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# Family day homes standards manual for Alberta

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Family Day Home Standards Manual for Alberta | Children's Services

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## Definitions

### Agency/Family day home agency

An individual, partnership or corporation that is licensed by Children's Services to administer a family day home service.

### Agency coordinator

An individual employed by the agency whose responsibilities include managing the administration and delivery of the family day home service.

### Agency home visitor/consultant

An individual contracted or employed by the agency to monitor family day home programs for compliance with Part 2: Family day home program standards and the program's contract with the agency.

### Children's Services/CS

A Children's Services regional office. Children's Services Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) staff are responsible to license, monitor, enforce, and provide consultation to child care programs and family day home agencies.

### Child

A child under the age of 13 years, and a child of 13 or 14 years of age who, because of a special need, requires child care.

### Child care

The temporary care and supervision of a child by an individual other than the child's parent or guardian.

### Child in care

A child who is 0-12 years (or 13 or 14 years of age and, because of a special need, requires child care) and is registered and placed in a family day home but is not:

- a child of the program educator or any resident of the family day home;

- under the guardianship of the educator or any other resident of the family day home; or
- normally a resident in the family day home.

### Criminal record check and vulnerable sector search

Agency staff and family day home programs must provide results of criminal record checks to the agency, including vulnerable sector searches, which may be processed at any police station or RCMP detachment and must be dated no earlier than six months prior to commencement with the agency. The criminal record check is the property of the individual requesting it. The law enforcement agency providing the criminal record check may charge a fee for this service.

### Educator/program educator

An individual who, under contract with a family day home agency, provides child care and supervision to children in their private residence.

### Extended hours of care

Care provided in the evening between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. or on the weekend.

### Family day home program

A child care program that is offered or provided by an individual in the individual's private residence, and under the oversight of a licensed family day home agency. A family day home program provides child care to no more than six children, not including the educator's own children.

### Health care

The health services administered by a physician or other medical professional for the treatment of illness or accidental injury.

### **Hours of care**

The stated hours child care is provided in a family day home program.

### **Incident**

An incident is defined as any one of the following:

- an emergency evacuation; unexpected program closure;
- an intruder in the program residence;
- a serious illness or injury to a child that requires the program educator or parent to request emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight;
- an error in the administration of medication by the program educator or other resident; the death of a child;
- an unexpected absence of a child from the program (i.e. lost child);
- a child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian;
- an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by a program educator or another resident of the program home;
- the commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta;
- a child left unattended in the program home outside of the program operating hours; and/or
- any other occurrence that may seriously affect the health or safety of a child.

If a parent or guardian decides at a later time to take the child to a clinic or hospital, an injury that occurred in the program home is then classified as an incident that is reportable to the agency and to CS.

### **Incident inspection**

A detailed and objective examination of past events such as an incident or emergency.

### **Licence/Family day home agency licence**

A licence issued under Section 18.3 of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*.

### **Licensing staff (Early Learning and Child Care staff)**

Authorized licensing staff who hold delegated authority and act on behalf of the Statutory Director named in the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*.

### **Ministry**

The Ministry of Children's Services (CS) is responsible for the regulation of child care in Alberta. The Early Childhood Development Branch is responsible for establishing standards and policies. The Regional Community and Program Delivery Branch is responsible for licensing and monitoring agencies for the operation of a family day home program.

### **Personal information**

Any information about an identifiable individual. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Name
- Contact information
- Birth date, age
- Credit card information
- Past work experience
- Criminal background check
- Social Insurance Number
- Driving record
- Contact information for referees
- Contact information for a parent/spouse to be used in an emergency
- Medical information

### **Record**

A record of information in any form or in any medium, whether in written, printed, photographic or electronic form or any other form.

**Residence**

The place where the family day home educator lives and operates a family day home service. Where there is more than one family day home in a location (house, duplex, basement suite, apartment), it must be clear that the residence is separate or self-contained and that children are not grouped together.

## Family day home programs

Family day home programs are one of the child care options available to parents and caregivers in Alberta. Under section 18 of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, family day home educators can provide child care to a maximum of six children aged 0-12 years old (or 13 or 14 years of age who, because of a special need, require child care), not including their own children, in their own private residences.

Children's Services (CS) licenses family day home agencies for the purposes of ensuring that children using a family day home program are healthy and safe.

## Purpose of manual

Licensed family day home agencies and the programs they oversee operate according to the Ministry standards outlined in this manual.

CS is responsible for monitoring an agency and its programs to ensure compliance to agency and program standards (Parts 1 and 2, respectively).

Licensed family day home agencies are responsible for complying with the agency standards (Part 1) and monitoring programs' compliance with the program standards (Part 2).

## Authority

Operating under the legal authority of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, these standards describe the roles, objectives, responsibilities and expectations for CS, licensed agencies and family day home programs.

## Children's Services role and objectives

### Role

The Statutory Director, under the authority of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, may issue a licence to any person respecting the administration of a family day home program by that person. The Statutory Director delegates licensing staff to be responsible for the licensing, monitoring and enforcement of agencies.

Licensing staff monitor the agency to ensure that standards are met and that complaints and incidents are properly investigated. When it is determined that a standard is not being met, licensing staff can take action as outlined in Section 18.9 of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* to compel the agency and its programs to comply. Licensing staff monitor an agency's performance by reviewing the operations, activities, records, and the care in program homes according to these standards.

Licensing staff are also available for consultation to agencies who are considering applying for a licence or licensed agencies who request support to improve the quality of their programming. Agencies are welcome to contact their CS office to request consultation.

### Objectives

Children's Services licensing staff:

- license agencies to recruit, approve, monitor, train and support family day home programs;
- provide consultation to family day home agencies; and
- assist eligible parents choosing family day homes to access child care subsidy.



# Quality in child care

Family day home educators operating under a licensed agency are required to implement and follow a program plan that adheres to the Principles and Matters to be Considered as stated in the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*. These provisions emphasize the importance of quality in child care, and highlight key factors of safety, well-being, inclusion, and child development.

