Child Care Regulations in California

Child care is regulated differently in every state and sometimes even in different counties or cities in the same state. In California, the Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services licenses child care centers, infant child care centers, child care centers for mildly ill children, school-age child care centers, family child care homes, both large and small, as well as specialized small family homes. However, small family homes take care of children who are adjudged to be dependents of either the court or county, and fall outside the realm of parents or legal guardians seeking child care. As such, these licensed providers are excluded from this guide.

Other types of local regulations, such as zoning, health, building, and fire safety codes, may also apply to child care facilities.

This guide explains some of the levels of quality required by child care regulations in California; it should not be used as an all-inclusive listing of the detailed regulations for child care in the state. Some child care programs in the state operate at this level and some well above it. As a parent, you have your own standards and will look for providers you trust to meet them. Over time, your informed consumer choice and cooperation with the licensing agency can help raise the quality of child care in your community.

Both the law and licensing requirements are subject to change. To ensure that you have accurate and complete information, check with the licensing office to see whether there have been any changes since the information in this guide was last updated.

Types of care that must be licensed
Child care licensing is a type of regulatory activity in which the state authorizes an individual or a group to operate a child care facility. The Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services is responsible for monitoring compliance with state standards, establishing procedures for revoking a license, and providing appeal mechanisms.
In California, the following forms of child care must be licensed:

- **Child care centers.** Less than 24-hour nonmedical care for children in a group setting. A combination center may be licensed for more than one type of care and must follow both sets of regulations. Some child care centers are subdivided into the following and are described later in this guide: infant care centers, child care centers for mildly ill children, and school-age child care centers. These primarily follow the guidelines for child care centers, but they have additional protocol that they must follow.

- **Large family child care homes.** Less than 24-hour nonmedical care in a provider’s own home for up to 14 children, including children under 10 years old who reside at the home.

- **Small family child care homes.** Less than 24-hour nonmedical care in a provider’s own home for up to eight children, including children under 10 years old who reside at the home.

More detailed information about these types of providers can be found later in this guide.

**Types of care that may operate without a license**

Some types of child care are not required to be licensed by the state. There are no agencies investigating or regulating these providers, so be sure to thoroughly check a provider’s background and experience before choosing this type of care.

In California, the following forms of child care are exempt from licensing:

- Care provided by a relative or guardian
- Care for the children of only one family at a time in addition to the provider’s own children
- Care that is provided cooperatively among parents when no fee is charged and no more than 12 children are receiving care
- Certain public or private recreation programs.
- Any program that operates only one day per week for no more than four hours on that one day.

**Age-group definitions**

- **Infant:** child from birth to under 2 years
- **Toddler:** child between the ages of 18 and 30 months (the overlap of ages between 18 months to under 2 years between the infants and the toddlers has to do with
placement of specified ages into specific child care rooms at child care centers; please see later in this guide for additional information)

- Preschooler: child between 30 months and up to kindergarten age (enrolled in kindergarten)
- School-age child: child enrolled in first grade or above, or in a child care program providing care and supervision exclusively to children enrolled in kindergarten and above

Subsidized child care
The Child Development Division of the California Department of Education makes funds available to families to assist them with child care payments. The state contracts directly with child care centers and family child care homes for care. Eligibility is based on family size and income or situation. Recipients of these funds must demonstrate a need for child care, which usually means they must be working or in training for employment in order to qualify. For further information about program availability and how to qualify, contact:

Child Development Division
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 6308
Sacramento, CA 95814
916-322-6233

Whom to contact
For more detailed information regarding child care regulations in California, to obtain a copy of the state standards, or to report licensing violations, contact your local office or go to the Web site at www.ccll.ca.gov/ChildCareL_1728.htm.

