

There's No Place Like Home!



- **What is family child care?**
- **How does family child care prepare children for school?**
- **Who uses family child care?**
- **How can communities support family child care?**

Florida Family Child Care Home Association

Promoting professionalism within the field of early care and education

FLORIDA FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME ASSOCIATION

9207 Edgemont Lane
Boca Raton, FL 33434
Phone: 954-581-1192
Fax: 407-366-5624
www.familychildcare.org



FFCCHA is a statewide, non-profit professional organization. Membership is open to all regulated family child care providers, parents, and advocates of quality care. We promote professional growth by hosting an annual statewide conference, quarterly meetings with training sessions and publishing a newsletter, which includes a parent's page. Some of the training, conference workshops, and newsletters are also available in Spanish. We offer scholarships for NAFCC national accreditation and in-service training.

MISSION

To represent a united voice on behalf of all children to promote and encourage quality professional family child care through education, legislation, advocacy, mentoring, caring and love.

GOALS

The purpose of FFCCHA, Inc. is to work on behalf of all family child care providers specifically to promote professionalism and encourage quality early learning environments. The objectives of this association are to:

- Build positive public awareness on the advantages of high quality family child care.
- Create an atmosphere of pride and professionalism for family child care providers in the state of Florida.
- Offer informative and educational updates to family child care providers.
- Develop and facilitate on-going support of local family child care associations (FFCCHA chapters).
- Advocate for quality early care and learning.



Quality Care . . . from Providers with Love to Share

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What is Family Child Care?

Family Child Care is a home-based service where child care is provided in the caregiver's home. The home must be licensed or registered according to county and state laws. Family Child Care is the most preferred type of care for young children, especially infants and toddlers. Many family child care homes provide high quality programs for preschoolers, school age, and children with special needs. Family child care is "home-away-from-home" personalized professional child care.

What Does Family Child Care "Look Like"?

Family Child Care "has been nearly invisible, tightly woven into the fabric of every neighborhood" (Dr. Kathy Modigliani). In fact, most people would find it difficult to distinguish between a family child care home and the neighbor next door!

Where Can You Find Family Child Care?

Many families are able to find family child care programs in their own neighborhood; many times with someone they already know. Other families prefer to find care in neighborhoods closer to work. Wherever you need child care, there is a good chance that there is a family child care home nearby. Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, Licensing agencies, and the Department of Children and Families (www.myflorida.com/childcare) have a complete listing of regulated family child care programs in the state of Florida.



Who are Family Child Care Providers?

Being a family child care provider “requires the wisdom of a parent, the knowledge of a social worker, the skill of a pediatrician, the tact of a mediator, the patience of a saint; not to mention the savvy of an entrepreneur running a small business” —*June Solnit Sale*

- Virtually all are women
- The majority are married
- Some care for their own young children or grandchildren
- They work longer hours than the parents who purchase their services
- They assume responsibilities that equal those in more highly paid professions
- A large number may have employed spouses, but their own salary, makes an important and often essential contribution to the household income
- A significant number provide for their family without other household income

(NCJW Center for the Child, NY, NY)

Who Uses Family Child Care?

Family Child Care is the most widely used type of out-of-home care for young children in the United States, especially for infants and toddlers.

Research has shown that family child care has unique qualities that make it the preferred arrangement of many parents.

Nearly one-quarter of all children are in family child care at some point before beginning elementary school. Furthermore, the majority of young children with working mothers are cared for in private homes. These children spend an average of 31 hours per week in family child care (Johnson, 2005), which can include nights and weekends (Davis & Connelly, 2005). Family child care providers also make up a sizeable portion of small business owners in the United States. Nationally, there are a total of 213,966 licensed family child care homes, which breaks down to 166,514 small family child care homes (serving up to 6 children) and 47,452 large licensed family child care homes (serving 7-12 children).

(National Association for Regulatory Administration and the National Child Care Information Center, 2006)

How Does Family Child Care Support Families?

