

# Consumer Guide to Using License Exempt Care

Some states choose **not** to regulate some types of child care. For example, care in the child's home or by relatives, part-day nursery schools, and summer camps often do not need to be licensed. In Pennsylvania, family child care homes with three or fewer children in care are license exempt (does not need to be licensed). In Delaware, they need to be licensed.

You can find out if a program or provider is license exempt by referring to "A Guide to Child Care Regulation" for the state in which you are choosing care. This guide is available from The Family & Workplace Connection. Or you can ask the administrator or family child care provider about the licensing regulations for the care offered.

## ▶ **If You Use Unlicensed Care, Be An Informed Consumer**

Many license exempt programs provide quality care for children. **However, it is especially important to be an informed consumer when selecting and using license exempt care.** As the consumer, you carry the full responsibility for seeing that your child is receiving the quality of care you want for him or her. **There is no agency keeping an eye on the quality of care in a license exempt program. This means that there is no one to investigate complaints or address concerns other than the administration of the program itself.** The only exception is that if you suspect child abuse. If you suspect child abuse, call either the police or the child abuse hotline. Suspicions of child abuse are investigated in both licensed and unlicensed care.

## ▶ **Questions To Ask About Unlicensed Care**

**Ask all the questions you would ask a licensed provider. Pay special attention to these areas:**

- What kind of educational backgrounds and work experience does the staff have? Are criminal and child abuse background checks required on all staff?
- What kind of curriculum do you use? What will my child be taught?
- How do you handle discipline? Do you spank children? If so, under what circumstances?
- If I am unhappy with something in your program, how will my concerns be handled? Who has the final word in responding to my concerns?