Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions a parent can make. Finding the care most suitable for your child will take time, but learning about the types of child care available and what makes a quality child care program will help your search to be successful.
Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions a parent can make. Finding the care most suitable for your child will take time, but learning about the types of child care available and what makes a quality child care program will help your search to be successful.

Children’s Home Society of California’s (CHS) Child Care and Development Services has prepared this guide to assist you as parents to evaluate your child care needs and to help you select a program that will best suit those needs.

We strongly urge you to visit the family child care homes or child care centers under consideration, and to talk to those who will be directly and indirectly involved in your child’s care. The more homes and centers you visit, the better prepared you will be to make the best choice for your child.

All family child care homes and child care centers must be licensed by the State of California. Licensing is intended to insure minimal standards of health and safety for children’s protection. But licensing alone does not guarantee the quality of a child care center or home. You are the best judge of whether a child care program will be suitable for your child.

If you need additional information to help you choose a child care program, please contact our office at the phone number on the back of this brochure.
**ADULT-TO-CHILD RATIO**

An important factor to consider in selecting child care is the adult-to-child ratio. Small Family Child Care Homes are licensed to provide care for a maximum of 8 children, including the caregiver's own children under age 8. Minimum licensing standards are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN</th>
<th>ADULT CHILDREN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4 Infants (birth-24 months)</td>
<td>1 Infants* (birth-24 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8 No more than 4 infants (birth-24 months)</td>
<td>9 Infants (birth-24 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-11 No more than 4 children and at least 1 school age* (over 6 years)</td>
<td>12 Infants (birth-24 months)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Large Family Child Care Homes are licensed to provide care for a maximum of 14 children, including the caregiver's own children under age 8. When care is provided for more than 8 children, an assistant caregiver must be present. Minimum licensing standards are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILDREN</th>
<th>ADULT CHILDREN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4 Infants (birth-24 months)</td>
<td>1 Infant* (birth-24 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8 No more than 3 infants (birth-24 months)</td>
<td>9 Infants (birth-24 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12 No more than 3 infants and at least 1 school age* (over 6 years)</td>
<td>14 Infants (birth-24 months)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

- Is the facility licensed?
- Are the proper adult/child ratios maintained?
- Is the setting bright and attractive, with adequate space for quiet and active play both indoors and outdoors?
- Are all areas child-proofed and free of hazards and is all equipment safe and in good repair?
- Is the facility clean overall? (Bathrooms and diapering areas, kitchen, play area) and is handwriting practicing regularly?
- Are there safe areas for napping?
- Are there working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and a first aid kit?
- Is an emergency evacuation plan posted and practiced?
- Are there emergency contact cards for each child?
- Does the caregiver have liability insurance or a waiver of liability?
- Does the caregiver or center staff have up-to-date training in pediatric first aid and CPR?
- Does the center use appropriate seat belts or safety belts for each child being transported?
- Is food furnished at the facility, is it nutritionally balanced and prepared and stored in a safe manner?

**CAREGIVER’S PROFESSIONALISM**

- Does the caregiver have training in child development or early childhood education?
- Licenses set minimum educational standards (or child care center directors and staff). No educational training is required for (family child care providers at this time.)
- Does the caregiver continue to keep up-to-date by attending trainings and seminars?
- How much experience caring for children does the caregiver have?
- Does the caregiver belong to any professional organizations?
- Are the child abuse reporting procedures provided to parents?
- Does the caregiver use written agreements and clearly communicate the expectations and policies of the program?
- Does the caregiver make available a reference list of current and past clients?
- You also have the right and responsibility to request specific information about a licensed child care home or center (Community Care Licensing, Department of Social Services). Call CHS for the specific phone number and location of the licensing office in your community.
- Continue to monitor your child care arrangements at all times. You have the right to visit the child care facility unannounced whenever your child is there. Making such visits is one way to find out for yourself what kind of care your child is receiving. Continue to check the safety of the child care setting and speak to the caregiver about any concerns you have. If you cannot resolve a complaint with the caregiver, report your concerns to Community Care Licensing, Department of Social Services. If you have the final responsibility for your child’s care and the right to change child care providers whenever you are concerned about your child’s well-being or happiness.