## Principles

Licensed family day home agencies and individual family day home programs operate under the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, and are to act in accordance with the following principles:

- a) the safety, security, well-being and development of the child is to be supported and preserved;
- b) flexibility in child care supports choice and accessibility for families;
- c) engagement of parents, guardians and community members in the provision of child care supports the child's optimal development.

## Matters to be considered by providers of child care programs

All child care programs, including licensed family day home agencies and individual family day home programs, shall take into consideration the following matters as well as any other matter they consider relevant:

- (a) Children should be encouraged in having care and play experiences that support their development and learning;
- (b) The child is to be protected from all forms of physical punishment, physical and verbal abuse and emotional deprivation;
- (c) Diversity in:
  - (i) The background and circumstances of children in the program and their families, including those who may be experiencing social or economic vulnerability, and
  - (ii) The abilities of the children in the program is to be respected and valued;
- (d) The child's familial and Indigenous or other cultural, social, linguistic and spiritual heritage are central to the child's safety, well-being and development;
- (e) Care of the child must be appropriate to the child's mental, emotional, spiritual and physical needs and stage of development;
- (f) Involvement and engagement of parents supports accountability of child care program, monitoring of child care programs and maintenance of good quality child care programs.

# Part 1: Agency standards

## Role

The mandate of licensed agencies and family day home programs is to offer a quality child care service in a family environment that meets the needs of children and families within the community.

Agencies are responsible for:

- complying with the requirements of their licence and the standards for agency operation and care of children;
- recruiting, approving and contracting with family day home educators who are able and willing to meet Ministry standards;
- providing training and support to program educators;
- monitoring programs for compliance with Ministry standards;
- implementing necessary actions required to remedy non-compliances in a timely manner; and
- investigating complaints and incidents.

## Objectives

The objectives of the agency are to:

- recruit, monitor, approve and contract with family day home educators who can meet Ministry standards for family day home programs; and
- assist parents in choosing a family day home suitable to their child and family's needs.

### Standard 1: Staffing

Staff are important to meeting the objectives of the agency. At a minimum, agencies must have one staff who fulfills the responsibilities of both the agency coordinator and home visitor/consultant.

#### Standard 1A: Agency coordinator

Agencies must have on staff an individual who manages the day-to-day operation of the family day home service. The coordinator is responsible for administering the program and acting as a contact person for families in the community.

#### Standard 1B: Home visitor/consultant

Agencies must have an individual on staff who is responsible for the recruitment, approval, monitoring, training and support of program educators.

Agency staff responsible for the monitoring of approved family day home programs for compliance with family day home standards must have a current first aid certificate and be certified at minimum as a Level 2 early childhood educator (one year certificate in early childhood education and care or equivalent training).

CS may consider exemptions for current staff who are unable to comply with this requirement for certification. Exemptions must be issued in writing, are time-limited and include an action plan that identifies how this requirement will be met.

### Standard 2: Caseloads and monitoring

Agencies must monitor all active programs a minimum of six times per year with both scheduled and unscheduled visits using the Family Day Home Agency Home Visitor/Consultant Checklist.

Agencies must complete two safety checks per year using a Ministry approved Home and Safety Inspection Checklist. The checklist must include at a minimum, a review of the items listed in Part 3: Standard 10B. Safety checks may be scheduled or unscheduled and may be completed during one of the six required visits.

Agencies visit all programs every two months and increase the frequency of home visits in the event a program educator returns after a leave or experiences a significant change in their personal circumstances, such as a birth of a child, etc. The visits monitor compliance to Ministry standards and offer advice and training on the provision of child care. The agency must

document all program non-compliances and ensure that they are adequately addressed to ensure compliance with Ministry standards.

The frequency, content and duration of home visits must be based on: the program educator's experience and need for monitoring, training and support; the numbers, age, and needs of the children in care; and the agency's history with the program.

All contacts with a program will be documented after home visits, using a Ministry approved form.

During each visit, home visitors/consultants must review and document the following using the Family Day Home Agency Home Visitor/Consultant Checklist:

- physical facility, including indoor and outdoor space, toys, furnishings, and equipment;
- program performance, including supervision of children, activities, daily routine, and child guidance practices;
- safety, health, and emergency provisions;
- home environment, including the influence of other children or adults who may be in the home while children are in care; and
- development and behaviour of children in the family day home program, including interactions between children and between child and educator.

If a non-compliance is found during a monitoring visit, the non-compliance must be noted on the visit checklist, even if it is remedied immediately.

All complaints about a program will be documented on the Family Day Home Program Complaint Record form, which will be submitted to CS monthly.

### **Standard 3: Criminal record checks**

All staff contracted and employed by the agency, including family day home program educators and other adult residents in the home, must:

- provide a criminal record check, including vulnerable sector search, dated no earlier than six months prior to start of the contract or employment; and
- update their criminal record check, including vulnerable sector search, every three years.

Adult residents of the home who are away for an extended period of time must complete the criminal record check, including vulnerable sector search. Where circumstances make it impossible to complete these checks, they must be completed immediately upon the resident's return home.

### **Standard 4: Recruitment of family day home educators**

Agencies recruit educators who are willing and able to meet Ministry standards for family day home programs.

Agencies must require that family day home program applicants are at least 18 years old and that they provide the following documents prior to approval and providing child care:

1. A completed criminal record check, including vulnerable sector search, for the applicant and anyone who is over 18 years of age or older, and who either resides with the applicant in the proposed family day home or who may be in the home on a regular basis during the program's regular operating hours.
2. A statement signed by the applicant disclosing any prior criminal involvement of any person younger than 18 years old who resides in the proposed family day home.
3. Three satisfactory personal references from non-relatives that corroborate the applicant's suitability for working with children.
4. Documentation that the family day home program educator has obtained Level 1 Early Childhood Educator certification. (If certification has not yet been obtained, the educator must obtain certification within six months of their approval date.)

