

Your Guide to Regulated Child Care Your summary of the child care rules

A WORD ON WISCONSIN CHILD CARE REGULATIONS

Anyone providing care and supervision for 4 or more children under age 7 years for less than 24 hours a day must be licensed by the Department of Children and Families. Exceptions to this rule are:

- A parent, grandparent, great-grandparent, stepparent, brother, sister, first cousin, nephew, niece, uncle, or aunt of a child, whether by blood, marriage, or legal adoption, who provides care and supervision for the child.
- Public and parochial schools.
- Care provided in the home of the child's parent for less than 24 hours per day.
- Counties, cities, towns, school districts, and libraries that provide programs for children primarily intended for social or recreational purposes.
- A program that operates not more than 4 hours per week.
- Group lessons to develop a talent or skill such as dance or music, social group meetings and activities, group athletics.
- A program where the parents are on the premises and are engaged in shopping, recreation, or other non-work activities.
- Seasonal programs of ten days or less duration in any 3-month period, including day camps, vacation bible school, and holiday child care programs.
- Emergency situations.
- Care and supervision for no more than 3 hours a day while the parent is employed on the premises.
- A program provided where the child of a recipient of temporary assistance to needy families, or Wisconsin works, is involved in orientation, enrollment or initial assessment or where parents are provided training or counseling.

Regulations set standards for adequate child care, but they cannot guarantee quality care. That is why parent involvement is so crucial.

TYPES OF REGULATED CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Licensed Family Child Care Centers

A program regulated under DCF 250 where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day to between 4 and 8 children under 7 years of age.

Age groups may be mixed according to the following combinations. Additional allowed school-aged children in care for 3 or fewer hours per day are shown in parentheses.

Children Under Age 2		Children Age 2 and Older		School Age Children		Maximum Group Size
0	+	8	+	(0)	=	8
1	+	7	+	(0)	=	8
2	+	5	+	(1)	=	8
3	+	2	+	(3)	=	8
4	+	0	+	(2)	=	6

Licensed Group Child Care Centers

A program regulated under DCF 251 where a person for less than 24 hours per day provides care and supervision for 9 or more children.

Age of Children	Staff-To-Child Ratio*	Maximum Group Size
Birth to 2 yrs	1:4 or .25	8
2 yrs to 2½ yrs	1:6 or .167	12
2½ yrs to 3 yrs	1:8 or .125	16
3 yrs	1:10 or .10	20
4 yrs	1:13 or .077	26
5 yrs and over	1:18 or .056	36

^{*} These ratios are adjusted for mixed age groups

Licensed Day Camps for Children

A program regulated under DCF 252 that provides care and supervision to 4 or more children, 3 years of age and older, in a seasonal program oriented to the out-of-doors for periods less than 24 hours per day.

Certified Family Child Care

A program regulated under DCF 202 where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day for no more than 3 children under age 7 with a maximum group size of 6, including the provider's own children under age 7.

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IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS

First, talk to your child's caregiver and try to work out your differences. If those attempts fail, and you feel the caregiver is violating a state licensing regulation, contact the appropriate regional office. See https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/contacts or call 1-800-362-7353 for licensing contact information. If you feel the caregiver is violating certification rules, contact the appropriate certifying agency. See https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cccertification/certifiers.pdf or call 1-800-362-7353 for certification contact information.

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, contact the Bureau of Early Care Regulation at defcclicreg@wisconsin.gov or (608) 421-7550. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS)-711 to contact the department.

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WHAT IS QUALITY CHILD CARE?

That question has no easy, quick answer. Evaluating child care may seem an overwhelming task, especially if you are new to child care services. This checklist can help. For a thorough evaluation, go through the entire checklist section by section, or, if you prefer, focus on the parts that seem most important to you. YoungStar is a program of the Department of Children and Families created to improve the quality of child care for Wisconsin children. To search for safe, quality child care in Wisconsin, see the Regulated Child Care and YoungStar Public Search page http://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/BasicSearch.aspx.

<u>Caregivers</u>	<u>Program / Activities</u>
Do they genuinely seem to enjoy working with young children?	☐ Is there a regular daily schedule? Is it organized without being rigid?
Do they seem to be warm, loving people?	Are activities geared for different age and developmental levels?
Do they talk with you openly and straightforwardly about their policies?	Are there indoor and outdoor activities?
What training and experience do they have? Do they receive regular, ongoing job-	☐ Is time provided for physical activity and quiet play?
related training?	☐ Is there a nap or rest period?
☐ Do they seem to get along well with each other?	Are there structured activities as well as free play when children can choose what
Caregiver / child interaction	to do?
Do they get down to eye level when talking to or listening to the children?	Are there opportunities for different types of interactions—large group play, small
Do they encourage the children to express their feelings verbally?	group play, alone time?
Do they encourage children to work out negative feelings without hurting others?	☐ Are there materials for different types of play—drama, music, creative movement,
Do they respect individual differences among the children?	language skills, gross and fine motor skills, art projects, sand and water play?
Do the child guidance measures focus on what the child should do rather than	Are there living plants for children to observe and care for?
what the child should not do?	☐ Are there pets in areas of the center accessible to children? Have pets been
Do they set reasonable limits and allow children to make choices when	appropriately vaccinated? Are pets tolerant of children? Is close supervision
appropriate?	provided?
Do they provide guidance with words, tone of voice, and actions that show respect	Are the children taken out into the community for activities—parks, libraries,
for children? Note: See licensing and certification rules for prohibited actions.	museums, field trips? Is there adequate supervision?
Do they show patience by letting children do things for themselves and exert their	<u>Transportation</u>
independence?	Are vehicles used to transport children insured, and does the center's policy
Do the children seem comfortable when talking to the caregivers?	address insurance coverage for transportation?
Do the children seem happily occupied and relaxed?	Are vehicles in safe operating condition?
Does the ratio of children to caregivers meet state requirements?	Are appropriate individual child car safety seats and booster seats used?
<u>Physical environment</u>	Does the center have a procedure to ensure that no child is left unattended in a
Are the play areas clean and large enough so children can move freely and safely?	vehicle?
Is the playground safe and supervised by an adult?	Do vehicles with a seating capacity of 6 or more passengers in addition to the
Is play equipment sturdy and in good repair?	driver have a vehicle alarm installed to ensure no child is left unattended in a
Are games, toys, etc. stored where the children can get to them?	vehicle?
Are wall displays placed at child's eye level?	General things to look for
Are unused electrical sockets covered with safety caps?	Is the license / certificate posted?
Are cleaning fluids, medications, poisons, sharp tools, matches, etc. stored away	Are visits by the parents, whether announced or unannounced, welcome at any time?
from children?	Are there opportunities for parent / caregiver communication?
Is the area free of other hazards: peeling paint, exposed electrical wires, uncovered	Is this the kind of place you would enjoy spending your day?
hot water pipes, unprotected hot radiators or heaters?	Are the results of the most recent licensing visit posted?
Are fire safety and tornado drills practiced?	Do staff and children wash their hands before meals and after toileting or
Are emergency telephone numbers posted by the telephones?	diapering?
Is there adequate heat, ventilation, and lighting?	Are meals and snacks well balanced and wholesome?
Are bathrooms clean and sanitary?	Is the food preparation area clean and sanitary?
Are step stools in the bathrooms to help young children reach toilets and sinks?	Are menus posted in licensed programs?

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