

Utah Office of Child Care

# What is Quality Care For Young Children?



Department of Workforce Services  
Office of Child Care  
[jobs.utah.gov/occ](http://jobs.utah.gov/occ)  
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## Vision Statement

Quality, affordable child care is available to every child in Utah who needs it.



All young children need quality care, whether at home with a parent, being cared for by a relative, or in a child care setting. Quality care is care that promotes the optimal growth and development of children. This pamphlet focuses on quality care for children in child care settings. It addresses the following seven areas:

**Health**

**Safety**

**A Good Physical Environment**

**Caring Adult/Child Interactions**

**Activities to Promote Healthy Growth and Development**

**Well Trained Caregivers**

**Checking Child Care Licenses**

Indicators of quality care in each of these areas have been compiled using quality standards published by the American Public Health Association & the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Child Care Association, and the National Association for Family Child Care. In many instances these indicators define a higher level of quality than that required by Child Care Licensing.



## Quality Indicators for Health

☺ ☹  
Yes No

- Child care settings meet all of the health regulations of the Bureau of Licensing and the local health department.
- Meals and snacks are nutritious and appealing to children.
- Children always have access to clean drinking water both indoors and outdoors.
- Children are given opportunities for rest and sleep, but are not forced to. Quiet play is provided for children who are unable to sleep.
- All children in care are up-to-date on required immunizations.
- Toys and materials are cleaned and disinfected regularly, and as needed between scheduled cleanings. Infant toys in centers are cleaned daily.
- The facility is cleaned and trash emptied regularly. Bathroom fixtures are cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Children and staff wash their hands upon arrival, before and after preparing or serving food and eating, after toileting or diaper changes, after handling animals, after coming in from outdoors, and whenever hands come in contact with bodily fluids.
- Adults model healthy behaviors for children, including eating nutritious foods and not smoking or drinking alcoholic beverages in front of children.

## Quality Indicators for Safety



☺ ☹  
Yes No

- Child care settings meet all of the safety regulations of the Bureau of Licensing and local fire departments.
- Children are directly supervised at all times.
- Parents are allowed to visit the child care setting at any time their child is in care.
- There are working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in the building.
- A stocked first aid kit is available.
- Emergency numbers for fire, police, ambulance, and poison control are posted near the phone.
- There is always at least one adult present who is trained in first aid and CPR and emergency procedures.
- The environment is free of safety hazards for small children, including: firearms; flammable materials and matches or cigarette lighters; toxic substances and plants; sharp points or corners (sharp wood, metal, or concrete edges should be rounded); splinters; protruding nails or bolts; rusty metal; lead paint; toys, objects, or objects with removable parts with a diameter of less than 1 1/4 inch; uncovered electrical outlets; plastic bags; Styrofoam; dangling cords or ropes; or balloons.

## Quality Indicators for Safety (continued)

☺ ☹  
Yes No

- Outdoor play areas are protected from the street and other dangers (such as ditches, wells, ponds, or swimming pools) by a fence or a natural barrier such as a hedge.
- Climbing equipment, slides, and swings are securely anchored to the ground. Cushioning material such as wood chips, sand, or rubber mats are used under and around climbing equipment, slides, and swings.



## Quality Indicators for a Good Physical Environment

☺ ☹  
Yes No

- The indoor environment is clean, in good repair, well-lit, well-ventilated, and maintains appropriate temperatures for children.
- The outdoor environment is clean and in good repair, and is free of animal feces, broken glass, and trash.
- There is adequate indoor and outdoor play space so that children are not crowded.
- The outdoor play area includes sunlit areas, shaded areas, grass, hard surfaces for wheeled toys, an area for sand play, and equipment for climbing, riding, and balancing.
- The environment is warm, colorful, inviting, and interesting to children. Pictures and children's artwork are displayed at children's eye-level.
- There are separate areas for active play and quiet play, and for playing alone or with others. Quiet areas includes soft elements such as rugs, pillows, and soft furniture.
- Each child has a space for his or her personal belongings.
- Children's furniture and equipment is child-size.
- There are a variety of age-appropriate toys and materials available to children, in sufficient quantity. Toys and materials are kept in good repair.

## a Good Physical Environment (continued)

☺ ☹  
Yes No

- Children's toys and materials are organized on low, open shelves where children can use them independently.
- Toys and materials are changed or rotated on a regular basis so children do not become bored.



