



Child Care Options

There are many different types of child care and early education programs. To find out about the "**Licensing History**" of any licensed program, you may contact the Massachusetts Department of Early Education & Care at 978-681-9684.

Family Child Care means children are cared for in the home of the provider. Families may choose this type of care because of the home setting, flexible hours, mix of ages and small group size. Providers may care for up to 6 children. Providers are licensed by the Department of Early Education & Care (EEC).

Family Child Care Plus means children are cared for in the home of the provider. Families may choose this type of care because of the home setting, flexible hours, mix of ages and small group size. Providers may care for up to 8 children, depending on their ages (2 of the children must be school-aged) and providers must have at least 3 years of experience. Providers are licensed by EEC.

Large Family Child Care offers the home setting of family child care for up to 10 children. With more than 6 children, an EEC certified assistant must be present in addition to the provider. Providers are licensed by EEC and providers must have at least 3 years of experience.

All Family Child Care Providers licensed in Massachusetts are required to have current CPR and First Aid certifications.

A voluntary form of accreditation a Family Child Care provider may choose to obtain is called **NAFCC** accreditation. Go to www.nafcc.org for additional information on **NAFCC** accreditation.

Family Child Care Systems are a formal network of licensed family child care homes coordinated by a central child care organization. Often, these systems provide social workers and/or educational coordinators who may be involved in training and recruiting providers and assisting them with issues and problems that arise. Transportation services are also provided by many FCC Systems

Child Care Centers provide care for larger numbers of children for part or full day programs. Centers are organized to meet the needs of children and working families. They are usually open year round. Child Care Centers offer programs to a variety of age groups and vary in terms of educational philosophy, curriculum, costs and services. These programs may be licensed by EEC or license exempt depending on their overseeing entity.

Basic adult:child ratios allowed by licensing are: Infants: 2:7 Toddlers: 2:9
Preschool: 2:10

A program may choose to have fewer children per adult than licensing allows.

Nursery School Programs typically offer only part-time care, usually for children 2 years & 9 months to five years of age. The children have an opportunity to socialize with other children their own age and engage in a variety of organized activities. Most nursery schools close for the summer, vacations and holidays, though there may be coverage at an extra fee. These programs may be licensed by EEC or license exempt depending on their overseeing entity.

Head Start is a child development program designed to promote the growth and development of children from low-income families. Children ages three to five years attend. Early Head Start provides learning and development services for families with children up to three. Both Head Start and Early Head Start may be provided in a center or home-based setting. These programs are licensed by EEC.

A voluntary form of accreditation a Center Based Program may choose to obtain is called [NAEYC](http://www.naeyc.org) accreditation. Go to www.naeyc.org for additional information on [NAEYC](http://www.naeyc.org) accreditation.

Drop-in Care programs that provide short-term, back-up or immediate care for children.

Before & After School (School Age Care - SAC) Programs may be located in schools, child care centers, family child care homes, churches or other settings that offer child care. These programs may be licensed or license exempt depending on their overseeing entity. SAC programs usually provide child care to kindergarten through sixth grade children before and after school, during school vacations and summer breaks.

A voluntary form of accreditation a School Age Program may choose to obtain is called [NAA](http://www.naaweb.org) accreditation. Go to www.naaweb.org for additional information on [NAA](http://www.naaweb.org) accreditation. School Age Programs may also choose to be NAEYC accredited.

Sick Child Care services vary from a provider coming into the family's home to care for a sick child, to a program within a hospital staffed by health care professionals. Some family child care homes will also care for moderately ill children who are not contagious.

Special Needs arrangements can be found in all types of child care. Contact your local CCR&R agency for information about Early Childhood Special Education programs and services for your child.

