

## Types of Child Care / MA Child Care Regulations AT-A-GLANCE

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There are many different types of child care available. Below is an overview of different types available, as well as basic licensing requirements for child care programs in Massachusetts.

**CHILD CARE CENTERS** provide full- or part-time care in a group setting. Centers are usually open from 7:00 or 8:00 AM to 5:30 or 6:00 PM 12 months per year. Centers offer programs for infants, toddler and preschoolers. Children are grouped with children their own age, with activities planned for that age group. Child care centers are licensed by the state and must meet minimum health, safety, and staffing requirements:

Group size is regulated in Massachusetts by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC):

INFANTS (0-15 months): One adult for first 3 children, and another for the next 4, in groups no larger than 7.

TODDLERS (15-33 months): One adult for first 4 children, and another for the next 5, in groups no larger than 9.

PRESCHOOLERS (2.9-5 years): One adult for every 10 children, in groups no larger than 20.

### **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS:**

- 3 credits in Child Development
  - ✓ 9 months of work experience in a Child Care program.

### **LEAD TEACHER (Teacher requirements plus):**

- 9 credits in Early Childhood Education
  - ✓ 36 months of experience if you have a High School diploma.
  - ✓ 27 months of experience if you have a Certificate.
  - ✓ 18 months of experience if you have an Associate degree.
  - ✓ 9 months of experience if you have a Bachelor degree.

**FAMILY CHILD CARE** is provided in the home of a person licensed by the state to care for children in her home. Family Child Care providers are licensed by EEC for three years at a time. The provider's home must also be licensed, and is inspected before a license is approved.

**SINGLE PROVIDER:** Maximum of 6 children at any one time

- Of the six children, only 2 can be under 15 months of age (infants)
- Of the six, only 1 can be between 15-24 months of age, and only if walking by himself (toddler)
- All other children must be over 24 months of age
- This includes provider's own children under age 10, who are in the home more than 3 hrs/day
- Requirements for SINGLE FAMILY CHILD CARE license include:
  - ✓ 15 hours of training every 3 years
  - ✓ Annual CPR training
  - ✓ First Aid training every 3 years
  - ✓ All assistants must also be approved by EEC
  - ✓ Criminal record check (CORI) for provider and assistants

**LARGE FAMILY CHILD CARE:** Maximum of 10 children at one time.

- Of the ten children, three can be under 15 months of age (infants)
- Of the ten, two can be between 15-24 months of age, and only if walking independently (toddler)
- All other children must be over 24 months of age
- If a provider has an approved assistant, he/she may have up to six children of any age, only when assistant is present
- This includes provider's own children under the age of 10, who are in the home more than 3 hrs/day
- Requirements for LARGE FAMILY CHILD CARE license include:
  - ✓ 3 years of full time experience as a licensed provider, or as assistant, OR 3 years experience in a group setting + 1 year licensed provider experience before getting this license.
  - ✓ 5-hour training session
  - ✓ 30 hours of training every 3 years
  - ✓ CPR & First Aid and background check requirements remain the same.

A provider must provide the names of approved assistants or substitutes to parents, and inform them of any field trips. Parents have the right to visit a child unannounced at any time. Family child care providers are not required to have a formal educational philosophy. However, they must offer a range of developmental activities, assist children in becoming self-reliant, and teach social skills. Certain methods of discipline, such as spanking or hitting, are forbidden at all times.

**FAMILY CHILD CARE SYSTEMS** are a formal network of licensed family child care homes coordinated by a central child care organization. Often, these systems provide social workers and/or educational coordinators who may be involved in training and recruiting providers and assisting them with issues and problems that arise. Transportation services are also provided by many FCC Systems

**NURSERY SCHOOL** programs offer group programs primarily for children ages 2.9 through 5 years. Most programs are open 3-4 hours per day (2-5 days/week), and usually follow the school year calendar. Many provide extended hours until 2 or 3:00 pm, but are not designed to provide full time child care for working parents.

**SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS** provide supervision, care and activities for school-age children before and/or after the regular school day, and sometimes during school holidays and summer vacations. School-age programs serve children not more than 13 years of age (or 16 years of age for special needs programs). These programs can be offered by public school systems, community groups, social service agencies, youth organizations (Y's, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc), churches, family child care providers or by groups who provide child care. EEC licenses school-age programs, EEC regulations cover health & safety, staff qualifications, administration and physical facilities. The adult to child ratio is 1:13.

**SUMMER CAMPS** offer parents a structured setting where children can develop new skills, make new friends, and have fun. Programs can be independently owned, religiously or agency affiliated, or community-based.

Camp programs vary in many ways. There are residential and day camps, which range in size from small, specialty camps (drama, music, computers) to large, multi-activity general camps. Some are co-ed; some just for boys or girls. Camps are a legal but unlicensed form of care. They must meet sanitation & safety standards set by the MA Dept. of Public Health. There are also accreditation agencies that rate camps, such as the American Camping Association (ACA), but it is a voluntary accreditation process.

#### **HEALTH ISSUES in CHILD CARE REGULATIONS**

Children in any licensed child care program must have a full physical examination before entering the program, or within 30 days after starting care. Parents must have a written statement of health, including up-to-date immunization records. Lead poisoning screenings are required for children aged two to six. If your child has a contagious disease, he/she may not participate in child care.

#### **OTHER TYPES OF UNLICENSED CARE**

In-home providers, such as nannies, au pairs, baby-sitters or relatives are legal child care providers, but are not licensed by EEC.

For more information on licensing or to inquire about a providers licensing history, contact the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) at [www.eec.state.ma.us](http://www.eec.state.ma.us) or at 617-988-6000.

Child Care Resource Center, Inc.  
130 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge, MA 02139  
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