**QUALITY CHILD CARE CHECKLIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</th>
<th>CAREGIVER’S PROFESSIONALISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the facility have in the facility? (over 6 years)</td>
<td>Does the caregiver have training in child development or early childhood education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the environment allow for a variety of play activities both inside and outside?</td>
<td>Licenses set minimum educational standards (or child care center directors and staff).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the space safe, bright, attractive, and interesting to children?</td>
<td>No educational training is required for (family child care providers at this time.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the proper adult/child ratios maintained?</td>
<td>Does the caregiver continue to keep up-to-date by attending trainings and seminars?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the setting bright and attractive, with adequate space for quiet and active play both indoors and outdoors?</td>
<td>How much experience caring for children does the caregiver have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all areas child-proofed and free of hazards and is all equipment safe and in good repair?</td>
<td>Does the caregiver belong to any professional organizations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the facility clean overall? (Bathrooms and diapering areas, kitchen, play area) and is handwriting practicing regularly?</td>
<td>Are the child abuse reporting procedures provided to parents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there safe areas for napping?</td>
<td>Does the caregiver use written agreements and clearly communicate the expectations and policies of the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and a first aid kit?</td>
<td>Does the caregiver make available a reference list of current and past clients?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an emergency evacuation plan posted and practiced?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there emergency contact cards for each child?</td>
<td>Continue to monitor your child care arrangements at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the caregiver have liability insurance or a waiver of liability?</td>
<td>You have the right to visit the child care facility unannounced whenever your child is there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the caregiver or center staff have up-to-date training in pediatric first aid and CPR?</td>
<td>Making such visits is one way to find out for yourself what kind of care your child is receiving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the center use appropriate seat belts or safety belts for each child being transported?</td>
<td>Continue to check the safety of the child care setting and speak to the caregiver about any concerns you have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is food furnished at the facility, is it nutritionally balanced and prepared and stored in a safe manner?</td>
<td>If you cannot resolve a complaint with the caregiver, report your concerns to Community Care Licensing, Department of Social Services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TRUSTLINE**

Parents may use TrustLine to find out background information about caregivers who are currently requesting a license to care for children in the State of California to be licensed. TrustLine, a public registry maintained by the California Department of Social Services and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, includes caregivers who have submitted their fingerprints to the Department of Justice and have no disqualifying child abuse reports. The Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Program provides child care information about caregivers who are not currently required by the State to be licensed. Information about TrustLine is available by calling CHS. TrustLine will discontinue referrals to the facility that has been issued a revocation, temporary suspension, or permanent suspension.

According to the laws of the State of California, CHS will discontinue referrals to the facility that has been suspended or revoked. This may include any facility that has been suspended or revoked.

CHS has notified by Community Care Licensing (CCL) that the provider has been issued a probationary (license or correction action plan, or the license has been suspended or revoked.

According to the laws of the State of California, CHS will discontinue referrals to the facility that has been issued a revocation, temporary suspension, or permanent suspension.

CHS will notify the provider in writing when it is determined that CHS will discontinue referrals to the provider because of one of the above items.

**CHILD CARE REFERRAL POLICY**

Children’s Home Society of California (CHS) Resource and Referral (R&R) Program provides child care referrals in the State of California. CHS also provides referrals based on their specific needs. CHS refers to child care centers, license-exempt child care centers, and licensed family child care homes.

CHS will:
- Assist parents seeking child care, but will not make recommendations.
- Provide written information about selecting quality child care.
- Recommend that parents visit facilities before making a decision.
- Inform parents of their right to review licensing information about providers.
- Maintain confidentiality of all information received from the parent.
- Operate all programs and services based on the CHS Mission, Technology, and Philosophy.