Recruitment and screening must include two in-person visits to the educator’s residence and the receipt of all background check documentation before children are cared for in the home, with the objective of assessing the suitability of potential program educators in their home environments.

Over the two home visits, each resident must be met at least once. Residents of the home who are away for an extended period of time (e.g., one month) may meet with the consultant/home visitor via video.

A family day home educator may have long-term visitors from out of province or out of the country. Visitors cannot be left unsupervised with family day home children at any time. A criminal record check, including vulnerable sector search, should be completed if it is at all feasible to do so. Parents and the licensed agency should be notified of long-term visitors.

When interpreting the Family Day Home Standards for secondary or basement suites, the key issue is whether the suite is a separate legal residence according to local bylaws. The status of each suite, and whether suite residents are considered residents of the family day home (and thus subject to criminal record checks and vulnerable sector searches) will therefore vary by individual situation and municipality.

**Residences**

**Secondary or basement suite issue**

**Legally separate residence from family day home**

**Legally the same residence as family day home**

Residents of suite require criminal record check (with vulnerable sector search)

No

Yes

FDH agency must meet suite residents

No

Yes

Residents of suite can be left unsupervised with children

No

No

Residents of suite can supervise own children in shared outdoor spaces (e.g., backyard) while FDH children are present

Yes

Yes

Residents of suite can operate separate agency family day home

Yes, with municipal approval

No

Agencies will complete a performance assessment at least once annually for each program. The assessment will include a review of the program’s history of compliance to standards, training and professional development, parent satisfaction, and history of complaints and incidents. The agency will use the results of the performance assessment to determine if the program should maintain their approval status.

Family day home program educators may wish to bring the children in their care to the home of another family day home program so there can be new play experiences for both sets of children. These visits are allowable under the following conditions:

Visits must be occasional. Visits cannot appear to, or function as, a larger child care program.

The licensed agency should assess and monitor the situation for any potential risks, and document their assessment process.

**Standard 5: Support for family day home programs**

Agencies support family day home programs through training, consultation, information sharing, and problem solving during home visits or other contacts. All contacts with a program will be documented by the agency including contacts for the purposes of providing support to the program. The form used for documenting contacts with programs must be approved by CS. Any changes to the form must be pre-approved by the Licensing staff member assigned to the agency.

Agencies must create at least six opportunities each year to bring family day home program educators together for training, consultation, information sharing, or problem solving to reduce isolation.

## **Standard 5A: Training**

An agency must, in partnership with each family day home program, develop and implement a written training plan that includes but is not limited to:

- first aid certification (required by all educators within three months of commencement of service);
- cleaning and sanitizing;
- hand washing;
- diapering;
- poison control;
- sleeping and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS);
- child development;
- child abuse and neglect;
- child guidance;
- the dynamics of all forms of family violence and its impact on children;
- behaviour management;
- managing serious incidents;
- cultural training and sensitivity for respectful work with Indigenous children and families and with children and families from other cultures;
- training for inclusive practice with children with a need for extra support;
- community resources;
- working with parent(s); and
- ethics and professionalism.

## **Standard 6: Agency program plan**

Program plans must include all content requested in the Family Day Home Program Plan Template. The agency program plan must adhere to the Principles and Matters to be considered by providers of child care found in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 in the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and at the beginning of this Standards Manual.

Agencies submit their program plan for approval as part of their licensing application package. Any subsequent changes to the program plan must be submitted to CS for approval and the updated program plan must be on file at all times.

## **Standard 6A: Backup care**

Agencies establish a system of backup care for their programs to ensure that there are alternate arrangements when a family day home educator is unavailable to care for children.

A family day home program must be temporarily closed if an educator's own child's symptoms fit the criteria for illness described in Program Standard 10C.

The parent must give written prior approval to all backup care arrangements.

An individual approved for backup care must also meet the minimum requirements set out in Agency Standard 4: Recruitment of Family Day Home Educators. A backup educator must:

- be at least 18 years of age;
- have a completed criminal record check, including vulnerable sector search; and
- have three satisfactory personal references from non-relatives that corroborate suitability for working with children;

Other ongoing requirements for educators (e.g., written training plan) do not need to be completed.

## **Standard 6B: Hours of Service**

The agency program plan must require that family day home programs explicitly communicate their regular hours of service to both the agency and parent(s) in a written statement. Agencies must be able to monitor extended hours care.

Child care provided to children outside regular hours of service is a private arrangement between the family day home program and the parent. Minimum requirements for extended care hours are as follows:

- no program shall offer child care for a child for a period longer than 18 hours in any 24-hours without prior written notification to the agency;
- a program offering child care to a child for a period longer than 18 hours in any 24-hours must provide that child with sleeping time;
- in such cases, the program educator, family, and agency must agree on sleeping arrangements, including children sharing rooms, and give each child his or her own bedding and sleeping accommodations that meet the child's developmental needs; and
- a program offering extended care is required to provide the child with facilities for bathing/showering (children must be bathed individually and supervised, according to developmental needs).

## **Standard 6C: Records**

All records must be maintained by the agency for a period of two years and available to CS at all times. Records may be in digital or paper form.

Agencies must collect, use, and disclose personal information (for example, information pertaining to agency staff, parents/guardians, children, program educators) in accordance with appropriate privacy legislation ([Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) or [Personal Information and Protection Act](#)).

An agency must maintain the following records:

### **Agency staff records:**

- a current first aid certificate for the Home Visitor/Consultant;
- evidence of early childhood educator certification or equivalent training;
- evidence that a criminal record check was provided including a vulnerable sector search as per Standard 3;
- job description; and
- resume.

