

Child Care Licensing Overview

Office of Child Care

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Child Care Licensing

Florida's first attempt to regulate child care occurred in 1941 when the Legislature mandated that those caring for children in counties with a population

greater than 267,000 be licensed by the State Welfare Board and inspected by the State Board of Health.

In 1974, Florida united with other states to implement a statewide licensure law for child care and developed minimum standards with the assistance of a state child care advisory board.

In 1975, regulations were established for child care licensure. Over the years, the regulatory law has had periodic amendments and continues to empower the mission of the child care program. Ongoing licensing inspections, school readiness inspections, and technical assistance are provided by trained licensing staff to ensure compliance with health and safety standards with the mission to protect children in care.

Local Licensing Counties

Five counties in Florida have elected to designate a local licensing agency to regulate licensing of child care arrangements based on provisions in s. 402.306, F.S. These counties are as follows:

- Broward
- Hillsborough
- Palm Beach
- Pinellas
- Sarasota

Legislative Intent

s. 402.301-319, Florida Statutes

- Protect the health and safety of all children in licensed facilities and homes.
- Provide training to child care providers to enhance the safety and quality of care.
- Promote quality child care for all children in care.
- Involve communities and organizations in the development of child care standards to meet the needs of the children and providers through mutual goals and initiatives.

Child Care Arrangements

The Department currently regulates the following child care settings:

- Licensed Child Care Facilities
- Licensed Family Day Care Homes
- Licensed Large Family Child Care Homes
- Licensed Specialized Child Care Facilities for the Care of Mildly Ill Children
- Registered Family Day Care Homes*

*As registered family day care homes are not licensed, they are not subject to on-site inspections.

The Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Care, is statutorily responsible for the statewide administration of the child care licensing program in 62 of the 67 counties in Florida.

Child Care Website

Florida's child care website is a comprehensive web-based resource for parents interested in locating quality child care arrangements.

The website gives parents access to child care provider demographic data, maps displaying the location of child care resources within each community, and the compliance/noncompliance inspection report history of licensed child care facilities and homes statewide.

Specific information for locating licensed facilities and homes may be found at www.myflfamilies.com/childcare.

Child Care Training

Child Care training is an important component and statutory requirement of the child care licensing program. Educating child care personnel is an essential determinant of the quality of service that children receive while in care. The following is a brief summary of some required training for child care personnel:

Child Care Facility Personnel: Must complete 40 hours of department approved training and subsequently pass a competency exam. Additionally, a minimum of 10 hours in-service training is required annually. (Note: This requirement does not apply to volunteers who work less than 10 hours per month on average and are under constant and direct supervision.)

Family Day Care Home Operators: Must complete 30 hours of department approved training and subsequently pass a competency exam. Additionally, a minimum of 10 hours in-service training is required annually.

Large Family Child Care Operators: Must complete 40 hours of department approved training and subsequently pass a competency exam. Additionally, a minimum of 10 hours in service training is required annually.

Further details about training requirements may be found on the child care website at www.myflorida.com/childcare.

Child Care Health & Safety Standards

Child Care health and safety standards for child care facilities and homes include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- ◆ Personnel Requirements
- ◆ Minimum Staff Credentials
- ◆ Capacity Requirements
- ◆ Staff-to-Child Ratios
- ◆ Physical Environment
- ◆ Sanitation and Safety
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Health-Related Requirements
- ◆ Food and Nutrition
- ◆ Record Keeping
- ◆ Transportation Safety

For more specific details on the above standards, please visit the child care website at www.myflfamilies.com/childcare.



Note: Additional licensing and training standards are located in s. 402.305, Florida Statutes, and Chapters 65C-20, 65C-22 and 65C-25, Florida Administrative Code specific to the role(s) of childcare personnel and the type of child care program.