

Facts about the Division of Early Care and Education - 2016

Most of the information was taken from
<http://www.scchildcare.org/providers/become-an-abc-provider.aspx>

The Division of Early Care and Education: Includes many services, including Child Care Licensing, ABC Quality, SC Voucher, the Nutrition programs, and the Center for Child Care Career Development.

Child Care Licensing ensures the health and safety of children in child care facilities subject to South Carolina laws and regulations.

The **ABC Quality Program** is a voluntary program that helps providers achieve higher standards of quality in caring for the children they serve.

The **SC Voucher Program** makes payments to child care providers to care for children from low-income families so their parents can work.

The **Center for Child Care Career Development** is the professional development system for South Carolina's child care workforce and helps child care providers access education and training.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) gives meal reimbursements to eligible child care and adult care providers for serving nutritious meals and snacks as a part of their program.

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is now located at the South Carolina Department of Education.

ABC Quality Standards

A – A+

Meet the highest quality state child care standards...may also be nationally accredited

Have teacher to child ratios and limited class size.

Required teacher to child ratios and class sizes for Levels A+ and A Centers:

Infants & toddlers:

0-1 year – 1 teacher per 5 children (class size 10)

1-2 years – 1 teacher per 5 children (class size 10)

2-3 years – 1 teacher per 7 children (class size 14)

Preschoolers:

3-4 years – 1 teacher per 11 children (class size 22)

4-5 years – 1 teacher per 13 children (class size 26)

5-6 years – 1 teacher per 15 children (class size 30)

School-agers:

6-9 years – 1 teacher per 18 children (class size 36)

9-12 years – 1 teacher per 20 children (class size 40)

Half of lead teachers have at least a Certificate in Early Care & Education; all must have the SC Early Childhood Credential. Directors have at least an Associate degree in Early Care & Education.

Teachers and directors receive 20 hours of specialized training every year to help them plan curriculum and activities to support every child's development and to prepare them for kindergarten.

Meet national quality standards through regular rigorous on-site reviews by trained ABC assessors.

B – B+

Meet quality standards beyond basic state health and safety requirements.

Have or exceed required teacher to child ratios and have limited class size.

Recommended teacher to child ratios and class size for Level B+ and B Centers:

Infants & toddlers:

0-1 year – 1 teacher per 5 children (class size 10)

1-2 years – 1 teacher per 5 children (class size 10)

2-3 years – 1 teacher per 7 children (class size 14)

Preschoolers:

3-4 years – 1 teacher per 11 children (class size 22)

4-5 years – 1 teacher per 13 children (class size 26)

5-6 years – 1 teacher per 15 children (class size 30)

School-agers:

6-9 years – 1 teacher per 18 children (class size 36)

9-12 years – 1 teacher per 20 children (class size 40)

Lead teachers have at least the SC Early Childhood Credential and experience working in a licensed child care setting. Directors have at least a Certificate in Early Care and Education and experience working in a licensed child care setting.

Teachers receive 15 hours of specialized training every year. Directors receive 20 hours of specialized training every year. This training helps them plan activities to support every child's development and learning.

Meet voluntary quality program standards for staff qualifications, interactions, activities, child health, safety and well-being, and physical environment.

Receive annual on-site reviews on state quality standards by trained ABC assessors.

C

Meet state requirements for health and safety to operate legally in SC.

Meet required teacher to child ratios.

Required teacher to child ratios and class size for Level C:

Infants & toddlers:

0-1 year – 1 teacher per 5 children

1-2 years – 1 teacher per 6 children

2-3 years – 1 teacher per 8 children

Preschoolers:

3-4 years – 1 teacher per 12 children

4-5 years – 1 teacher per 17 children

5-6 years – 1 teacher per 20 children

School-agers:

6-12 years - 1 teacher per 23 children

All teaching staff must have a minimum of a high school diploma and experience working in a licensed child care setting.

Directors must have a high school diploma and experience working in a licensed child care setting.

Teachers receive 15 hours of specialized training every year. Directors receive 20 hours of specialized training every year. This training helps them plan activities to support every child's development and learning.

Receive annual on-site reviews of health and safety by trained ABC assessors.

Staff-to-Child Ratios for Licensed, Approved and Registered Centers

Child's Age	Staff-to-Child Ratios
Birth to one year	1:5
One to two years	1:6
Two to three years	1:8
Three to four years	1:12
Four to five years	1:17
Five to six years	1:20

Six to twelve years	1:23
---------------------	------

Evaluative Visits to Child Care Programs

4 Kinds of Evaluative Visits

- (1) *ABC Quality (Voluntary) – Melissa Heston - ABC Quality Monitor
- (2) DSS Licensing (Required)- Tonya Risano and Jennifer Brown – Licensing Specialists
- (3) DHEC (Required) – Check for compliance with DHEC Regulations
- (4) Fire Marshall (Required) – Check for compliance with Fire Safety Regulations

*ABC Quality Assessment occurs once per year. Centers most often stay at B because of staff level of training. New requirement that all centers receiving federal funds (i.e., DSS) must have staff who have certain levels of training.

Infant and Toddler Care Program: A state-based program that provides technical support that promotes their standards. They work with centers that have a C or B rating. They are partners with the ABC Quality Program.

Registered vs. Licensed Child Care Programs

In order to legally operate in South Carolina, child care providers must maintain a valid license or registration or be legally exempt. State laws have established the level of mandated DSS oversight, which varies by type of provider.

Each type of provider is legally required to maintain a minimum level of regulation based on the type of care provided, but providers can choose to pursue a higher-than-required level of oversight to provide a higher standard of care. That means a family-home provider, which is only required to be registered, can instead choose meet the stricter standards of licensing.

A provider's license is important, but it is not always an indication of quality. It indicates that they are operating legally and in compliance with state laws regarding health and safety. DSS licensing professionals can visit any child care provider unannounced in response to a complaint. A parent should always ask if a program they are considering is licensed, registered or exempt and should expect to see evidence of their status.

Licensed/Approved Provider – Meets basic requirements for health and safety child care. Routinely visited by DSS Licensing Professionals

Register Faith-Based Provider – Sponsored by a religious organization or church. Meets basic requirements for health and safety child care. Regular visits by DSS Licensing Professionals.

Registered Family Home Provider – Required to register with DSS by mail. DSS Licensing Professional can visit unannounced once per year.

Exempt Provider – Only operates less than 4 hours per day or on school holidays. No licensing or inspections by DSS required by law

Voluntary Quality Program

Any SC child care provider can participate in ABC Quality, the state’s voluntary quality rating and improvement system. ABC Quality is administered by the Division of Early Care and Education of the SC Department of Social Services. ABC Quality staff monitor and inspect participating providers to ensure adherence to program standards.

Types of Providers

There are four types of legally operating child care providers in South Carolina. Family members and friends entrusted to care for children by parents are not registered, licensed or inspected by DSS.

Child Care Center – 13+ children; commercial, church or school based.

Operating Status – Licensed, registered, or approved

Group Homes – 7-12 children; home based.

Operating Status – Licensed

Family Home – 6 or fewer children – home based.

Operating Status – Registered or licensed.

Limited Operations/Holiday Care

Exempt from regulatory requirements.

Open fewer than 4 hours daily or on school holiday. No licensing or inspection required by law.

Operating Status - none