

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

SUMMARY OF LICENSING REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUP CHILD CARE HOMES

This summary is intended as a guide for parents of children in group child care homes. It outlines some of the requirements child care providers must meet in order to be licensed. The purpose of licensing is protection of children. The Department of Human Services has the legal responsibility for licensing homes which provide child care for 8-12 children. Questions about licensure requirements or concerns about a home's compliance with them should be referred to the local DHS office. You may ask your child care provider to see a rule book ("Standards for Group Child Care Homes").

Ownership and Administration

- Children in child care shall be at least six weeks old.
- This summary shall be given to parent(s) of each child enrolled.
- Specific policies are required to be in written form.
- A policy statement signed by caregiver and parent shall be on file.
- Parents shall be permitted access to their children and shall be informed in advance of removal from premises.
- The following records shall be kept:
 - Three recommendations for each caregiver.
 - Adult health records.
 - Child health records.
 - Daily attendance records.
 - Children's records containing identifying and emergency information and a parent caregiver communication plan.
- A child's and family privacy and confidentiality shall be protected.
- A current license shall be posted conspicuously.
- All agencies will undergo an evaluation prior to the expiration of their license and be required to post a report card that outlines the results of the evaluation.
- General liability and medical payment insurance coverage is required on the operations of the facility.

Staff

- Any person identified as perpetrator of abuse shall not have contact with children in the home.
- Substitutes providing services for 36 or more hours in a calendar year must have a physical and a criminal background check.

- Criminal background checks are required for employees who have contact with children and anyone 15 or older who lives in the home.
- All caregivers shall be trained in child abuse detection/prevention.
- The primary caregiver shall:
 - Be 18 or older.
 - Be able to read and write English.
 - Have earned a high school diploma or GED.
 - Complete pre-service and 8 hours of inservice training.
 - Not be employed at any other occupation during child care hours.
- An adult shall be present and supervision at all times.
- Volunteers shall not be used to meet classroom adult:child ratios.
- The total number of children shall not exceed 15.
- If 4 or more infants/toddlers are enrolled, they shall have their own space and their own caregiver for their safety and security and for infection control.
- See ratio chart on the last page.

Equipment

- Equipment shall be well made and safe.
- There shall be equipment appropriate for:
 - Children enrolled.
 - Activities listed under Program.
- Outdoor equipment shall be:
 - Placed to avoid accidents.
 - Securely anchored.
 - Placed over resilient surfaces.
 - At least 6 feet away from retainer structures.

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Program

- The daily program shall include some of the following:
 - Reading to and talking with children.
 - Art, music, and dramatic play.
 - Age-appropriate participation in home-type activities.
- The daily schedule shall be posted.
- Children shall be allowed to choose some of their own activities; others shall be planned by the caregiver.
- Children shall not be confined to one room.
- TV/videos shall be limited to 2 hours per day and to children's shows. Other options shall be available.
- All children shall play outside daily except in extremely bad weather.
- Discipline shall be:
 - Reasonable and in terms of the child's understanding.
 - Positive and encouraging of good behavior.
- Discipline shall not be:
 - Shaming, humiliating, frightening, or injurious.
 - Related to food, rest, toilet training, or physical punishment.
- Preschool children shall have a reclining rest period, according to individual needs.
- School-age children shall be allowed to nap but not forced to do so.
- Children under 15 months and unable to walk shall have their own crib or playpen for napping; sleeping infants shall be checked every 30 minutes.
- Older children shall have something soft and at least two inches thick to sleep on.
- All children shall have their own clean sheet and coverlet.
- Children shall be allowed to get up after a reasonable rest period.
- Toilet training shall not be started until the child:
 - Has been in the child care home long enough to feel comfortable.
 - Is able to understand, to do what is asked, and to let his/her need to use the bathroom be known.
- Children shall not be made to sit on the potty more than 5 minutes.
- Children shall be diapered or cleaned when needed.

- For ages three through school-age instruction in personal safety must be offered annually.
- The facility is required to notify parents regarding the personal safety curriculum that is being used.

Health & Safety

- Children shall be age-appropriately immunized before admittance to child care.
- If immunizations are not current or continued, the child will not be allowed to remain in child care.
- Records of children with disabilities shall contain a physician's statement identifying the condition and giving special instructions for that child's care.
- Children under 31 months shall have a physical examination prior to admission to child care.
- Immunization records shall be on file in the child care home.
- Accidents and injuries shall be recorded.
- Parents and the local health department shall be notified of outbreaks of communicable diseases.
- Medications and drugs shall not be administered without parental instructions and shall be charted as given, and containers shall be labeled and stored properly.
- Caregivers have physical examination before beginning work.
- An updated statement of caregivers' physical health shall be obtained every third year.
- A statement of caregivers' mental or emotional health may be required when deemed necessary by the Department.
- Caregivers shall not smoke while physically interacting with children; parents shall be informed of smoking in the home.
- Caregivers shall use prescribed infection control methods.
- The primary caregiver shall have pediatric CPR and first aid training.
- Home shall have a working telephone.
- A child sexual abuse prevention program shall be presented to children ages 3 and above.
- Suspected abuse/neglect shall be reported immediately.
- Primary caregivers shall be prepared for disasters.
- Firearms and other deadly weapons or tools shall be made inaccessible to children.

