

Types of Licensed Care In Massachusetts

Child Care Center

This is a group child care setting for infants, toddlers or preschoolers. Centers group children by age, with class sizes and child/teacher ratios determined by state regulation. Child care centers are usually open all year, and may offer part-day or part-week schedules in addition to full time.

- Infants: A child from 1 month to 14 months of age
Toddler: A child from 15 months to 2 years, 8 months of age
Preschooler: A child from 2 years, 9 months to Kindergarten

Preschool

These programs offer part-time care (part-week, part-day, or both) for children who are 3 to 5 years old. Generally, these programs run on a school-year schedule, are closed during school vacations, and may or may not offer a summer session. These programs are sometimes also called Nursery Schools.

Family Child Care

Care is provided in the home of a person licensed by the state to care for children in his/her home. There are 3 types of family child care:

- Regular family child care – care for up to 6 children
- Large family child care – care for up to 10 children with help from at least one approved assistant
- Family child care plus – care for 6 children, plus 2 school age children.

A Family Child Care System is a sponsoring agency that manages a group of licensed family child care homes. They offer training, supervision and support to family child care providers.

School Age Child Care

A group setting in which care is provided for children in Kindergarten and up, before and/or after school and possibly during school vacations. These programs may be operated by public or private schools, or by community or private agencies.

Other types of programs that are not licensed by the state include in-home care, (care is provided by an adult in the child's home), relative care (care is provided by a relative in the relative's home) and programs run by public or private schools. Summer camps are licensed by the Board of Health in each individual city or town.