



2-1-1
CHILD CARE



For more information: Dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-505-1000 | www.211childcare.org | www.ctunitedway.org

Types of Child Care

There are a number of options to choose from when looking at child care settings. Programs can be different in a number of ways, sometimes making your choice confusing. Below you will find information to help you choose a program that best fits the needs of your child and family. You may want to look at several types of care before making your decision.

Licensed Care

This type of child care must meet requirements of the State Department of Public Health (DPH). These requirements mainly address health and safety issues. DPH inspects licensed programs on a regular basis and may also conduct unannounced inspections.

- **Family Child Care** – an individual approved by the Connecticut State Department of Public Health to provide care in their own home. Care can be provided for up to six full time children, with only two of those children being under the age of two years. Additionally, there can be up to three additional school age children before and after school (during the school year).
- **Group Homes** – a program licensed by the Connecticut State Department of Public Health that provides care for seven to twelve children. In group homes and child care centers, children are often grouped by age. For example, infants and toddlers are usually separated from preschoolers, and preschoolers from school age children, etc.
- **Child Care Centers** – a program licensed by the Connecticut State Department of Public Health that provides care for thirteen or more children. For infants and toddlers (0-36 months), group size is limited to eight children. There must be one adult for every four children. For preschoolers (3-5 years) and school age children (5-12 years) group size is limited to twenty children. There must be one adult for every ten children.

Unlicensed Care

This type of child care is informal and therefore does not need to meet any state requirements.

- **Relative Care** – care provided by a close relative such as a child's grandparent, aunt or uncle -- either in the home of the relative or the child.
- **In-home Care** - care provided by a caregiver in the child's home, i.e., a nanny, babysitter or an au pair.

Exempt Care

The State Department of Public Health determines that some types of child care are neither informal nor required to be licensed. For example, a preschool run by the board of education may be exempt from becoming licensed. For more information on exempt care, contact 2-1-1 Child Care Infoline.

Quality

When searching for child care, quality matters most. Research shows that quality child care is good for young children's development. Quality care includes a warm, loving relationship with a caregiver, an exciting learning environment, and a safe setting.

- Quality can be found in any type of child care arrangement.
- There is no "right" or "best" type of care.
- Quality is not determined by the title a program uses to describe itself (i.e. Child Care vs. Nursery School)
- Consider and visit different options.
- Choosing a program for your child is a very personal decision; what works for your friend may not be the best choice for your family.
- After you do your research, remember to trust your instincts.



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