

# CHILD CARE CONSUMER EDUCATION

*Helping Parents Choose the Best Possible  
Child Care for Their Children*



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*Building Communities by Strengthening Families Since 1975*

## **YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CHILD CARE CONSUMER:**

- Expect that your child's care meets the standards set by Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) & the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) child care licensing regulations. (The regulations are available online at: [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us);
- Visit the facility without prior notification any time your child is there;
- See the rooms and outside play area where care is provided during program hours;
- Be notified if someone in the family child care home smokes. In child care centers, smoking is prohibited;
- Receive advance notice when a substitute will be caring for your child in a family child care home for more than two hours at a time;
- Give written permission before a caregiver may take your child swimming or on field trips;
- Give written authorization before any medication may be administered to your child;
- Be notified immediately of any serious injury or accident. If your child has a non-serious injury or accident, you must be notified on the same day;
- File a complaint with OCFS if you believe that the caregiver has violated child care regulations. Any complaint you make to OCFS about the care your child is receiving will be promptly investigated by Child Protective Services (CPS);
- Review the public portion of the licensing file for the facility where your child is or has been enrolled, or where you are considering enrolling your child.

**Disclaimer:** *Child Development Support Corporation (CDSC) does not license, recommend or endorse any one program or provider over another. It is the parent's responsibility to evaluate and select the child care program that best meets their child's and family's needs.*

## **WHO REGULATES CHILD CARE IN NEW YORK CITY?**

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) license and regulate most child-care settings. To remain licensed or registered, facilities must maintain compliance with child care laws and standards.

### **Requirements to Operate a Child Care Facility:**

- The facility meets safety requirements by having at least two exit doors, an emergency evacuation plan, adequate toilet and sink facilities, barriers where needed, and a working telephone with emergency phone numbers posted next to it.
- Have the license issued by OCFS posted where it is easily and clearly visible to parents. The license shows:
  - the maximum number of children who may be present at the same time;
  - the age groups which may be served;
  - the facility's approved hours of operation and
  - the facility's authorization to administer medication.
- Everyone who works, volunteers or lives at the site who are 18 years or older must undergo a criminal and child abuse/maltreatment background check to ensure that they are cleared to work with children.
- Provide care only in the areas of the facility that have been approved for use.
- Staff must get a medical checkup and be certified by a health care provider that they are in good health.
- At all times, each child must be supervised in a manner appropriate to the child's age, activities, and individual needs.
- All areas of the facility used for child care must be clean, well lit, and properly ventilated. Room temperatures should be comfortable and smoking, consumption of alcohol or drugs are prohibited during child care hours.
- If food service is provided, food must be stored, prepared, and served in a safe, sanitary and healthful manner.

- The facility must offer a daily program of indoor and outdoor activities that are appropriate to the age, needs and capabilities of each child.
- An up-to-date emergency information card must be on file and maintained for each child.
- The facility must post an approved emergency evacuation plan and conduct evacuation drills at least monthly.
- Child discipline procedures must be appropriate to a child's age and maturity level and may not include the deliberate infliction of physical or emotional pain. Corporal punishment of any kind is strictly prohibited.

**TIPS TO SELECT A QUALITY CHILD CARE PROGRAM:**

An important first step before choosing a child care program is to make sure the program is in good standing with OCFS and that the program or provider has no unresolved citations. To do a background check on a child care provider, call 1-800.732.5207 or visit [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us).

**1.** Speak over the phone and get basic information. You may have to arrange a time to speak because providers may be busy taking care of the children. Find out other basic information such as:

- ◆ What are the hours?
- ◆ What are the fees?
- ◆ What are the ages of the children?
- ◆ What is the group size?
- ◆ Can parents make unannounced visits?
- ◆ Are group activities planned for children?
- ◆ Are there separate defined spaces for eating, diapering/toileting, sleeping, and various activities?
- ◆ Are emergency telephone numbers, registration or license, and emergency procedures posted?
- ◆ Is the provider CPR and First Aid certified?

