

**Licensed** – Providers have undergone an application and review process with state licensing (Dept. of Social Services, Dept. of Human Services, or Dept. of Education) and are required to comply with health and safety regulations. Centers operate based on a specific Title or Chapter (Title 22, Title 11, Chapter 52, etc.) as a regulatory guideline. Licensing evaluations are conducted (randomly) at least annually (some states twice each year). May also be referred to as “Certified” such as in PA.

**Licensed Exempt** – State regulations exempt certain types of providers from licensure, meaning they can operate legally without a license. License exemption status is authorized by government organizations such as the Dept. of Public Health, Dept. of Health and Human Services, or the Dept. of Education. It also includes kindergartens, pre-kindergarten programs, or childcare centers that are operated by, and are an integral part of, a private educational institution or system providing elementary education in grades kindergarten through sixth grade. These programs are still responsible to meet the National Health and Safety standards.

**Religious Exempt** – Exempts from licensure a child day center operated or conducted under the auspices of a religious institution if the religious institution meets certain specific requirements and files certain documentation with the state prior to opening and annually thereafter. Documentation includes notification to parents that the center is exempt from licensing inspections, certification that employees meet professional qualifications of the state, evidence of 501(c)3 status, local fire and health inspection results, and certification that the program meets state staff:child ratios. Centers must also meet background check requirements and meet the National Health and Safety standards.

**Registered** – In some states, childcare programs are only required to be registered with the state for operation to serve children 3 years and older. In some states, programs only need to be registered if serving children YOUNGER than 3 years of age. Registration requires notifying the state of program vitals. No oversight or inspections are provided.