

TIPS FOR READING DAYCARE REPORTS

A licensed childcare program has continual monitoring to ensure that it is meeting the minimum standards for health and safety. The findings of the monitoring are reflected in the reports. Reports are available through the state agencies that oversee childcare programs. These vary from state to state and are sometimes licensed by local health and social service offices or through a state's department of education.

To find an inspection report:

- Follow [this link](#) to ChildCare.gov
- Select your state under "Get Childcare Resources For"
- On the following page, click on the link in the section titled "Inspection Reports"
- Enter the name of the provider or center, ID or license number to find the associated report

While these reports are not standardized from state to state, there are overarching insights that will help make sense of what you find in your state's report.

1. Severity of violations:

Assess the severity of any violations found during the inspection. Some inspection reports categorize violations based on their level of severity. Critical violations typically involve issues that pose an immediate risk to the health and safety of children and require immediate correction.

For example, the Type A Citations on the CA Department of Social Services, looks like this:

All Visits	Citations	Inspections	Complaints
Type A Citation: 0	Type B Citation: 8	One or more citations under appeal and/or m	

In CA, a type A Citation is for the most serious type of violations in which there is an immediate risk to health, safety or personal rights of those in care. For example, access to dangerous chemicals, lack of supervision or fire clearance.

2. Compliance

Check if the daycare center has complied with all the required regulations. Pay attention to any violations or non-compliance issues mentioned in the inspection report. Note that minor violations may be relatively common, but repeated or serious violations could be a cause for concern.

3. Corrective actions

Look for indications of how the daycare center addressed the violations or non-compliance issues. The report may mention if the center took appropriate actions to rectify the identified problems which demonstrates their commitment to maintaining a safe and compliant environment.

4. Follow-up inspections

Determine if the daycare center has had any follow-up inspections after the initial report. Follow-up inspections can indicate whether the identified issues were resolved or if further action is needed.

5. Ongoing Investigations

Sometimes a report will show an ongoing investigation. This typically occurs after a parent or employee called the program's licensing agency and filed a complaint. The licensing agency will send out an inspector who will speak to the director, teachers, parents, and anyone else who would have information relevant to the investigation. An ongoing investigation isn't necessarily a reason to worry, since complaints can be filed by anyone and may be unfounded.

6. Overall inspection rating

Some inspection reports provide an overall rating or evaluation of the daycare center based on the findings. This rating can offer a general assessment of the facility's compliance and quality.

7. Contextualize the findings

Consider the inspection report in conjunction with other sources of information, such as personal visits, conversations with staff and other parents, and online reviews. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the daycare center's overall quality and performance. If you have concerns or questions you can also contact the relevant regulatory agency or licensing authority for clarification or additional information.

Finally, it's important to note that inspection reports are snapshots of a specific moment in time and may or may not reflect the daycare center's current conditions. Staff turnover at daycare centers can be relatively high, so if the report is from a number of years ago it may reflect different management and/or staff. In the end, just make sure you have peace of mind that your child is safe and being well cared for.