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- Swimming pools must comply with environmental sanitation regulations and wading pools must be approved by the environmentalist.
- Pets and children shall not be together on a regular basis.

Transportation

- When transportation is provided:
 - The driver shall be licensed.
 - General liability and medical payment insurance coverage required for injuries of children being transported.
 - Driver must submit to drug screening.
 - Children shall not be left alone in the vehicle.
 - Staff shall use passenger log to take roll during transportation.
 - Passenger log shall be reconciled with attendance records.
 - Driver or caregiver shall conduct physical walk through and inspection of vehicle after unloading the last child.
 - Additional staff person shall also verify the reconciled log and conduct physical walk through and inspection.
 - There shall be a plan for emergency transportation.
 - Children under four years of age shall be fastened in individual seat belts.
 - Children are not allowed to ride in the floor.
 - Firearms shall not be stored in the vehicle.

Food

- Prescribed food patterns shall be followed so that children receive adequate nourishment.
- Infant diets and other special diets shall be prepared as prescribed by the physician.
- Weekly menus shall be posted.
- These hygiene practices shall be followed:
 - Adults and children shall wash their hands before handling food.
 - High chairs, tables, and floors under them shall be clean.
 - Napkins, forks, or spoons shall be provided.
- Infants:
 - Bottles shall not be propped or given to children who are lying flat.
 - Children able to sit in a high chair shall be allowed to feed themselves at least a part of the meal.

- Formula and food from home shall be labeled with the child's name and placed in the refrigerator.
- Previously opened baby food jars shall not be used.
- Solid foods shall not be given in bottles or infant feeders.
- Weaning shall be started only after communication with parent.
- Servings shall be adequate to meet children's needs.
- Food, including dessert, shall not be forced or withheld.

Physical Facilities

- New or remodeled group child care homes shall be approved by a state fire safety inspector and by an environmentalist prior to opening.
- All group child care homes shall be inspected and approved annually.
- Facility shall have at least 30 square feet of usable play space per child.
- There shall be two exits, other than from the kitchen.
- The home shall not share a building used for other purposes which would be hazardous to children or limit outdoor play.
- The outdoor play area shall contain 50 square feet per child.
- Diapering areas shall be as close to a sink as possible, but not in the kitchen.
- All areas of the premises shall be well maintained, non-hazardous, and free of animal waste.

Care of Children With Disabilities

- In addition to the preceding standards, if children with disabilities are cared for, the following requirements shall be met. These requirements apply to staffing, grouping, equipment, program, health, food, and physical facilities.
- Children enrolled in a child care home shall receive the same care and participate in the same program activities as their peers with adaptations to enable them to participate.
- Adaptations to the environment shall be directed toward normalizing the lifestyle of the child with a disability by helping him/her become independent and develop self-help skills.
- Efforts to provide specialized services (e.g. speech/hearing therapy, physical therapy,

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psychological evaluation, or services for the mentally retarded) shall be documented in the child's record. Any information exchange regarding these services shall also be documented.

- The home shall have individualized evacuation plans for disabled children and shall be practiced monthly.

Ratio Chart:

Caregivers Required*	Maximum Number of Children & Ages**
1	Maximum of 15 present and no child present is under three (3) years of age
2	Maximum of 15 present and at least one (1) child up to a maximum of nine (9) children present are under three (3) years of age, but no more than four (4) present are under two (2) years of age. ***
3	Maximum of 15 if ten (10) or more are under three (3) years of age.***
*If any child's physical or mental condition requires special care, if children under 9 living in the home increases the group size, or when a field trip is taken off premises, the number of caregivers required shall be increased by one.	
**Before 8 or more children are enrolled, the facility shall be approved by a fire safety inspector and by an environmentalist.	
***If over 12 children are enrolled, the additional children shall be of school age and a school age program shall be provided.	

- **Locate the nearest child care certificate office**
- **Find info on choosing child care**
- **Locate a resource and referral center**
And Much More!

Group Child Care Home Rules

The full set of the official group child care home rules can be found on the Secretary of State's Web Site:
<http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1240/1240-04/1240-04.htm>

Report Card & Star Quality Program
<http://tnstarquality.org>

Child Care Resource & Referral Centers

Currently, there are eleven CCR&R centers located throughout the state. The centers help parents find the type of care that is best for their child or children. These community resources also give providers technical assistance to better serve the children in their care. Contact information for the CCR&R centers can be found on the Child Care Services web page.

Child Care Resource & Referral – Complaint Hotline

NASHVILLE AREA: 615-313-4820
LONG DISTANCE: 1-800-462-8261

If you have a concern about an existing child care agency or wish to report an illegal operation you can call the Department's complaint hotline.

Department of Children's Services
Report Child Abuse or Neglect Hotline
1-877-237-0004

You can access the Department's website at:
<http://state.tn.us/humanserv>

A wealth of child care information can be found on the Department's website.

You can:

- **Learn more about the rules**
- **Learn more about the types of regulated care**
- **Locate a child care provider**
- **Learn more about the Report Card and Star Quality Program**
- **Locate the local child care licensing office**
- **Review the current personal safety curriculum**
- **View recent correspondence to providers**
- **Read about new initiatives**