## Quality Indicators for Activities to Promote Healthy Growth & Development

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Yes No

- Daily play activities are provided to promote the physical, social/emotional, and intellectual development of each child. Activities are appropriate to the developmental levels of each child. A written plan outlining the daily activities is posted for parents to see.
- Children have opportunities to engage in the following activities: block building, dramatic play, art, music and dance, books and reading, science, pre-math, sand and water play, and play with manipulatives. There are sufficient toys and materials for these activities.
- Adults read and sing with children daily. Songs and books allow children to play and experiment with rhythm, rhyme, and repetition. Children also have opportunities to write (with scribbles, letter-like marks, and invented spelling) in play activities.
- Children have daily opportunities for outdoor play, weather permitting.
- Children's activities are hands-on, allowing them to actively explore and experiment with materials and their environment. Adults observe what interests children and plan activities based on the children's interests.
- Children's activities are multi-cultural, non-sexist, and non-stereotyping.
- Children are allowed to make choices about which activities they engage in.

## Activities to Promote Healthy Growth & Development (continued)

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Yes No

- Children are given opportunities to develop growing competence and independence in age-appropriate self-help skills such as feeding, dressing, and toileting, and through selecting and putting away their own play materials.
- Daily activities include a balance of indoor/outdoor activities, quiet/active activities, large muscle/small muscle activities, individual/group activities, and child-initiated/adult-initiated activities.
- The amount of time spent in whole-group, adult-initiated activities is minimized for children under age 6. Children are given plenty of uninterrupted time to engage in freely chosen extended play activities.
- Children have many opportunities to focus on the process of expressing ideas and feelings, rather than on the creation of a specific finished product. For example, block play, dramatic play, and free art.
- Caregivers work cooperatively with parents of children with special needs to ensure children's needs are met.
- Transition times between activities are un-hurried and un-regimented. Children are told ahead of time when a transition is coming, and are allowed time to finish up their activities. Children are not expected to sit and wait with nothing to do during transition times.
- Adults are flexible in adjusting routines and activities to the changing needs and interests of children as they arise.

## Quality Indicators for Caring Adult/Child Interaction

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Yes No

- Each child has opportunities to develop long-term trusting relationships with and attachments to a small number of caregivers.
- Adults like children and enjoy working with them.
- Adults interact frequently with children, and express respect and affection for children by smiling, touching, holding, and speaking with children at their eye level throughout the day.
- Adults listen attentively to children, and encourage them to share their experiences, ideas, and feelings, giving children as much one-on-one attention as possible.
- Adults respond quickly to children's needs for food, rest, and toileting/diaper changes, and provide comfort, relief from distress, and stimulation.
- Adults help children to cope with separation from their parents and reassure children that their parents will return.
- Adults use daily routines such as meal times/feeding and toileting/diapering to talk with children and give them one-on-one attention.
- Adults allow and encourage children to express their feelings, including happiness, delight, sadness, anger, and hurt. Adults help children deal with feelings by identifying and naming them, and helping children learn appropriate ways to express their feelings.
- Children are encouraged to feel good about their accomplishments.

## Caring Adult/Child Interaction (continued)

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Yes No

- Adults treat children of all races, religions, family backgrounds, and cultures with equal respect and consideration. Adults provide children of both sexes with equal opportunities to participate in all activities.
- Adults encourage children's learning by asking questions, posing problems, and making comments or suggestions that stimulate children's thinking. Adults sometimes join in children's play to help expand upon the children's ideas.
- Adults recognize and encourage pro-social behaviors such as cooperating, helping, taking turns, solving problems by talking, and respecting other's feelings and belongings.
- Adults help children to develop self-control. Adults establish clear and consistent limits and fair rules, and patiently remind children of the rules as needed. Adults use positive guidance techniques such as redirection and problem-solving with children when problems occur.
- Adults intervene quickly when children become aggressive to prevent them from hurting each other, and help children learn more appropriate ways to express anger or frustration.
- Adults do not use any type of corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, shaking, pinching, or any other measures which produce physical pain. Adults do not use any humiliating or frightening discipline technique, including threats, verbal abuse, or emotional abuse. Adults do not force, withhold, or threaten to withhold food, rest, or bathroom use.

## Quality Indicators for Well Trained Caregivers

☺ ☹  
Yes No

- Adults have a good understanding of child development, and use this knowledge to plan activities and an environment that promotes children's growth and development. The table below gives minimal training requirements (those required by Licensing) and optimal training requirements (best practice for meeting children's needs).

### Training Levels for Child Care Providers

#### Minimal Required for Licensing

#### Optimal Training

Family Child Care Providers have a high school diploma or GED and complete 20 hours of child care related training each year.

