

Alabama Child Care Subsidy Program Consumer Statement

The mission of the Child Care Subsidy Program is to provide Alabama’s families with equal access to affordable and quality child care services as they participate in work, educational or training activities. There are many factors to consider when selecting a child care provider. The following information is designed to help you make an informed choice regarding the best child care option to meet the needs of your family.

Child Care Management Agencies (CMAs) manage the subsidy program by determining eligibility, providing resources and referrals, authorizing child care services, and registering subsidy providers. The CMA will provide the following information to families at initial and continuing application periods:

- Application for Subsidized Child Care
- Parent Agreement – details the applicant’s responsibilities as a recipient of the Child Care Subsidy Program
- Parental Choice form – explains parent has free choice when selecting a child care provider
- Notice of Client’s Rights – notifies of parent’s right to request a fair hearing or administrative review if not satisfied with actions of the CMA

(The following can be viewed at <https://dhr.alabama.gov/child-care/information-for-parents/>)

- Human Resources & Civil Rights pamphlet
- Choosing Child Care in Alabama pamphlet
- Putting It Together for Those Who Need Us pamphlet – information on DHR programs
- Child Abuse Hurts pamphlet
- TAS Quick Reference Guide – instructions for reporting child care attendance using the Time and Attendance System Point of Service device
- 2-1-1 Connects Alabama– information about community resources

Child Care Provider License and Compliance

Child Care centers in Alabama legally operate in one of two ways: licensed or licensed exempt; while child care homes must be licensed. Providers wishing to participate in the Child Care Subsidy Program must be licensed or meet an exemption legally authorized by the state per the Child Care Safety Act of 2018. Licensing provisions ensure compliance with health and safety standards, which include on-going training, comprehensive criminal background checks, and

compliance with ratios and group sizing for all providers wishing to participate in the Child Care Subsidy Program regardless of licensing status. Licensing occurs every two (2) years. For more information about a provider's license or exemption, date of last inspection, or history of provider violations, go to https://apps.dhr.alabama.gov/daycare/daycare_search and select the desired provider.

Child Care Provider Quality Information

Licensed child care providers are guided on a path of continuous quality improvement through Alabama's Quality Rating and Improvement System or Alabama Quality STARS. This program awards STAR levels to early childhood care and education programs that meet set program standards. Although the program is voluntary, most licensed child care providers are STAR rated, and information regarding their rating can be found on the statewide directory. To find more information on Alabama Quality STARS visit the website at www.alabamaqualitystars.org.

Finding a Child Care Provider

You may contact the CMA to obtain information about a specific provider. To identify the CMA that serves your county, go to <https://dhr.alabama.gov/child-care/subsidy-overview/child-care-management-agencies/> and click on your county in the map. In addition, information regarding child care providers may also be found on the website at <https://dhr.alabama.gov/child-care/subsidy-overview/>. There is a Statewide Day Care Directory which may be sorted by county, zip code, center/home name, or license status.

Additional Resources

To obtain information about other resources for your family, contact DHR child care licensing intake at 1-866-528-1694. Also, details regarding developmental screenings can be found at <https://dhr.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/HMG-Brochure.pdf>. Additional resources can be found on DHR's website at www.dhr.alabama.gov/child-care/information-for-parents/. These resources include assistance on local resources for Medicaid, Pre-K, and services for children with developmental delays and disabilities.

Filing a Complaint

To file a complaint regarding a child care provider, contact the Office of Child Care Licensing Intake at (334) 242-1425 or toll free at 1-866-528-1694.