### **Program records:**

- name and home address of each program;
- written record of all contacts, using the prescribed form, between agency staff and programs;
- records of all complaints and incidents;
- records of each home visit or contact;
- evidence of a completed criminal record check as per Standard 4;
- evidence of three personal references;
- evidence of two completed home visits;
- written training plan for each program;
- statement of each program's regular hours of service;
- reports of incidents and follow-up inspections;
- copy of insurance for programs;
- evidence of automobile insurance coverage for programs, if applicable;
- consent to administer medication, if applicable;
- consent to participate in off-site activities, if applicable; and
- performance assessments.

**Parent records:**

- name, address and contact information for each parent enrolled in the program (parents, even if they share a residence, must provide individual information in (e.g., no blank spaces or writing “ditto”);
- written records of all contacts, using the prescribed form, between agency staff and parent(s);
- emergency contact information for each parent;
- names of children;
- birth dates of children;
- record of contacts with parent(s);
- records related to the placement process including parent contracts;
- consent to administer medication, if applicable; and
- consent to participate in off-site activities, if applicable.

Records specific to a child or parent must be available to the parent with reasonable notice. Records specific to a program must be available to the program with reasonable notice.

**Standard 7: Services for parents**

Agencies assist parent(s) in finding a family day home program, enrolling children and providing referrals to other community supports and services.

**Standard 7A: Placement Services**

Agencies assist parent(s) in enrolling their children with a suitable program and resolving any issues. At the time of enrolment, agencies will provide prospective parents with information about home visits, complaints received, and any incidents that may have occurred in day home programs. Upon implementation of the standards, agencies will inform parents currently enrolled that this information is available.

During the placement process, agencies must:

- communicate with parent(s) to determine their personal preferences and criteria for child care (e.g., location, pets, hours of care required);
- provide a list of potentially suitable homes for the parent(s) to assess;
- provide prospective parent(s) with an Approved Family Day Home Program Profile that includes information about home visits, complaints received and any incidents that have occurred in a program home;
- coordinate pre-placement contact between the parent, the program educator and the child;
- upon acceptance of placement by all parties, obtain information required in the parent contract; and
- document all contact between agency staff, parent(s) and programs.

**Standard 7B: Parent involvement**

Agencies must obtain written consent from the parent(s) for their children to participate in off-site program activities such as field trips or excursions to community playgrounds, etc. Agencies must also obtain written authorization for the family day home program educator to administer children’s medications, when applicable.

Agencies must provide parent(s) with a handbook outlining how parent(s) will be involved and how the family day home program will use community services and resources. The handbook must outline:

- the program philosophy and the child guidance methods it employs;
- how parent(s) will be involved in decisions related to their children’s care; and
- how parent(s) will be informed about scheduled activities.

**Standard 7C: Information and referral**

Agencies give parent(s) information and assistance for choosing and using family day home services. Agencies may refer parent(s) to other services and resources as needed.

## **Standard 8: Incidents**

Agencies must report to Children's Services the following incidents immediately upon learning of the occurrence.

An incident is defined as follows:

- an emergency evacuation;
- unexpected program closure;
- an intruder in the program residence;
- a serious illness or injury to a child that requires the educator or parent to request emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight;
- an error in the administration of medication by the educator or other resident;
- the death of a child;
- an unexpected absence of a child from the program (i.e. lost child);
- a child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian;
- an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by an educator or another resident of the program home;
- the commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta; and/or
- a child left unattended in the program home outside of the program operating hours.

Agencies must have policies and procedures in place for receiving, recording and investigating complaints, reports of incidents, emergencies or communicable diseases. This policy must state at a minimum that:

- all complaints are followed-up by the agency through a home visit or interview with the educator and, at the conclusion of the inspection, communicate the outcome to the complainant and the parent of child involved if they are not the complainant;
- all communicable diseases are reported to Alberta Health Services;
- agencies immediately notify the child's parent(s) or emergency contact of an incident; and
- if the incident involves a serious injury of a child, death of a child, or allegations of abuse or neglect of a child (including the educator's own children) by an educator or another resident of the program home, the agency must immediately contact the local police service and/or Child Intervention Services and the program home must be closed for child care immediately until the completion of the inspection; and
- if CS requests that the agency investigates an incident, the inspection must be completed within two to five working days and the final written report must be completed and submitted to CS within 12 working days of the incident's occurrence.

Licensing staff will initiate an inspection immediately after an agency reports any of the following incidents:

- allegations of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child;
- serious injury requiring emergency response or overnight hospitalization;
- death of a child;
- missing child; or
- the commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta.

An inspection report is completed within 12 working days (which may accompany enforcement action) and must be sent to the family day home agency. The inspection report must document findings, evaluation of compliance with the standards and the enforcement actions and timelines for remediation.

Time limits for remediation must be clearly identified.

CS offices must develop a process to receive incident reports from family day home agencies outside of the child care office's regular operating hours.

For all other types of incidents, CS may request that the agency lead follow-up.



## **Standard 9: Visual identity for family day home**

Agencies will use the Government of Alberta's Family Day Home visual trademark on marketing and communication materials related to family day home services and follow any relevant CS visual identify guidelines. If a program does not maintain approved status, agencies must remove all logos from the program residence.

## **Standard 10: Licensing of agencies**

The Statutory Director, under the Authority of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, delegates to CS licensing staff the authority to licence family day home agencies. Licensing staff are responsible for the approval, monitoring and enforcement of agency licences.

A new or renewed family day home agency licence authorizes the holder to oversee family day home programs in accordance with the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, the Regulation, the Family Day Home Standards Manual, and the terms and conditions of the licence.

Application for a new or renewal family day home agency licence may be made by an adult or a corporation. An application:

- must be made using the process outlined in the Family Day Home Agency Licensing Handbook;
- must contain all the information that CS directs must be included; and
- must be accompanied with an application fee, if required.

To support the safety of children who attend family day home programs overseen by an agency, you must submit a current criminal record check and vulnerable sector search for the individual applicant, corporate directors, corporate officers and any other current staff who will have access to children or the ability to view a child's records. The criminal record check and vulnerable sector search must be dated no earlier than six months prior to the date of application.