Following are the local offices for the Community Care Licensing Division:

Northern California offices
Northern Child Care Area Office (main office)
8745 Folsom Boulevard, Suite 130
Sacramento, CA 95826
916-229-4500

Bay Area Regional Office
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1102, MS: 29-04
Oakland, CA 94612
510-622-2602
Counties: Alameda and Contra Costa
Chico Regional Office
520 Cohasset Road, Suite 6, MS: 29-05
Chico, CA 95926
530-895-5033
Counties: Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, and Yuba

Fresno Regional Office
770 East Shaw Avenue, Suite 300, MS: 29-02
Fresno, CA 93710
559-243-4588
Counties: Alpine, Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Stanislaus, and Tulare

Peninsula Regional Office
801 Traeger Avenue, Suite 100, MS: 29-24
San Bruno, CA 94066
650-266-8843
Counties: Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Solano

River City Regional Office
8745 Folsom Boulevard, Suite 200, MS: 19-29
Sacramento, CA 95826
916-229-4530
Counties: Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Tuolumne, and Yolo

San Jose Regional Office
111 North Market Street, Suite 300, MS: 29-08
San Jose, CA 95113
408-277-1286
Counties: Monterey, San Benito, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz

Southern California offices
Southern Child Care Area Office (Main Office)
6167 Bristol Parkway, Suite 400, MS: 29-13
Culver City, CA 90230
310-342-6846
Child abuse reporting
The staffs of all child care facilities are required to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the licensing agency and to police. To report suspected child abuse, contact local law enforcement or your county child protective services office.
Alameda
Director, Alameda County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 12941
Oakland, CA 94607
510-259-1800

Alpine
Director, Alpine County CWS Agency
75-A Diamond Valley Road
Markleeville, CA 96120
888-755-8099, 24 hours
530-694-2235

Amador
Director, Amador County CWS Agency
1003 Broadway
Jackson, CA 95642
209-223-6550 day
209-223-1075 night

Butte
Director, Butte County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 1649
Oroville, CA 95965
530-538-7617 Oroville
800-400-0902 others

Calaveras
Director, Calaveras County CWS Agency
891 Mountain Ranch Road
San Andreas, CA 95249-9709
209-754-6452 day
209-754-6500 night

Colusa
Director, Colusa County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 370
Colusa, CA 95932
530-458-0280
Contra Costa
Director, Contra Costa County CWS Agency
40 Douglas Drive
Martinez, CA 94553-4068
925-646-1680 central
925-374-3324 west
925-427-8811 east

Del Norte
Director, Del Norte County CWS Agency
880 Northerest Drive
Crescent City, CA 95531
707-464-3191

El Dorado
Director, El Dorado County CWS Agency
3057 Briw Road
Placerville, CA 95667
530-544-7236 S. Tahoe
530-642-7100 Placerville

Fresno
Director, Fresno County CWS Agency
2600 Ventura Street
Fresno, CA 93750
559-255-8320

Glenn
Director, Glenn County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 611
Willows, CA 95988
530-934-6520

Humboldt
Director, Humboldt County CWS Agency
929 Koster Street
Eureka, CA 95501
707-445-6180

Imperial
Director, Imperial County CWS Agency
2995 South 4th Street, Suite 105
El Centro, CA 92243
760-337-7750
Inyo
Director, Inyo County CWS Agency
Courthouse Annex, Drawer A
Independence, CA 93526-0601
760-872-1727

Kern
Director, Kern County CWS Agency
PO Box 511
Bakersfield, CA 93302
661-631-6011 days
661-633-7227 voice mail for mandatory reporting

Kings
Director, Kings County CWS Agency
1200 South Drive
Hanford, CA 93230
559-582-8776

Lake
Director, Lake County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 9000
Lower Lake, California 95457
707-262-0235

Lassen
Director, Lassen County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 1359
Susanville, CA 96130
530-251-8277 day
530-257-6121 sheriff

Los Angeles
Director, Los Angeles County CWS Agency
425 Shatto Place
Los Angeles, CA 90020
800-540-4000 in state
213-639-4500 out of state
Madera
Director, Madera County CWS Agency
700 East Yosemite Avenue
Madera, CA 93638
559-675-7829
800-801-3999

