

WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION & CARE?

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) licenses all child care programs. It establishes regulations; licenses child care providers and programs; keeps a complaint history of providers and programs; and investigates complaints.

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Child care programs -- centers, nursery schools, and school-aged programs -- must be licensed, unless the program is run by a public school system or a private elementary school. Programs are inspected before licensing & visited throughout the licensing period. A license is valid for 2 years.

Child care staff, teachers, directors, program administrators, must be certified by the ECC. Staff must meet specific educational and experience-based requirements, and undergo a criminal record check. Employees must have an orientation, regular staff meetings, and at least 20 hours of training per year. Twenty-five percent of this annual training must address mainstreaming of children with disabilities.

Every center must have at least one person with lead teacher certification, and larger centers must have more than one. If kindergarten-age children are in the program, there also must be a kindergarten coordinator. Here is a chart of the maximum number of children allowed in each group, based on age, as well as the number of staff required for each group:

Age	Maximum Group Size	Child to Staff Ratio
1 - 14 mos	7	3:1 or 7:2
15 - 32 mos	9	4:1 or 9:2
33 mos - 7 yrs	20	10:1
33 mos - 7 yrs	24 (half-day program)	12:1
4.9 yrs - 7 yrs	30	15:1

Mixed Ages	Maximum Group Size	Child to Staff Ratio
1 - 32 mos	9	3:1 or 9:2
15 mos - 7 yrs	9	5:1 or 9:2
33 mos - 7yrs	20	10:1
6yrs +	Not specified	13:1

NOTE: There are other regulations that cover programs which cover programs which contain mixed-age classrooms. Contact ECC or CCRC for that information, of visit the website, www.qualitychildcare.org

Child care centers are required to present parents with a formal educational philosophy, complete with goals and objectives. Programs must have a range of developmentally and culturally appropriate activities and an opportunity for make-believe play. Parents are always permitted to visit the program while their child is there and must receive written progress reports. A parent may request a conference at any time. Discipline must be developmentally appropriate, not harmful to a child's self-esteem, and may not include corporal punishment at any time.

FAMILY CHILD CARE

The people caring for children unrelated to them ("providers") must be licensed by the ECC. The provider's home must also be licensed, and will be inspected before a license is issued. Providers must give parents a summary of the license requirements so

that they can ensure continuing compliance. Before licensing, providers must attend a 3-hour training session, and also complete 15 hours of approved training every three years. First aid training must be certified every three years, and CPR certification every year. All assistants and substitute providers must also be approved by EEC and meet the same requirements as the provider (unless they are a household member). All providers, assistants, and other members of a family day care provider's household are subject to a criminal record check. Licenses are issued for three years.

Here is a summary of regulations covering the number of children permitted in a licensed family day care program:

Single provider: Maximum of 6 children at any time:

- This includes provider's own children under the age of 10 who are present in the home more than 3 hours a day (even if there is an approved assistant).
- Of the six children, only two children may be under 15 months of age.
- There may also be one additional child between 15 and 24 months, only if the child is walking independently.
- All other children must be over 24 months.
- If a provider has an approved assistant, he/she may have up to six children of any age in the program while the assistant is present.

A provider must provide the names of approved assistants and substitutes to parents. Parents also must be informed of any field trips, and have the right to know any information about their child with regard to the family child care home. Parents have the right to visit their child in the family child care home unannounced at any time.

Family child care providers are not required to have a formal educational philosophy. However, the care must offer a range of developmental activities, build self-esteem, assist children in becoming self-reliant, and teach children social skills. Discipline must also address these issues. Certain methods of discipline, such as corporal punishment, are forbidden at all times.

LARGE FAMILY CHILD CARE

Providers who have a large family child care license must have at least three years of full time experience as a licensed child care provider (or as an approved assistant), OR three years of full time experience in a group setting, including at least one year of full time experience as a licensed child care provider or approved assistant. In addition, they must attend a five hour orientation training session before licensing and have at least 30 hours of approved training every three years. CPR and first aid training requirements remain the same as regular family child care requirements.

A large family child care provider may have no more than 10 children in care at any one time. Like regular family child care, this number includes the provider's own children. When there are 7-10 children in the program, an approved assistant must be present. Of the 10 children, six of them may be under the age of two years with no more than three of those children being under the age of 15 months. The other three children must be over the age of 15 months and walking unassisted. In cases where there are three providers, all 10 of the children can be under the age of two years with no more than seven infants.

HEALTH ISSUES IN CHILD CARE REGULATIONS

Children in licensed child care, regardless of the type of care, are required to have a full physical examination either before or within 30 days after starting care. All children must have a written statement of health, which includes an up-to-date immunization record. Lead poisoning screenings are required for children two to six years old. If your child has a contagious illness, he or she may not participate in child care. However, some centers may have a quiet area for mildly ill children.

WHO IS NOT LICENSED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION & CARE?

In-home providers such as nannies, au pairs, and baby-sitters are legal child care providers but are not licensed by the Department of Early Education & Care. The same is true for relatives. Child care programs that are run by public schools or that are an integrated part of a private elementary school do not require licenses. Summer camps for school-age children are regulated by the local Department of Public Health.

PARENTS & EEC AS PARTNERS

The information contained in this document is a general summary of licensing requirements. There are many additional specific regulations for child care centers and family child care homes. The Department of Early Education & Care realizes that parents have the most contact with child care providers and locations. It is imperative that parents familiarize themselves with Massachusetts child care regulations and contact EEC if a regulation is in question. It is important to report concerns for the safety and benefit of both the children and the provider. Quality can be maintained if parents take an active role in its assessment. If you have a question or complaint, please contact the Child Care Resource Center at (617) 547-2982 and we will file a complaint for you, and/or contact:

**Massachusetts Child Care Licensing
Office of Child Care Services
1250 Hancock St, Suite 120-6
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 472-2881 www.QualityChildCare.org**

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<http://www.cccinc.org>
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MASSACHUSETTS CHILD CARE REGULATIONS

“AT-A-GLANCE”



