

# **Rules & Regulations for Licensed Child Care Centers & Group Child Care Homes**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**



Department of Public Health & Social Services



## **What are the “Rules and Regulations (Regs) for Licensed Child Care Centers and Group Child Care Homes”?**

Whenever a person decides to open a day care center, they must follow rules provided by the government about this type of “business.” There are Rules and Regulations currently in place that guide how day care centers must be structured. The Department of Public Health and Social Services (DPHSS) is the government agency that is responsible for ensuring that child care centers follow these rules to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of our young children.

### **So if there are rules already, why do they have to make changes?**

The current rules and regulations have been in place since 1978 and have never been updated! Through scientific research, the body of knowledge related to early childhood development has increased tremendously in the last 32 years, and the “regs” need to reflect that information. We know a lot more now about early childhood development so we need to incorporate this knowledge into the rules & regs to maximize the potential of our children.

### **What do you mean?**

Well, we now know that even before a child is born, babies are capable of benefiting from their environments. They can hear their mother’s voice, for example, and can respond to various sounds. But probably the most amazing fact about children in early childhood is that brain growth is phenomenal! Scientists tell us that 75% of a child’s brain develops by the time they are three years old! As parents, and as a community, we must take advantage of this incredible opportunity to help provide a warm, nurturing environment and make it comfortably stimulating to help young brains grow!



## So how does this new scientific information affect the proposed new regulations?

Well, to begin with, one of the significant changes is that the proposed regs will lower the child to caregiver ratio for the following age groups:

Age of Child	Child : Staff Ratio Current Regulations	Child : Staff Ratio Proposed Regulations	Proposed Effective Date of Compliance for Existing Child Care Facilities
Birth to 12 months	5:1	4:1	January 1, 2012
13 months to 2 years	8:1	7:1	January 1, 2012
25 months to 3 years	10:1	10:1	Remains the same
37 months to 4 years	15:1	15:1	Remains the same
4 years and up	20:1	20:1	Remains the same

## This is good — but child care is already expensive, and this is going to impact my wallet.

Yes, it probably will. Better child care will be more expensive. The investment is well worth the cost. For those who have difficulty with the price of child care, DPHSS provides block grants to qualified families to help subsidize the cost. Contact the Department of Public Health and Social Services at 735-7241/7312.

## But just because there are more caregivers and adults working in a center doesn't mean that the quality will automatically improve!

You are right. The caregivers must have the right training, mentoring, and supervision in their role to ensure the highest quality of service. The proposed regs addresses the need for training, professional development, and certification for the child care directors and staff. The DPHSS sponsors numerous training opportunities FREE OF CHARGE to persons working in the child care sector of our community. These are announced on a regular basis.