**2.** Arrange for a visit to the child care program and take a checklist with you. If possible, visit a program more than once, and at different times of the day so that you can get a sense of the flow of an average day.

**3.** When visiting a child care program, make sure you speak directly with the child care provider who would be caring for your child.

**4.** Speak to other parents using the program to get a different view point on the kind of care provided, their experience and level of satisfaction.

## INDICATORS OF QUALITY CHILD CARE

**Group Size and Ratio** - Group size and Ratio have a positive impact on the overall quality of early and school-age care and education programs and the experiences that children have in those programs. Smaller group size and proper staff/child ratio are important in maintaining proper supervision, quality care and enough one-on-one attention for each child in care.

Children's Ages	Ratio Staff/Child	Maximum Group Size
2 months – 12 months	1:3	8
12 months – 2 years	1:5	10
2 years – 3 years	1:6	12
3 years – 4 years	1:10	15
4 years – 5 years	1:12	20
5 years – 6 years	1:15	25

**Health and Safety** - Some things to look for that indicate the program is safe and healthy are working smoke detectors, toys and equipment that are in good condition, food prep areas are separated from the restrooms and diapering areas. The daily routine includes proper hand-washing and diapering procedures, and direct competent supervision of children at all times.

**Family Involvement** - When parents are involved, children are more confident, and feel more comfortable, especially in a new setting. Choosing a program that welcomes parents to come in during the time the child is in care is the first step in getting to know the "important people" in a child care program. Know what is expected of you, and what you can expect from a program. New York State law requires providers to give parents the opportunity to discuss issues related to their children. It is the parent's right to know what is happening while their child is in a child care program.

**Caregiver Education and Turnover** - Caregivers in child care centers, school-age care programs and registered/licensed family child care programs must receive a minimum of 30 hours of educational training every two years.

**Accreditation** - Accreditation is a voluntary system by which programs measure themselves against a national set of standards. Going beyond minimum licensing standards, accredited programs make a commitment to excellence. Caregivers in accredited programs take part in on-going professional development.

## **CHILD CARE OPTIONS IN NEW YORK CITY**

### **Family Child Care**

Care in someone's home

Can be care for up to eight (8) children ages 6 weeks to 12 years

One caregiver for every two (2) children under 2 years old in attendance

Registered with the NYS Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS)

through the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

### **Group Family Child Care**

Care in someone's home

Care for up to 16 children with the help of an assistant

One caregiver for every two (2) children under 2 years old in attendance

Can accept children from 6 weeks to 12 years

Licensed by the NYS Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) through the NYC DOHMH

### **Center Based Care**

Many offer full day, half day and operate year round

Can serve children between 8 weeks and 5 years

Most serve preschoolers over age 2, fully toilet trained

Children-to-staff ratio varies depending on the age of the child

Licensed by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

### **Infant Toddler Child Care Program**

Can be a stand-alone program or part of a preschool center

Serves children from 8 weeks to age 3

Must obtain a special license to serve this age group

Licensed by the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene

### **School Age Program**

Serves children enrolled in school, ages 5-12 year olds

Offers care before and after school, generally until 6:00 p.m.

Generally open during school breaks, holidays and summer

Programs must be registered by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services through the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

### **Universal Pre K (UPK)\***

Programs offered primarily as part day (2.5 hours) while some offer full school day during the school year

Children who are 4, or turn four by the end of the school year

Services provided in schools and early childhood centers and some group family child care

Program is free for the UPK hours

## **Head Start**

Federally funded and services include other family supports  
Preschool, primarily for 3 and 4 years olds  
Services provided in Head Start programs or as part of other early  
childhood programs  
Head Start programs is absolutely free  
Eligible families must meet specific federal income requirements

## **Informal Child Care** (license-exempt)

Individual can be a relative, friend or neighbor of the child  
Individuals can care for fewer than 3 non-related children  
Not required to be registered or licensed  
Individuals may need to meet requirements in order to serve children  
who receive public funding  
Can be in a child's or caregiver's home

## **Non-Traditional Hour Care**

Generally referred to as care offered before 7 am and after 7 pm  
May also include Saturdays and/or Sundays  
Few options in centers, some in regulated family child care and group  
family child care  
More likely to be a relative or neighbor

## **Child Care and the Americans with Disabilities Act**

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require all child care  
programs to make reasonable efforts to accommodate children with  
disabilities. For more information about the ADA, please visit:  
[ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/mat/matada/asp](http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/mat/matada/asp).

