

Some Questions To Ask

Here are some questions you can ask to get a sense of the quality of child care provided at a particular facility:

Staff Education

- ◆ What kind of ongoing education does your staff take?

Program Standards

- ◆ How do you handle nap time?
- ◆ What is a typical day like at your program?
- ◆ What kind of flexibility do you have to accommodate a baby's natural schedule regarding eating habits and diapering needs?
- ◆ How do you handle toilet training children?
- ◆ How do you discipline children?
- ◆ How many other children will be with my child?
- ◆ What types of play or learning activities do you have for children in my child's age group?
- ◆ How do you handle homework for school age children?
- ◆ What is your policy for caring for children's medical needs?
- ◆ Do you administer medication to sick infants and toddlers?
- ◆ How will you communicate with me about my child's day?

For help in finding quality child care in your area, please call or visit your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. A list of these agencies can be found on the Parent Resource page on the Division's web site at www.ncchildcare.net.

The Smart Start partnership in your area can also help you with questions about child care and other parenting information. To find the partnership nearest you, visit www.ncsmartstart.org or call 919-821-7999.

For help to pay for child care, contact your county Department of Social Services or go to www.dhhs.state.us/dss and click on "Local DSS Directory."

North Carolina Division of Child Development

Location Address
319 Chapanoke Road
Raleigh, NC 27603

Mailing Address
2201 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2201
Phone 919-662-4499
NC Toll Free 1-800-859-0829
Website: www.ncchildcare.net

State of North Carolina
Michael F. Easley, Governor

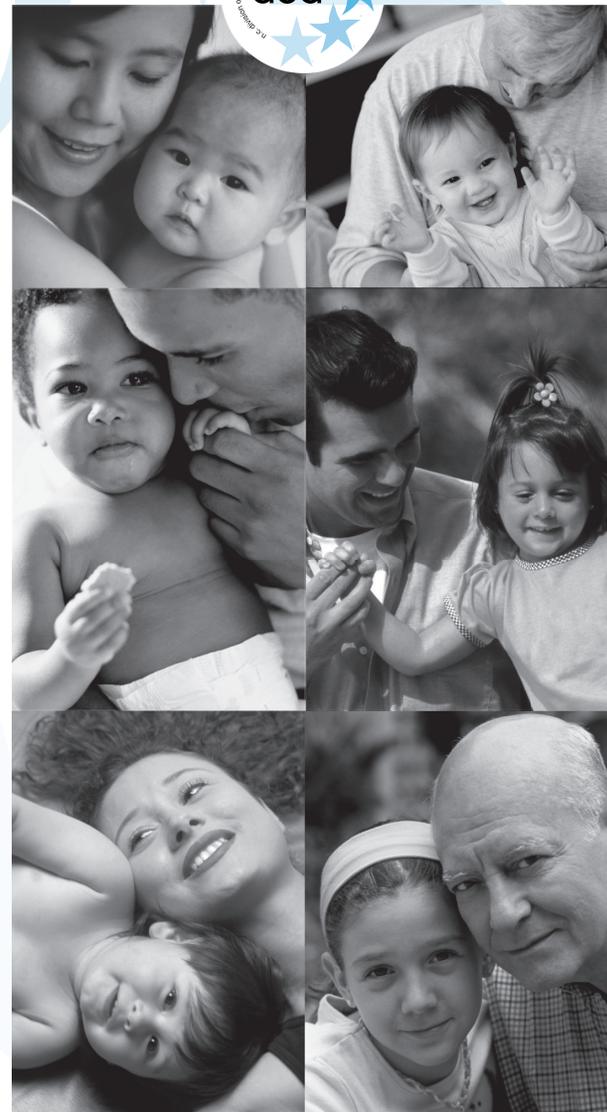
Department of Health and Human Services
Website: www.ncdhhs.gov

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Choosing Quality Child Care

For Children Birth Through 12 Years:
One of the Most Important Decisions
You Will Ever Make



Finding Quality Child Care in North Carolina

Choosing quality child care is an important decision. Good child care that provides a healthy environment and a wide range of enriching experiences is vital for your child's growth and development.

Rating North Carolina Child Care

The Division of Child Development (DCD) and the North Carolina Child Care Commission have created the Five Star Rated License System to help you find quality child care. You can look at that license and see the quality of child care a licensed facility provides.

More Stars = Higher Quality

One star means that a child care facility meets North Carolina's minimum standards. Two to five stars means that an operator has chosen to apply for more stars. In order to be awarded two to five stars, an operator agrees to have the program evaluated using a rating scale that measures quality.

Stars are awarded based on a child care facility's scores in two areas:

Staff Education **Program Standards**

Staff Education

Child care providers with more early childhood education and experience will provide your child with a more enriching child care experience.

Program Standards

What activities are available at the facility? How much play space is available? Are good health practices followed, such as hand washing for both teachers and children? How many child care providers and children are in each group? What is the daily routine? Asking these questions will provide you with information about program standards.

Facilities can receive up to seven points in each area. A program may also earn one quality point towards its rated license by having staff with even more education or meeting additional program standards such as reducing the staff to child ratio, or offering more activities for children among other options.

The maximum number of points that can be earned is 15. The more points that are earned, the higher the facility's star rating will be. More stars means higher quality.

Here's a sample license:

State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Child Development

Three Star Child Care License

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆
ABC CHILD CARE CENTER
123 Anywhere St
Raleigh, NC 27777

<p>In each area rated, this facility earned:</p> <p>Staff Education: 4 out of 7 points Program Standards: 4 out of 7 points Quality Point: 1 out of 1 points Total: 9 out of 15 points</p> <p>ID Number: 92001033 Type of Facility: Center Issued to: CHILD CARE, SUZIE</p>		<p>Issued by: CHLD CARE, SUZIE Age Range: 0-12 years Capacity: 1st shift:8 Effective Date: July 1, 2007 Restrictions: Daytime care only Children in care on ground level only</p>
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SAMPLE

Typically, programs are re-evaluated once every three-years. A program may request to be re-evaluated prior to this time frame.

Health and Safety History

All licensed child care programs including homes are visited at least once per year by Division of Child Development staff to make sure the facility is in compliance all child care regulations, including health and safety standards. Child Care Consultants monitor health and safety standards such as whether or not the facility is hygienic, the toys and play equipment are in good repair, and hazards such as cleaning solutions are out of reach of the children. These consultants also investigate complaints.

Through 2008, you may find some licenses that look different. Those licenses, issued prior to 2006, will include compliance history along with program standards and education as a factor in the star rating. While programs are transitioning to the new two component license, those licenses with and without compliance history as a factor in the star rating will be valid. Under the two-component license, all facilities must maintain a minimum 75% compliance history score to receive a license and remain licensed.

What Else Should You Know?

A good way to begin your search for child care is to visit the DCD website at www.ncchildcare.net where you can find more details about particular child care programs. You can search for child care by name, type of care, license and location. Information about complaints and investigations of facilities is also available online or you can review these records at the Division's office in Raleigh. Copies of facility files can be requested by calling DCD at 919-662-4499 or by submitting an electronic request.

Once you have found some facilities that you are interested in, visit them. For a checklist of what to ask and look for during your visit, go to the Parent's Page on the DCD website.