A family day home agency licence is not transferable by the licence holder to any other person. Where a family day home agency licence is held by a corporation and there is a change in the directors or officers of the corporation, the licence holder must notify CS of the change, in writing, within 15 days of the change.

A family day home licence expires at the end of the term of the licence unless it is renewed for a further term.

Licensed agencies have a duty to inform parents of any changes in the status of their licence, including:

- any report provided by the Statutory Director;
- any variations, conditions imposed on the licence or orders to remedy issued under section 18.9 of the Act; or
- cancellation of the licence under section 18.9.1 or 18.9.2 of the Act.

Agencies must have policy related to sharing information with parents and a procedure to ensure that parents are informed of licensing reports and decisions.

Licensed agencies may apply to vary the following provisions of their licence:

- the address of the licensed family day home agency;
- the maximum number of family day home programs that the family day home agency is authorized to oversee;
- the term of the licence;
- any other conditions to which the licence is subject; and
- any other information contained in the licence that the Statutory Director considers necessary.

The Statutory Director may, in the Statutory Director's discretion, decline to consider applications for a family day home agency licence that are or may be made under section 18.2 of the Act. Prior to accepting an application for a new family day home agency licence, CS staff must confirm that the Statutory Director will consider applications for new licences and inform the potential licence holder.

On considering an application for a family day home agency licence, CS may:

- issue or renew, on any conditions the Statutory Director considers appropriate, a family day home agency licence, or
- refuse to issue or to renew a family day home agency licence if the Statutory Director:
  - a) is not satisfied that the applicant is capable of providing appropriate oversight of family day home programs;
  - b) is satisfied that the applicant has made a false statement in the application or in any information provided to the Statutory Director in support of the application; or
  - c) has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that any individual associated with the applicant is not suitable to oversee the provision of child care by family day home programs.

Licensing staff set the term of a family day home agency licence, which must be at least one year but not more than three years. Initial licences will be for one year, and subsequent renewal licences will be issued for three years.

A family day home agency licence that is issued or renewed must indicate the following:

- the name of the licence holder;
- the address of the licensed family day home agency;
- the maximum number of family day home programs that the family day home agency is authorized to oversee;
- the term of the licence;
- any other conditions to which the licence is subject;
- any other information the Statutory Director considers necessary.

Licensing staff may, on the application of a licence holder, vary any of these provisions of a family day home agency licence, excluding the name of the licence holder.

### **Standard 10A: Monitoring of agencies and programs by Children's Services**

CS Licensing staff ensure that, at least once per year, all licensed agencies are visited to review their compliance to agency standards. The CS Review of Family Day Home Standards form will be completed with a copy provided to the agency.

If an agency is found to be not complying with any standard, licensing staff may take enforcement action as described in the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and Regulation to compel the agency to address the non-compliance.

Enforcement actions include:

- a) vary a provision of a family day home agency licence;
- b) impose conditions on a family day home agency licence for a specified period of time; or in writing, order a holder of a family day home agency licence to take measures specified in the order within the time limits specified in the order to remedy any non-compliance with this Act, the regulations or the conditions of the licence;
- c) cancellation of the licence.

At least once annually, licensing staff, unaccompanied by agency staff, will visit a minimum of 10 per cent of an agency's active individual family day home programs (with a minimum of two programs) during the program's regular operating hours for the purposes of determining compliance with Ministry standards.

Licensing staff will randomly select programs for home visits. A list of all active educators' programs will be requested from the agency at least seven working days prior to a visit. From that list, 10 per cent of names will be randomly selected with a minimum of two programs selected annually. If a non-compliance is found during a visit to a family day home program by a licensing staff member, the non-compliance must be noted on the visit checklist, even if it is remedied immediately.

Following a visit to an agency, the CS Review of Family Day Home Standards form is completed and a copy is provided to the agency. If non-compliances are identified, these are communicated to the agency in writing within five working days of the visit. Licensing staff will work with the agency to develop an action plan that outlines how and when the non-compliances will be addressed. Non-compliances must be remedied within the timelines identified in the enforcement action, and agreed to in the action plan.

The agency will provide evidence of compliance to CS and all evidence must be maintained in the agency's file held by CS.

Licensing staff will:

- establish a process to monitor agency licence files quarterly using the CS Review of Family Day Home Standards Quarterly Review form to ensure that staff are addressing all non-compliances; and
- ensure that a review is completed each month on Complaint Record forms submitted by agencies.

### **Standard 10B: Children's Services' enforcement of licensing requirements**

If CS is of the opinion that a licensed family day home agency is not providing oversight of family day home programs in accordance with the Early Learning and Child Care Act, the Early Learning and Child Care Regulation, the Family Day Home Standards Manual, or the conditions, if any, of the licence, it may take the following actions to:

- vary a provision of a family day home agency licence;
- impose conditions on a family day home agency licence for a specified period of time; or
- in writing, order a holder of a family day home agency licence to take measures specified in the order within the time limits specified in the order to remedy any non-compliance with the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, the Regulation, the Family Day Home Standards Manual, or the conditions of the licence;
- cancel a family day home agency licence, taking effect
  - a) immediately after the Statutory Director has given notice of the cancellation to every family day home program being overseen by the family day home agency, if the Statutory Director is of the opinion that any act or omission by the agency presents an imminent danger to the health, safety or well being of a child, or
  - b) 15 days after the day on which a notice of cancellation is served on the licence holder, in any other case.

Where any of these actions take place, the Statutory Director must serve on the licence holder a notice in writing that:

- sets out the action taken by CS and the reasons for the action, and
- informs the licence holder of the licence holder's right to:
  1. request an administrative review by the Statutory Director of the enforcement action under section 18.94(1);
  2. request to enter into alternative dispute resolution with the Statutory Director regarding the decision; and/or
  3. appeal the enforcement action to an appeal panel under section 21(1).

