

What is a Family Child Care Home?

A Family Child Care Home (FCCH) is a child care arrangement located in a resident where, at any one time, more than two children, but less than nine children, receive child care. A family child care home is licensed by the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE).

How do I know if I need to be licensed?

To determine whether you are required to be licensed to operate a family child care home, answer these two questions:



1. Will I be caring for more than two children who are not related to me?
2. Will the children be present for more than four hours a day?

If the answer to both questions is yes, you need to be licensed.

KEEP IN MIND

Until you have completed the application process and you are licensed, you may legally care for **no more than two children** who are unrelated to you. As of December 1, 2003, it is a Class I felony to willfully operate a family child care home without being licensed.

Steps to become licensed:

The steps outlined below will assist you in becoming a licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH) provider. Please read all the information carefully and mail in the appropriate paperwork to the appropriate Unit. Once DCDEE processes your information, a child care consultant will contact you to begin the licensure process.

- ❖ Contact your local zoning and planning office to find out if your residence meets child care zoning requirements for a family child care home.
- ❖ If you are renting or are a part of a Home Owners Association (HOA), you will need to have their permission in writing before DCDEE can work with you to establish your child care facility.
- ❖ You must meet the new criminal background check requirements listed on the DCDEE website at www.ncchildcare.nc.gov/general/dhhscre_childcare.asp
- ❖ Click on the link below to download the family child care home application packet at www.ncchildcare.nc.gov/PDF_forms/FCCH_Application_Packet.pdf
- ❖ Once you have submitted a complete application and required supporting documentation, a pre-licensing consultation and initial assessment visit will be scheduled. During this time, the child care consultant will review all applicable child care requirements, observe all indoor and outdoor areas of your home, complete a pre-licensing consultation, and monitor to ensure all requirements have been met. More than two visits may be needed. Additional forms necessary for completing the application process will be provided during the visit.

Requirements for Family Child Care Homes

- ❖ Must be at least 21 years old, have a high school diploma or GED.
- ❖ Prior to licensure, must complete a criminal background check and receive a qualification letter. This also includes household members age 16 years and older.
- ❖ Prior to licensure, complete ITS-SIDS training, if planning to care for children 12 months of age and younger.
- ❖ Prior to licensure, successfully complete CPR and FA courses appropriate for the ages of children you will be serving.
- ❖ Your home must comply with all current building code requirements for family child care homes.
- ❖ Your home must be equipped with an electrically operated (with a battery backup) smoke detector, or one electrically operated and one battery operated smoke detector located next to each other.

- ❖ Your home must have at least one 5lb 2-A: 10-B: C type fire extinguisher for every 2,500 square feet of floor area.
- ❖ All children must be cared for on the ground level with an exit at grade.
- ❖ Once licensed, you will have one year to complete Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) in Child Care training and within four months of completing the training, you will be required to develop an EPR Plan.
- ❖ Once licensed, you will need to complete training on Recognizing and Responding to Suspicions of Child Maltreatment.
- ❖ Meals and snacks served must comply with the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Programs from the USDA.
- ❖ You must follow sanitary procedures in preparing and serving food and in diapering children.
- ❖ You must offer at least one hour of outdoor time daily, if weather conditions permit.
- ❖ Developmentally appropriate activities, materials and equipment must be provided.
- ❖ Screen time is prohibited for children under the age of two.
- ❖ You must provide an adequate resting space with clean linens for each child.
- ❖ You are not allowed to use corporal punishment unless you are operating under the provisions of G.S. 110-106.1 for religious-sponsored homes.
- ❖ You must develop and adopt a Safe Sleep Policy, if you are licensed to care for infants 12 months of age and younger.
- ❖ You must develop a Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma policy. This policy is required for any facility serving children ages zero to five years of age.
- ❖ Smoking and use of tobacco products are prohibited from being used in the home while children are in care.
- ❖ You must complete 12 hours of in-service training annually.
- ❖ You must complete required training in specific health and safety topic areas.
- ❖ An **annual** License Fee of \$52.00 is required.

Star Rated License

A new family child care home is issued a One Star License. You may voluntarily choose to apply for a Two to Five Star License after you have been licensed for six months, which indicates you meet higher program and education standards. Keep in mind that to receive child care subsidy payments you are required to obtain at least a Three Star License. Information on how you can receive a Two to Five Star License will be discussed during your pre-licensing consultation and initial visit(s) with your child care consultant.

How Many Children May I Have in Care?

- ❖ Of the children present at any one time in a family child care home, no more than five children can be preschool-aged, including your own preschool-aged children, unless your local zoning ordinance has a more stringent requirement.
- ❖ If you will be providing care in a single-wide manufactured home, you will be allowed to care for a total of five children, of whom no more than three may be preschoolers. In addition, no more than two of these preschoolers may be less than three years old.
- ❖ Once licensed, you must count all the children present who are younger than school-age, even if they are related to you. You must also count all school-age children except your own, or other school-age children who live in the home. School-age child means any child who is attending or who has attended a public or private grade school or kindergarten and meets the age requirements as specified in G.S. 115C-364.