



Licensed Child Care Center Checklist

If you need to find care for your child, one possibility is a licensed Child Development Center (CDC). CDCs provide care, supervision, and guidance for children on an ongoing basis. Unlike licensed Child Development Homes (CDH), these programs are located in buildings approved by local zoning authorities for use as a child development program and not in the residence of the caregiver (owner).

Licensed CDCs are regulated by the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). CDCs provide care to children in classrooms based on age groups and incorporate various learning activities to support each child's growth, development, and education. CDCs offer care in a structured, formalized style and adapt the schedule of activities for the different age groups in care. CDCs are typically licensed to care for more children than a CDH and employ multiple caregivers and staff.

Some parents like the structure that this type of care offers and are more comfortable using CDCs. They also like that their children can socialize with peers from different age groups.

When choosing a licensed CDC, it is important to find a setting you are comfortable with and a caregiver who shares your attitudes and values about children. Using this checklist, plan to visit the CDC to talk and observe the caregiver with the children.

Sources:

- *Choosing Child Care* (n.d.), by Child Care Aware, available at <http://childcareaware.org/families/choosing-quality-child-care/>.
- *Is This the Right Place for My Child? 38 Research-Based Indicators of High-Quality Child Care* (2008), by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA), available at <http://ccapub.childcareaware.org/docs/pubs/121e.pdf>.
- *Development Facility Licensing Requirements* (April 27, 2007), by the District of Columbia Department of Health and District of Columbia Department of Human Services, available at http://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/611_Licensing_Regulations_29_D_CMR_3.pdf.

Child Development Center Information:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone number(s): _____
 Hours of operation: _____
 Fees charged: _____
 License number and type: _____
 License capacity for each age category of children: _____

Checklist

Questions about the Physical Facility, Health, and Safety:

Required by the District		
Is the CDC's license current? If it is not displayed, ask the caregiver to show you the license.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the CDC have a current fire safety inspection certificate? If it is not displayed, ask the caregiver to show you the certificate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility provide separate bathroom facilities for adults to use and children to use?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility ensure that no person (staff and visitors) smokes or uses tobacco products while children are in care?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are all cleaning and sanitation supplies, toxic substances (e.g., paint, poisons), or other items bearing warning labels safely stored and out of the reach of children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are all appliances, sharp utensils, and other dangerous devices kept out of the reach of children at all times?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the outdoor play area enclosed with a fence or natural barriers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are lawn mowers, hedge clippers, shears, and other similar items stored under lock when children are present?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are practice evacuation drills conducted at least every two months?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Your Initial Reaction and Assessment		
Is the facility child-proofed? For example, electrical outlets are covered with safety caps, medicines are locked, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do equipment, toys, and materials (indoor and outdoor) appear to be in good condition and age-appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If there is playground equipment, is it placed on sand, mulch, or rubber matting?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility have first aid supplies and kits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there a plan in place to use when a child is injured or becomes ill?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility have a plan for responding to disasters? For example, fires, flood, winter storm, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility (indoor and outdoor) feel safe?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Questions about Caregiver Competencies, Supervision, and Discipline:

Required by the District																																
Does the facility director have a degree in early childhood education or early childhood development and experience caring for children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Do facility teacher(s) have a credential or associate in early childhood education or early childhood development and experience caring for children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Does the facility have at least two staff members who possess current certification in First Aid and CPR for children, and the prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Does the facility have a written discipline policy with specifics of how discipline will be used?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Are children supervised during all periods of outdoor play?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Are the DC child-to-adult ratios maintained? See below:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age(s)</th> <th>Child-to-Adult Ratio</th> <th>Maximum Group Size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0–12 months</td> <td>3:1</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0–12 months</td> <td>4:1</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12–24 months</td> <td>3:1</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12–24 months</td> <td>4:1</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24–30 months</td> <td>4:1</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30 months through 3 years</td> <td>8:1</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4–5 years</td> <td>10:1</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Under 6 years</td> <td>12:1</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 years and older</td> <td>15:1</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age(s)	Child-to-Adult Ratio	Maximum Group Size	0–12 months	3:1	9	0–12 months	4:1	8	12–24 months	3:1	9	12–24 months	4:1	8	24–30 months	4:1	12	30 months through 3 years	8:1	16	4–5 years	10:1	20	Under 6 years	12:1	24	6 years and older	15:1	30		
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Are children supervised at all times, including times when they are sleeping?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Observe how many children each adult provides care for during the day. Is the facility in compliance with the DC child-to-adult ratio requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Do caregivers comfort children when they need comforting?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Is the caregiver warm, affectionate, and welcoming with children? For example, by playing, smiling, cuddling, and speaking pleasantly?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Do caregivers talk with children and/or engage in conversation during the day?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Are caregivers fair, positive, clear, and consistent when they discipline?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														
Are caregivers in compliance with the facility's discipline policy? Do they use the discipline techniques outlined in the discipline policy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No																														

Questions about the Program Activities and Materials:

Required by the District		
Does the facility have a program of activities that include both quiet and active play?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility have a program of activities that allow for outdoor play/activities each day (except in extremely inclement weather)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility have a program of activities that allows both structured and unstructured, and both staff-directed and child-initiated, experiences?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility have a program of activities that provides periods of rest, including specific designated times for rest each day?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility have a written activity plan for each group of children cared for?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility have a designated space for infants to play and safely and comfortably sit, crawl, or walk?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Specific to CDCs that provides out-of-school-time care: Does the facility have a program of activities that balances self-initiated, group-initiated, and staff-initiated activities; opportunities for learning and self-expression; opportunities for civic engagement and community service; and activities that foster self-reliance, social responsibility, and growth and development?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Your Initial Reaction and Assessment		
Are there areas for different types of play, such as art, books, puzzles, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are new or different activities/materials added often?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there enough toys/materials so children can play without having to wait more than a few seconds?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are some toys/materials available at all times?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there toys for infants? For example, balls, grasping toys, toys to chew on, feel, look at, or stacking and nesting toys?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there toys for toddlers? For example, equipment for climbing, balls, large interlocking blocks and puzzles, riding toys, water and sand for sensory play?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are children engaged and seem to be enjoying the activities planned?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do caregivers read to children or encourage children to read, if they can read?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the space organized, easy to use, child friendly, and appealing to children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the environment welcoming and culturally representative? For example, posters, signs, books available in different languages?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Questions about Menus, Meals, and Service:

Required by the District		
Are menus, including snacks, planned and posted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are infants not placed in cribs with bottles for feeding, nor are bottles propped to feed them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are prepared bottles and infant food refrigerated immediately upon its arrival?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is infant food served as instructed by parents, guardians, or licensed health care practitioner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the facility have a written policy regarding hand washing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Your Initial Reaction and Assessment		
Based on posted menus, are foods and beverages served to children nutritious? If menus are not posted, ask caregiver to show you planned menus.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the area where food is stored and/or prepared clean?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is hand-washing (before/after eating, after using the bathroom, etc.) modeled by caregiver and taught to children?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Your Overall Thoughts

1. How do you feel about this facility?
2. How would your child feel about this place?
3. Do you feel comfortable with the caregiver and could you share concerns about your child with him/her?
4. Does the facility feel warm, cheerful, and inviting?

Above all, trust your own judgment and feeling about a facility. You know your child best and can tell which facility will be right for your family.