Please note the following time limits for these options:

- A request for an administrative review must be submitted to the Early Learning and Child Care Office within 30 days of the date of the decision.
- A notice of appeal (CDEV 3979) must be submitted to the Early Learning and Child Care Office within 30 days after the day the decision is received.
- If you wish to request to enter into alternative dispute resolution with the Statutory Director, you may do so after an administrative review has been completed, or at any time if you have not requested an administrative review.

Licensed agencies can obtain a Notice of Appeal form, an Administrative Review Request form and an Alternative Dispute Resolution Request form from licensing staff or their office.

Where the cancellation of a family day home agency licence takes effect immediately, the notice must be served on the licence holder immediately.

## Part 2: Family day home program standards

### Role

Family day home educators are responsible for:

- the safety, health and well-being of children in their care;
- delivering quality child care programming that aligns with the Principles and Matters to be Considered in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, and
- complying with Ministry standards for family day home programs.

The Principles and Matters are also available at the front of the Standards Manual.

### Objectives

Family Day Homes exist to:

- offer parents the option of a formal child care service in a family home setting where care is monitored to ensure it meets established standards, and where parents can access assistance with fees through the child care subsidy program;
- ensure that children's health, safety and well-being are protected; and
- operate in accordance with the Principles and Matters to be considered by providers of child care programs, as laid out in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*.

#### Standard 1: Insurance coverage

All programs must have current insurance policies.

##### Standard 1A: Liability

All programs must be covered by general liability insurance.

##### Standard 1B: Transportation

Where the educator transports children, automobile liability insurance coverage must be obtained at a minimum of \$2 million per occurrence.

Family day home educators should follow relevant requirements of any other Alberta regulatory authority (e.g., Alberta Transportation).

#### Standard 2: Children's information records

Children's information records must include up-to-date information for each child that includes:

- child's name, date of birth, home address;
- completed enrolment/registration form and parent/program/agency contract;
- parent/guardian's name, home address, work address, home telephone number, work telephone number;
- emergency contact name and telephone number(s);
- evidence that child's parent(s) have been advised of any outings including transportation and supervision arrangements;
- daily attendance details including arrival and departure times (parents should initial the child's arrival and departure times as a security measure for the transfer of responsibility between the parent and educator);
- information about any health care provided to a child, including written consent of the child's parent to provide or allow for health care; and
- any other relevant health information about the child provided by the child's parent(s), including immunization records and allergies.

Parents must fill in all information about themselves. Blank fields, or writing “ditto” is not acceptable because it may lead to missed information.

Programs will maintain updates to children’s information records (i.e., attendance sheets, new health information, etc) for no longer than one month. Within five working days after the last working day of the previous month, programs must submit to their agency all updates to children’s information records.

Records are available to parents at reasonable times and are available to CS at all times. Records may be in paper or digital form.

Records must be kept by the agency for a minimum of two years.

Family day home programs must collect, use, and disclose personal information (for example, information pertaining to parents/guardians, children) in accordance with appropriate privacy legislation ([Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) or [Personal Information and Protection Act](#)).

### **Standard 3: Portable emergency information records**

The program must maintain a complete, portable record for each child in care, which must be taken on all outings and must include:

- child’s name and date of birth;
- parent’s name, home address, work address, home telephone number and work telephone number;
- one emergency contact name and telephone number(s); and
- relevant health information including immunization status and medical condition(s).

Records may be in paper or digital form.

### **Standard 4: Family day home program accommodations**

The program residence must have sufficient space for the developmental activities of the children in care.

#### **Standard 4A: Residence**

The residence must be in good repair. Space must be adequate to accommodate the following requirements:

- windows in every room used by children;
- adequate heat, light, and ventilation;
- clean, comfortable surroundings; and
- sufficient space for developmental activities of children in care.

#### **Standard 4B: Furnishings and equipment**

The family day home program’s furnishings and equipment must be age appropriate. Toys, equipment, materials, furnishings must be of sufficient variety and quantity for the number and ages of children being cared for. Toys, equipment and materials should be organized and accessible so that children can make their own selections.

Furniture and equipment must meet federal and provincial product safety legislation and are only used as recommended by the manufacturer.

- This includes but is not limited to beds, mats or mattresses with bedding, safety gates, cribs, play pens, high chairs, toilet seats or potties, strollers or carriages, and car seats or booster seats.
- Federal safety legislation does not specify requirements for sleeping infants in play pens, as this type of equipment does not meet the definition of a crib, cradle or bassinet. Therefore, Health Canada advises playpens not be used for unsupervised sleep. If the educator is not physically present and watching the child sleep, the child is unsupervised.

Diapering arrangements ensure:

- each child is changed on either a change table or individual change pad; and

- children are diapered in a location that allows for supervision of other children.

#### **Standard 4C: Outdoor play space**

The program must ensure that children have access to outdoor play space.

If the outdoor play space is part of the program residence, it must be securely enclosed.

If the outdoor play space is not part of the program residence, it must be within a safe and easy walking distance.

The agency can exempt a program, using a CS-approved form, from the requirement to have the outdoor play space securely enclosed if outdoor play space that is securely enclosed is not reasonably available and if children will be adequately supervised and protected in the outdoor play space provided.

The form used to exempt a program must be approved by CS annually and any changes to the form must be pre-approved by CS. A copy of the exemption form must be stored on the program's record with the agency and parents must be informed at the time of enrolment that the program has an exemption.

#### **Standard 5: Transportation and outings**

Programs must have the parent's written permission to transport their child.

Parents must be advised in writing of any outings or excursion the program plans for a child, including transportation and supervision arrangements.

#### **Standard 6: Number and ages of children**

Programs may accommodate a maximum of six children, not including the educator's own children.

A maximum of three children may be 36 months or younger. The educator's own children must be counted for this maximum.

A maximum of two children may be 24 months or younger. The educator's own children must be counted for this maximum.

Agencies may request time-limited exemptions to the maximum of three children 36 months or younger and/or two children 24 months or younger requirements.

