



Standards for Participation in Indiana

Licensed Child Care Home



Licensed Child Care Home Level 1

Level 1 Licensed Child Care Home Providers will be able to:

- ★ Meet minimum health and safety standards
- ★ Develop and implement basic health and safety policies and procedures

Licensed Child Care Home Providers meet the standards for a level 1 rating providing the following are met:

- 1. The license issued by Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), the Division of Family Resources (DFR) is current and in good standing.**

Licensed Child Care Home Level 2

Level 2 Licensed Child Care Home providers will be able to:

- ★ Provide an environment that is welcoming, nurturing, and safe and promotes the physical, emotional, and social well-being of all children
- ★ Provide a variety of learning materials that reflect the age, interests, and abilities of each child
- ★ Provide for children's language and literacy skill development.
- ★ Provide pertinent program information to families
- ★ Promote assistant caregivers' development and training

Licensed Child Care Home providers meet the standards for a level 2 rating providing the following are met:

1. **All requirements of Level 1 are met.**
2. **Lead Caregiver receives orientation and trains assistants on the *Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children, Birth to Age Five*.**
3. **Lead Caregiver is a member of a nationally recognized early childhood organization.**
4. **Child care home has a written philosophy and goals for children.**
5. **Lead Caregiver will have a current CDA or equivalent certificate, OR an early childhood degree or equivalent degree OR have completed 45 clock hours of educational training in early childhood education within the past three years leading to a CDA or an early childhood/ child development degree.**
6. **At least 50% of caregivers, including the lead caregiver, annually participate in a minimum of 15 clock hours of educational or in-service training focused on topics relevant to early childhood.**
7. **A system is in place for communicating pertinent information to families, daily and at an annual family conference for each child.**

8. A written emergency plan is established and implemented. The plan is shared with parents at the time of enrollment and any time the provider initiates a change in any aspect of the plan. The purpose of the written emergency plan is to make all emergency policies and procedures clear to parents. The plan is to be signed by the parent(s) to indicate their understanding and acceptance of the policies and procedures. The written plan will include:

1. The procedure for notifying parents in the event of the provider's illness, the illness of a member of the household who may be contagious to others, or any emergency that prevents children from being cared for in the provider's home
2. Back-up plan for care that the provider will arrange in the event of an emergency
3. Directions to parents for having a back-up plan for care in place, in the event of their child's illness or the provider's inability to care for children
4. Alternative contacts and medical care authorization available in case parents can not be reached in the event of an emergency
5. A list, provided by the parent(s), of people authorized to pick up a child.
6. A plan for fire evacuation or any other type of evacuation
7. A plan for safe shelter during a tornado warning or any other threatening weather emergency

9. Written policies and a child care contract is established and implemented with families. The contract should be signed by the parent and must contain:

1. Persons authorized to pick up a child
2. Illness policies, including reasons for exclusion
3. Guidance and discipline policy
4. Medication administration procedure
5. Policy regarding parent conferences, visits and open door policy
6. Information on transportation and field trips
7. Hours care is provided
8. Late pick up policy
9. Payments and fee schedule
10. Vacation policies for both provider and family vacations
11. Sick leave policies for both provider and children's illness
12. Alternate care/substitute policies
13. Termination of care policy
14. Child information including any special needs, fears or food preferences/allergies

10a. The home is welcoming, nurturing, and safe for children to have interactions and experiences that promote their physical, social, and emotional well-being. Indicators must include:

