Child Care Quality Indicators

The following checklist contains information on indicators of quality, licensed child care. You may also download our “Choosing Child Care” brochure and Child Care Checklist by clicking here.

Caregivers and Teachers

Caregivers and teachers should:

- Treat parents with courtesy on the phone and in person
- Encourage and adequately respond to questions
- Complete 15 hours of CPR, first aid, and health and safety training
- Appear professional, competent, and happy in their work
- Participate in continuing education and training
- Model the behavior expected of the children
- Interact with children in a caring, positive manner
- Communicate with children at their eye level
- Greet children individually and assist with transitions

Staffing

Child care center and family child care homes should:

- Ensure at least one staff member is on-site at all times who meets the required 15 hours of health and safety training, pediatric CPR, first aid and nutrition
- Ensure that the teacher-to-child ratio meets state licensing requirements
- Demonstrate a low staff turnover rate
Communication and Parent Involvement

The child care provider should:

- Use a bulletin board or newsletter for parent-teacher communication
- Have a system for daily/weekly communication, such as a journal or daily notes
- Have an “open door” policy allowing parents to drop in unannounced; this is a parent’s legal right after their child is enrolled
- Allow visiting parents the opportunity to speak with enrolled families
- Encourage parent participation
- Have established illness and conflict resolution policies
- Have opportunities for parents to meet, discuss, and socialize
- Communicate discipline policies

Environment and Setting

The child care environment should feature:

- Materials, art projects, and decorations that are at the children’s eye level
- Materials and facility setup that encourage choice and exploration
- A clean and well-maintained facility
- Child-sized materials and furniture
- Pictures, decorations, books, and curricula that recognize a variety of languages and ethnic backgrounds
- Fenced outdoor play area
- Clean and safe toys within reach of children

Health and Safety

The child care provider ensures that:
- Staff uses proper hand-washing techniques before and after toileting and handling food
- The site follows universal infection control practices (e.g. paper towels, pump soap, disposable gloves, etc.)
- Surfaces, toys, and diaper changing areas are disinfected throughout the day and at closing time using bleach and water solution
- Separate sinks are used for toileting and eating
- Diaper changing area is separate from playing and eating areas
- Indoor and outdoor areas are free of hazardous materials and chemicals
- Electrical outlets are covered
- Gates, latches, and door/cabinet/drawer locks are utilized
- There are procedures for administering medication and posting children’s allergies
- Emergency cards are on file and updated regularly
- Evacuation procedures are posted and practiced
- All areas are visible and easily supervised by teachers
- Separate toileting facilities are available for children and teachers (centers only)
- Emergency and evacuation procedures are established and practiced
- Designated area is available for isolation when a child becomes ill

Teacher-to-Child Ratios

According to state licensing regulations:

- Privately funded child care centers have a maximum teacher-to-infant ratio of 1:4 and teacher-to-preschooler ratio of 1:12
- Subsidized child care centers have a maximum teacher-to-infant ratio of 1:3 and teacher-to-preschooler ratio of 1:8
- Family child care providers licensed for 6 children total can have no more than 3 children under under 2 years of age
- Family child care providers licensed for 8 children total can have no more
than 2 children under 2 years; 2 children must be 6 years or older
• Family child care providers licensed for 12 children total must have an additional caregiver present, and must have no more than 4 children under 2 years
• Family child care providers licensed for 14 children total must have no more than 3 children under 2 years; 2 children must be 6 years or older

**Program and Philosophy**

Parents should make sure that:

- The program is licensed or regulated; contact Community Care Licensing at 650.266.8842 to or [www.ccl.d.ca.gov](http://www.ccl.d.ca.gov) verify
- Philosophy of the program matches their own
- Children appear happy and engaged
- Transitions are kept to a minimum
- Daily schedule is posted and followed
- Transitional objects from home are encouraged (e.g. blankets and dolls)
- Nutritious meals and/or snacks are provided
- Activities are child-centered rather than teacher-directed
- Age-appropriate books, toys, and materials are used
- Activities promote success, independence, and self-esteem
- Curriculum promotes literacy and language development
- Program structure allows children to choose between group and individual activities
- Program integrates field trips and enrichment activities
- Discipline techniques emphasize education rather than punishment