Convenient Neighborhood Care

Close to home or work

Cozy Homelike Environment

Natural learning setting

One Consistent Caregiver

Stability all day, every day, for years

Low Provider to Child Ratio

1:4 infants, 1:6 preschool

Mixed Ages in Small Groups

Builds leadership skills, social skills, and self-esteem. Allows siblings to be cared for together

Flexibility

Days, hours, evening, weekend, and/or odd-hour care

Personal Communication

Daily between provider & parent

Family Support

Nurtures family concepts, experiences and values

Inclusion

For a variety of special needs care

Caring Relationships

Between provider, child and parent/family

School Readiness Skills

Enrichment activities and educational learning experiences

School-Age Care

Before and After School Care, including holidays and summer care

VPK – Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

Free pre-school education program preparing 4 year olds to enter school ready and eager to learn!

Early Head Start

Free early care for birth to three year olds



Benefits of Family Child Care Which Help Prepare Children for School

The following headings (which are called domains) are the latest adopted by the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) - Office of Early Learning (OEL) known as the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Birth to Four Years (2010). AWI and the Florida Department and Education - Office of Early Learning collaborated to create one set of Standards for Florida's Four-Year-Olds (2011) for use in School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) educational programs. Below each of these headings you will find specific aspects and benefits of family child care that help children prepare for school.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Gross & Fine Motor Skills; Self-Help; and Health

- Children are in an environment that tends to be more flexible regarding daily schedules. This allows a broader range of activities to be offered at the same time, for longer periods of time.
- Family child care is not confined to one classroom. Instead, children are usually allowed access to most (if not all) of the home, offering a wider variety of activities and more space to explore with freedom of movement.
- Low adult to child ratios encourage caregivers to observe each individual child in care, and therefore more readily identify any health needs.
- Small groups lower the incidence of illnesses among the children in the group.
- Early intervention is more likely to happen when there is a close, personal relationship between the provider and parent which you find in family child care. This relationship encourages on-going, daily sharing of information on the physical, social and emotional development of each child.
- Health, safety and hygiene activities (for example brushing teeth, combing hair, cleaning up and washing hands) are usually done routinely and are easily incorporated in a home environment.
- A stress-free environment is conducive for optimal bonding and learning. Research has shown that cortisol levels are extremely low among children cared for in family child care homes (the same level as in their own homes).



APPROACHES TO LEARNING

Eagerness & Curiosity; Persistence; Creativity & Inventiveness

- Children learn through play. The home is the most natural learning environment, offering practical life skills and experiences.
- Family child care is only found in a home; therefore the environment naturally tends to be 'cozy' and 'soft'. When providers and children are comfortable in their environment, it encourages eagerness, curiosity and persistence that is conducive to building a strong foundation for inventiveness and creativity.
- Due to low ratios, family child care providers are able to focus on each child individually, allowing the provider to observe and respond to learning opportunities as well as to be flexible in customizing the curriculum and initiating changes based on a child's needs and curiosity.
- A family child care home promotes bonding and attachment because of its low adult to child ratio and small group size which brain research has shown to be essential in brain development.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Trust & Emotional Security; Self Reflection; Self-Concept

- Children are not moved to a new classroom with a new provider when they have a birthday or master certain skills. This helps eliminate potential stress and anxiety and gives the children in care a consistent caregiver, which brain research has identified as a necessary component of quality care.
- A small group size encourages children to interact with a variety of behaviors and offers them the chance to continuously practice cooperative work and play skills (sharing, taking turns, expressing feelings, resolving conflicts, etc.).
- Children with difficulty following rules are encouraged to control their own behavior by having them remind the younger ones of the rules.
- Children with low self-esteem have an opportunity to refine their social skills and build their confidence in a non-competitive environment that includes younger children.
- Family and sibling-like relationships can be fostered with mixed age groups. This encourages helpful interactions throughout the day such as empathy and caring for others.
- Since children progress at various rates, they will have age-specific needs at different times, therefore, mixed age groups are ideal. Children are not usually compared with or feel the need to compete with their same-age peers.



LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Listening & Understanding; Communication and Speaking; Emergent Reader; Emergent Writer

- Older children have the opportunity to lead, instruct, assume responsibility, nurture others and strengthen their own skills and knowledge.
- Younger children are exposed to more complex play that includes advanced language and educational activities which they observe and imitate.
- It is not unusual to find older children reading to younger children, or to see older children ‘modeling’ reading while they are doing their homework and reading for pleasure.
- Family child care has a naturally print rich environment (books, magazines, mail, food labels, recipes, phone book, newspaper, encyclopedia, and computer).
- There are cozy spaces in the home that are inviting for reading and looking at books.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Exploration & Discovery; Concept Development & Memory; Problem-Solving; Mathematical and Science Thinking; Social Studies and the Arts

- Family child care has a sensory rich environment that encourages children to freely explore and experiment.
- A close relationship between provider and child allows the child to feel safe, secure, valued and appreciated thus positively impacting their overall growth and cognitive development.
- Activities are coordinated for all age groups allowing children with different skill levels to learn from each other regardless of their chronological age or developmental level.
- Children have the opportunity as they grow to play various roles such as the youngest, middle or oldest of the group and therefore have exposure to different learning experiences to understand “real life” roles and relationships.
- Family child care offers many opportunities for math and science activities in the natural environment of a home. One example is daily food preparation that allows children to practice counting place settings, observing liquids changing to solids and necessary life skills such as pouring, measuring, and using cooking utensils.
- Because family child care has such a small group size, it is natural that the provider would have more time to spend with each child, thus enabling the provider to assist the child in achieving his or her next skill level.
- Most family child care homes have an outdoor nature classroom in their own backyard. Children have access to this wonderful opportunity to experience many science and math activities, for example, growing vegetables and/or flowers, collecting insects and leaves, and observing wildlife.

The True Cost of Family Child Care

A family child care provider's salary is actually whatever is 'left over' after she/he has paid all expenses. Therefore, the net-profit of her business equals her salary. Many providers work over 50 hours per week without overtime pay. Therefore, most family child care providers make less than minimum wage. Because family child care providers are self-employed, many do not receive payment for holidays, vacation or sick time (unless they build it into their fee structure). In addition, most do not have private retirement benefits or insurance coverage (health, life, dental) unless their spouses cover them.

MINIMUM START-UP REQUIREMENTS

- Annual DCF (Department of Children and Families) fees
- Fingerprinting and background screening of all adults (18 yrs and older) in the household
- 30 hour state mandated training class and competency test
- 5 hour Early Literacy and Language Development training
- CPR and First Aid class (and First Aid kit)
- Fire Extinguisher - ABC type is recommended
- Smoke alarms
- There may be additional expenses relating to local government mandates - i.e. city and/or county occupational licenses
- Home repairs and/or improvements
- Sleeping/Napping equipment

EARLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Puppets, blocks, puzzles and books (enough for each age group)
- Inside equipment - such as cribs, playpens, mats, table and chairs (child height), high chairs and booster chairs, changing table, paint easels, dramatic play items (play kitchen, workbench, puppet theater, etc.)
- Outside equipment such as swings, slides, balls, riding toys, push/pull toys, puppets, sand and water table and play accessories, etc.
- Fenced play area outdoors with cushioning material (sand or mulch) under play equipment

MEALS AND SNACKS

Some programs include meals and snacks in the fee they charge for child care; others choose to have the families supply all food to help reduce the overall child care cost (food usually represents the most expensive cost associated with child care).

However, if the parents supply the food, many providers supply food as needed to meet approved nutritional guidelines.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

- Arts and Crafts supplies (paint, play-dough, etc.)
- Curriculum materials
- Cleaning supplies
- Paper products
- Health and Safety materials (i.e. electric outlet covers)

ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURES

- Liability Insurance (home and auto)
- Half the cost of Social Security tax (based on net profit of business)
- On-going training (workshops, seminars and conferences)
- On-going education (college, CDA, Accreditation)
- Professional association membership dues
- Repairs and improvement
- Home improvements
- Office supplies
- Disposable supplies, for example light bulbs
- Utility expenses
- Auto expenses



Florida State Mandated Family Child Care Adult-to-Child Ratios

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME - 1 ADULT

Note: The ratios listed below are for both registered and licensed family child care homes. Provider's own children are included in the count (0-12 yrs). In addition, local cities or counties may have lower ratios than listed below. Be sure to check with your local licensing agency to verify these ratios.

