

CHECKLIST FOR SAFE, QUALITY CHILD CARE: LICENSE-EXEMPT 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.

There are **three** child care situations that do not require a Colorado child care license.



Occasional child care that has no pattern.



Care for children who are related to the provider and children from one other family.



Care for up to four children (regardless of relationship to the provider or each other) as long as no more than two of the children are under age 2.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nanny shares and other informal types of care that families may use are still required to follow child care licensing rules.

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 eligibility.](#)

Did you know that license-exempt providers can benefit from CCCAP?

It's true! Families that participate in CCCAP can recommend their license-exempt provider for CCCAP Qualified Exempt status. That means the provider can receive payments from CCCAP to support the cost of caring for the child. [Learn more.](#)

NEED HELP FINDING CHILD CARE?

If you would like to find a licensed child care program in your community, you can search for one at [ColoradoShines.com](https://coloradoshines.com), or call 1.877.338.2273 or [complete this online form](#).

If you choose a license-exempt option for child care, make sure to use this checklist to ensure that your child will be safe and in a nurturing environment.

VISIT, OBSERVE AND ASK QUESTIONS

The best way to learn about a license-exempt provider is to have a conversation, ask questions, and observe how the provider interacts with children. It's also important to visit the place where your child will be cared for (if this is not in your own home). This might be the provider's home or the home of another family.



When visiting license-exempt providers and observing the space where your child will be cared for, **use this checklist as your guide.**

CHILD CARE CHECKLIST: LICENSE-EXEMPT CARE

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

Questions to Ask:

- How many children does the provider care for?
- Does the provider follow rules for license-exempt care?
- What hours is care available? Does the provider take time off during the year?
- What training has the provider had?
- How does the provider try to support children's early learning and development?
- What are the daily routines and activities for the children?
- Are hazardous items (medications, cleaning products, firearms, etc.) locked and out of reach of children?
- 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?
- Is there a current parent to contact for a reference on the provider?
- Will the provider drive the child anywhere? If so, do they have safe, reliable transportation and a current driver's license?
- Where will children sleep? Does the provider follow safe sleep practices?
- Who else besides the provider will be present in the home?

Safe Sleep for Infants

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

- 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

- 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.
- Supplies and furniture are clean and appear safe.
- 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.
- Provider plays 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 the provider 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.

Adult / 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.
- Provider and children seem to enjoy being together.
- Provider listens to each child and is encouraging and positive.
- Provider asks children questions and doesn't just give directions.
- Provider quickly responds to and cares for children who are hurt or upset.