Marin
Director, Marin County CWS Agency
20 North San Pedro Road, Suite 2028
San Rafael, CA 94903
415-499-7153
415-479-1601 TDD

Mariposa
Director, Mariposa County CWS Agency
5186 Highway 49 North
Mariposa, CA 95338
209-966-3030

Mendocino
Director, Mendocino County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 1060
Ukiah, CA 95482
707-463-5600

Merced
Director, Merced County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 112
Merced, CA 95341
209-385-3000 ext 5856 or 5858

Modoc
Director, Modoc County CWS Agency
120 North Main Street
Alturas, CA 96101
530-233-6501 day
530-233-4416 night
Mono
Director, Mono County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 576
Bridgeport, CA 93517
760-932-7755
800-340-5411

Monterey
Director, Monterey County CWS Agency
1000 South Main Street, Suite 209-A
Salinas, CA 93901
831-755-4661

Napa
Director, Napa County CWS Agency
2261 Elm Street
Napa, CA 94559
707-253-4261

Nevada
Director, Nevada County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 1210
Nevada City, CA 95959
530-273-4291

Orange
Director, Orange County CWS Agency
888 North Main Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701
714-245-6295
714-940-1000 registry

Placer
Director, Placer County CWS Agency
11730 Enterprise Drive
Auburn, CA 95603
530-886-5450

Plumas
Director, Plumas County CWS Agency
270 County Hospital Road, Suite 207
Quincy, CA 95971
530-283-6350
Riverside
Director, Riverside County CWS Agency
4060 County Circle Drive
Riverside, CA 92503
800-442-4918
800-582-9893 Rancho Mirage

Sacramento
Director, Sacramento County CWS Agency
7001 East Parkway, Suite A
Sacramento, CA 95823
916-875-5437

San Benito
Director, San Benito County CWS Agency
1111 San Felipe Road, Suite 206
Hollister, CA 95023
831-636-4190 day
831-636-4330 night

San Bernardino
Director, San Bernardino County CWS Agency
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, 5th floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415
800-827-8724
909-350-4949
909-422-3266 night

San Diego
Director, San Diego County CWS Agency
1700 Pacific Highway, M.S. P501
San Diego, CA 92101
858-560-2191

San Francisco
Director, San Francisco County CWS Agency
P. O. Box 7988
San Francisco, CA 94120
415-558-2650
800-856-5553
San Joaquin
Director, San Joaquin County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 201056
Stockton, CA 95201-3006
209-468-1333

San Luis Obispo
Director, San Luis Obispo County CWS Agency
P. O. Box 8119
San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8119
805-781-5437
800-834-5437

San Mateo
Director, San Mateo County CWS Agency
400 Harbor Boulevard
Belmont, CA 94002
650-595-7922
800-632-4615

Santa Barbara
Director, Santa Barbara County CWS Agency
234 Camino Del Remedio
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
800-367-0166 day
805-737-7078 Lompoc
805-683-2724 night

Santa Clara
Director, Santa Clara County CWS Agency
1725 Technology Drive
San Jose, CA 95110
408-299-2071 North
408-683-0601 South

Santa Cruz
Director, Santa Cruz County CWS Agency
1000 Emeline Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-454-4222
831-763-8850 Watsonville
Shasta
Director, Shasta County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 496005
Redding, CA 96049-6005
530-225-5144

Sierra
Director, Sierra County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 1019
Loyalton, CA 90118
530-289-3720
530-993-6720

Siskiyou
Director, Siskiyou County CWS Agency
818 South Main Street
Yreka, CA 96097
530-841-4200 day
530-842-7009 night

Solano
Director, Solano County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 4090, MS: 3-220
Fairfield, CA 94533
800-544-8696

Sonoma
Director, Sonoma County CWS Agency
P. O. Box 1539
Santa Rosa, CA 95402-1539
707-565-4304

