

DROP-IN/SHORT-TERM
CHILD CARE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

WHAT IS DROP-IN/SHORT-TERM CHILD CARE?

Drop-in/short-term child care is defined by law in G.S. 110-86(2)(d)(d1) as a child care arrangement where care is provided while parents participate in activities that are not employment related, and where the parents are on the premises or otherwise easily accessible.

These arrangements are available in health spas, health clubs, bowling alleys, shopping malls, resort hotels, or other similar locations.

Drop-in/short-term care child care would be used by parents who need care while they occasionally run errands or participate in leisure activities. The operation must be able to reach the parent by telephone, cell phone, or pager, etc., if they are not on the premises. The parent must be able to get back to the program within 15 minutes.

CAN THE OPERATOR OF THE BUSINESS ALSO OFFER DROP-IN/SHORT-TERM CHILD CARE FOR THE CHILDREN OF THEIR EMPLOYEES?

The law allows an employer to offer drop-in/short-term child care for the children of their part-time employees, if the child does not receive care for more than 2 and a half hours during the same day, the parent is on the premises, and there are no more than 25 children in any one group in any one room.

WHO REGULATES DROP-IN/SHORT-TERM CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS?

Drop-in/short-term child care arrangements are not required to be licensed or regulated by any state agency, including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or the Division of Child Development (DCD). These arrangements must complete a *Registration Application* and receive a notice that must be posted in a prominent location to notify parents that they are not required to be and are not licensed or regulated.

HOW IS DROP-IN/SHORT-TERM CHILD CARE DIFFERENT FROM CHILD CARE?

Child care is defined by law in G.S. 110-86 (2) as a program or arrangement where three or more children less than 13 years old, receive care away from their home on a regular basis (at least one time per week) for more than four hours but less than 24 hours per day from people other than their parents or legal custodians. Child care programs that meet this definition must be regulated by the Division of Child Development to ensure that children are in healthy, safe and educational settings while not in the care of their parents or legal custodians.

There are a few situations, in addition to drop-in/short-term child care arrangements that do not meet the definition of child care and, therefore, are not required to be regulated by the Division of Child Development:

- When all of the children being cared for are related to each other and care is provided in their home, and no more than two additional children are in care;
- Recreational programs that operate for less than four consecutive months in a year;
- Special activities or instruction like athletics, dance, art, music lessons, horseback riding, gymnastics, or organized clubs for children, such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H groups or boys and girls clubs;
- Public schools;
- Private schools accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that operate a child care facility for less than 6 and a half hours a day, either on or off the school site;
- Vacation Bible schools;
- Care provided in Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse facilities;
- Cooperative arrangements between parents to provide care for their own children as a convenience rather than for employment;
- Any child care program that has two or more separate components, each of which operates for four hours or less per day with different children attending each component.

WHAT DO I DO IF I THINK A DROP-IN/SHORT TERM CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT SHOULD BE REGISTERED (HAVE A NOTICE POSTED) AND THEY AREN'T?

Contact your local Resource and Referral agency or the Division of Child Development's hotline # at 1-800-859-0829 and ask to speak with a customer service representative.

WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK A DROP-IN/SHORT-TERM CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENT BEFORE I DECIDE TO LEAVE MY CHILD(REN) THERE?

- ◇ What are the education and training qualifications of your staff?
- ◇ Do you require a criminal background check on your staff?
- ◇ How many children will be in the group with my child?
- ◇ How many staff members will be supervising my child's group?
- ◇ What types of activities will be available for my child?
- ◇ Do you offer meals and/or snacks to my child?
- ◇ What type of security measures does your arrangement have in place to assure my child's safety? (staff required to be first aid and CPC certified, sign in/sign out procedures, staff knowledgeable of evacuation procedures like fire drills or tornados, safety caps on outlets, etc.)
- ◇ Do you use physical punishment? What is your discipline policy?