

Child Care Centers in Alaska

Overall Score: 72/150 (48%)

Rank*: 43

	Score	Percent	Rank
Oversight	14/50	28%	48
Regulation	58/100	58%	31

Child Care Center Costs in 2009

Average annual fees paid for an infant in a center	\$8,904
Average annual fees paid for a 4-year-old in a center	\$8,268

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 Alaska

Strength

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Program activities must address all six developmental domains (social, physical, language/literacy, cognitive/intellectual, emotional and cultural).
- ✓ Health and safety standards address 10 of 10 basic standards (immunizations, guidance/discipline, diapering/handwashing, fire drills, medicine administration, following safe sleeping practices to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), emergency preparedness, playground surfaces, hazardous material, and incident reporting).
- ✓ Center staff are required to undergo a comprehensive background check that includes using fingerprints to check state and federal criminal records and checks of child abuse and neglect registry and sex offender registry.
- ✓ Child care licensing staff have an average caseload of 50 programs or fewer.

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 not required to have a high school diploma or GED before working with children.
- X Staff:child ratios are not in compliance with NAEYC accreditation standards for five age groups.
- X Does not specifically address parent involvement or daily/frequent communication with parents.
- X Neither complaint nor inspection reports are online.
- X Child care licensing staff are not required to have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field.

Recommendations

- Require every child care center and family child care home caring for one unrelated child or more for pay to be licensed.
- 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.
- Require parent involvement and daily/frequent communication with parents.
- Make both inspection and complaint reports available online.
- Require licensing staff to have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or related field.