Stanislaus
Director, Stanislaus County CWS Agency
P. O. Box 42
Modesto, CA 95353-0042
800-558-3665

Sutter
Director, Sutter County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 1535
Yuba City, CA 95992-1535
530-822-7155
Tehama
Director, Tehama County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 1515
Red Bluff, CA 96080
800-323-7711
530-527-9416

Trinity
Director, Trinity County CWS Agency
P.O. Box 1470
Weaverville, CA 96093-1470
530-623-1314

Tulare
Director, Tulare County CWS Agency
5957 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277
800-331-1585 county only
559-730-2677

Tuolumne
Director, Tuolumne County CWS Agency
20075 Cedar Road North
Sonora, CA 95370
209-533-5717 day
209-533-4357 night

Ventura
Director, Ventura County CWS Agency
505 Poli Street
Ventura, CA 93001
805-654-3200

Yolo
Director, Yolo County CWS Agency
25 North Cottenwood Street
Woodland, CA 95695
530-669-2345/46 day
530-666-8920 night
888-400-0022
Child care centers and infant care centers

Licenses
- Must be licensed.
- License must be clearly posted.
- General or professional liability insurance is not required.
- License does not expire unless revoked or surrendered.
- Staff must attend an orientation program.
- Licensee must meet the financial needs of the center by maintaining a plan to ensure the operating costs of the facility.

State inspection
- Announced inspection is made prior to initial licensing.
- Unannounced inspection is made annually, after a complaint, and within 10 days of a deficiency correction deadline.

Staff:child ratios
- Birth to 18 months: one adult for up to three children (1:3) or one teacher for up to 18 children (1:18)
- 18 to 36 months: one adult for up to four children (1:4) or one teacher for up to 16 children (1:16)
- 36 months to kindergarten-age: one adult for up to eight children (1:8) or one teacher for up to 24 children (1:24)
- Kindergarten-age to 14 years: one adult for up to 14 children (1:14) or one teacher for up to 28 children (1:28)

In mixed-age groups, if the group mix is 50 percent of any specific age group, the younger age group ratio is required.

Parent cooperative centers (which have more than 12 children): one adult for up to five children (1:5) and one teacher for up to 25 children (1:25).
Child development programs funded by the Department of Education

- Birth to 18 months: one adult for up to three infants (1:3) and one teacher for up to 18 infants (1:18) at a child care center; at an infant care center, one teacher to four infants (1:4), or a fully qualified infant teacher supervising up to 12 infants, along with an infant aide for up to four infants (1:3:12)

- 18 to 36 months: one adult for up to four toddlers (1:4) and one teacher for up to 16 toddlers (1:16)

- 36 months to kindergarten-age: one adult for up to eight children (1:8) and one teacher for up to 24 children (1:24)

- Kindergarten-age to 14 years: one adult for up to 14 children (1:14) and one teacher for up to 28 children (1:28)

In mixed-age groups, the staff:child ratio for the youngest child applies if children in the youngest age group make up at least 50 percent of the group. Otherwise, staff:child ratios can remain separate.

When a toddler component is incorporated into the infant care center, a center will submit an amended application. Children between the ages of 18 and 30 months old may be placed in the toddler program. No child younger than 18 months old may be placed in the toddler program. A ratio of one teacher to each six toddlers (1:6) must be maintained

Maximum group size

- Must maintain staff:child ratios and license capacity

Staff qualifications

Child care center director, infant care center director, and assistant infant care center director

- Must be at least 18 years old.

- Must have a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma (GED).

- Must have a combination of education and experience, including one of the following:
  - Fifteen college-level units in early childhood education or development, plus three units in staff administration and four years of teaching experience
  - Infant care director must have three credits related specifically to the care of infants
  - An assistant infant care director must be present if the center has 25 or more infants
  - An assistant infant care director must be a qualified infant care teacher
An assistant infant care director must have three college credits in employee relations, or complete these credits within one year of being employed; must also work under the supervision of the infant or child care center director.