1. Each child and his/her family are warmly acknowledged upon arrival and departure
2. Each child feels safe, accepted, and protected. This is supported by daily practices that reinforce respect for people, feelings, ideas, and materials
3. The environment includes representation of each child and family (including all age groups, abilities, and cultures), which might include books, pictures, photographs, music/songs, games, toys, dress-up clothes/materials, and foods
4. A place for storage of each child's personal belongings and possessions is labeled with the child's name
5. Caregivers communicate with and listen to children (both verbal and non-verbal messages) with lots of one-on-one attention throughout the day and usually at eye-level, including time when the caregiver is down on the floor with the children
6. Children's ideas, requests, and questions are acknowledged with a verbal response or physical gesture
7. Children's feelings are acknowledged with an accepting, non-critical verbal response or physical gesture
8. Caregivers refrain from negative verbal or physical responses to children at all times, which includes yelling, criticizing, scolding, threatening, using sarcasm, name calling, yanking, pinching, squeezing, or spanking
9. Destructive or disruptive behavior is addressed with children (face-to-face rather than from a distance) by the caregiver, explaining the effect of the behavior, stating the desired behavior and redirecting or helping the child make alternate choices
10. Conflicts are resolved by/with children through a problem-solving approaches (acknowledge feelings, listen to children share what happened, ask for ideas or solutions, and follow through)
11. The caregiver sometimes joins in children's play, expanding upon their ideas and playing interactively
12. The home is generally characterized by varying sounds and/or comfortable conversation from engaged children and involved adults

10b. Specific Infant/Toddler indicators must include:

1. Infants are frequently held and comforted when crying
2. Infants are given one-to-one attention during feeding and diapering
3. Caregivers engage in many one-to-one face-to-face interactions with infants/toddlers, including singing and playful interactions
4. Caregivers acknowledge infant/toddler babblings with a verbal response, vocal imitation or physical gesture
5. Caregivers engage in conversation with toddlers
6. Caregivers give toddlers simple words to use to express feelings. Verbal toddlers are then encouraged to use words in conflict situations

11a. Daily schedule provides ample time for child-directed choices with activities and materials that are geared to the age, interests, and abilities of each child. Indicators must include:

1. The daily schedule is consistent and predictable
2. Children direct their own free play (individual or group play) for at least one half hour at a time, totaling at least two hours in an eight hour day
3. Routine tasks (which might include, labeling, sorting, classifying, folding clothes, counting while cleaning up or setting the table) are used as learning opportunities
4. Transitions are generally relaxed, allowing time for play and completing activities. Children are transitioned from one activity to the next to avoid idle sitting and waiting time
5. Meal times are relaxed, with no scolding or nagging. Children are encouraged to sample new foods but allowed to eat the foods of their choice.
6. Nap time is relaxed with alternative, supervised activities\ available for the non-nappers
7. The caregiver has a system for rotating toys and materials for variety so that unused toys are stored and later reintroduced
8. TV/VCR/DVD, if used, is primarily an educational experience. Caregiver discusses what is viewed with children and provides an alternative activity; OR TV/VCR/DVD is not used at all

11b. Outdoor play time indicators must include:

1. Outdoor play is included daily when weather, air quality, or environmental safety conditions do not pose a health risk. Active indoor play may be a replacement when necessary
2. Outdoor/large motor activities and plentiful play materials for a variety of skills are offered (for example, climbing, running, jumping, balancing, riding, and playing with balls)

11c. Specific Infant/Toddler indicators must include:

1. Individual napping schedules are respected for infants and toddlers
2. Play areas are protected and have open spaces for exploring
3. Children are offered a variety of outdoor play experiences

12a. The home is arranged and utilizes enough materials and activities to provide a variety of age and developmentally appropriate interest centers that invite children's explorations. Caregiver offers at least three of the following centers daily, from which the children may choose. Caregiver regularly rotates the interest centers that are offered. Each interest center must contain at least three different items. Interest centers must include:

