

Child Care Centers in Alabama

Overall Score: 71/150 (47%)

Rank*: 45

	Score	Percent	Rank
Oversight	28/50	56%	27
Regulation	43/100	43%	44

Child Care Center Costs in 2009

Average annual fees paid for an infant in a center	\$5,356
Average annual fees paid for a 4-year-old in a center	\$5,668

Child Care Center Oversight

Benchmarks for Ranking	Meets
1. All centers and family child care homes caring for unrelated children for a fee are licensed.	●
2. Child care centers are inspected at least four times a year, including visits by licensing, health and fire personnel. Some visits are unannounced.	○
3. Programs to licensing staff ratio does not exceed 50:1.	◐
4. Licensing staff have a bachelor's degree in ECE* or a related field.	●
5. Online inspection and complaint reports are available to parents.	○



Child Care Center Regulations

Benchmarks for Ranking	Meets	Benchmarks for Ranking	Meets
1. Staff:child ratios are in compliance with NAEYC** accreditation standards.	○	6. Lead teachers are required to have 24 hours or more of annual training.	◐
2. Group size requirements are in compliance with NAEYC accreditation standards.	○	7. Background checks require use of fingerprints to check state and FBI records and checks of state child abuse registry and sex offender registry.	◐
3. Center directors are required to have a bachelor's degree or higher in ECE or a related field.	○	8. Programs are required to address six developmental domains.***	○
4. Lead teachers are required to have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or an associate degree in ECE or related field.	○	9. Programs are required to address 10 basic regulations of health and safety standards.**** Corporal punishment is not allowed.	◐
5. Lead teachers have initial training, including orientation and training in fire safety and other health and safety issues. One staff member on duty must be certified in first aid and CPR.	●	10. Programs are required to encourage parent involvement, communicate with parents daily or on an ongoing basis and allow parental visits.	◐

Key



Fully Meets



Substantially Meets



Partially Meets



Marginally Meets



Does not meet

N/A = Not Available

*Out of 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Department of Defense. **Early childhood education **National Association for the Education of Young Children. ***Six developmental domains are language/literacy, cognitive/intellectual, social, emotional, physical and cultural. ****Ten areas are immunizations, guidance/discipline regulations, diapering and handwashing, fire drills, medication administration, incident reporting, placing infants on backs to sleep, hazardous materials, playground surfaces under outdoor equipment and emergency preparedness.

Source for cost information: National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies. *Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2010 Update* - based on 2009 data.

All WCDB data is sourced from a survey of state licensing directors conducted by the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies in December 2010. Note: Information was also verified against state regulations.

Child Care Centers in Alabama

Strength

- ✓ Child care centers and family child care homes caring for one or more unrelated children are required to be licensed.
- ✓ Routine monitoring inspections are unannounced.
- ✓ Complaint inspections are unannounced.
- ✓ Center staff are required to have initial orientation, fire safety, and other health and safety training. Centers are required to have one first-aid and CPR-certified staff member on premises at all times.
- ✓ Health and safety standards address nine of 10 basic standards; programs are not required to have fire drills.
- ✓ Center staff are required to undergo a background check that includes using fingerprints for state and federal record checks but does not require a check of the sex offender registry.
- ✓ Child care licensing staff are required to have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field.

Weakness

- X Child care inspections are only conducted once every two years.
- X Center director education requirements do not meet NACCRRRA's recommended standard.
- X Lead teachers in centers are only required to have a high school diploma or GED before working with children.
- X Center staff are required to complete only 12 hours of annual training.
- X Staff:child ratios are not in compliance with NAEYC accreditation standards for seven age groups.
- X Programs are not required to address any of the six developmental domains (social, physical, language/literacy, cognitive/intellectual, emotional and cultural).
- X Parent involvement is not specifically addressed.
- X Neither complaint nor inspection reports are online.

Recommendations

- Increase frequency of inspections of child care centers.
- Require center directors to have a bachelor's degree or higher in early childhood education or a related field.
- Increase the education requirements for lead teachers to a CDA credential or an associate degree in early childhood education.
- Increase the annual training requirements for teachers to 24 hours including CPR and first-aid renewal.
- Require programs to address all six of the developmental domains in offering activities.
- Require a check of the sex offender registry.
- Require programs to encourage parent involvement.
- Make both inspection and complaint reports available online.