

What does licensing mean?

Illinois Child Care Licensing Standards Definitions

In Illinois, the Child Care Act of 1969 (as amended) is the law that requires the licensing of child care centers, family child care homes and group child care homes. Child care licensing is a form of consumer protection. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) regulates child care programs by requiring child care providers to meet minimum 1) health and safety standards, 2) education/experience standards, 3) annual continued education standards, and be subject to a background check and fingerprint searches.

A DCFS license must be on display at the center or home. State licensing representatives annually monitor each child care program. They determine if programs meet all minimum requirements and ensure compliance with the standards.

Programs should distribute a summary of the licensing standards to parents or guardians at the time of enrollment. A child care center, family child care, and group child care home license must be renewed every three (3) years. Both the Child Care Act and/or the Licensing Standards are subject to change.

Group Size and Staff Requirements for Licensed Centers:

AGE OF CHILDREN	STAFF/CHILD RATIO	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
Infants (6wks – 14mo)	1 to 4	12
Toddlers (15 – 23mo)	1 to 5	15
Two Years	1 to 8	16
Three Years	1 to 10	20
Four Years	1 to 10	20
Five Years (preschool)	1 to 20	20
School-age: (Kindergartners present)	1 to 20	30

Group Size for Licensed Family Child Cares:

Children's Ages:	NUMBER OF STAFF	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
No more than five under 5 yrs, No more than three under 24 mo	1	8
No more than six under 5 yrs, No more than two under 30 mo	1	8
All School Aged	1	8
No more than eight under 5 yrs, No more than five under 24 mo	2	12

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the agency that investigates all complaints made about providers. They also operate a Day Care Information Line that provides parents with licensing compliance information about licensed programs. The Day Care Information Line number is **1-877-746-0829**.