1. Reading:
Materials might include books, soft, washable seating/pillows for use while reading
2. Writing:
Materials might include writing tools, paper, envelopes, typewriter or keyboard, letters, numbers
3. Art:
Materials might include drawing materials (crayons, markers, thick pencils, variety of paper, sizes and types, not coloring books or dittos/worksheets), painting materials, tools (scissors, hole punch, tape), staplers for school-age children, three-dimensional materials (play dough, clay with tools), collage materials (catalogs, magazines, paper scraps, fabric pieces, string, yarn, cotton balls, pipe cleaners, craft sticks)
4. Blocks:
Materials might include different size/types of blocks and accessories such as small people, animals, vehicles, and road signs to enhance building, sticks, stones, tape, string, craft sticks, interlocking blocks
5. Dramatic Play:
Materials might include dress-up clothes (such as work boots, high heels, a variety of hats, career gear/attire/uniforms, purses, billfolds, and multicultural outfits.) Other items would also include large pieces of fabric/scarves, child-size play furniture, dishes, pots, pans, dolls (multicultural included), dollhouse or other play-sets, accessories for dolls, and "props" for different themes
6. Math/Numbers:
Materials might include small objects to count/sort/classify, measuring tools (scales, rulers), numbers/shapes, number games, puzzles and pattern blocks
7. Music and Movement:
Materials might include audio equipment, variety of tapes/CDs, music boxes, musical toys and instruments, dance props such as scarves/streamers
8. Nature and Science:
Materials might include collections of natural items (shells, rocks, flowers, bugs), living plants, pets to care for, science games, toys, magnets, magnifying glasses, cooking opportunities
9. Sensory Play:
Materials might include water, play dough, sand, or similar materials, along with kitchen utensils, measuring containers, shovel, trough, buckets, small cars and trucks, and water-play accessories for pouring, measuring, squeezing, and basting
10. Small Motor/Manipulative:
Materials might include blocks, puzzles, crayons, pencils, scissors, interlocking blocks and other small building toys, pegboard and pegs, games, counting materials, sorting or classifying materials and containers

12b. Specific Infant and Toddler indicators include:

1. Materials are organized consistently on low, open shelves for independent use by children
2. Materials are sturdy and in good condition
3. Enough materials to avoid problems with children making the same toy choice and waiting
4. A variety of open-ended, washable toys, which might include rattles, teething/rings, balls, pop beads, nesting toys, containers, cuddle toys, push/pull toys are available
5. Furniture adapted for toddlers is available
6. Low, stable furniture is available for children to pull themselves up
7. Soft, washable elements, such as cuddle toys, soft furniture or cushions

13a. Children are read to daily and encouraged to explore books and other print materials. Indicators must include:

1. Caregiver reads and/or looks at books with children daily, including during quiet, individual lap time
2. Books are available and accessible daily for children to look at and enjoy on their own
3. Children are invited to tell stories or “read” a picture book
4. Children are encouraged to explore print and writing. Examples might include scribbling, inventing spellings, writing their name or other words, or making books
5. Caregiver writes words dictated by children as they tell a story or describe their pictures
6. A variety of writing materials and toys to be used while writing is available. Materials might include: markers, child-sized pencils, chalk and chalk board, paper, envelopes, stamps, tape, paper punch, stickers, magazines, calendars, toy telephones, puppets, tape recorder, alphabet letters, or flannel boards
7. Preschoolers are provided language materials daily, in addition to books, which might include puppets, flannel boards, recorded stories and picture card games
8. Books for preschoolers must include a variety of imaginative, rhyming, and informational books
9. Books for school-age children must include a variety of reading levels and topics, which might include adventures, mysteries, and informational books and magazines

13b. Specific Infant/Toddler indicators must include:

1. The availability of durable books with short stories about common daily activities
2. The availability of sturdy, simple books with pictures of real objects for toddlers to look at on their own
3. Daily language activities using books, pictures or puppets
4. Toddlers are encouraged to experiment with a variety of writing materials
5. Caregiver responds to sounds/speech, including by imitating infants’ vocalization and engaging toddlers in conversation
6. Caregiver talks about objects and events that infants and toddlers experience

Licensed Child Care Home Level 3

Level 3 Licensed Child Care Home Providers will be able to:

- ★ Implement a planned curriculum that addresses the stages of child development
- ★ Demonstrate professional growth in excess of licensing requirements
- ★ Facilitate family and assistant input into the program.
- ★ Actively engage in program evaluation and have an action plan for improvement
- ★ May be working towards accreditation

Child Care Home providers meet the standards for a Level 3 rating provided that the following are met:

1. **All requirements for Level 1 and 2 are met.**
2. **Lead Caregiver has at least 12 months experience as a caregiver in a licensed child care setting or in a child care setting that is accredited by one of the Bureau of Child Care approved, nationally recognized organizations.**
3. **Lead Caregiver will have a current CDA or equivalent certificate, OR and early childhood degree or equivalent degree; OR have completed 60 clock hours of educational training leading to an early childhood/child development degree or CDA credential within the past three years.**
4. **At least 50% of caregivers, including the lead caregiver, annually participate in a minimum of 20 clock hours of educational or in-service training focused on topics relevant to early childhood.**
5. **Program evaluation is completed annually by families.**

