and hazardous materials inaccessible to children.
- Not use playpens with mesh siding for infants and newborns unless a variance for that playpen is posted with their license. A crib, portable crib or playpen with a waterproof mattress or pad must be used for each infant and newborn in care. Equipment must meet federal safety requirements for bars and rails.
- Make swimming and wading pools, beaches and other bodies of water inaccessible, except during supervised use.
- Use gates or barriers on stairways when children between 6 and 19 months are in care. Stairways, decks, balconies and loft areas must meet specific standards.

Health and Sanitation

Providers must:

- Keep the childcare home clean
- Meet requirements for sewage disposal
- Follow sanitary procedures to reduce the spread of communicable disease, including storage and disposal of diapers and cleaning of diapering areas
- Notify parents immediately when a child has an oral temperature of 101 F or higher, is vomiting, has diarrhea or sudden rash
- Have written permission from the parent to administer medicines, diapering products, sunscreen and insect repellent

Emergencies

- Providers must have:
- Poison control, 911 and other emergency numbers posted by the telephone
- Phone numbers of parents and physicians
- A first aid kit
- Arrangements for substitute care

- Fire and storm escape plans
- Monthly fire and storm drills

Transportation

The provider must have:

- Seat belts, safety seats and weight-appropriate child passenger restraints in accordance with vehicle safety standards
- A valid driver’s license
- Written permission from parents to transport their child

The Family Child Care Program

A good child care program helps children grow in healthy ways and helps their minds develop.

Supervision: A caregiver must be within sight or hearing of an infant, toddler or preschooler at all times so that she is capable of intervening to protect each child’s health and safety. The provider must be available for assistance and care for school-age children.

Ratios: Providers are licensed for a total number of children, age 10 and younger, who are present in the child care home at any one time, including the children of any caregiver. Different ratios apply if the provider has a specialized license to care for infants and toddlers.

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| Family Child Care License: | | | |
| Children | Adult’s | Preschool | Infants, Toddlers |
| 10 | 1 | 6 | No more than 3 infants and toddlers of which no more than 2 are infants. |
| Group Family Child Care License: | | | |
| Children | Adult’s | Preschool | Infant, Toddlers |
| 10 | 1 | 8 | No more than 3 infants and toddlers of which no more than 2 are infants. |
| 12 | 1 | 10 | No more than 2 infants and toddlers of which no more than 1 is an infant. |
| 14 | 2 | 10 | No more than 4 infants and toddlers, of which no more than 3 are infants. |

Behavior Guidance: The provider is required to give Each child guidance that helps them develop a positive self-image, self-control and teaches acceptable behavior. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Children must not be punished for toileting accidents.

Activities and Equipment: Child care activities must provide for each child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. Activities must be scheduled both indoors and outdoors, be appropriate to each child's development stage and age, include active and quiet time and contain provider-directed and child-initiated activities.

Policies: Providers must make a copy of the licensing rule and their policies available, including:

- Ages and numbers of children in care
- Hours and days of operation
- Meals and snacks to be served
- Sleeping and rest arrangements
- Nondiscrimination practices
- Care of ill children, disease notification, immunizations, and medication permission
- Fees and termination
- Helper and substitute plans
- Pets
- Insurance coverage

Records: Parents must supply providers with:

- Admission and arrangements form
- Special instructions in writing about toilet training, eating, sleeping, napping, allergies and any health problems
- Immunization records
- Signed written consent to obtain medical care
- Written permission to transport children
- Signed authorization to release the child from care to a parent or person authorized by the parent

As a parent, what is your role as an informed consumer?

- Watch for safe practices every time you are at the child care home
- Ask your provider about your child's day
- Listen to what your child tells you about his/her day
- Discuss any concerns with your provider immediately
- Contact your county licensing agency about unresolved concerns or any questions

Your Questions and Concerns

A county licensor visits family child care providers at license renewal time – every one to two years – to determine whether providers are meeting the license requirements.

Licensors also visit to investigate complaints.

Contact your county to report a suspected licensing violation or with questions or concerns about your family child care provider.

When someone contacts the county and requests information about complaints on a provider's record, the general nature of the complaint, the determination made regarding the allegation and any action taken as a result of the complaint are released.

You may also contact DHS at 651-296-3971 for general licensing information, or check DHS web site: www.dhs.state.mn.us