All children present in the home must be counted in the six child limit (not including the educator's own children). The only exception is if a visiting child's parent/guardian or care provider is present and supervising that child.

Otherwise, any visiting child is counted, regardless of whether or not the program educator is being paid to care for the child. For example, if a friend of the educator's child visits after school, the educator must count that child because he or she requires direct supervision.

#### **Standard 7: Child care program**

The family day home program educator plans and implements a daily program of activities that is consistent with the agency's philosophy and is developmentally appropriate for the ages of the children. The program must also be in accordance with the Principles and Matters to be considered by providers of child care found in Sections 1.1 and 1.2 in the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* and at the beginning of this Standards Manual.

The daily program, which includes both indoor and outdoor activities, must be made available to parent(s) and home visitor/consultants who ask to see it.

Children with special needs may require activities and experiences adapted to their needs and abilities.

The daily program ensures children's developmental needs are met, including:

- emotional;
- physical;
- intellectual; and
- creative and social.

Family day home program educators may wish to bring the children in their care to the home of another educator so there can be new play experiences for both sets of children. These visits are allowable under the following conditions:

- Visits must be occasional. Visits cannot appear to, or function as, a larger child care program.
- The licensed agency should assess and monitor the situation for any potential risks, and document their assessment process.

A family day home educator may have long-term visitors from out of province or out of the country. Visitors cannot be left unsupervised with family day home children at any time. A criminal record check, including vulnerable sector search, should be completed if it is at all feasible to do so. Parents and the licensed agency should be notified of long-term visitors.

## Standard 8: Child supervision

Children receive developmentally appropriate supervision by the program educator at all times.

Age of child	Level of supervision required
Up to 19 months	Within the educator's sight at all times, unless the children are napping, in which case, an infant monitor must be used
20 months to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not allowed to use outdoor play space without supervision</li> <li>• Must be within hearing distance of the educator at all times</li> <li>• Educator physically checks every 3-5 minutes</li> <li>• When children are napping, an infant monitor may be used</li> </ul>
5 years to 8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May use outdoor play space without supervision if they are within sight of the educator (e.g., through a window)</li> <li>• Educator physically checks every 5-10 minutes</li> </ul>
9 years to 12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be allowed more freedom within the residence and in the program's private outdoor play space</li> <li>• Educator must know where children are at all times</li> <li>• Educator physically checks frequently, considering what is age appropriate and developmentally appropriate for the children being cared for</li> </ul>

## Standard 9: Child guidance

Programs must use a positive approach to child guidance. The approach is discussed with the child's parent(s). The child guidance methods used in the program are consistent with both the parent handbook and agency program plan and are explicitly communicated in a written statement to the:

- parents; and
- children, when developmentally appropriate.

Any child guidance action taken is to be reasonable given the circumstances and must never:

- inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal, physical degradation or emotional deprivation;
- deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity; or
- use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation.

## **Standard 10: Health and safety**

### **Standard 10A: Incidents**

- an emergency evacuation;
- unexpected program closure;
- an intruder in the program residence;
- a serious illness or injury to a child that requires the program educator or parent to request emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in hospital overnight;
- an error in the administration of medication by the program educator or other resident;
- the death of a child;
- an unexpected absence of a child from the program (i.e. lost child);
- a child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian;
- an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by a program educator or another resident of the home;
- the commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta; and/or
- a child left unattended in the program home outside of the program's operating hours.

If an incident occurs, a program must:

- obtain emergency medical assistance as required;
- immediately notify the parent or emergency contact if parent is unavailable;
- notify the agency immediately and complete an incident report; and
- participate in inspections conducted by the agency and/or licensing staff or other law enforcement agencies as required.

### **Standard 10B: Home and Safety**

- programs must have written emergency plans for evacuation procedures and an evacuation route;
- all children who are developmentally able must know the designated meeting place outside the home in the event of a fire;
- fire drills must be practiced monthly and recorded monthly (it is recommended that the drills include the sounding of the smoke alarm so that children learn to recognize the sound and connect it with the practiced evacuation);
- a working telephone (mobile and/or landline) is required at all times;
- program educators must know the procedure for calling for help;
- all medications and vitamins must be kept under lock and key (excluding emergency medications, such as an EpiPen®, which must be stored according to Standard 10E: Medication);
- all chemicals, alcohol, cannabis products, any substance or material related to smoking or vaping, personal care products and household cleaning products must be stored in an area that is inaccessible to children; and
- programs must ensure that the following telephone numbers are readily accessible: emergency medical service; ambulance service; fire department; police service; poison control centre; nearest hospital or emergency medical facility; and child abuse hotline.

### **Standard 10C: Illness**

If a program educator notices that a child exhibits any of the signs or symptoms listed below, the educator must ensure that:

- the child's parent(s) arranges for the immediate removal of the child from the program premises; and
- the child does not return to the program premises until the educator is satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk to others in the program (e.g., the parents provide a physician's note, the parents declare that the child has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours).

Signs or symptoms of illness exhibited by a child include:

- a child vomiting, having a fever, diarrhea or a new unexplained rash or cough;



- a child requiring greater care and attention than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children in the program; or
- a child having or displaying any other illness or symptom the educator knows or believes may indicate that the child poses a health risk to persons on the program premises.

A family day home program must be temporarily closed if an educator's own child's symptoms fit the criteria described above.

### **Standard 10D: Medical Conditions**

Family day home educators:

- must consult with the parent about special handling of children with medical conditions (e.g., allergies, diabetes, asthma, eczema, epilepsy); and
- may require special instruction or training from medical personnel on how to handle certain conditions or medical emergencies (e.g., asthma attack, administering insulin).

### **Standard 10E: Medication**

Family day home educators may administer medications including prescription and non-prescription drugs, emergency medications and herbal remedies, when the:

- program has written consent of the child's parent(s);
- medication is in its original container; and
- medication is administered according to the label directions.

