

# *Child Care Regulations in Alaska*

## **Overview**

A summary of child care regulations in Alaska.

- Types of care that must be licensed
- Types of care that may operate without a license
- Age-group definitions
- Subsidized child care
- Whom to contact
- Child abuse reporting
- Child care centers
- Child care group homes
- Child care homes

Child care is regulated differently in every state and sometimes even in different counties or cities in the same state. In Alaska, the Department of Health and Social Services's Division of Public Assistance Child Care Program Office licenses child care centers, child care group homes, and child care homes. The city of Anchorage has its own regulations for child care centers. Other types of local regulation, such as zoning, health, building, and fire safety codes, may also apply to child care facilities.

This guide explains the level of quality required for child care regulations in Alaska. 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 gives permission to an individual or a group to operate a child care facility. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services's Division of Public Assistance Child Care Program Office is responsible for monitoring compliance with state standards, establishing procedures for revoking a license, and providing appeal mechanisms.

In Alaska, the following forms of child care must be licensed:

- *Child care centers.* Full- or part-time care in a nonresidential setting for 13 or more children. In Alaska, this includes nursery schools, pre-kindergartens, and preschools. In Anchorage, a child care center license is required to care for more than six children unrelated to the licensed provider.
- *Child care group homes.* Full- or part-time care in a residence for between nine and 12 children, including the provider's own children.

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- *Child care homes.* Full- or part-time care in a residence for between four and eight children, including the provider's own children.

More detailed information about child care centers, child care group homes, and child care homes may 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 Alaska, the following forms of child care are exempt from licensing:

- Care provided in the child's home or by relatives
- Child care homes that provide care for fewer than 5 children unrelated to the provider (may be registered to receive public subsidy)
- Child care homes certified by the U.S. Coast Guard or U.S. Department of Defense

### **Age-group definitions**

- *Infant:* child between birth and 18 months
- *Toddler:* child between 9 and 35 months
- *Preschooler:* child between 3 and 4 years
- *Kindergartener:* child between 5 and 6 years, unless not old enough for kindergarten yet
- *School-age:* child between 7 and 18 years

### **Anchorage**

- *Infant:* child between 6 weeks and 11 months or older if not walking
- *Toddler 1:* child 12 to 18 months old and walking
- *Toddler 2:* child between 19 and 35 months
- *Preschooler:* child between 3 and 5 years if not in school
- *School-age:* child between 5 and 17 years

### **Subsidized child care**

The Alaska Division of Public Assistance makes funds available to low-income families to assist them with child care payments. For further information about program availability and how to qualify, contact the Child Care Assistance

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Program Office at 888-268-4632. You may also get information from your local child care licensing office.

#### **Whom to contact**

For more detailed information regarding child care regulations in Alaska, to obtain a copy of the state standards, or to report licensing violations, call:

#### **Alaska Department of Human Social Services, Division of Public Assistance Child Care Program Office**

619 East Ship Creek Avenue, Suite #203  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Main number:	907-269-4600
Message line:	800-764-9466
Southeast Alaska:	907-465-4756
Northern Alaska:	907-451-3198
South Central Alaska:	907-269-4500
Anchorage:	907-343-4758

#### **Child abuse reporting**

The staffs of all child care facilities are required to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the state or the police. To report suspected child abuse, call the Office of Children's Services at 800-478-4444.

## *Child care centers*

#### **Licenses**

- License is valid for the first year and then renewed every two years.
- Must be clearly posted.
- General and/or professional liability insurance not required.

#### **State inspection**

- State inspects before a license is issued, after first year, and at least every two years.
- Unannounced inspections are made randomly and after a complaint.

#### **Staff:child ratios**

- *Infant*: one staff for up to five infants (1:5)
- *Toddler*: one staff for up to six children (1:6)
- *Preschooler*: one staff for up to 10 children (1:10)

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- *Kindergartener*: one staff for up to 14 children (1:14)
- *School-age*: one staff for up to 18 children (1:18)

In mixed-age groups, the ratio for the youngest child applies.

##### **Anchorage**

- *Infant*: one staff for up to four infants (1:4)
- *Toddler 1*: one staff for up to five children (1:5)
- *Toddler 2*: one staff for up to six children (1:6)
- *Preschooler*: one staff for up to 10 children (1:10)
- *School-age*: one staff for up to 10 children (1:10)
- *13+ years*: one staff for up to 20 children (1:20)

##### **Maximum group size**

- May not exceed twice the maximum number of children allowed per caregiver

##### **Staff qualifications**

###### **Administrator**

- Must be at least 21 years old
- Must be high school graduate
- Must have completed 12 hours of college-level credit in early childhood education or have child development associate (CDA) credential
- Must be present at least half of the time center is open

###### **Associate administrator**

- Must be one for every 30 children in care
- Must meet the same qualifications as administrator

###### **Teacher**

- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must attend orientation

###### **Teacher's aide**

- Must be at least 18 years old unless supervised by a teacher or have completed a child care training course
- Must attend orientation

**Staff training**

- Twenty hours annually, which may include orientation and preservice training

**CPR and first aid**

- Training is required.
- Must have one staff on duty at all times with current CPR and first-aid training.

**Staff medical requirements**

- Required on request.
- TB test is not required.
- AIDS test is not required.
- Drug and alcohol tests are not required.
- Immunization for hepatitis B or measles is not required.

**Staff background checks**

- Child abuse clearance and criminal background check are required for all administrators and staff.
- Administrator and staff must provide three written references including two from nonrelatives.

**Discipline**

- Certain methods of discipline, including corporal punishment, are prohibited.