CHS reserves the right to discontinue referrals to a child care provider when:

- Licensing, law enforcement, or another regulatory agency has substantiated a complaint involving the health, safety, or personal rights of children; or actions that would impact the care services to children.
- CHS is informed of an ongoing investigation regarding the health, safety, or personal rights of children; or actions that would impact the care services to children.
- CHS has received a complaint regarding the health, safety, or personal rights of children; or actions that would impact the care services to children.
- CHS has been notified by Community Care Licensing (CCL) that the provider has been issued a probationary (license or correction action plan, or the license has been suspended or revoked.

According to the laws of the State of California, CHS will discontinue referrals to a licensed child care facility that has been issued a revocation, temporary suspension, or permanent suspension.

CHS will notify the provider in writing when it is determined that CHS will discontinue referrals to the provider because of one of the above items.
**QUALITY CHILD CARE CHECKLIST**

- Does the caregiver have training in child development or early childhood education? (Licensing sets minimum educational standards for child care center directors and staff, no educational training is required for family child care providers at this time.)
- Does the caregiver continue to keep up-to-date by attending trainings and seminars?
- How much experience caring for children does the caregiver have?
- Does the caregiver belong to any professional organizations?
- Are the child abuse reporting procedures provided to parents?
- Does the caregiver use written agreements and clearly communicate the expectations and policies of the program?
- Does the caregiver make available a reference list of current and past clients?

**HEALTH & SAFETY**

- Is the location of the facility licensed?
- Are the proper adult/child ratios maintained? (In the setting bright and attractive, with adequate space for quiet and active play both indoors and outdoors.)
- Are all areas child-proofed and free of hazards and is all equipment safe and in good repair?
- Is the facility clean overall (bathrooms and diapering areas, kitchen, play areas) and is handwashing practiced regularly?
- Are there safe areas for napping?
- Are there working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors?
- Does the caregiver have liability insurance or a waiver of liability?
- Does the caregiver or center staff have up-to-date training in pediatric first aid and CPR?
- Does the caregiver or center use appropriate car seats or safety belts for each child if children are being transported?
- Is food furnished at the facility nutritionally balanced and prepared and served in a safe manner?

**CAREGIVER’S PROFESSIONALISM**

- Does the caregiver have in-home care in which a caregiver provides care in their home for children from only one other family besides their own.
- Is the home clean and safe? (Licensing sets minimum educational standards for home family child care homes may care for 14 children (instead of 10).)
- Does the adult want to discuss your child with you, and are parents welcome to make unannounced visits at any time?

**TRUSTLINE**

- Are there working fire extinguishers?
- Are all areas child-proofed and free of hazards?
- Are quiet and active play areas both indoors and outdoors available?
- Are there safe areas for napping?
- Is handwashing practiced regularly?
- Is the facility clean overall (bathrooms and diapering areas, kitchen, play areas) and is handwashing practiced regularly?
- Are emergency contact cards for each child?
- Are there working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors?
- Does the caregiver have liability insurance or a waiver of liability?
- Does the caregiver or center staff have up-to-date training in pediatric first aid and CPR?
- Does the caregiver or center use appropriate car seats or safety belts for each child if children are being transported?
- Is food furnished at the facility nutritionally balanced and prepared and served in a safe manner?

**THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOUR CHILD**

- What is the education level of the child care providers?
- Are there any areas child-proofed and free of hazards, and is all equipment safe and in good repair?
- Is the facility clean overall (bathrooms and diapering areas, kitchen, play areas) and is handwashing practiced regularly?
- Are there safe areas for napping?
- Are there working smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and a first aid kit?
- Is there an emergency evacuation plan posted and practiced?
- Are there emergency contact cards (for each child)?
- Has the child care provider been issued a probationary suspension order, or that is on probation.
- Does the child care provider have any other contracts or agreements with the local licensing or regulatory agency for child care.