6. A written curriculum reflects the program philosophy and goals, is based on child development and appropriate practice and provides for the various ages, ability levels, and developmental stages of the children. This curriculum meets the following requirements:

1. Provides for children's physical, cognitive, language, literacy, and social-emotional development. It includes goals for children that are consistent with the Indiana Foundations for Young Children
2. Families are made aware of the curriculum of the program through one or more of the following ways: parent handbooks, newsletters, orientation, and/or family meetings
3. Assistants are oriented to the curriculum. The lead caregiver plans daily activities with assistants so that the curriculum can be implemented effectively to provide support for children in their active learning experiences
4. The curriculum and goals for children are reflected in everyday practice, including through daily, weekly, or monthly written lesson plans

7a. Children's physical, cognitive, language, literacy, math, and creative development is supported. Indicators must include:

1. Many opportunities throughout the day for communication (all ages), which might include sharing information, pointing out logical relationships, and encouraging children's ability to reason
2. Many opportunities throughout the day for reading
3. Every day children have many experiences and materials available to encourage imagination and creativity
4. Children's thinking is stimulated through various means which might include experimentation, exploration, and access to interesting materials and adult support
5. Displays of children's art are available at children's eye level and show that most art work is exploratory and unique to each child
6. Caregiver encourages language and literacy daily through interactions which might include books, songs, puppet play, and writing/drawing opportunities
7. Math experiences are a part of everyday activities and routines
8. Daily music experiences are available and may include singing, creative movement, a variety of types of music, and a variety of musical and rhythmic instruments
9. Science exploration is part of daily activities (examples may include collections of natural objects, living things to care for, cooking, and simple experiments)
10. The daily schedule provides a balance of activities including: quiet and active, individual and small group and large group, child initiated and adult initiated

7b. Specific Infant and Toddler Indicators must include:

1. Infants and toddlers are not expected to function as a large group
2. Infants and toddlers are offered a variety of sensory experiences each day
3. Toddlers are offered opportunities for writing experiences each day

8. Children are actively engaged throughout the day in making choices about activities and materials. Indicators must include:

1. Children should be given several free choice periods daily. Children's choice (individual or small group play) occurs at least one third of the day and includes indoor and outdoor play
2. The caregiver supports children's development by gathering information through child observations that is used to guide lesson planning
3. The caregiver supports children's play by providing additional materials and experiences that expand on children's interests and skills
4. The caregiver extends learning for children by talking about what they are doing and asking open-ended questions that promote critical thinking skills
5. The caregiver finds ways to help children learn skills when it is developmentally appropriate and when the child shows an interest
6. The caregiver takes advantage of the many natural learning experiences associated with daily life and makes "teachable moments" opportunities for learning

9. Plans and environmental accommodations for children with special needs are evident. Indicators must include:

1. A written plan is in place for effectively caring for children with special needs
2. Space is arranged to provide children of different ages and abilities daily access to materials and opportunities to engage in play and projects without limitation or interference from one another
3. Adaptation of materials occurs to provide children of different ages and abilities daily access to materials and opportunities to engage in play and projects without limitations or interference from one another
4. The caregiver includes children in age-appropriate self-help activities, such as dressing, picking up toys, washing hands, folding clothes, serving food, and setting or cleaning up meals
5. The caregiver answers children's questions about differences in a respectful and factual way

Licensed Child Care Home Level 4

Level 4 Licensed Child Care Home Providers will be able to:

- ★ Meet the highest standards for high quality early care and education
- ★ Assist other programs in quality improvement through volunteer mentoring

Licensed Child Care Home providers meet the standards for Level 4 rating provided that the following are met:

- 1. Program meets all the requirements for Levels 1, 2, and 3.**
- 2. Lead Caregiver has a current CDA or equivalent or ECE degree or an equivalent degree.**
- 3. Accreditation by a Bureau of Child Care approved, nationally recognized accrediting body has been achieved and maintained.**
- 4. Lead caregiver volunteers to informally mentor a program at a Level 1, 2, or 3.**



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