

Family and Group Family Child Care

General Licensing Information

Minnesota Department of **Human Services**
Division of Licensing



I'd like to start a child care business in my home, but I understand I need a license.

Why is it important to license child care?

Parents who use child care entrust their children to a care provider for many hours each day. Licensing child care providers helps protect the health and safety of children by requiring that certain minimum standards of care are met.

What do I need to do to get a license?

In Minnesota, family and group family child care must meet certain standards for caregiver qualifications, physical environment, number of children per caregiver, behavior guidance, required policies and records, activities and equipment. This brochure, explains, in general, what you need to do to obtain a family child care license. It does not include all specific requirements. Please refer to Minnesota Rules, parts 9502.0300 to 9502.0445 (commonly called Rule 2) for a complete description. These can be found in the reference section of your local library or by visiting the Web site for the Office of the Revisor of Statutes at www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/.

What is meant by "family child care" and "group family child care"?

Family child care is for 10 children or fewer at one time; no more than 6 may be younger than school age.

Group family child care is for up to 14 children at any one time.

The total number of children for both licenses includes the children of any caregiver when the children are present in the residence.

What qualifications are needed to be a caregiver?

A family child care or group family child care provider must be

- An adult and
- Physically able to care for children.

Providers and all adult caregivers who are assisting with care on a regular basis must have had a physical exam within 12 months before obtaining their initial license.

In addition, group family child care providers must meet **one** of the following experience or educational qualifications:

1. A minimum of one year as a family child care provider; or
2. A minimum of six months as a licensed family child care provider plus certain training and experience described in Minnesota rules; or
3. Certification or licensure in the specified child development or early childhood program, child development assistant program, current prekindergarten license, K-6 teaching degree or documentation of six months' experience as a full-time teacher at a licensed child care center.

Training

Initial training: Providers must complete six to nine hours of training in a combined course of child-related first aid and CPR and six hours of training in child development and child care within one year of or one year prior to initial licensure.

Ongoing training: Each year providers must complete six hours of training in one or more of 14 specified subject areas, such as child development, child abuse and parent-provider relationships.

Adult caregiver and helper training: Each adult caregiver must have six hours of training in the specified areas within one year after the date of initial employment and six hours of training annually after that.

Behavior guidance

Caregivers give each child guidance that helps the child acquire a positive self-image, self-control and teaches acceptable behavior. Corporal punishment is prohibited. A time-limited separation of a child from a group must be appropriate to the age of the child and the circumstances.

Evaluations

To protect the health and safety of children, DHS or the local social service agency may, based on reasonable cause, require a physical, mental health or chemical dependency or abuse evaluation of any caregiver or person who lives in the residence or who is present during the hours of care.

What are the rules regarding space and the condition of my home?

Family child care may be provided in the license holder's own residence or someone else's residence where the provider is the primary caregiver.

Indoor space:

A minimum of 35 square feet of usable indoor space is required for each child.

Outdoor play space:

There must be an outdoor play space of at least 50 square feet per child, adjacent to the residence for regular use, or a park or playground within 1,500 feet of the residence.

Health and safety codes:

The child care residence must meet additional physical environment and health and sanitation standards. For example, a fire code inspection may be required under certain circumstances. If the local social service agency has reasonable cause to believe a hazardous condition



exists, a fire, building or health inspection also may be required.

What about activities and equipment?

Providers must have enough appropriate equipment for the number and ages of children in care.

How many children may I care for at any one time?

It depends on the ages of the children and how many other caregivers are in the home. Several classes of licenses are issued based on these factors. For example, for a C3 license, the provider must maintain a child to adult ratio of 14 to 2 and is limited to 10 total children under school age. Of those, no more than 4 may be infants and toddlers and of this number, no more than 3

may be infants. Other license classes allow different ratios and combinations of school-age children, infants and toddlers. For a more thorough explanation of ratios and age restrictions, please consult Rule 2 or your county licensing office.

What kinds of paperwork or records am I required to maintain?

Written policies, procedures

You must have the following written information available for the parents of children in care and for the licensing agency:

- Ages and numbers of children in care
- Hours and days of operation
- Meals and snacks to be served
- Labeling requirements for food brought from the child's home
- Sleeping and rest arrangements
- Nondiscrimination practices
- Policies for the care of ill children, disease notification, immunizations, and medication permission policies
- Emergency, fire and storm plans and monthly fire drills
- Seat belt and transportation plans, field trip and transportation permission requirements; fees
- Termination notice procedures

- Helper and substitute plans for emergencies, vacations or holidays
- Pets
- Insurance coverage
- A copy of Rule 2.

Records

Before admitting a child, you must obtain from the parents the following information:

- Admission and arrangements form
- Special instructions in writing about toilet training, eating, sleeping, napping, allergies, and any health problems
- Immunization records
- Signed written consent to obtain medical care
- Written permission to transport children
- Signed authorization to release the child from care to a parent or person authorized by the parent.

How do I apply for a license? What is involved in the application process?

Request an application from your local social services agency, usually the county human services department.

You may be asked to attend an orientation meeting to receive the application, review the licensing standards and learn about the licensing process. Submit a completed license application to the local social services agency.

The applicant must be the person who will be the provider of care in the residence, present during hours of operation, and who will be legally responsible for the operation of the business. Or the applicant may be an employer who is providing child care services to the children of employees. The applicant must provide required identification and background information.

The local social services agency can help with the application process. When the agency has received a complete application, a county licensor will schedule an on-site licensing inspection of the residence.

Fire and building codes

Fire inspections are required for all new applicants for group family child care, as well as family child care residences under certain conditions, such as homes that use the basement for child care or family child care residences in mixed and multiple occupancy dwellings. The residence must meet local ordinances.

Background studies

At the time of application, the applicant, all caregivers and specified household members must have a background study conducted by the agency. This study reviews the person's criminal record and checks for any record of maltreatment.

Once the application process is completed, the agency forwards a recommendation to the Department of Human Services.

Who can I contact for more information?

Contact your local social services agency to request an application and information about the licensing process. You may also contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing, at 651-296-3971 for general information.