Family Child Care Providers are high school graduates and have either a CDA credential, an associate or undergraduate degree in early childhood education or child development, or course work in child growth and development. They also participate in ongoing professional development including training in child development, child health and safety, and program planning for children.

Child Care Center Directors have a high school diploma or GED and one of the following: an associate's degree in early childhood or child development, a bachelor's degree including four courses in child development, or a CDA, CCP, or NAC credential. They also complete 20 hours of child care related training each year.

Child Care Center Directors have: 1) a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development; and 2) course work in business administration or related business experience; and 3) prior teaching experience in early childhood. They also participate in ongoing professional development including training in child development, child health and safety, and program planning for children.

Child Care Center Caregivers have a high school diploma and GED and complete 20 hours of child care related training each year.

Child Care Center Lead Teachers have either an associate's degree in early childhood education or child development, or a CDA or CCP credential. Child Care Center Teacher Assistants are high school graduates who have training in early childhood education/child development. They also participate in ongoing professional development including training in child development, child health and safety, and program planning for children.



# Child Care Regulation in Utah

# Checking a Provider's Licensing Record

When choosing a child care provider, it is important to understand the different types of regulated care in Utah. The Bureau of Licensing regulates four different types of child care. They are:

- Residential Certificate Providers (in home care)
- Licensed Family Providers (in home care)
- Licensed Family Group Providers (in home care)
- Licensed Center Child Care (out of home care)

The chart below highlights some of the differences in these types of regulation. The asterisk denotes the degree of state regulation required, with 1 being the least or minimal amount of regulation, and 4 being the most regulation. For more information on child care regulation in Utah, contact the Bureau of Licensing toll free at 1-888-287-3704.

* Residential Certificate	** Licensed Family	** Licensed Family Group	**** Center Child Care
Care for up to 8 children with 1 provider (not including the provider's own children).	Care for up to 8 children (including the provider's own children under the age of 5) with 1 caregiver. Only 2 of the children can be under the age of 2.	Care for up to 16 children (including the provider's own children under the age of 5) with 2 providers. Only 4 of the children can be under the age of 2.	Care for more than 12 children in a center setting. Ratios vary by age group, but there must be at least 2 providers present at all times.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial criminal background check</li> <li>• Initial 5 hrs of training</li> <li>• Annual home visit by licensing with a 90 day notice</li> <li>• Initial fire inspection</li> <li>• Health &amp; safety standards not enforced</li> <li>• No formal education required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly criminal background check</li> <li>• 20 hours of annual required</li> <li>• Annual unannounced home visit by licensing. No notice required</li> <li>• Initial fire inspection</li> <li>• Meet all zoning and planning regulations for their area</li> <li>• Enforcement of health &amp; safety standards</li> <li>• No formal education required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly criminal background check on both caregivers</li> <li>• 20 hours of annual training required</li> <li>• Annual unannounced home visit by licensing. No notice required</li> <li>• Initial fire inspection</li> <li>• Meet all zoning and planning regulations for their area</li> <li>• Enforcement of health &amp; safety standards</li> <li>• No formal education required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly criminal background check on each caregiver</li> <li>• 20 hours of annual training required for each caregiver</li> <li>• Annual unannounced home visit by licensing. No notice required</li> <li>• Annual Fire and health inspections</li> <li>• Planned and posted activities for children</li> <li>• Enforcement of health and safety standards</li> <li>• Directors are required to have a CDA or degree in Early Childhood Development</li> </ul>

Once you have narrowed your choice of potential child care providers to three or four providers, you will want to contact the Bureau of Licensing to check on the licensing record of each provider. The Bureau of Licensing can tell you if the providers you are considering have any substantiated complaints, rule violations, or license sanctions.

Counties	Phone Number	Counties	Phone Number
Beaver	435-865-5670	Piute	435-865-5670
Box Elder	801-444-2950	Riche	801-444-2950
Cache	801-444-2950	Salt Lake	801-538-9299
Carbon	435-636-2355	San Juan	435-636-2355
Daggett	435-636-2355	San Pete	801-374-7858
Davis	801-444-2950	Sevier	435-865-5670
Duchesne	435-636-2355	Summit	801-444-2950
Emery	435-636-2355	Tooele	801-538-9299
Garfield	435-865-5670	Uintah	435-636-2355
Grand	435-636-2355	Utah	801-374-7688
Iron	435-865-5670	Wasatch	801-444-2950
Juab	801-374-7688	Washington	435-674-3819
Kane	435-674-3819	Wayne	435-865-5670
Millard	435-865-5670	Weber	801-444-2950
Morgan	801-444-2950		

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