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Types of Childcare Services



Before you start your own daycare, it is important to understand the meaning of childcare and the different types of childcare services available in the market. In general, childcare is the care of a child by a person outside the child's immediate family.



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Childcare needs are met in many ways but generally fall into these three categories: Care in the child's home; care in a regulated child care center; and care in the provider's home.

Care in a regulated child care center

Regulated child care (or daycare) centers are institutions that are bound to strict rules or legislations mandated by a government body. These rules or legislations exist to protect the safety and welfare of the children enrolled in these centers. Rules in relation to security, area per child, health, staff to children ratios (e.g. 1 teacher per 3 children), food handling, behavior management, and programming are just a few of the areas that a regulated daycare must adhere to. Without adherence to these rules, daycare centers will not receive a license to operate the childcare business. In addition, rules vary for each state or province. Therefore, it is important to refer to your state's or province's childcare government body responsible for licensing requirements.

Licensed childcare centers are also required to run structured programming for the children. A structured program consists of age-appropriate activities that develop the child's skills. In general, the selection of age-appropriate activities follows the center's learning philosophy such as Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, etc. However, regardless of which learning philosophy the center adapts, age-appropriate learning activities are meant to develop the child's cognitive, gross-motor, fine-motor and other types of skills, with the goal of achieving specific developmental milestones.

Licensed childcare centers can be located in office buildings, commercial retail pads, stand-alone buildings, houses or in schools. In most cases, they operate between 7AM to 6PM and may employ several teachers to run the program.



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Care in the Provider's Home

Care in the provider's home is generally called Home Daycare, Family Daycare, or Day Home. A home daycare can be licensed or unlicensed. In general, licensing is required if the number of children cared for in the provider's home grows to more than the maximum specified by law. For instance, in some areas, you can only care for up to 5 children (including your own children) without a license. Anything over that, you must get a license to operate the childcare business. Home daycare licensing requirements also vary for each state or province. Again, refer to your state or provincial government body responsible for child care licensing.

Care in the Child's Home

Childcare in the child's home is typically provided by babysitters or nannies. Babysitting is the occasional temporary care of a child during the absence of the parent. Babysitters, in general, can work for more than one family and are often called upon during emergencies (e.g. parent has to attend an emergency meeting for a few hours).

In contrast, a nanny typically just works for one family and has a fixed schedule. They can be classified as live-in nannies or live-out nannies. Live-in nannies will live in the child's home, while live-out nannies do not.

Unlike regulated child care centers or licensed home daycare centers, babysitters or nannies do not usually provide any form of structured programming.



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