## **Special Needs Child Care Rates**

The rate of payment for child care services provided to a child determined  
to have special needs is the actual cost of care up to the statewide limit  
of the highest weekly, daily, part-day or hourly market rate for child care  
services in the State, as applicable, based on the amount of time the  
child care services are provided per week regardless of the type of child  
care provider used or the age of the child.

The highest full time market rate in NY State is:

**Weekly** \$340    **Daily** \$68    **Part-Day** \$45    **Hourly** \$18.75

**Child Care Market Rates 2014-2015** (Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, and Richmond)

These rates represent the general cost of child care in NYC. As with any service, child care services vary in pricing based on quality, experience, location, etc.

TYPE OF PROVIDER	AGE OF CHILD			
	Under 1½	1½ - 2	3 - 5	6 - 12
<b>Day Care Center</b>	<b>Under 1½</b>	<b>1½ - 2</b>	<b>3 - 5</b>	<b>6 - 12</b>
Weekly	\$330	\$255	\$233	\$215
Daily	\$56	\$53	\$47	\$43
Part-Day	\$37	\$35	\$31	\$29
Hourly	\$15.75	\$17.00	\$15.75	\$10.75
<b>Registered Family Child Care</b>	<b>Under 1½</b>	<b>1½ - 2</b>	<b>3 - 5</b>	<b>6 - 12</b>
Weekly	\$175	\$160	\$150	\$150
Daily	\$33	\$32	\$31	\$30
Part-Day	\$22	\$21	\$21	\$20
Hourly	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$13.25	\$13.00
<b>Group Family Child Care</b>	<b>Under 1½</b>	<b>1½ - 2</b>	<b>3 - 5</b>	<b>6 - 12</b>
Weekly	\$200	\$185	\$175	\$175
Daily	\$38	\$37	\$35	3
Part-Day	\$25	\$25	\$23	\$23
Hourly	\$18.75	\$16.00	\$13.25	\$14.00
<b>School-Age Child Care</b>	<b>Under 1½</b>	<b>1½ - 2</b>	<b>3 - 5</b>	<b>6 - 12</b>
Weekly	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$215
Daily	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$43
Part-Day	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$29
Hourly	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10.75
<b>Legally-Exempt Family Child Care &amp; In-Home Child Care Standard Rate (*)</b>	<b>Under 1½</b>	<b>1½ - 2</b>	<b>3 - 5</b>	<b>6 - 12</b>
Weekly	\$114	\$104	\$98	\$98
Daily	\$21	\$21	\$20	\$20
Part-Day	\$14	\$14	\$14	\$13
Hourly	\$10.40	\$7.80	\$8.61	\$8.45
<b>Legally-Exempt Family Child Care &amp; In-Home Child Care Enhanced Rate (*)</b>	<b>Under 1½</b>	<b>1½ - 2</b>	<b>3 - 5</b>	<b>6 - 12</b>
Weekly	\$123	\$112	\$105	\$105
Daily	\$23	\$22	\$22	\$21
Part-Day	\$15	\$15	\$15	\$14
Hourly	\$11.20	\$8.40	\$9.28	\$9.10

Note: \* Legally-exempt must meet training requirements to receive these rates.



## **ACS AND SUBSIDY CHILD CARE FACTS**

### **What is subsidized child care?**

The Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) provides free or low cost child care to eligible families living in New York City. Child Care is available for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years, while children with special needs receive care through age 18. Child care is typically provided at ACS-funded child care centers and are glistered family child care homes.