Infant (0-11 mos)	Preschool (12 mos - 5 yrs+)	School-Age (K+)	Total
4	0	0	4
3	3	0	6
3	2	1	6
3	1	2	6
3	0	3	6
2	4	0	6
1	5	0	6
0	6	0	6
2	3	5	10
2	2	6	10
2	1	7	10
2	0	8	10
1	4	5	10
1	3	6	10
1	2	7	10
1	1	8	10
1	0	9	10
0	5	5	10
0	4	6	10
0	3	7	10
0	1	9	10
0	2	8	10
0	1	9	10
0	0	10	10

Ratio Categories

- a) A maximum of four children from birth to 12 months of age
- b) A maximum of three children from birth to 12 months of age, and other children, for a maximum total of six children
- c) A maximum of six preschool children if all are older than 12 months of age
- d) A maximum of 10 children if no more than five are preschool age, and, of those five, no more than two are under 12 months

VPK in FCC Homes

(Effective Fall 2005)

VPK 1:6 (minimum of 4 children 4 years old by September 1st)

VPK homes must be licensed and providers must have their Staff Credential, Director's Credential and be approved by their Early Learning Coalition to offer the VPK program.

A provider can meet only one category (a, b, c, or d) at a time. However, he/she is not limited to one category on the registration or license and may change to a different category at various times throughout the day or week.

Florida State Mandated Large Family Child Care Home Ratios

LARGE FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME - 2 ADULTS

Note: Ratios listed below are for licensed large family child care homes with 2 providers present (one must have a Staff Credential) caring for the children. The providers own children are included in the count (0-12 yrs). In addition, some local cities or counties may have stricter ratios than listed below. Be sure to check with your local licensing agency to verify these adult-to-child ratios.

0 - 23 months	24 months - 12 years	Total
8	0	8
7	1	8
6	2	8
5	3	8
4	8	12
3	9	12
2	10	12
1	11	12
0	12	12

Ratio Categories

- a) A maximum of eight children from birth to 23 months of age
- b) A maximum of 12 children, with no more than four children under 24 months of age

VPK in Large FCCH

(Effective Fall 2005)

Ratio 2:12

Florida State Mandated Center-based adult-to-child ratios

Note: Group size can be increased as long as the number of providers is increased, unlike family child care, that is limited in their group size total.

0 - 12 months	1:4
1 year	1:6
2 years	1:11
3 years	1:15
4 years	1:20
5 years and older	1:25
VPK	1:11 or 2:20

402.305 (4)(a)(7) When children 2 years of age and older are in care, the staff-to-child ratio shall be based on the age group with the largest number of children within the group.

Family Child Care Florida State Mandated Regulations

In the State of Florida, counties offer registration and/or licensure for family child care. However, some counties may have stricter guidelines than are required by state law (Florida Statutes 402.302, 402.313).

REGISTRATION GUIDELINES:

- Pay annual fees to the Department of Children and Families.
- The primary provider (and substitutes who are with the children more than 40 hours per month) must complete the 30-hour state mandated Child Care Course which includes 6 hours of Rules and Regulations for Family Child Care and pass the competency exam at the conclusion of the course. In addition, the provider must complete an approved one time 5 hour literacy class and complete 10 hours of in-service training annually.
- Substitutes who are with the children less than 40 hours per month must successfully complete the state mandated 6 hour Family Child Care Rules class and pass the competency exam.
- Must have an emergency substitute available who has completed the 6-hour state mandated Family Child Care Rules class and pass the competency exam.
- Child immunizations must be kept up-to-date and be maintained on file in the family child care home.
- Complete, sign and submit a home safety checklist.

