

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (Child Care) IN A NUTSHELL*

In Collier County, the Department of Children and Families is the licensing and regulation authority for the child care programs. The laws governing the facilities can be found in chapter 402 of the Florida Statutes and rule 65C-22 of the Florida Administrative Code.

WHAT DOES LICENSING DO FOR ME?

- The state laws give government the authority to protect children as vulnerable and dependent citizens and to protect families as consumers of child care service.
- As a parent exploring a suitable child care program for your child, you need to be aware of the **license** status of the child care program, and what benefits licensure may provide you. Not every program is licensed or regulated in the same ways, so you need to be aware of the difference.

STATE LICENSED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- ☺ The state regulated programs are generally inspected four times a year or more by a day care licensing counselor and also an environmental health inspector from the local public health unit.
- ☺ Inspections are unannounced and conducted at various hours. Observed violations are given a corrective action date. Enforcement measures are taken for non-compliance.
- ☺ If they are properly licensed, the center will have a Department of Children and Families' license located in the facility and they must advertise with their license number.

WHICH PROGRAMS ARE NOT LICENSED?

- ◆ **School Programs**
 - Pre-Kindergarten and afterschool programs (only for ages 3 and up) which are staffed and operated by the public or private school in which they are located are not licensed or regulated by the state and **are** the responsibility of the **school**.
 - School programs with children under 3 years must be licensed.
- ◆ **Religiously Exempt Child Care Programs**
 - Some church programs choose to be licensed and others may claim this exemption. To obtain exemption, these programs must be an integral part of a church or parochial school and be affiliated with a recognized accrediting agency.
 - A list of religious exemption accrediting organizations and contacts are on page 7.
- ◆ **Boy's Clubs, Girls Clubs and Other Recreational Programs**

- These are not licensed or regulated at all because they do not provide child care.
- The staff may not be screened nor are there any inspections.
- ◆ **Summer Day Camps**
 - These are not inspected or regulated
 - Staff background screening is limited