

## Personal Care and Service

### Child Care Workers

**Child Care Workers** typically care for children who have not yet entered kindergarten and often supervise children who are in before and after school programs. Child care workers provide basic care, such as safety, nutrition, health needs and the feeding and changing of infants. Their jobs involve engaging in learning activities with the children they care for. Personal care and learning activities regularly overlap, such as in the case of teaching a child how to tie his or her shoes. Child care workers help children develop social skills and foster learning through play. They supervise organized play activities, such as storytelling, acting, working together to build a town out of toys, and free play where they help children explore areas of individual interest.

There are four different groups of child workers, based on the type of work setting. They include:

- *Private household workers:* Often referred to as babysitters, they care for children in their client's homes. They can work for one family or multiple families. Most private household workers live in their own homes and commute to work. Some live in the homes of their client's and are referred to as live in nannies. Live in nannies often have their own room and bathroom while living in their client's home and sometimes begin to feel like or are treated as a member of the family.
- *Family child care providers:* Work alone with small groups of children, often from different families, out of their own homes.
- *Child care center workers:* Work in centers where there is more than one adult who works with groups of children, often of preschool age (3 - 5 years old). They greet children as they arrive at the center and help them select an activity of interest. Head Start, Early Head Start, and pre-schools are examples of child care centers.
- *Before and after school program workers:* Watch school aged children before and after school in order to provide child care to children whose parents work. Before and after school program workers may bring to children to school in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. They help children with their homework and engage them in extracurricular activities such as field trips or sports.

Employment as a child care worker can be rewarding because they help children learn and grow through play. Work, however, can be repetitive and emotionally and physically demanding; child care workers have to stand, walk, bend, stoop, and lift in

order to attend to the needs of the children under their care. States require a certain adult to child ratio in order to ensure proper care for children; regulations vary by state.

Work hours vary for child care workers depending on the setting that they work in.

Child care centers are typically open year round and are open long hours to accommodate parent work schedules. Centers have full-time and part-time staff who often work certain blocks of time and not the entire work day.

Family child care providers work long hours as well to accommodate work schedules.

Private household workers have schedules that depend on the schedule of the family that they work for.

Before and after school programs are typically open the 9 - 10 month school year and operate long working hours to fit parent schedules.

## **Education/Training**

### *How to Obtain:*

Training and qualifications vary widely by state and by the type of childcare provided, from less than a high school diploma to a bachelor's degree in early childhood education. Some child care centers may hire employees with less than a high school diploma and little to no working experience in child care, but many facilities have training and education requirements.

Childcare workers in private settings who care for only a few children often are not regulated by states. However, some states may require a national Child Care Professional credential or a Child Development Associate credential for child care workers who care for more than a few children, such as those who work in child care centers or are family child care providers. In most states, these two credentials are recognized as equivalent. Both credentialing agencies have slightly different requirements but each one measures competence in teaching childhood education.

Additionally, some states, including New York, offer state-specific child care credentials in order to formally recognize practitioners who display a specialized knowledge in infant/toddlers. The New York State Association for the Education of Young Children offers this credential. A certificate is not required for a baby sitter. However, the baby sitter must be at least 14 years old. Certification can help with advancement or the attainment of higher paying jobs and can be reassuring to overly cautious parents.

The Bureau of Child Care is the regulatory agency for child care services (public and private) operating within New York City. The Bureau regulates group child care, as provided for in the New York City Health Code and provides licensing and registration services for group family child care, family child care and school-age care, as regulated under New York State Department of Social Services Regulations. The Department does not endorse any organization to which it issues a permit but it inspects them to ensure compliance with the New York City Health Code.

A The New York State DOH permit to operate a child care service is required for all programs with more than three children who are up to six years of age. This process includes screening and fingerprinting of all child care service personnel to permit review of any criminal records, inquiry of the New York State Central Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register, and reference checks with each of their three most recent employers

Heads of Groups in New York State daycare centers must have an Associate of Arts in early childhood education, child development, or another child-related area; or Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and 2 years experience related to caring for children; or high school diploma or equivalent and 3 years experience. Additionally, if caring for a group of children under the age of 3 years, they must have 1 year experience and/or training specifically in Infant and Toddler care.

The requirements of a New York State Infant/Toddler Care Credential include:

- 12 college credits in infant toddler development, 3 of which must be completed within the past 5 years
- 1 year of experience caring for infants and/or toddlers obtained from a New York State-licensed childcare center or a family child care home
- Either 2 semesters of a supervised field work course with infants/toddlers and six months work experience caring for infants and/or toddlers or 480 hours of documented experience

Fulfilling the requirements of a national Certified Child Care Professional credential from the National Childcare Association takes up to one year or longer depending upon training already completed. Components include:

- A high school diploma or the equivalent
- 720 hours of direct experience within the last five years
- Writing samples
- 180 hours of continuing education credit
- Performance-based observations by a field counselor
- National Credentialing Examination
- Professional Standards Council Review

The requirements of a national Child Development Associate from the Council for Professional Recognition credential include:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Possession of High school diploma or the equivalent

- 480 hours of experience working with children within the last five years
- 120 hours of formal child care education within the last five years
- No fewer than ten hours in each of the following content areas:
  - Planning a safe and healthy learning environment
  - Advancing children's physical and intellectual development
  - Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development
  - Strategies to establish productive relationships with families
  - Strategies to manage an effective program operation
  - Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
  - Observing and recording children's behavior
  - Principles of child development and learning

*More Information on Certification:*

- National Childcare Association certifies the national Child Care Professional certification:  
<http://www.nccanet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=34>
- Council for Professional Recognition certifies the national Child Development Association credential:  
<http://www.cdacouncil.org/cda.htm>
- The New York State Association for the Education of Young Children certifies the New York infant/childcare credential:  
<http://www.nysaeyc.org/credentials/default.asp#InfantToddlerCare>
- New York State Office of Children & Family Services:  
<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/>
- Bureau of Childcare NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:  
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/dc/dc.shtml>
- New York State Division of Childcare Services:  
<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/becomeaprovider.asp>

*Average Costs:*

Child Care Professional Certification: \$470 - \$495 registration fee.

Child Development Association Credential: \$18 application fee + \$325 assessment fee.

New York infant/toddler certification by New York State Association for the Education of Young Children: \$50 application fee + a \$300 credential fee.

Costs of continuing education, certification and recertification may vary.