

CHECKLIST FOR SAFE, QUALITY CHILD CARE

Quality child care in the early years helps create a strong foundation for children's lifelong success!

Families in Colorado have choices when it comes to child care. No matter what kind of care you decide on, use this checklist to make sure the program is safe and will provide quality care to support your child's early learning and development.

Types of Child Care

Family Child Care Home

Care that takes place in the home of the child care provider and serves more than four children on a regular basis; must have a Colorado child care license.

Child Care Center

Care that takes place in a dedicated school building or community center; includes Early Head Start and Head Start; must have a Colorado child care license.

License-Exempt Child Care

Three types of child care situations do not require a license (license-exempt). License-exempt child care includes care provided by a family member, friend, nanny or neighbor.



NEED SUPPORT TO FIND CHILD CARE? WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

STEP 1: LEARN ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS



Search for a licensed family child care home in your community at [ColoradoShines.com](https://coloradoshines.com). For each program, you'll find details about its licensing history, inspection reports, and if any complaints have been filed against the program.



Families can also call the Colorado Shines Child Care Resource and Referral Line to connect with a friendly navigator for one-on-one help to find child care. Call [1.877.338.2273](tel:18773382273) or [complete this online form](#).

YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO HELP PAY FOR CHILD CARE!

The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) supports families with lower incomes to pay for quality child care.

[Learn more about income requirements and find out if you qualify for financial support through CCCAP.](#)

STEP 2: VISIT, OBSERVE AND ASK QUESTIONS

The best way to learn about a program is to visit in person. You can talk to the provider, observe how the provider and children interact, and see for yourself the space and the learning environment that your child would spend time in.



CHILD CARE CHECKLIST:

Name of Program/Provider: _____ Date of Visit: _____

- How many children are cared for?
- Are other caregivers present? Have providers had background checks?
- What is the adult-to-child ratio and group size?
- What are the hours? What days is the program closed/ provider not working during the year?
- What is the age range of the children cared for?
- Is the program licensed by the State of Colorado?
- What training have the providers had?
- What is the daily schedule of activities?
- Are TV, computers, or other technology used with children? If so, how often and how are the devices used?
- Does the provider have a plan in place in case of a disaster, like a fire, tornado, or flood?
- Does the provider have an emergency plan in case a child is injured, sick, or gets lost?
- Are there ways for parents to be involved?
- Is there a list of current parents to contact for a reference?
- Is there a safe outdoor area for children to play?

Safe Sleep for Infants

If you have a baby, make sure the provider adheres to these practices proven to reduce the risk of Sudden Unexplained Infant Death Syndrome (SUIDS).

- All infants are put to sleep on their backs.
- The sleep spaces have a firm surface, like a mattress in a crib, covered by a fitted sheet with no other bedding, bumpers, blankets or stuffed animals.
- Provider is trained on safe sleep.
- Infants have their own sleep space that is the same every day.
- Infants do not sleep in swings or car seats.
- Provider can see/hear infants at all times, including during sleep.
- Provider regularly checks on infants during sleep.



Things to Look For...



Health and Safety

- Licensed and in good standing with the State.
- Supplies and equipment are clean and work well.
- Electrical outlets are covered.
- Staircases are blocked with secure gates.
- All potentially hazardous items are removed or out of reach of children.
- Doors are locked at all times.
- All toys are clean and in good condition.
- Outdoor area (if applicable) is fenced in and safe for play.
- Animals (including their food, cages, litter boxes, etc.) are secured in a separate area of the home.

Daily Activities

- Nutritious meals and snacks are served.
- Playtime, storytime, activity time, and nap time are part of every day.
- Providers play with children to help support their learning.
- A variety of materials (puzzles, blocks, music, make-believe materials) are available.
- Children play for much of the day and have time to choose their own activities.

Learning Environment

- The space is pleasant, clean, and there are different areas for resting, quiet play, and active play.
- There is enough room for children and providers to move around.
- The children appear happy and at ease with the provider and with other children.
- Furniture and materials are the right size and type for the age of the children.
- There are enough toys and learning materials for the number of children.

Provider / Child Interactions

- Provider speaks to and treats children warmly and respectfully and gets down on a child's level when talking with them.
- Provider seems genuinely interested in what children are doing.
- Providers and children seem to enjoy being together.
- Provider listens to each child and is encouraging and positive.
- Children are asked questions and not just given directions.
- Provider quickly responds to and cares for children who are hurt or upset.