

**Arizona Department of Health Services
Division of Licensing Services
Office of Child Care Licensing**

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. What is the Office of Child Care Licensing?

The Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL) monitors the health, safety and well being of children in child care centers and child care group homes by regulating, establishing and enforcing appropriate rules. OCCL provides consumer education and technical assistance and training to child care staff. OCCL also ensures compliance with regulatory requirements by investigating unlicensed facilities and taking enforcement actions that are necessary to ensure compliance with the standards that are set forth by the State of Arizona.

2. What types of licensed child care are available?

The types of child care available are child care group homes and child care centers. A child care group home must be in the licensee's own home and care is provided for no more than 10 infants through school-age children for compensation. A child care center is usually located in a commercial building and care is provided for infants through school-age children.

3. How can I find a licensed child care facility for my child?

All licensed child care facilities are listed on the OCCL's web page. Refer to additional resources, Child Care Resource and Referral and The Department of Economic Security (DES).

4. Why should I choose a licensed child care center or certified child care group home for my child?

The child care licensed or certified providers are required to be fingerprinted. An extensive background check is done at that time. In addition to the licensing inspections done by the OCCL, centers are required to have liability insurance and fire, sanitation and safety inspections. Child care group homes are required to have liability insurance and meet local zoning requirements.

5. Do all child care group homes have to be certified by the State of Arizona?

No, a person may care for four or fewer children for compensation without being a certified child care group home. A person caring for five or more children for compensation must be certified by OCCL in order to operate legally.

6. How many children may a center care for at one time?

The square footage for the indoor activity areas and the age of children being cared for in each room are ways that determine the number of children who may be cared for in a child care center. The maximum number of children that the center may care for will be printed on the license and each will have a maximum capacity posted.

7. What happens to my child if my group home provider becomes ill or has an accident during the day?

Regulations require each provider to have a person who is qualified and is familiar with the regulations and policies of the home to be present when the provider is not home.

8. How will I learn about the center's rules and policies?

The center is required to provide parents with a written Statement of Services (Parent Handbook) which must include, but is not limited to, the following information:
services offered

- hours of operation
- charges, fees and payment requirements
- admission and release requirements
- enrollment and disenrollment procedures
- discipline guidelines and methods
- transportation procedures
- field trip requirements and procedures
- responsibilities of parents in center activities
- description of activities and programs
- statement about liability insurance
- medication policy
- emergency medical procedures
- statement of availability of inspection reports
- a statement that the facility is regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services including the OCCL's address and telephone number

9. Can the staff at the center or home give medication to my child?

The staff at the center or home may or may not administer medication depending on their policy. If they choose to administer medication, there are strict guidelines in the rules that must be followed.

10. What happens when a center or home fails to meet some of the regulations?

When the Department determines that the facility is not in compliance, the OCCL will cite the facility and offer technical assistance to help them return to compliance. An acceptable Written Documentation of Corrections is required. If there is a consistent pattern of non-compliance or areas which endanger the health and safety of children, legal action may be taken against the facility. Legal actions may include reduction of services, fines, suspension or revocation of the license. Refer to the OCCL's web page "Enforcement/Complaints" section.

11. How do I know if staff at a center or home are meeting regulations?

The staff at a center or home are required to make inspection reports available to parents. These reports are also available on OCCL's web page in the "Facility Search" link. The Child Care Rules and Statutes may be found in the "Rules/Regulations" section of the web page.

12. What will happen when there is an emergency and I cannot be reached?

Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact persons on the "Emergency, Information and Immunization Record" card, in addition to providing information about their business addresses and telephone numbers. The staff at the center or home will try to contact the parent first and if the parent cannot be reached, the persons listed as the emergency contacts will be called. In the event that parents and the persons listed as the emergency contacts cannot be reached, 911 or Child Protective Services will be called.

13. What are the staff-to-child ratios for child care centers and child care group homes?

The ratios for centers are:

- Infants - 1:5 or 2:11
- One year old children - 1:6 or 2:13
- Two year old children - 1:8
- Three year old children - 1:13
- Four year old children - 1:15
- Five year old children - 1:20
- School-age children - 1:20

The required staff-to-child ratio for a mixed age group of children is based on the age of the youngest child in the group.

The ratios for homes, regardless of age, are: 1:5
2:6-10

14. What do I look for when visiting a center or home?

There is a "Parent's Child Care Checklist" available on the OCCL's web page that can be printed and taken to the center or home when visiting. A "Notification of Parents' Rights" is also available in the "Parent Information" section.

15. Can the OCCL recommend centers or homes to parents?

The OCCL does not rate a facility. The OCCL maintains a Public File for three years on each facility. These files are available for the public to review. Each file has inspection reports, complaint information, deficiencies and documentation of corrections as well as the full licensing history, staff lists and applicant information. The OCCL web page has a list of each facility by city and zip code. Refer to the "Facility Information" - "Listing of Arizona Child Care Facilities" section. Inspection reports for each facility are also available for review. Refer to the "Facility Information" - "Facility Search: Including Inspection Reports" section.

16. Can infants be mixed with older children?

Infants may be mixed with older children if those older children are younger than school-age children and there are less than 6 children present in the center. Infants may not be mixed with school-age children. When there are 6 or more children present at the center, infants may not be mixed with any other age group. In a home, all ages, including infants, may be mixed.

17. How do I find out about complaints or any enforcement actions against a facility?

All complaint investigation reports are available for parents to review at the center or home. The OCCL keeps a record of all complaints and they may be reviewed at the OCCL office. Also, refer to the "Enforcement/Complaints" section on the OCCL's web page.

18. How do I file a complaint? Who do I call if the OCCL cannot take my complaint?

Any individual or agency who suspects that a regulation is being violated may call in a complaint or send it in writing. Complaints are prioritized based on the severity and risk to children and are investigated in a timely manner. The OCCL investigates all complaints that are based on rule or statute violations within their jurisdiction. To file a complaint, call the OCCL between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday-Friday and speak to Surveyor on Duty who is available to answer questions and take complaints. If the complaint is not within OCCL jurisdiction, the Surveyor can refer you to the appropriate agency. Complaint forms are available on the OCCL's web home page. Refer to the "Enforcement/Complaints" section - [Complaint Form](#).

19. How often are facilities inspected?

Centers are inspected annually. Homes are inspected twice annually. All annual and mid-year inspections and complaint investigations are unannounced. For more information about the Survey process refer to "Child Care Facilities Survey Process - How the State Surveys Child Care Centers and Child Care Group Homes" available in the "Parent Information" section on the OCCL's web page.

20. Can a facility disenroll my child for any reason?

Yes, a facility can disenroll a child based on their policies and procedures listed in their "Statement of Services" (Parent Handbook).

21. Why don't some facilities have to be licensed?

If parents remain at the facility (on premises) while the child is in care, those facilities are exempt.

Local Child Care Licensing Offices:

Phoenix:
150 North 18th Ave.
Suite 400
(602) 364-2539

Tucson:
400 West Congress
Suite 100
(520) 628-6541

Flagstaff:
1500 East Cedar Ave.
Suite 22
(928) 774-2707