

An Important Decision For You To Make

Choosing an appropriate child care program is an extremely important decision for both the child and parents. The family situation as well as the child's individual needs must be considered. The child's age and developmental level are important when selecting the program to best suit his or her needs.

All family child care homes are required to comply with the state's minimum child care licensing standards. Hillsborough County's local ordinance exceeds the state's minimum standards for child care. Parents may contact the local licensing agency to find out the specific standards used in licensing family child care homes.

This brochure provides helpful information about family child care homes to parents, physicians, health care professionals, teachers, social workers, and others working with children. It summarizes the activities which should be available in a good family child care home program, the minimum standards used to license family child care homes, the qualities of a good child care caregiver, and the parents' role in working with the family child care home.

What Is A Good Child Care Program?

Good child care offers the child healthy social and educational experiences under qualified supervision in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. In a good family child care home, children not only are well cared for but are encouraged to participate in daily activities appropriate for their ages and developmental levels. Through these activities each child will have the chance to develop many skills, learn to get along with others, and build independence and self-respect.

To provide a child with a sense of security, family child care homes should provide a daily schedule that has some flexibility. This should include:

- Active and quiet play.
- Indoor and outdoor play.
- Organized and free activities.
- Play with other children and solitary play.
- Activities using toys and imaginative play.
- Time to listen to music, play instruments, and sing.
- Time to run, exercise, and develop coordination.
- Time for art activities, puzzles, and books.
- Field trips to parks, libraries, museums, firehouses.
- Time for individual adult attention and interaction.
- Scheduled rest time.
- Time for meals and snacks.

Every Licensed Family Child Care Home Should:

Have a valid license which bears the distinctive seal of the County of Hillsborough posted in a conspicuous place within the family child care home.

Have only one of the three following groups of children in care, at any given time, which shall include any child under the age of thirteen who is present in the Caregiver's home:
(1) a maximum of four children from birth to 12 months of age; or
(2) a maximum of six children, with no more than three of these from birth to 12 months of age; or
(3) a maximum of 10 children, if no more than five are preschool age, and of those five preschoolers, no more than two are under the age of 12 months.
(A preschooler is defined as a child who is from birth to 5 years of age and is not in kindergarten.)

Have a written schedule of daily activities available.

Have all first aid and emergency procedures in writing.

Have a working telephone with police, fire, poison control, Health Department, rescue numbers, and the address and directions to their child care home posted near the telephone.

Have the statewide toll-free telephone number of the Florida Abuse Registry posted near all telephones.

CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE: 1-800-96-ABUSE

The statewide toll-free telephone number for reporting child abuse is 1-800-962-2873. Reports of suspected and actual cases of child physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect received through the Abuse Registry number are referred to the Department of Children and Families ("the Department") for investigation. The Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing Office partners with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office to protect all children served within Hillsborough County.

The Department is required by law to immediately investigate any report of child abuse or neglect. When conducting these investigations or having face to face interviews with the child or other relevant persons, child protective investigation visits shall be unannounced unless determined it threatens the child's safety (F.S.39.302).

Have a working fire extinguisher and conduct monthly fire drills with children.

Have a storage place that is locked or out of the reach of children for medicines, cleansers, poisons, sharp instruments, firearms, matches, and other dangerous items.

Have a caregiver who is certified in first aid and infant/child CPR on the premises at all times. Also must have a fully-stocked first aid kit.

Have a separate, observed place to care for children who are sick until picked up by parents.

Have a physical environment that is clean, uncluttered, and free of hazards.

Have adequate, safe indoor and outdoor play space and equipment.

Have clean bathroom facilities which are accessible to children.

Serve nutritious and appetizing meals and snacks. If food or formula is supplied by the child's parents, a written agreement needs to be signed and placed in the child's file.

Have the weekly menu available.

Have clean cots, mats, cribs or beds for naps or rest.

A Child Caregiver Should Be a Person Who:

Has experience and/or training in the areas of child care or child development.

Is 18 years of age or older.

Is friendly and eager to care for children.

Feels good about his/her work.

Is warm and understanding and gives attention to each Child's individual needs.

Understands and accepts that all children have different Developmental stages and moods.

Follows sanitary regulations in feeding, diapering, and handling children.

Holds, cuddles, talks to, and plays with children.

Allows infants out of cribs/playpens for reasonable periods of time during the day.

Never props a bottle for infants in cribs. Holds infants while feeding.

Provides children with daily routines and rules they understand.

Provides children with stimulating, interesting, and educational activities.

Treats children with respect and helps build self-respect.