- Associate’s degree with a major in early childhood education or child development with three units in administration or staff relations, plus two years of teaching experience.

- A child care center director with a bachelor’s degree with a major in early childhood education or child development or administration or staff relations, plus one year of teaching experience; or a child development site supervisor permit or child development program director permit issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Child care teacher, infant care teacher, and fully qualified infant care teacher

- Must be at least 18 years old.

- A child care teacher must have completed at least six college course units in early childhood education or development; or must have a child development assistant permit issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing; or must have a Regional Occupation Program Certificate of Training in Child Care Occupations issued by a regional occupational program, along with completion of 95 hours of classroom instruction in child development and 150 hours in supervised field experience.

- An infant care teacher must have three college credits in early childhood education and three credits related to infant care, or complete two credits each semester until the requirements have been fulfilled.

- A fully qualified infant care teacher must have 12 college credits in child development education, three of which must be related to care of infants; also must have six months of experience in a licensed infant care center or comparable facility.

- Child care teachers must continue training until one of the following is met for full qualification status:
  - Twelve postsecondary college-level units in early childhood education or development plus six months of experience
  - Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and six months of experience
  - CDA Teacher, Teacher, or Master Teacher Permit issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
  - Regional Occupational Program Certificate from a Western Association of Schools and Colleges accredited program
Teacher’s aide and infant care aide
• May be under 18 years old if a high school graduate or in an occupational program conducted by a high school or college.
• Must be supervised by a teacher.
• May aid in supervision with a fully qualified teacher if already completed six postsecondary college-level units in early childhood education and two units in early childhood each semester while employed.

Staff training
• Must have training in nutrition, sanitation, provision of child care supervision, assisting with self-administered medications, illness recognition, and availability of community services and resources.
• Must have special training to care for infants and mildly ill children.
• Directors and teachers must have 15 hours of training in preventive health practices, including pediatric CPR and first aid, infectious diseases, and injury prevention.

CPR and first aid
• One staff member who has pediatric CPR, pediatric first aid, and a certificate of completion in preventive health practices must be on-site at all times.

Staff medical requirements
• Must have a health statement.
• Must have had a TB test not more than one year before, or seven days after, beginning work.

Staff background checks
• Each staff must obtain a California clearance or a criminal record examination, which will include fingerprinting and a copy of a driver’s license or some other valid identification.

Discipline
• Certain methods of discipline, including corporal punishment, are prohibited.

Parents’ rights
• Must receive a copy of the Notification of Parents’ Rights and of the background check form.
• May request the names of anyone exempt from criminal background checks.
• May drop in unannounced at any time once the child is enrolled.
• Must be allowed to file a complaint without discrimination or retaliation.
Child Care Regulations in California

• Must be allowed to review reports of inspections and substantiated complaints from the last three years.

• May request in writing that a parent not be allowed to pick up a child if attached to a court order.

• All programs must maintain close contact with parents and must inform parents about child’s incidents, activities, adjustments, and development.

• Must meet with the staff before a child enrolls and on an ongoing basis.

• Must be notified of illness or injury above a minor cut.

**Health and safety requirements**

• Must have a plan of operation as outlined by the Department of Social Services.

• Personnel record for each staff member must be kept.

• Any center providing meals must meet code of federal regulation, both for adequate nutrition and food preparation and handling.

• Must not feed honey or corn syrup to infants.

• Must not use baby walkers.

• Must have fire and water clearance.

• Must have written disaster plans for fires and earthquakes.

• Must have emergency drills every six months.

• Must have 35 square feet of indoor space and 75 square feet of outdoor space per child.

• Inside temperature must be kept between 68 degrees and 85 degrees.

• Hot water must be kept between 105 degrees and 120 degrees.

• Must have a shaded area outside for the children.

• Must inspect sandboxes daily to ensure they are free of any foreign hazardous materials.

• Must have a disaster and casualty plan, including exit plans, means of transporting children, and communication with appropriate local agencies.

