

## Looking for child care?



Every working parent wants to know that his or her **children are in a safe and healthy place during the day**. But right now, many Alabama parents simply have no way of knowing that for sure.

This is because there are **important things that only a trained inspector can determine** – whether wiring is up to code, whether facilities are cleaned and maintained in ways that protect health, whether staff qualifications are adequate, etc.

But unlike other states in the region and the country, **many Alabama's child care facilities are not visited by inspectors trained to check child care facilities**. They may be failing to meet minimum standards and parents – and even the caregivers themselves – wouldn't know. Even a well-meaning provider doesn't bring the same expert eye as a trained inspector.

**Alabamians wouldn't want to eat at a restaurant that isn't inspected**, and we even require that hair salons and nursing facilities be licensed and inspected regularly. It's simple common sense that the places where so many of our kids spend hours a day should meet the same standards.

## Additional Resources

To download a checklist for comparing child care choices and key questions to ask, visit:

[http://www.alavoices.org/Children's Issues/Child Care in Alabama](http://www.alavoices.org/Children's_Issues/Child_Care_in_Alabama)

Other agencies with valuable information:

[www.familyguidancecenter.org](http://www.familyguidancecenter.org)

[www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org)

[www.childcareaware.org](http://www.childcareaware.org)

[www.brightfutures.org](http://www.brightfutures.org)

# Child Care In Alabama



*A guide to assist you in making the best decision possible when looking for care for your children*



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**DO YOU KNOW . . .**

- *If your child care facility is regularly inspected?*
- *If it is not inspected, whether it meets state minimum standards for health and safety (including wiring and other codes).*
- *If staff background checks are on file?*
- *If staff have suitable training in First Aid and CPR?*
- *If staff have adequate training in early childhood development?*
- *Whether the caregiver-child ratio is appropriate for your child's age?*



*Does your child care facility have age appropriate toys?*

**IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING CHILD CARE...**

**Use Your Senses**

**Sight . . .**

*look for cleanliness; warm, nurturing care; toys appropriate for age, babies in cribs with bottles propped in mouths, caregiver behind a desk or interacting with children*

**Sound . . .**

*do you hear music, caregivers reading and playing with the children or do you hear crying or yelling*

**Smell . . .**

*fresh and clean*

**Intuition . . .**

*when you're there does it feel inviting and warm*



*Are there adequate staff for the number of children?*

**FOR ALL ALABAMA FAMILIES...**

**Did You Know. . .**

- *Many of the state's child care facilities are not required to have regular inspections and as many as half aren't even licensed?*
- *A trained inspector can check important things a parent may not be able to?*
- *Other states require minimum standards and regular inspections of child care facilities – just as we do for restaurants, hair salons, nursing facilities, etc.?*
- *Inspections can offer additional reassurance to all parents – as well as all child care providers who want to run safe, healthy facilities?*
- *When some facilities don't have to be licensed and inspected, all facilities face pressure to cut corners?*



*Is the outdoor area fenced?  
Does it have sturdy well-maintained equipment?*