

# UNLICENSED CHILD CARE

In Alabama, nearly one-half of child care centers are uninspected and unregulated for basic health and safety standards.

**Child care centers operating "exempt" from licensing:**

- Are not required to meet Alabama's Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers and Nighttime Centers.
- Are not inspected by the Alabama Department of Human Resources or required to submit documentation of a fire and health department inspection, staff criminal background checks, staff-to-child ratios, and First Aid and CPR training.
- Can include a program that is an integral part of a local church ministry or a religious nonprofit elementary school.

A Partnership Campaign Of



Visit [alabamachildcarefacts.com](http://alabamachildcarefacts.com) to:



FIND LICENSED CHILD CARE



SHARE YOUR STORY



ADVOCATE

IN ALABAMA,  
**TATTOO  
PARLORS**  
HAVE TO BE  
**INSPECTED.**

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS  
**DON'T.**

DON'T BE IN THE  
★ DARK ABOUT ★ CHILD  
★ CARE ★

Contact Us at:

1.866.711.4025  
[AlabamaChildCareFacts@gmail.com](mailto:AlabamaChildCareFacts@gmail.com)



Alabama is 1 of only 6 states that allows some child care programs to legally operate unlicensed and uninspected for basic health and safety standards.

# LICENSED CHILD CARE

The purpose of licensing and inspection is to ensure the child care program provides a safe environment that supports the children's growth and development.

**Licensed Child Care Programs:**

- Must submit a written fire and health department inspection report with no violations cited and zoning approval.
- Are inspected annually by a trained professional from the Alabama Department of Human Resources to ensure the program meets the Alabama Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers and Nighttime Centers.
- Must show proof of required documentation, such as staff criminal background checks, staff-to-child ratios, and First Aid and CPR training.



CHILD CARE CHECKLIST

Factors to consider when selecting child care:

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD CARE PROVIDER:

Is the child care facility licensed by the Alabama Department of Human Resources?  
Find out where the DHR license is displayed. (Some programs display the poster shown in the bottom right corner)

YES

NO

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Have criminal background checks been conducted on all employees that come in contact with the children?

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Are the teachers educated in early childhood education?

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Do the teachers receive ongoing training in child care and development?

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Is there staff with current infant-child CPR and First Aid training?

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Is there an emergency/evacuation plan in place in case of a fire or tornado?

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USE YOUR SENSES:

SIGHT

Is the space comfortable, clean, and safe inside and out?

Are children busily engaged in activities?

Do the teachers get down on the child's level to interact?

Are there plenty of age-appropriate toys, books, art supplies, and blocks?

Do the children seem happy? Are they smiling and playing?

Are the children being watched closely?

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SOUND

Do you hear music?

Are caregivers laughing and playing with the children?

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SMELL

Take a deep breath. Is it fresh and clean?

Smoke-free?

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INTUITION

Does it feel inviting and warm?

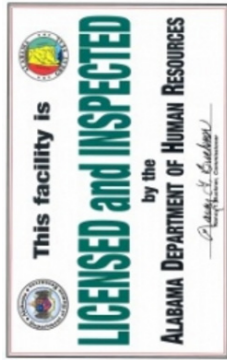
Would you want to spend the day there?

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Visit our website for more checklists at: [alabamachildcarefacts.com/parent-resource/](http://alabamachildcarefacts.com/parent-resource/)

NOTES:



STAFF

The staff is the foundation of a quality child care program.

Quality child care providers have backgrounds in early child care and education or child development that help them understand children's needs and how they can help them grow and develop. When you pursue child care options, look for staff who enjoy caring for young children and respect the child's development and learning.

This includes staff that:

- Nurture, talk, and listen to the child
- Use a respectful tone of voice and sit or kneel down on the child's level to interact
- Celebrate the child's new skills
- Talk to you on a regular basis about your child's development and learning



ENVIRONMENT

A quality child care environment is inviting and warm, as well as safe, organized, and clean.

A quality **physical environment** provides fun, hands-on activities, including:

- A play area with age-appropriate toys, books, blocks, and art supplies
- Opportunities to play outside
- Musical activities where children sing, play instruments, dance, or listen to music
- Activities that encourage children to use their five senses

A quality **emotional environment** is welcoming and the children's behavior is guided in a positive way, including:

- Staff that praise the children when they share, help one another, and work together
- Staff that explain the rules in a simple, positive way
- Staff that comfort children and help them express their feelings when they're upset
- No physical punishment is allowed

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COMPONENTS OF  
QUALITY CHILD CARE



HEALTH & SAFETY

A quality child care program has standards and policies in place to keep the children and staff healthy and safe.

In Alabama, licensed child care programs are inspected annually to ensure that they meet the state's minimum standards for the health and safety of children in child care. If your child care program is not licensed, find out if it meets the following health and safety standards:

- Fire & Health Inspections
- First Aid & CPR Training
- Emergency Procedures
- Staff-to-Child Ratios

You can look up Alabama's current staff-to child ratios on our website:  
[www.alabamachildcarefacts.com/minimum-standards/](http://www.alabamachildcarefacts.com/minimum-standards/)



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Developing a good relationship with your child care provider will create a good support system to promote your child's development and learning.

Quality child care programs will have staff members who keep you informed about your child's day, but you can also make sure they maintain quality care for your child:

- Keep talking with your child care provider. Discuss your concerns and make sure you're happy with their answers.
- Keep talking to your child. Ask them how their day went, what they did, who they saw, or if anything special happened.
- Report your concerns. If you see anything that may affect a child's health or safety, contact the Alabama Department of Human Resources:

**Contact Child Care Services Division:** (334) 242-1425 or 1-866-528-1694  
**Report child abuse or neglect by calling:** (334) 242-9500