



Child Care Center Licensing Manual

(August 2016)

for use with

COMAR 13A.16 Child Care Centers
(as amended effective 7/20/15)

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.01 License Permitted.

An office may issue a license to a drop-in center.

.02 Scope of Care.

A drop-in center shall provide care exclusively to children on an intermittent and occasional basis for less than 4 hours a day while parents are not on the same premises or not immediately available, or both. Drop-in centers include child care centers located in shopping malls or shopping centers for the occasional use of customers, child care centers located in resorts for vacationers, and similar settings.

.03 Applicability of Subtitle.

An applicant for a drop-in center license shall meet the requirements of this subtitle with the exception of:

- A. COMAR 13A.16.03.02 concerning admission to care;**
- B. COMAR 13A.16.05.12 concerning outdoor activity area;**
- C. COMAR 13A.16.09.01A(7) concerning outdoor play;**
- D. COMAR 13A.16.09.03B(1) and (2) concerning materials and equipment;**
- E. COMAR 13A.16.10.01A(2)(c) concerning emergency evacuation and disaster drills for children; and**
- F. COMAR 13A.16.12.01 concerning food service.**

.04 Plan of Operation.

- A. An applicant for a drop-in center license shall:**
 - (1) Submit to and receive prior approval from the office of a written plan of operation for the center; and**
 - (2) Operate according to the approved plan.**
- B. An applicant shall include in the written plan of operation:**
 - (1) The ages, numbers, and groupings of children to be served;**
 - (2) The space, materials, equipment, and furnishings to be used at the center;**
 - (3) The hours, days, and months of operation;**
 - (4) The activity program of the center; and**
 - (5) A method for ensuring that children are released only to their parents or other persons authorized by parents to pick up children who are properly identified to the center.**

***INTENT:** A drop-in center is intended solely to provide temporary, occasional child care while parents shop, visit, sightsee, or engage in similar activities. As such, a drop-in center is exempt from certain licensing requirements that are appropriate or feasible only for programs that provide care to the same children on a regular or extended basis. Nevertheless, the center must comply with basic child health and safety requirements of COMAR 13A.16 – Child Care Centers, and must operate according to an approved*

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service plan that ensures appropriate physical facilities, child supervision, activities, and child protection.

INSPECTION REPORT ITEM: *"Plan of Operation"*

COMPLIANCE CRITERIA: *The center:*

- *Complies with all applicable requirements of COMAR 13A.16 – Child Care Centers, and*
- *Operates in full accordance with its approved plan of operations.*

ASSESSMENT METHOD: *Observe and, as necessary, review facility documentation to determine if the center complies with all applicable requirements of COMAR 13A.16 – Child Care Centers, and with the provisions of its approved plan of operation.*

Note: *A facility that operates a drop-in program in addition to a regular program must have two licenses. Also, the drop-in program must be contained within its own space; however, this does not apply to a facility that accepts drop-in children with all the emergency and admission records required under Chapter .03, §.02 – Admission to Care, and Chapter 03, §.04C(1)-(9) – Child Records.*

.05 Special Variances.

An applicant may request variances for COMAR 13A.16.05.03A concerning indoor space requirements, and COMAR 13A.16.08.03 concerning group size and staffing.

INTENT: Because of the temporary nature of the care provided and the transient nature of the child population served, OCC may grant a space or group size and staffing variance that would not be available to a regular center.

.06 Admission Requirements.

A. A child younger than 2 years old may not be admitted to a drop-in center.

INTENT: Infants and toddlers require a more intensive level of care and supervision than a drop-in center can reasonably be expected to provide.

INSPECTION REPORT ITEMS: *"Admission Requirements"*

COMPLIANCE CRITERIA: *The center serves only children who are at least 2-years-old.*

ASSESSMENT METHOD: *Review center admission records to determine if each child is at least 2-years-old.*

B. The operator shall:

- (1) **Require the parent of each child to complete and sign an emergency card and health history form on the child before the child's admission to the center; and**
- (2) **Ensure that the emergency card and health history form are signed and updated, if necessary, by the parent each time the child is dropped off at the center.**

INTENT: Center staff must know how to contact a child's parent in the event of an emergency and must know if the child has a health or physical condition that may require particular attention. Because a drop-in center is not supposed to provide care to any child on a regular basis, this information must be reviewed each day that a given child is present.

INSPECTION REPORT ITEM: "Admission Requirements"

COMPLIANCE CRITERIA:

- *An "Emergency Form", OCC form 1214, (Appendix B-5); and a "Health History Form For Use in Drop-In Child Care Centers", OCC form 1285, (Appendix B-20), are on file for each child admitted to care.*
- *On each day that a given child is in care, the child's parent signs and dates the child's Emergency Form and Health History Form.*

ASSESSMENT METHOD: *Review center records to determine if, for each day that a child is present, the child's parent has signed and dated an Emergency Form and a Health History form.*