Manages children's behavior in a positive, constructive, and non-threatening manner.

Understands that he/she is required by Florida law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

Provides parents with the family child care home's written rules, guidelines, and policies.

Accepts the family's cultural values.

Takes time to discuss the child's progress or any problems with the parents.

Never leaves children unsupervised.

Notifies parents immediately of any illness, accident, or other serious incident.

Releases children only to persons identified and approved by parents.

Obtains written permission before taking a child on a field trip.

Follows strictly the law requiring the use of seat belts and child restraints when transporting children.

The Parents' Role

Good child care involves not only the child but also a close working relationship between the caregiver and parents. The parents' responsibility in establishing this relationship includes:

Providing the caregiver with **complete enrollment information** including current home telephone number and numbers where they can be contacted during the day; telephone numbers of two persons in case of an emergency (friend, neighbor, relative), and names of authorized

persons with permission to take the child from the family child care home.

Providing caregiver current and **up-to-date immunization and health records.**

Telling the caregiver any special needs the child may have, including food allergies or dislikes, problems with naptime, toilet habits, favorite toys and games.

Asking the caregiver about his or her qualifications and experience in child care.

If the child has special needs, discussing with the caregiver the family child care home's capability to provide activities which meet the needs of all children.

Making sure the family child care home and equipment are accessible to and appropriate for special needs children, if applicable.

Discussing with the caregiver the family child care home's policy for disciplining children, and receiving in writing a copy of those procedures. Licensing regulations prohibit: 1. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment; 2. Discipline practices that are severe, humiliating, or frightening to the child; 3. Discipline practices which are associated with food, rest, playtime or toileting.

Asking about transportation policy - is it the responsibility of the parents, or does the family child care provider provide transportation.

Asking about field trips.

Asking about the family child care home's hours of operation (including days and times).

Making sure to be on time when picking up children from day care.

Notifying the family child care home if they are going to be late to pick up their child.

Never bringing a sick child to the family child care home.

Notifying the family child care home if the child is sick or if the family is going out of town and the child will not be attending.

Finding out the cost of child care and what this includes. For example, are food, diapers, laundry, toys, and trips extra, or are they included in the fee?

Finding out what the payment schedule is. Does the parent pay in advance or at the end of the week?

Making sure children are dressed adequately for the weather and in clean and neat clothing, and that they have an extra set of clothing to change into.

Asking the caregiver the procedure for dispensing medicine to children and signing authorization for the caregiver to dispense medicine.

Participating in the family child care home's special activities and attending scheduled parent meetings and conferences.

Talking with the caregiver about any concerns regarding the child, for example, cuts, scratches, bruises or other injuries which may have occurred at the family child care home.

Strongly encouraging the children to talk about their experiences in child care.

Visiting the family child care home during the time the child is in care to observe different activities in which the child is involved.

Familiarizing themselves with the child care standards used to license the family child care home. These standards may be found in the Hillsborough County Family Child Care Home Licensing Ordinance, rules and regulations.

Personnel

- Shall be of good moral character, based upon screening and background checks.
- Shall be 18 years of age or older.
- Meet minimum staff training requirements for identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.
- Meet minimum levels of training in first aid and CPR.
- Meet minimum ratios of personnel to children.

Physical Facilities

- Must meet minimum standards for:
- Building conditions.
 - Indoor and outdoor play space.
 - Napping space.
 - Bathroom facilities.
 - Food preparation facilities.
 - Indoor and outdoor toys and equipment.

Sanitation and Safety

- Must meet minimum standards for:
- Sanitary and safe conditions.
 - First aid treatment.

- Emergency procedures.
- Fire safety.

Nutritional Practices

The home must provide meals or snacks of a quality and quantity to assure the nutritional needs of the child are met.

Admissions and Recordkeeping

- The family child care home should have for each child:
- Complete enrollment information.
 - Medical Examination Certificate.
 - Record of current and up-to-date immunizations.

Transportation Safety

- Requires the use of seat belts for children 4 years of age or older, and separate child carriers for younger children.
- Requires annual inspection of the vehicles.
- Requires limitations on the number of children in the vehicles based on the number of seat belts.
- Requires proof of vehicle insurance.
- Requires proof of current drivers' license.

Access

Allows for reasonable access to the family child care home by the custodial parent or guardian during the time the child is in care.

This family child care home has met the minimum child care licensing standards as outlined in Florida Statutes and the Hillsborough County Family Child Care Home Licensing Ordinance, rules and regulations.

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**Hillsborough
County Florida**



Sponsored by Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County, Inc., and Office of Early Learning

Know Your Child's Family Child Care Home



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