

Washington State Child Care Licensing Regulations

How providers become licensed

Licensed child care centers and family child care homes must pass a criminal background check, attend initial and ongoing training, and pass health and safety inspections.

Staff/child ratio requirements

The number of children who can be cared for by one adult is limited by licensing regulations. Before choosing a program, ask to see the license and observe for yourself that the number of children does not exceed the number allowed.

Child care center staff/child ratios and group size may not exceed:

Age of Children	Staff/Child Ratio	Group Size
1 to 11 months (Infant)	1 to 4	8
12 to 29 months (Toddler)	1 to 7	14
30 months to 5 years (Preschool)	1 to 10	20
5 years and older (School-age)	1 to 15	30

Family child care home staff/child ratios and group size:

Rules for family child care homes differ from those of child care centers and do not fit easily in a small chart. If there are any children who are not yet walking, the number of children per adult should be 6 or fewer. If all children are walking and age 2 or older, 2 staff can care for up to 12 children. The group size will be smaller if there are up to 4 children not walking. For more information or if you have concerns, contact the Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center or Department of Early Learning. Details of the State Licensing rule are at:

www.del.wa.gov/publications/laws/docs/FHCC_final_%20annotated_111411.pdf. (See section WAC 170-296A-5700.)

Provider history

A provider's license must be in good standing in order for Child Care Aware of Washington to provide a referral (this means there are no current investigations of a serious enough nature to prevent referrals). Before you select a provider, we recommend that you contact the Washington State Department of Early Learning's Licensed Child Care Information System at **1-866-482-4325** or www.del.wa.gov/check to check if there are any new complaints and to review the complete licensing and complaint history (you will need the provider's last name or business name and county and/or phone number).

Complaints

If you have a complaint or see licensing violations, discuss your concerns with the caregiver or center director. If this doesn't resolve the situation and you suspect child abuse or neglect in a licensed child care facility, call **1-866-END-HARM (1-866-363-4276)** to report your concerns.