



Washoe County Child Care Licensing

Complaint Process Fact Sheet

Before making a complaint with Washoe County Child Care Licensing about a child care provider, please consider talking with facility management. Many concerns can be immediately addressed by the director or owner. Even after making a complaint, we encourage speaking to the person in charge to try to fix any issues. We are all partners in ensuring that the children in our community receive safe and quality care!

How are complaints received?

Washoe County Child Care Licensing accepts complaints [online](#) and via telephone, fax, [email](#), and other sources. Anyone can make a complaint against a child care provider, including parents, staff members, family members, professionals, state agencies, and anyone who becomes aware of possible regulatory violations within a child care facility.

Who investigates complaints?

Washoe County has child care licensing case workers who are assigned to complaint investigations. Our case workers are highly trained in State and County regulation and policy and have a specialized understanding of how regulation applies to daily child care operations.

How are complaints investigated?

Child Care Licensing workers use several methods to investigate complaints to ensure a thorough and impartial investigation, including but not limited to interviews, record reviews, reviewing video footage, obtaining photos, and classroom observations. Most complaints are initiated with an unannounced site visit, although there are situations when a determination can be made based on information obtained over the phone or other documentation.

How are complaints prioritized?

Each complaint is reviewed by a supervisor to determine the appropriate response based on the allegations:

- Immediate response: Risk of imminent harm to a child
- Response within 3 Business Days: No immediate danger, but risk/regulation violation involved
- Information Only: No regulation violation noted, follow up with provider and concerns documented in file for future reference

Did You Know?

The results of all investigated complaints are made public. Anyone can [search the Child Care Licensing database](#) to see if a provider has any complaints or violations.

What happens next?

After an investigation, the complaint will either be **substantiated**, meaning there is enough evidence to support that a regulation was violated, or **unsubstantiated**, meaning there was not enough evidence to support the allegation. If an allegation is substantiated, licensing will work with the provider to ensure any violations are corrected. Depending on the severity of a violation, a provider can be placed on a corrective action plan, incur a fine, have their licensed number or hours reduced, have their license suspended, or have their license revoked. Please note, child care licensing does not have the authority to terminate an employee or facility management.