**Parent's rights**

- Must be informed of operating procedures
- Must be allowed free access to children and all areas used by them

**Health and safety requirements**

- Firearms not permitted.
- Electrical outlets must be covered.
- Must have emergency evacuation plan.
- Must conduct emergency evacuation drills monthly.
- Must have a working phone.
- Smoking is prohibited.

**Child medical requirements**

- Physical exam is not required.

- Immunizations are required.
- In a community where medical services are not available on a weekly basis, facilities may provisionally admit children without immunizations.

#### Care for sick children

- Mildly ill children may be admitted or allowed to remain in care if the care does not compromise the care of the other children.
- Children with a serious or communicable illness must have approval from a medical provider to attend.

### *Child care group homes*

#### **Licenses**

- License is valid for the first year and then renewed every two years.
- Must be clearly posted.
- General and/or professional liability insurance not required.

#### **State inspection**

- State inspects prelicensing, after first year, and at least every two years.
- Unannounced inspection randomly and after a complaint.

#### **Staff:child ratios**

- Two caregivers for no more than 12 children younger than 12 years old.
- Two caregivers for no more than five children younger than 30 months old, with no more than four infants not yet walking.
- One caregiver for up to 10 children with none younger than 30 months old or 12 school-age children if caregiver has been licensed for one year or has completed 12 hours of college-level credit in early childhood education.

#### **Maximum group size**

- Twelve children to two caregivers

#### **Staff qualifications**

##### Provider

- Must be at least 21 years old

##### Assistant

- Must be at least 18 years old

**Staff training**

- Twenty hours annually

**CPR and first aid**

- Training is required

**Staff medical requirements**

- Physical exam is required if deemed necessary.
- TB test is not required.
- AIDS test is not required.
- Drug and alcohol tests are not required.
- Immunization for hepatitis B or measles is not required.

**Staff background checks**

- Child abuse clearance and criminal background check required for providers, staff, and adults living in the home.
- Must provide three written references.

**Discipline**

- Certain methods of discipline, including corporal punishment, are prohibited.

**Parents' rights**

- Must be informed of operating procedures.
- Must be allowed free access to children and all areas used by them.

**Health & safety requirements**

- Firearms must be unloaded and inaccessible to children.
- Electrical outlets must be covered.
- Must have a working phone.
- Must have an emergency evacuation plan.
- Must conduct emergency evacuation drills monthly.
- Smoking is prohibited during hours of operation.

**Child medical requirements**

- Physical exam is not required.
- Immunizations are required.

- In a community where medical services are not available on a weekly basis, facilities may provisionally admit children without immunizations.

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### **Maximum group size**

- Twelve children to two caregivers

### **Staff qualifications**

#### Provider

- Must be at least 21 years old

#### Assistant

- Must be at least 18 years old

### **Staff training**

- Twenty hours annually

### **CPR and first aid**

- Training is required.

### **Staff medical requirements**

- Physical exam is required if deemed necessary.

- TB test is not required.
- AIDS test is not required.
- Drug and alcohol tests are not required.
- Immunization for hepatitis B or measles is not required.

#### **Staff background checks**

- Child abuse clearance and criminal background check are required for providers, staff, and adults living in the home.
- Must provide three written references.

#### **Discipline**

- Certain methods of discipline, including corporal punishment, are prohibited.

#### **Parent's rights**

- Must be informed of operating procedures.
- Must be allowed free access to children and all areas used by them.

#### **Health and safety requirements**

- Firearms must be unloaded and inaccessible to children.
- Electrical outlets must be covered.
- Must have a working phone.
- Must have an emergency evacuation plan.
- Must conduct emergency evacuation drills monthly.
- Smoking is prohibited during hours of operation.

#### **Child medical requirements**

- Physical exam is not required.
- Immunizations are required.
- In a community where medical services are not available on a weekly basis, facilities may provisionally admit children without immunizations.

#### **Care for sick children**

- Mildly ill children may be admitted or allowed to remain in care if the care does not compromise the care of the other children.
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## *Child care homes*

### **Licenses**

- License is valid for the first year and then renewed every two years.
- Must be clearly posted.
- General and/or professional liability insurance not required.

### **State inspection**

- State inspects prelicensing, after first year, and at least every two years.
- Unannounced inspections are made randomly and after a complaint.

### **Staff:child ratios**

- One caregiver for a total of no more than eight children younger than 12 years old, including the children related to the caregiver
- One caregiver for no more than three children younger than 30 months old or no more than two infants not yet walking

### **Maximum group size**

- Eight children

### **Staff qualifications**

#### **Provider**

- Must be at least 18 years old

#### **Assistant**

- Must be at least 18 years old

#### **Substitute**

- Must be available

### **Staff training**

- Twelve hours annually

### **CPR and first aid**

- Training is required.

### **Staff medical requirements**

- Physical exam is required if deemed necessary.
- TB test is not required.

- AIDS test is not required.
- Drug and alcohol tests are not required.
- Immunization for hepatitis B or measles is not required.

#### **Staff background checks**

- Child abuse clearance and criminal background check are required for providers, staff, and adults living in the home.
- Must provide three written references.

#### **Discipline**

- Certain methods of discipline, including corporal punishment, are prohibited.

#### **Parents' rights**

- Must be informed of operating procedures.
- Must be allowed free access to children and all areas used by them.

#### **Health and safety requirements**

- Must have at least one smoke detector and one fire extinguisher.
- Must have two means of emergency escape. Single family homes with only one exterior door may not have more than six children in their care at any given time.
- Flammable or combustible liquids must be stored out of children's reach.
- Firearms must be unloaded and inaccessible to children.
- Electrical outlets must be covered.
- Must have a working phone.
- Must have an emergency evacuation plan.
- Must conduct emergency evacuation drills monthly.
- Smoking is not permitted during hours of operation.

#### **Child medical requirements**

- Physical exam is not required.
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