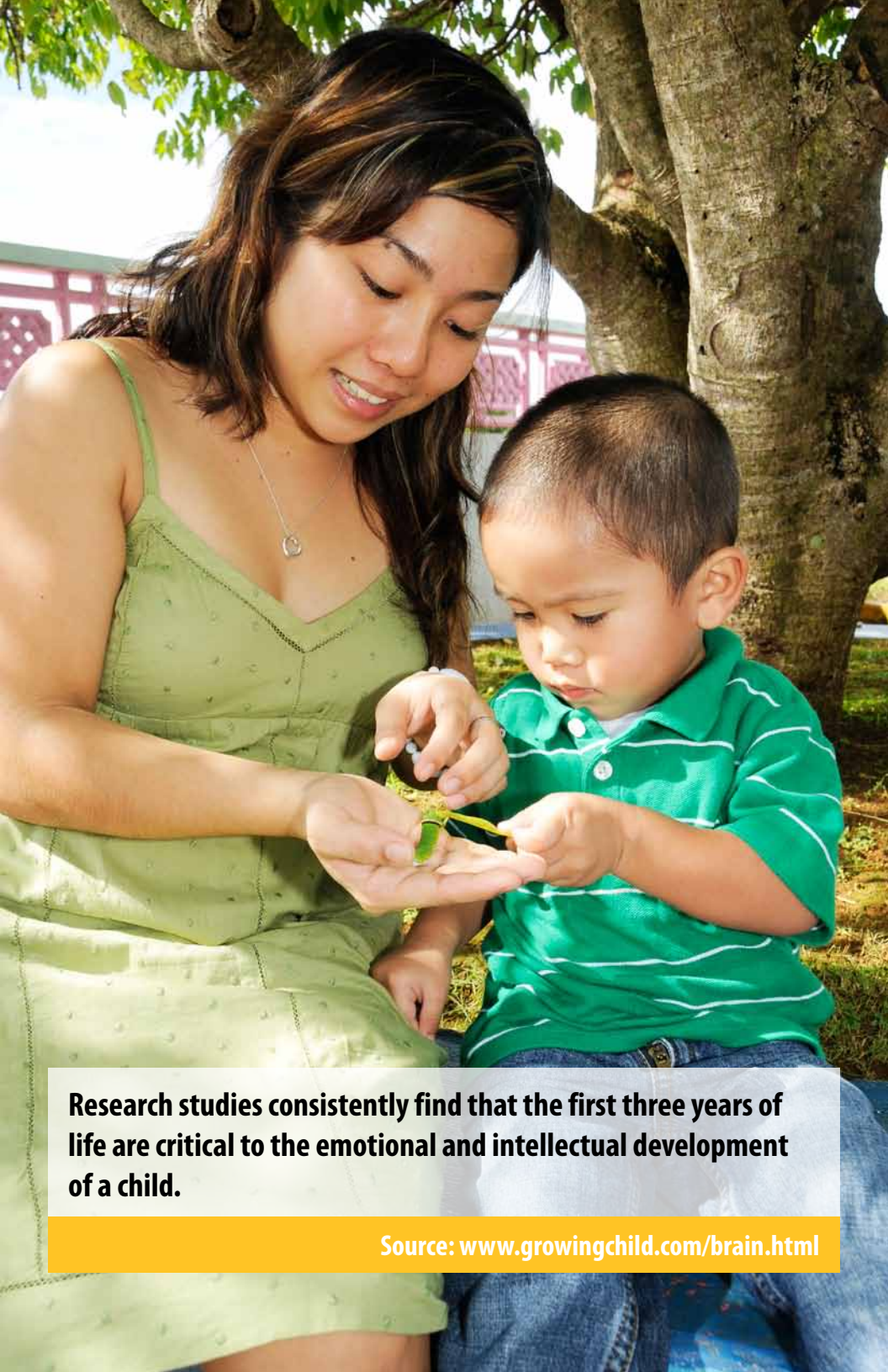


### **What are some other changes that are in the proposed regulations?**

- Requirements for sanitation, health, and safety will follow regulations under the Division of Environmental Health
- Implementation of developmentally appropriate practices
  - DPHSS developed the Guam Early Learning Guidelines for Young Children Birth to 36 months and the Guam Early Learning Guidelines for Young Children Ages Three to Five that centers may use as a guide for a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Implementation of assessments that provide information on individual learning and to ensure appropriate instruction, intervention, and/or evaluation that meet individual needs
- Requirements for staff to be certified in CPR
- Requirements to follow nutritional guidelines
- Recommendations for training on:
  - Child Development Theory and Practical Application
  - Healthy and Safe Environments
  - Working with Families
  - Professional Conduct and Ethics

*Note: Course work will be provided free of charge to qualified applicants through a federal grant beginning in January 2011.*





**Research studies consistently find that the first three years of life are critical to the emotional and intellectual development of a child.**

**Source: [www.growingchild.com/brain.html](http://www.growingchild.com/brain.html)**



**So we are looking at a lot of new requirements! Somebody is going to have to be the “watchdog”, to ensure that these rules and regulations are followed and enforced.**

The DPHSS, Division of Public Welfare, Bureau of Social Services Administration & Division of Environmental Health, are charged with this responsibility. They have individuals who are responsible to go to the centers to ensure the rules are being followed. Penalties will be levied for non-compliance.

**This is just adding on more to the bureaucracy! Why can't we just use the current regs? They've been fine for 32 years...why change now?**

The bottom line is we want the best for our children, as parents and as a community. In the past, it was thought that as long children were fed and were kept clean, that was “enough.” The latest scientific research has shown us repeatedly that early experiences influences the development of a young child's brain and that we must provide positive guidance and experience to give our children the best foundation possible in the areas of cognitive, language, physical, and social emotional development.

### **What are the next steps?**

After many, many meetings over the past five years with parents, child caregivers and directors, the Child Care and Development Association of Guam, Public Health officials, and representatives from the University of Guam and Guam Community College, in addition to input from the National Child Care Technical Assistance and Information Center, a bill that aims to update the Rules and Regs was introduced in August 2010 by Senator Frank Aguon, Jr.

The actual proposed legislation, Bill No. 455-30, “An Act to Establish the Administrative Rules and Regulations of the Department of Public Health & Social Services Relative to Child Care Centers and Group Child Care Homes” may be viewed on the 30th Guam Legislature's website at [www.guamlegislature.com](http://www.guamlegislature.com). If you would like a printed copy, submit a request to the University of Guam Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (Guam CEDDERS) by calling 735-2466.

## **Do we really have to do this? Can't the individual centers just come up with their own policies?**

As a community, we want the best for our children. We want to be proactive and establish reasonable standards. If you look at the development of many other rules & regulations addressing other areas, often times the reasons that updates are initiated is because of a tragedy. We want to avoid having this happen on our island, and to do this we must have standards that promote not only a high level of safety but also a positive and developmentally appropriate learning environment.

## **Who can I talk to about the proposed Rules and Regs?**

You can talk to the director of the center your child attends. You can also call Lydia Tenorio, Administrator, Bureau of Social Services Administration, DPHSS at 475-2653, or Elaine Eclavea, Initiative Area Coordinator, Guam CEDDERS at 735-2466, or send an email message to [elaine.eclavea@guamcedders.org](mailto:elaine.eclavea@guamcedders.org).



**Positive learning experiences are necessary for healthy growth and development in early childhood.**





For more information, call:  
Lydia Tenorio, DPHSS at 475-2653  
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