

GLOSSARY OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Child Care Centers provide group care for children away from their homes for three or more hours per day. Centers may care for children from 6 weeks old through 12 years old and must maintain strict staff/child ratios, group size limits and adhere to staff academic qualifications. Day Care Centers are licensed by NYS Office of Family and Children's Service (NYSOCFS).

Family Day Care Programs care for children in the provider's home. If a provider cares for three or more children (other than her own) the provider must be registered by the NYSOCFS. A provider may care for up to six children and two additional school age children

Group Family Day Care Programs also care for children in a provider's home. The maximum number of children allowed in this modality is doubled (12) because an assistant is required. These two caregivers may care for up to 12 children and two additional school age children. Group family child care providers are licensed by NYSOCFS.

Head Start Centers are federally-funded and when offered for a full day, are regulated by the State under the same provisions as child care centers. They provide a range of social services and care is offered free of charge

In-home care is when a provider comes to the family's home to provide services, such as a nanny, au pair, or babysitter. When provided on a regular basis, this caregiver is considered an employee and employment and tax laws apply. There is no oversight of nannies, au pairs or babysitters.

Informal Exempt providers are those who typically care for their own children as well as two other children, hence their other label, "Legal 2's" and are not subject to any regulation or oversight.

Legally-Exempt Providers, also known as "informal providers" or "kith and kin" care, are primarily friends, relatives or neighbors. This is the most highly used form of care, and the majority of these providers need not be regulated by OCFS. There are low income families who receive child care subsidies from the Department of Social Services (DSS) who are not required to use regulated programs. These families identify the "legally-exempt" caregiver, and the caregiver must enroll with their respective Child Care Councils in order for the families to receive subsidies to help them cover the costs. This care can take place in either the provider's home or the child's home.

Nursery Schools and Preschools care for children for less than three hours per day. Many of these programs operate on a school calendar and often offer both a part-day and part-week option to families. These programs are not required to be regulated. However, many programs voluntarily register with the State Department of Education. Schools with extended day programs (three hours or more) are legally considered child care centers and must be licensed by DSS.

Pre-K Programs are offered through school districts to four-year olds, and some three-year olds. Some districts partner with child care centers, Head Start programs, nursery schools and other social service agencies to run the Pre-K program for some or all children in the district. The program provides a part-day service (2.5 hours) and operates on a school calendar. These programs receive funds from the New York State Department of Education, and often from the local school district, and are free to all children enrolled.