

## Steps to Take if Considering Obtaining a License

- 1** Determine which license best suits your needs
- 2** Go to <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/280/Child-Care-Licensing> (Kansas Department of Health and Education child care licensing page); on the left menu, scroll down and click on “Local County Licensing Contacts (PDF)” to view/download a list of surveyors by county.
- 3** Call your surveyor to set up an orientation session; KDHE has created excellent Power Point presentations guiding you step-by-step through the entire application and licensing process for each type of licensed facility. It is suggested that you ask your surveyor to email this presentation to you in advance of your orientation, so that you will have this helpful resource and be better prepared with questions to ask during your initial meeting (note: you must complete this initial orientation with the surveyor before you can apply for a license)
- 4** Call your City or County Clerk to find out if there are any zoning or other requirements for opening a child care facility at your intended address of operation
- 5** After you have completed your orientation with the KDHE surveyor and verified that you can open a licensed facility at your location:  
Create an account and submit an application and supporting forms online  
OR  
Complete and submit a paper application and supporting forms and mail (with applicable payment) to:  
Child Care Licensing  
100 SW Jackson, Ste 200  
Topeka, KS 66612

### Notes:

- New application may take up to 90 days for processing once an application is complete
- Application and background check fees have been waived until September 30, 2023

## Why Quality Child Care is Essential to Every Community

The need to stabilize, enhance and expand child care and early childhood education has emerged as a critical factor for Northwest Kansas communities. Throughout our region, communities are finding that families who are prepared to accept jobs or buy a house often end up declining due to a lack of child care options. As a result, fewer homes are sold, fewer children enroll in our schools, and the labor pool is shrinking to a critical level for our businesses.

A growing trend of people relocating or moving back home to raise their families has created an acute need for child care in even our smallest communities. Without addressing the lack of quality child care, a community simply cannot function, let alone grow and thrive.

The issue is vast and difficult to tackle. After considerable study, the Dane G. Hansen Foundation introduced Phase I of its Northwest Kansas Cares for Kids, an early childhood education initiative, designed to assist qualifying child care centers and group homes in attracting and retaining quality staff, and providing them with the books and curriculum they need to ensure that the children in their care are ready for pre-school or kindergarten. The Hansen Foundation has now introduced Phase II of this initiative, designed to assist communities in starting or expanding quality early education centers or group homes in Northwest Kansas. Details about both of these initiatives are available on the Hansen Foundation's website ([www.danehansenfoundation.org](http://www.danehansenfoundation.org)); click on the “NWKansas Cares For Kids” logo.

NWKansas  
**CARES FOR KIDS**

Dane G. Hansen Foundation

*This Quick Reference Guide has been published by the Dane G. Hansen Foundation as a convenient reference for communities or prospective providers who are beginning the process of addressing the shortage of child care in Northwest Kansas. It is not intended as formal legal advice and you are encouraged to study the actual regulations and consult with applicable KDHE personnel on all licensing questions.*

## Quick Reference Guide to

# Child Care Licensing in Kansas



## Licensed Day Care Home

- License is usually issued for the providers own home, but can be another location
- This is the predominant form of child care provider in Kansas
- Governed by approximately 200 regulations;
- Can be privately owned for-profit or operated by a non-profit entity
- Limited to no more than 10 children, ratio requirements below

### Home License Ratio Chart (One Provider)

Maximum Number of Children Under 18 Months	Maximum Number of Children at Least 18 Months but Under 5 Years of Age	Maximum Number of Children at Least 5 Years but Under 11 Years of Age	License Capacity (Note: children under 5 may be substituted for younger children in the license capacity)
0	7	3	10
1	5	4	10
2	4	3	9
3	3	2	8

### Advantages:

- Easiest, cheapest and quickest way to address the need for child care in a community
- No formal degree requirements for the provider and minimal training to become licensed

### Disadvantages:

- Generally do not stay in business more than 3 to 5 years (so they often do not provide consistent, sustainable child care capacity for a community);
- Provider is his/her own boss, but no benefits and no convenient substitute if ill or need time off
- Few opportunities for grants or other financial assistance if privately operated for profit



## Group Day Care

- License is usually issued for a residential home but can be in a commercial building or other structure
- This is the next most common form of child care provider in Kansas
- Governed by the same 200 regulations as a licensed Day Care Home;
- Can be privately owned for-profit or operated by a non-profit entity
- Limited to no more than 12 children, ratio requirements below

### Group License Ratio Chart (Two Providers)

Maximum Number of Children Under 18 Months	Maximum Number of Children at Least 18 Months but Under 5 years of Age	Maximum Number of Children at Least 5 Years but Under 11 Years of Age	License Capacity (Note: children under 5 may be substituted for younger children in the license capacity)
1	8	3	12
2	7	3	12
3	6	3	12
4	4	2	10

*\*Other ratio requirements exist depending on whether it is operated by one provider or two, and Depending on whether there are any children under the age of 2 ½*

### Advantages:

- Relatively easy and quick to obtain a license
- Typically are more sustainable and provide more consistent child care capacity for a community
- If operated by a business or governmental entity (ideally a school district), the facility license remains in place despite turnover of staff (i.e. increases likelihood of long-term sustainability for child care)
- If operated by a school district, staff are more readily obtainable because benefits can be offered, reducing staff turnover; serves as a pipeline for increased enrollment in the school; enhances kindergarten readiness; various additional grants are available for school districts

### Disadvantages

- You only gain 2 more child care slots than in a day care home, in exchange for the added expense of an additional provider (although you can flexibly operate with one or two providers as long as you stay within ratios)

## Child Care Center

- License issued for a facility only after certain architectural/State Fire Marshal requirements are met
- This is the least common form of child care provider in Kansas
- Governed by approximately 600 regulations;
- Can be privately owned for-profit or operated by a non-profit entity
- Licensed for more than 13 children, ratio requirements below

### Minimum Staff to Child Ratio

Age of Children	Min Staff/Child Ratio	Maximum Number of Children Per Unit
Infants (2 Weeks to 12 Months)	1 to 3	9
Infants to 6 years	1 to 4 (max 2 infants)	8 (max of 4 infants)
Toddlers (12 Months to 2 ½ Years if Walking Alone)	1 to 5	10
2 Years to 3 Years	1 to 7	14
2 ½ Years to School Age	1 to 10	20
3 Years to School Age	1 to 12	24
Kindergarten Enrollees	1 to 14	28
School Age	1 to 16	32

*\*There are numerous forms of licensing that are issued for each unit of your facility based on the unique features of your facility*

### Advantages:

- Provides the maximum number of child care slots for a community
- Often allows for a more robust curriculum for age-based learning
- If enrollment can consistently be maintained at 40 or more children, a center can provide the highest quality, and most consistent source of child care for a larger community

### Disadvantages:

- The costs and regulatory barriers to obtain a license are often insurmountable for rural communities
- The length of time to obtain licensure is considerable (often more than a year)
- Given the regulatory burdens (e.g. ratio requirements) it is difficult and costly to become financially self-sustaining
- It is difficult to find and keep a qualified director due to the educational requirements for that position
- Finding/keeping qualified staff is difficult due to the low salaries and lack of benefits available in most centers