When emergency medications are used to treat allergies, the educator must be able to recognize the allergy symptoms and know how and when to administer the medication. Emergency medications must be available for the child at all time, including on outings.

In all cases where medications are administered, the educator must:

- record the name of the medication, the time and dose administered, and sign or initial that they administered the medication.

All medications must be locked up, excluding emergency medications (such as an EpiPen©) that must be stored in an area that is inaccessible to children, unless emergency medication is handled in accordance with a plan that:

- ensures the medication is accessible by the program educator and child (where it is developmentally appropriate and safe for all children being cared for in the program), but is not accessible by other children in the program, and
- has been agreed on by the educator and the child's parent.

### **Standard 10F: Animals**

Where there are pets in the program home or other animals on the program property:

- children must not have access to animal/pet foods or wastes;
- children should not have unsupervised access to pets;
- pets must be vaccinated according to local veterinarian recommendations; and
- reptiles and amphibians must be kept in safe, locked aquariums or cages.

### **Standard 11: Smoking/Vaping**

Smoking or vaping is not permitted on the premises of the family day home during hours that children are being cared for. Smoking or vaping is not permitted at any time or in any place where children are being cared for, including off-site activities and during field trips or other program related activities.

### **Standard 12: Meals and Snacks**

Programs serve meals and snacks at appropriate times, in sufficient quantities and in accordance with each child's needs including allergies and special diets, ensuring that:

- meals and snacks are in accordance with food guide recognized by Health Canada or Alberta Health;
- menus are made available daily to parent(s) or home visitors/ consultants;
- programs ensure the manner in which children are fed is appropriate to age and level of development;
- children should be seated while eating and seated or standing while drinking;
- no beverages should be given to children while napping; and
- parent of infants must supply infant food (including special dietary requirements).

### **Standard 13: Visual Identity**

Programs must display the visual identity for family day homes in a prominent place in the program residence while they are approved. If a program does not maintain approved status, they must remove all logos from their residence.

### **Standard 14: Early childhood educator certification**

Family day home program educators must obtain Level 1 early childhood educator certification from the Government of Alberta within six months of their approval to provide child care by their licensed family day home agency. For further information on obtaining early childhood educator certification, please visit [alberta.ca/child-care](http://alberta.ca/child-care).

# Forms

The following tables provide a list of standard forms that Children’s Services develops and maintains, and that licensed family day home agencies and Children’s Services are required to use.

## Forms developed and maintained by Children’s services

Form name	Standard reference
Application/application renewal for a child care licence	Agency Standard 10: licensing agencies
Family day home agency program plan template	Agency Standard 6: Agency program plan Agency Standard 10: Licensing agencies
Licence holder request for variation to a licence	Agency Standard 10: Licensing agencies
Notice of appeal	Agency Standard 10B: Enforcing licensing requirements
Children’s services review of family day home agency standards	Agency Standard 10A: Monitoring of agencies and programs by Children’s Services
Family day home agency home visitor/consultant checklist	Agency Standard 2: Caseloads and Monitoring
Exemption request – staff certification (facility-based and family day home licensees), transportation, crib, outdoor play space (facility-based licensees only), and age ratio exemption (family day home licensees only)	Agency Standard 1: Staffing Program Standard 6: Number and ages of children
Incident reporting form	Agency Standard 8: Incidents
Family day home program complaint record	Agency Standard 2: Caseloads and monitoring

The following table provides a list of forms that family day home agencies are required to develop, maintain and use in the administration of their family day home programs. Copies of all forms are to be provided to the regional Children’s Services office when the agency is initially licensed. Any changes to the required forms made during the licence term are to be reported to CS. Licensing staff may request that the agency change a form if all required information is not contained in the form.

## Forms developed and maintained by licensed agencies

Form required	Information required on form		
Hours of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educator’s name</li> <li>Educator’s hours of service detailed for each day of the week</li> <li>Statement signed and dated by the educator, indicating they understand that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any care provided to child in care outside their stated regular hours is considered a private arrangement between the program and the parent;</li> <li>A program cannot offer care for a child longer than 18 hours in any 24-hour period without prior written notification to the agency; and</li> <li>A program offering care to a child for a period longer than 18 hours in any 24-hours must provide each child with sleeping time (in these cases, the educator must give each child their own bedding and sleeping accommodations that meet the child’s developmental needs and agree on sleeping arrangements with agency and family).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Home safety inspection checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date and time of inspection</li> <li>Educator’s name and home address</li> <li>Signature of educator and agency representative</li> </ul>		
Record of contact	<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date and time of contact</li> <li>Method of contact</li> <li>Purpose of contact</li> </ul> </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Names of individuals present</li> <li>Summary of contact</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date and time of contact</li> <li>Method of contact</li> <li>Purpose of contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Names of individuals present</li> <li>Summary of contact</li> </ul>
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Parent consent for back-up care	<table border="0"> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of educator</li> <li>Name of back-up educator, if known</li> <li>Name of parent</li> <li>Name of child</li> </ul> </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of back-up care</li> <li>Signature of parent with date</li> <li>Signature of agency representative with date</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of educator</li> <li>Name of back-up educator, if known</li> <li>Name of parent</li> <li>Name of child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of back-up care</li> <li>Signature of parent with date</li> <li>Signature of agency representative with date</li> </ul>
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Educator training plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of educator</li> <li>Dates covered by training plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of training plan</li> <li>Signature of educator and agency representative</li> </ul>
Exemption request outdoor play space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of educator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address of educator</li> </ul>
Educator annual performance assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of educator</li> <li>History of compliance to standards</li> <li>Training and professional development</li> <li>Parent satisfaction</li> <li>History of complaints and incidents</li> <li>Agency assessment of whether or not educator should continue to be approved to operate under the licensed agency</li> </ul>	

## Contact Information

Children's Services Child Care Branch  
3rd Floor, Forestry Building, 9820 108 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4  
Tel: 780-422-1119