• Must conduct disaster drills at least once every six months.

• Must cover electrical outlets.

• Must put screens on all windows.
• Must store items labeled “keep out of reach of children,” chemicals, cleaning supplies, and other harmful products in a locked cabinet.

• Must use child gates to keep children under 5 years old away from stairs and out of dangerous areas.

• Outside play area must be surrounded by a fence that is at least 4 feet high.

• Must have a working telephone.

• Must have a first-aid kit.

• Must store all medications in a container with an unaltered label, proper documentation, and date identification.

• Swimming pools, hot tubs, spas, fish ponds, or similar bodies of water must be made inaccessible by a pool cover or fence at least 5 feet high with a self-latching gate that does not hide the pool from view. Wading pools are not subject to this mandate, as long as they are emptied after each use and are a size with sides low enough for the children to step out unassisted.

• Must fence playgrounds to prevent children from exiting.

• Must have at least one adult with a valid water safety certificate present during water activities; one supervising adult for every six children (1:6) must be present.

• Firearms are prohibited.

• Smoking is prohibited.

**Transportation**

• Only drivers licensed for the type of vehicle operated are permitted to transport children.

• The manufacturer’s rated seating capacity of the vehicle must not be exceeded.

• Motor vehicles used to transport children must be maintained in a safe operating condition.

• All vehicle occupants must be secured in an appropriate restraint system.

• Children must not be left in parked vehicles.

• Signs must be posted at the entrance of the child care center that provide the telephone number of the local health department and information on child passenger restraint systems.

**Child medical requirements**

• Must have a medical assessment within 30 days of admission; assessment must not be over a year old when obtained by the center.
• Must have a TB test within 30 days of admission.
• Must be immunized according to the state’s schedule (exemptions due to religious faith are permitted).
• Must keep a record of any child who has special needs or requires medications.
• Must keep a record of the ambulatory status for each child.
• Must have written permission to dispense prescription medications.

**Care for sick children**
• A child who becomes ill during the day must be isolated until a parent is able to pick him or her up.
• The area of isolation must be regularly supervised by the staff.
• A mat, couch, or bed must be made available to ill children.
• There must be one toilet and one basin separate from and in addition to any other toilet and basin used by the remaining staff or children.
• Centers are not permitted to admit sick children unless holding a separate license to care for mildly ill children.
• The state has adopted regulations for centers caring for mildly ill children, viewing them as separate centers or as separately licensed programs offered within a center.

**Child care centers for mildly ill children**

Child care centers for mildly ill children must follow the same guidelines as described in the child care center section of this guide, but particular areas may vary by not needing particular requirements, substituting requirements for other training, or requiring additional training beyond what is needed at the centers.

The following are the main points:
• Child care centers for mildly ill children must obtain a separate license.
• The director, teacher, and fully qualified teacher must complete three college credits in childhood illnesses and communicable diseases.
• The director must complete 15 hours of health and safety training, including CPR and first aid.
• The director or the teacher must have 15 hours of training in preventive health practices.
• All staff and volunteers must complete a minimum of 20 hours of training on the practices and procedures at a child care center for mildly ill children.

**Staff:child ratios**
- *Infant:* one teacher for up to three infants (1:3)
- *Preschooler:* one teacher for up to six preschool children (1:6)
- *School age:* one teacher for up to eight school-age children (1:8)

Staffing requirements for mixed-age groups are based on the age of the youngest child in the group.

Staffing requirements change if the children are napping or engaging in water activities.

