

**Do you know** the questions to ask when selecting a child care provider? Check out our website for helpful resources. Look. Listen. Ask. Know *before* they go.



## Child Care Licensing Center Requirements



### For More Information

This brochure contains only a few of the laws and regulations that protect children in child care centers. For more information, visit our website or call one of the following DSS licensing offices:

- State Office** (Columbia): 1.800.556.7445
- Region I** (Greenville): 1.800.637.8550
- Region II** (Columbia): 1.888.202.1469
- Region III** (Charleston): 1.800.260.0211
- Region IV** (Florence): 1.800.464.9138
- Emergency:** 1.800.556.7445

[www.scchildcare.org](http://www.scchildcare.org)



Click here to find your  
child care provider

**South Carolina wants the best for its children** – and that means ensuring safe, nurturing environments in which they can thrive. Highlighted in this guide are just a few of the laws that licensed child care centers must follow to make sure that children are protected while in their care. The complete regulations may be found at [www.scchildcare.org](http://www.scchildcare.org) and have been developed because of the care and commitment of countless parents, state officials and licensed child care providers. Naturally, it is through the cooperation of all of these groups that our state will succeed in protecting our children and the bright futures that lie ahead of them.



Few factors determine the quality of a child's care more than the individuals providing it.

Therefore, it is crucial that all persons employed by a child care center meet certain criteria.

### Staff

- To work in a child care center, every adult must pass background checks, including federal and state fingerprint checks through the State Law Enforcement Division (SLED) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
- Anyone who has committed an act of child abuse or neglect as defined by law cannot work in a child care facility.
- Teachers must be at least 18 years old and center directors must be at least 21 years old, and they must meet certain educational requirements.
- Teachers must complete 15 hours of training each year; center directors are required to complete 20 hours.

## Supervision

There must always be a certain number of adults present to supervise children; this varies by the age of the children in the room.

In addition to ratios, there are other important regulations that are related to the supervision of children:

- Children must be directly supervised at all times by qualified staff.
- There must be at least 2 qualified child care staff in the center at all times.
- Staff must be in the same room with infants and toddlers and must keep the children within sight at all times.
- Staff must be physically near, aware, responsible, and able to intervene in the activities of pre-school and school-age children.
- Children in feeding chairs must be constantly supervised.
- Children must be accounted for at all times. This means that staff must have a written plan and account for children whether entering or exiting the center, or traveling from room to room within the center, or during transportation to a new location.
- Except in certain emergencies, centers can only serve as many children as they are licensed to keep. The capacity, or number of children, is listed on the license, and centers are required to post a copy of their license for everyone to see.



## Physical Site or Building

- All indoor and outdoor areas used by children must be safe, clean, and sanitary.
- Children must not be exposed to household cleaners or other poisonous substances.
- Floors, walls, ceilings, windows, doors, and other surfaces must be free from hazards such as peeling paint, broken or loose parts, loose or torn flooring or carpeting, sharp edges, splinters, exposed bolts, and openings that could cause a child harm.
- Playground equipment must be safe and sturdy, free from rust or poisonous materials, and cannot have sharp objects. It must also have approved cushioning material underneath it.
- Outdoor metal equipment must be located in shaded areas that are protected from the sun.



## Health and Safety

- Staff must make sure that the hands and faces of children are clean.
- Furniture, toys, and other equipment that come into contact with the mouths of children must be washed and sanitized immediately.
- Linens, blankets, cribs, cots, and mats must be cleaned at least weekly.
- Staff should wash their hands frequently, especially after diapering children.
- Centers must have fire and health inspections.
- There must be at least one staff member trained in CPR and First Aid present in the center at all times.
- Centers should have written plans for emergencies, including a plan for evacuating the children from the center in the event of a fire.

The following staff-to-child ratios apply most of the time. There may be different requirements for nap times or when children are engaged in swimming pool activities.

Please visit the website at [www.sccchildcare.org](http://www.sccchildcare.org) for a complete list.

AGE RANGE	RATIO
birth to 1 year	1 to 5
1 to 2 years	1 to 6
2 to 3 years	1 to 8
3 to 4 years	1 to 12

AGE RANGE	RATIO
4 to 5 years	1 to 17
5 to 6 years	1 to 20
6 to 12 years	1 to 23

## Other Program Requirements

- There must be a written, planned, daily program of activities for children.
- Written parental consent is required for center staff to give medication to any child.
- If there is a medical emergency, staff must take the child's emergency information with them to the hospital and must remain with the child until the parents arrive.
- Food must be served that suits the child's age and appetite, and second portions must be made available to the child.
- All food must be properly labeled and stored to protect against contamination.
- There will be at least two unannounced visits each year from DSS Licensing staff.
- Infants should not be left in cribs all day.
- All cribs must meet federal standards.

## Incident Reporting

Any injury or accident that results in medical treatment for a child must be reported to DSS and the parents must be notified immediately. The following must be reported:

- Any death occurring at the center.
- Any child who is missing or left unattended in a vehicle.
- Any major structural damages or man-made disasters that cause a facility to close.
- Any charges or convictions of crimes against the owner, director, or staff of a center.
- Any suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Any instance affecting the health and safety of the children that requires a fireman or policeman to come to the center.