LICENSING GUIDELINES:

- Must complete all of the requirements listed under Registration Guidelines (above).
- Must meet health and safety guidelines listed in Florida State Statute 402 and Department of Children and Families guidelines 65C-20, Florida Administrative Code.
- Must pass bi-annual inspections and approval by the local licensing agency.
- Must have current certification for Pediatric CPR and First Aid class(provider and substitutes).
- Must be licensed for two years and have a Staff Credential for one year in order to apply for a Large Family Child Care Home license.
- In addition, the Large License must have an employee when operating under the ratios of a Large Family Child Care Home.

Family Child Care Training, Credentials and Certifications

Florida Gold Seal Quality Care designation is given to family child care homes and centers who are accredited by nationally recognized accrediting associations approved by the Florida Department of Children and Families. NAFCC is the only one approved for family child care homes. Visit www.myflorida.com/childcare or call 1-888-352-2842.

Florida Staff Credential This is a provider educational credential. Two ways to meet this requirement are:

- **Florida Child Care Professional Credential** (formerly known as the CDAE). Visit www.myflorida.com/childcare or call the Child Care Training Information Center at 1-888-352-2842.
- **National Family Child Care CDA (Child Development Associate credential)** Providers complete a comprehensive resource file, an on site assessment, written and verbal exams along with documentation of 120 clock hours of training in 8 subject areas. Visit www.cdacouncil.org or call the Council for Professional Recognition at 1-800-424-4310.

Master Provider Credential This 5-level credential, based on education and experience, is offered nationally through PathFinders Unlimited, Inc. Visit www.pathfindersunlimited.com or call 276-694-7571.

M.E.N.T.O.R. Program—(Mentors Educate, Nurture, Train, Observe, Role model). This peer mentoring program offers training and a certification process for family child care providers to become certified mentors and instructors. Email FLMentorprogram@aol.com or call 954-581-1192.

NAFCC National Accreditation sponsored by the National Association for Family Child Care and is the only nationally recognized accreditation system designed specifically for family child care providers. Accreditation is awarded to family child care providers who meet eligibility requirements and the Quality Standards for NAFCC Accreditation. Visit www.nafcc.org or call 801-886-2322.

Second Helping/Cuatro Pasos Instructor Training is an intensive class designed to teach advanced providers how to become Instructors of Second Helping/Cuatro Pasos administered by PathFinders Unlimited, Inc. Visit www.pathfindersunlimited.com or call 276-694-7571.

Second Helping/Cuatro Pasos Training is a nationally recognized 32-hour advanced enrichment class, divided into four major modules: The Provider, The Business, The Children, and The Family. Visit www.pathfindersunlimited.com or call 276-694-7571.

How Communities Can Help Support Family Child Care

- Advocate for more funding for the statewide T.E.A.C.H.® Early Childhood Scholarship Program (offering scholarships to providers to obtain their CDA, Director Credential, or 2-year degree in early care and education).
- Advocate for funding for the statewide Child Care WAGES® FLORIDA program (which pays wage supplements to providers to encourage continuity of care for children).
- Offer financial assistance to help providers obtain their NAFCC (National) Accreditation.
- Offer financial assistance to help providers purchase educational materials and equipment to enhance their early care and learning environment.
- Schedule business meetings and conference calls so that providers can be involved and have a voice in the decision making process.
- Offer financial assistance to help providers attend local, state and national meetings, trainings and conferences, specific to family child care.
- Offer financial assistance for training and certification to providers to become mentors and/or instructors.
- Use certified MENTORS for training and technical assistance in your community.
- Create a separate family child care position or seat on the local Early Learning Coalition and/or other early care and education organizations.
- Assist with community public awareness on how to choose quality family child care.
- Fund accreditation projects and fees for family child care providers to obtain their NAFCC Accreditation.
- Encourage and fund local FFCCHA chapter membership and participation.
- Recognize and celebrate quality family child care programs in your community. Visit www.providerappreciationday.org for more information.

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