

Basic Information: New Jersey Child Care Center Regulations

Child care center licensing regulations in New Jersey are minimum standards. High quality programs exceed the regulations, and many are nationally accredited by either the National Association for the Education of Young Children or National Child Care Association.

Although there are a few exceptions, facilities providing child care for more than five children at one time must be licensed by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Office of Licensing, under the regulations provided in New Jersey Administrative Code Chapter 122. For a copy of the regulations go to <http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/families/childcare>.

Child care center regulation compliance information is on file at the Office of Licensing. Parents can review any licensed center's files by scheduling an appointment at (877) 667-9845.

New Jersey does not require a certified teacher in every classroom. *The Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers* addresses the minimum educational requirements for staff. Directors, head teachers, and group teachers must complete 20 hours of staff development, while other staff working in the center must participate in at least eight hours of child development related training each year. The *Manual* defines the minimal child/staff ratio as:

AGE	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE	CHILD/STAFF RATIO
Under 18 months	20	4:1
18 months – 30 months	20	6:1
30 months – 4 years	20	10:1
4 years	20	12:1
5 years and older	20	15:1

All staff must be screened by having a Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) check and a criminal history/fingerprint check. To file an abuse or neglect complaint against a staff member, call (877) 652-2873. To file a non-abuse/neglect complaint against a staff member or center, call (877) 667-9845.

Parents of enrolled children may visit the program at any time during the center's hours of operation to observe its operation and program activities.

Prior to entering the center, all children under two and one-half (2 ½) years old must have a health examination by a physician within six months of enrollment. For children over two and one-half (2 ½) years old, the health examination must be within one year of enrollment.

Requirements regarding center operations, physical environment, health and safety measures, environmental sanitation, activities for children, discipline policies, transporting children, parent involvement, rest and sleep, medication administration, immunizations, sick child care, and environmental safety are detailed in the *Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers*.

If you would like to speak with a Child Care Connection counselor regarding center based child care, please call us at (609) 989-8101. Child Care Connection offers literature on Choosing Child Care and Quality Child Care, as well as many early childhood specific topics



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Revised July 2014

Basic Information: New Jersey Family Child Care Regulations

Family child care regulations in New Jersey are minimum standards. High quality programs exceed the regulations, and some may be nationally accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care.

Family child care registration in New Jersey is voluntary; however, once registered, family child care providers must agree to comply with the regulations. The family child care regulations are defined by the New Jersey Administrative Code 10:126, Subchapters 1, 5, and 6. The State has designated a child care resource and referral agency in each county to administer the registration operations. In Mercer County, the registering agency is Child Care Connection. The designated or sponsoring agency is authorized to register providers, issue new and renewal Certificates of Registration, provide administrative services, evaluate and monitor providers, maintain permanent records on each provider, and ensure that each provider complies with all applicable requirements. For a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Family Child Care Registration go to http://www.nj.gov/dcf/divisions/licensing/FCCmanual_09.pdf or the Child Care Connection Web site at www.childcareconnection-nj.org (click downloadable forms). The Manual contains regulations pertaining to child care site operations, physical environment, health and safety measures, environmental sanitation, activities for children, discipline policies, transporting children, parent involvement, rest and sleep, medication administration, immunizations, and sick child care.

Family child care (sometimes referred to as family day care) providers are private businesswomen/men operating in the residence where the services are provided. They are not employees of the registering agency. Family child care providers may care for no more than five children at one time depending on the age of those children. However, registered providers caring for up to three children under 12 months, or up to four children under two years with no more than two children under 12 months, must have an assistant present.

Family child care registration compliance information is on file at the sponsoring agency in each county. Parents can review any registered provider's files by scheduling an appointment at the sponsoring agency. Complaints regarding a registered family child care provider should be made to the sponsoring agency. All registration related complaints will be investigated.

Family child care providers must participate in eight hours of pre-service training in child development related topics prior to receiving the initial Certificate of Registration. An additional 20 hours must be completed every three years. Provider homes are inspected at the time of registration and also monitored. However, parents should be familiar with the regulations and maintain open communication with the provider regarding any concerns.

All family child care providers must submit specific application documents along with information regarding criminal convictions of the provider and any household members fourteen (14) years and older. The provider and household members over age fourteen (14) must be screened by having a Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) check to identify a history of substantiated child abuse. To file an abuse or neglect complaint against a registered provider, call (877) 652-2873. To file a non-abuse/neglect complaint against a registered provider in Mercer County, call Child Care Connection (609) 989-7770, ext. 132 or 154. All children under two and one-half (2 ½) years old must have a health examination by a physician within six months of enrollment or up to one month after admission and each year following. For children over two and one-half (2 ½) years old, the health examination must occur within one year of enrollment or up to one month after admission and each year following. Parents of enrolled children may visit the home anytime during the provider's hours of operation. To speak with a child care counselor about family child care, call (609) 989-8101.



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