**Daily inspection of illness**
- The licensee will not accept or keep any child with the following symptoms:
  - Body temperature: if the temperature exceeds 102 degrees (oral) or 103 degrees (rectal or per ear) or 101 degrees (under the arm), or
  - Rapid or labored breathing, or
  - Oral temperature of 101 degrees, rectal or ear temperature of 102 degrees or under-the-arm temperature of 100 degrees, and accompanied by stiff neck, lethargy, irritability, or persistent crying, or
  - Acute rash, or
  - Yellowing of the eyes or skin, or
  - Abdominal pain that is persistent or intermittent, or
  - Vomiting three or more times over a six-hour period, or
  - Diarrhea (five or more times in an eight-hour period), or
  - Other conditions determined by a qualified staff person

**Physical separation of children**
- Will include:
  - Separate rooms or moveable partitions
  - Separate toilet and hand washing facilities
  - Separate toys

**Isolation of children**
- Must have a separate door to the outside of the center
- Must have floor-to-ceiling walls
- Must have a separate ventilation system
• Must have separate toilet and hand washing facilities

• Must not be in any food preparation area

• Must have 15 square feet of indoor space for each cot, couch, crib bed, or floor mat

Observation
• Must observe and monitor behavior, temperature, breathing, vomiting, amount of food and fluid intake, color and consistency of bowel movements, and frequency of urination

Food
• Must prepare individual meals and snacks in accordance with the requirements of the plan of care

Personal services
• Must use disposable diapers; can use cloth diapers if specified in the plan of care, and if diapers have outer waterproof covers

General sanitation
• Children must not have access to items used by pets or animals.

• Must mop floors with a disinfectant daily; must vacuum carpets daily.

• Must disinfect walls and partitions monthly.

• Sinks used to wash infants must be disinfected after each use.

• Linens, towels, washcloths, and so on must be laundered daily.

• Must use single-use disposable cups or cups labeled with the child’s name.

School-age child care centers

School-age child care centers follow the same guidelines as child care centers, but particular areas may vary by not needing particular requirements, substituting requirements for other training, or requiring additional training beyond what is needed at the child care centers.

The following are the main points:

• A special license is issued to school-age child care centers.

• A school-age child is one defined as at least 4 years and 9 months old or currently enrolled in a school.
All school-age child care centers will have a director, and this director may substitute six credits of the early childhood education with six credits appropriate to elementary school-age children.

The director may substitute three credits or 60 training hours in both administration courses and childhood education with other courses, such as recreation, physical education, psychology, nursing, home economics, or some other appropriate courses.

A director who has an associate’s or a bachelor’s degree may also qualify for the position if at least three credits are in early childhood education and three credits are in administration.

Other vocational, professional, or standard training programs may be acceptable.

School-age teachers

The teacher may substitute 20 training hours for each of the required units of education in recreation, physical education, human services courses, home economics, or other appropriate courses.

Other vocational, professional, or standard training programs may be acceptable.

Teacher:child ratio

One teacher for up to 14 children (1:14)

One teacher and one aide for up to 28 children (2:28)

Two teachers and one aide for up to 42 children (3:42)

Two teachers and two aides for up to 56 children (4:56)

Medical assessment documentation immunization records are not required if the school-age children are enrolled in a public or private school. However, a health background is necessary, including such items as allergies and serious injuries.

Physical separation between school-age children and other children is required, except when a joint planned activity is scheduled.

Family child care homes (large and small)

Licenses

Must be licensed.

Must have either liability insurance of up to $100,000 per occurrence, and $300,000 in total annual aggregate, or signed acknowledgment from parents that the home is not insured.

License does not expire unless revoked or surrendered.
State inspection
• Prelicensing visit is announced.

• Fire safety clearance must be obtained for a large family child care home, but not for a small family child care home.

• Unannounced inspection as deemed necessary by the department, but no less than once every five years.

• Unannounced inspection within 10 days of a complaint.

• Additional unannounced inspections of 10 percent of homes annually.

Staff: child ratio and maximum group size
Small family child care home
• A provider may care for between six and eight children without an additional adult attendant if the following conditions are met:
  - At least two of the children are at least 6 years old
  - No more than two infants are cared for during any time when more than six children are in care
  - The licensee notifies each parent that the facility is caring for two additional school-age children, and that there may be up to seven or eight children in the home at one time

• In short, one provider for up to eight children (1:8).