***You may be eligible for free or low cost child care based on your family’s income and reason for requiring child care.***

### **Financial Guidelines**

Family of 2: income must be lower than \$40,068

Family of 3: income must be lower than \$47,256

Family of 4 income must be lower than \$50,380

Family of 5 income must be lower than \$58,872

Family of 6 income must be lower than \$67,476

### **Social Guidelines**

You are enrolled in an approved training or educational program or looking for work.

You are ill or incapacitate.

Your child or family is receiving services from either ACS or Human Resources Administration (HRA).

### **What Are ACS-Funded Child Care Programs?**

ACS directly funds child care services for eligible families at more than 300 child care centers, and family child care networks as well as over 250 Head Start programs. All ACS-funded child care centers and family child care networks are registered by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to make sure they meet NYS and NYC standards.

### **What Is A ‘Voucher’?**

A child care voucher permits families eligible for subsidized child care to access child care services outside of the ACS-funded programs. *Funding for vouchers is extremely limited, and the wait for a voucher can be very long.*

## **How To Apply For Subsidized Child Care**

Families interested in subsidized child care should apply to be evaluated by ACS. Fill out a Child Care Application (call 311 to be sent an application) and contact programs in your area to discuss availability, program requirements and the needs of your child. You are encouraged to visit the child care programs in order to choose the best care for you and your child.

## **RESOURCES**

**Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (Federal and NYS)/NYC Child Care Tax Credit New York City Commission on Women's Issues:** Tax Credits For families living on low or moderate wages there are a variety of tax credits and refundable tax benefits.

**Child Tax Credit (Federal)/Empire State Child Credit (New York State) New York City Commission on Women's Issues:** Tax Credits For families living on low or moderate wages there are a variety of tax credits and refundable tax benefits.

### **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (Federal, NYS and NYC)**

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable credit that returns federal, State, and New York City tax dollars to qualifying families and individuals to help cover basic expenses. The refund amount varies depending on your income and marital and parental status.

### **NACCRRA Military Fee Assistance Program**

NACCRRA is working with the U.S. Military Services to help those who serve in the military find and afford Child Care that suits their unique needs. Through the fee assistance program, families are eligible to receive a monthly subsidy to help offset the cost of child care in their communities. For more information, call 800.424.2246 or visit <http://www.naccrra.org/military-families>

**Food Stamps:** The Food Stamp Program (also known as the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) is a critical work support, which provides food assistance for nearly 1.8 million low-income New Yorkers including families, the elderly and the disabled. The primary goal of the program is to help families supplement the cost of their diet with nutritious foods.

**Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) offers nutrition education, breastfeeding support, Referrals and a variety of nutritious

foods to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding or postpartum women, infants and children up to age five to promote and support good health.

**National Child Abuse Hotline:** The National Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-4-A-CHILD is dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. Serving the United States, its territories, and Canada, the Hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with professional crisis counselors who, through interpreters, can provide assistance in 170 languages.

**Resources for Children with Special Needs:** Resources for Children with Special Needs (RCSN) is New York City's only independent nonprofit organization that works for families and children with all special needs, across all boroughs, to understand, navigate, and access the services needed to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop their full potential [www.resourcesnyc.org](http://www.resourcesnyc.org).

**Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** is a nutrition education and meal reimbursement program helping providers serve nutritious and safely prepared meals and snacks to children and adults in day care setting. For more information on CACFP visit [www.health.ny.gov/cacfp](http://www.health.ny.gov/cacfp).

**Early Learn NYC** is an innovative, high-quality early education program for families across the five boroughs. Their mission is to provide social, intellectual development from birth to age 5 preparing your child for kindergarten today and a successful future tomorrow. To find out if you are eligible for an early learning program, visit the child care eligibility wizard [www.nyc.gov/html/acs/childcare\\_eligibility/wizard/html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/acs/childcare_eligibility/wizard/html)

## **GIVE US YOUR OPINION**

Tell us what you think about the service we provided to you and your child care search experience. Please take a few minutes to complete a very short survey on line at [www.cdscnyc.org](http://www.cdscnyc.org) or call us at 718.398.6738. Your response will enable us to better serve other parents. We appreciate your assistance. Thank You.

**CDSC IS A MEMBER OF**



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