

Quality child care in the early years helps create a strong foundation for children's lifelong success!

Families in Colorado have choices when it comes to child care. No matter what kind of care you decide on, use this checklist to make sure the program is safe and will provide quality care to support your child's early learning and development.

Types of Child Care

Child Care Center

A Child Care Center license is required when caring for 5 or more children. The care takes place in a dedicated building. The license should be posted to show families the ages and number of children the program is licensed for.

Family Child Care Home

A licensed Family Child Care Home can care for up to 6 children with no more than 2 children under 18 months. There are other types of Family Child Care Home licenses with different capacities. The license should be posted in the home.

License-Exempt Child Care

License-exempt child care includes care provided by a family member, friend or neighbor. Can care for up to 4 unrelated children with no more than 2 children under the age of 2. Can care for more than 4 children if children are siblings from the same family.



NEED SUPPORT TO FIND CHILD CARE? WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

STEP 1: LEARN ABOUT YOUR OPTIONS



Search for a licensed family child care home in your community at [ColoradoShines.com](https://coloradoshines.com). For each program, you'll find details about its licensing history, inspection reports, and if any complaints have been filed against the program.



Families can also call the Colorado Shines Child Care Resource and Referral Line to connect with a friendly navigator for one-on-one help to find child care. Call **1.877.338.2273** or [complete this online form](#).

YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO HELP PAY FOR CHILD CARE!

The Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) supports families with lower incomes to pay for quality child care.

[Learn more about income requirements and find out if you qualify for financial support through CCCAP.](#)

STEP 2: VISIT, OBSERVE AND ASK QUESTIONS

The best way to learn about a program is to visit in person. You can talk to the provider, observe how the provider and children interact, and see for yourself the provider's home and the learning environment that your child would spend time in.



When visiting family child care homes, use this checklist as your guide.

CHILD CARE CHECKLIST: FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

Name of Program/Provider: _____ Date of Visit: _____

- Have you reviewed the program's licensing history on ColoradoShines.com?
- How many children are cared for?
- Are other caregivers present? Have they all had background checks?
- Does the provider follow licensing rules for adult-to-child ratio and group size?
- What are the hours? What days is the program closed during the year?
- What is the age range of the children in the program?
- What training have the providers had?
- What is the daily schedule of activities?
- Are TV, computers, or other technology used with children? If so, how often and how are the devices used?
- What is the program's disaster plan in case of fire, flood or tornado?
- Does the provider have an emergency plan in case a child is injured, sick, or gets lost?
- Are there ways for parents to be involved in the program?
- Is there a list of current parents to contact for a reference on the program?
- Is there a safe outdoor area for children to play?

Safe Sleep for Infants

If you have a baby, make sure the provider adheres to these practices proven to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

- ☐ All infants are put to sleep on their backs.
- ☐ The sleep spaces have a firm surface, like a mattress in a crib, covered by a fitted sheet with no other bedding, bumpers, blankets or stuffed animals.
- ☐ Provider is trained on safe sleep practices.
- ☐ Infants have their own crib or playpen.
- ☐ Infants do not sleep in swings or car seats.
- ☐ Provider can see/hear infants at all times, including during sleep.
- ☐ Provider checks on infants at least every 10 minutes during sleep.



Things to Look For...



Health and Safety

- ☐ Review the provider's licensing history on ColoradoShines.com
- ☐ Supplies and equipment are clean and work well.
- ☐ Electrical outlets are covered.
- ☐ Staircases are blocked with secure gates.
- ☐ All potentially hazardous items are removed or out of reach of children.
- ☐ Doors are locked at all times.
- ☐ The program can accommodate my child if they need medication.

Daily Activities

- ☐ Nutritious meals and snacks are served.
- ☐ Playtime, storytime, activity time, and nap time are part of every day.
- ☐ Providers play with children to help support their learning.
- ☐ A variety of materials (puzzles, blocks, music, math, science, art, and make-believe materials) are available.
- ☐ Children play for much of the day and have time to choose their own activities.
- ☐ Materials are culturally diverse.

Provider / Child Interactions

- ☐ Provider speaks to and treats children warmly and respectfully and gets down on a child's level when talking with them.
- ☐ Provider seems genuinely interested in what children are doing.
- ☐ Providers and children seem to enjoy being together.
- ☐ Provider listens to each child and is encouraging and positive.
- ☐ Children are asked questions and not just given directions.
- ☐ Provider quickly responds to and cares for children who are hurt or upset.
- ☐ Provider helps children resolve conflict.

- ☐ All toys are clean and in good condition.
- ☐ Outdoor area (if applicable) is fenced in and safe for play.
- ☐ Animals (including their food, cages, litter boxes, etc.) are secured in a separate area of the home.
- ☐ Climbing equipment over 18 inches should have protective surfacing such as mulch, pea gravel, or AstroTurf.
- ☐ There is clear space around in the equipment in case children fall.
- ☐ The play area is inspected regularly for safety.

Learning Environment

- ☐ The space is pleasant, clean, and there are different areas for resting, quiet play, and active play.
- ☐ There is enough room for children and providers to move around.
- ☐ The children appear happy and at ease with the provider and with other children.
- ☐ Furniture and materials are the right size and type for the age of the children.
- ☐ There are enough toys and learning materials for the number of children.
- ☐ Different cultures, traditions and students with special needs are seen in the home.