Large family child care home
• A provider and an assistant may care for between 12 and 14 children, including the provider’s and assistant’s own children under 10 years old, if the following conditions are met:
  - At least two of the children are at least 6 years old
  - No more than three infants are cared for during any time when more than 12 children are being cared for
  - The licensee notifies each parent that the facility is caring for two additional school-age children and that there may be up to 13 or 14 children in the home at one time

• In short, one provider and one assistant for up to 12 children (2:12), or in the circumstances listed above, one provider and one assistant for up to 14 children (2:14); in both cases, no more than four infants may be in care

Staff qualifications
• Must be at least 18 years old.
• Must have one year of experience as a licensed small family child care home provider, or as an administrator or a teacher in a licensed child care center.

• Must understand requirements and regulations.

• Must reside in home.

**Staff training**
• Provider must complete 15 hours of training in preventive health practices.

**CPR and first aid**
• Provider must be certified in pediatric CPR and first aid, and must be present at all times at a small family child care home; only one person at a large family child care home needs to be certified and present.

**Staff medical requirements**
• Physical exam may be requested.

• TB test is required.

**Staff background checks**
• All adult staff and household members must have a criminal background check with fingerprints cleared through the California Department of Justice.

• Child Abuse Central Index check is required.

**Discipline**
• Must be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including, but not limited to interference with eating, sleeping or toileting; or withholding shelter, clothing, medication, or aids to physical functioning

**Parents’ rights**
• Must receive a copy of the Notification of Parents’ Rights and of the background check form

• May request the names of anyone exempted from criminal background checks

• Must be notified and receive from the licensee a written notice that lists persons not allowed in the home while children are present

• May drop in unannounced at any time once the child is enrolled

• Must be allowed to file a complaint without discrimination or retaliation

• Must be allowed to review reports of inspections and substantiated complaints from the last three years
• May request in writing that a parent not be allowed to pick up a child if attached to a court order
• Must be notified of illness or injury beyond a minor cut

**Health and safety requirements**
• Must maintain emergency information on each child, including contact numbers of parent or guardian and physician.
• Must keep personnel records on each employee.
• Any center that offers an evening or overnight program must designate a director for each program.
• Unusual incidents or injuries must be reported to the licensing board.
• Must maintain adequate ventilation, heating, and cooling.
• Must cover electrical outlets.
• Must put screens on all windows.
• Must keep guns, other weapons, and poisons in a locked cabinet with ammunition stored separately.
• Must keep detergents and other cleaning products out of reach of children.
• Must use child gates to keep children under 5 years old away from stairs and out of dangerous areas.
• Must conduct fire and disaster drills every six months.
• Must have a fire extinguisher.
• Must have a smoke alarm.
• Must have a working phone.
• Swimming pools, in-place wading pools, hot tubs, spas, fish ponds, and similar bodies of water must be made inaccessible by a pool cover or a fence at least 5 feet high with a self-latching gate that does not hide the pool from view. Above-ground pools that are 5 feet high or more must barricade or make inaccessible the access ladder or entry to the pool.
• Baby walkers, bouncers, or similar items are prohibited.
• Smoking is prohibited in areas of the home where care is provided during the hours when the home is in operation.
• Must ensure that food brought in by child is clearly marked with that child’s name.
• Must have a written disaster plan.

Transportation
• Only drivers licensed for the type of vehicle operated are permitted to transport children.
• The manufacturer’s rated seating capacity of the vehicle must not be exceeded.
• Motor vehicles used to transport children must be maintained in a safe operating condition.
• Age-appropriate child safety restraints are required.
• Children may never be left unattended or ever left by themselves in a parked vehicle.

Child medical requirements
• Must have a medical assessment.
• Must have a TB test within 30 days of admission.
• Must be immunized according to the state’s schedule.

Care for sick children
• When the provider suspects a child has a communicable disease, the child must be separated and the parents called and asked to remove the child.
• Provider may choose to care for mildly ill children.