

# NATIONAL CHILD CARE STANDARDS

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“Leading Women in the UAE have played a key role in shaping the UAE culture and developing our society, I believe women in this country have a great deal more to offer, if they are given the right support and commitment from the society at large.”

**His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum**  
Vice President and Prime Minister of the  
United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai

# Foreword

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The Initiatives of Dubai Women Establishment to produce National Child Care Standards and to establish child care centres in the workplace, supports the UAE Federal Strategy to improve the quality and standards of education, at all levels in the public and private sector.

The Strategy also supports women's contribution to development by improving their ability to achieve excellence in all areas and to assume leadership positions. The Dubai Women's Establishment (DWE) is helping women become positive contributors to the national development of the UAE, without compromising on their traditional role as the backbone of the family unit, and more importantly on their responsibility towards children's development. Women must not be expected to make sacrifices in their personal or professional lives. The creation of a positive work environment which supports women, and working mothers in particular, through the availability of childcare in the workplace, will make an important contribution to their performance and professional development, knowing that their children are close by in a safe and nurturing environment.

Her Highness Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum  
President of Dubai Women Establishment

# Acknowledgement

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# Introduction

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The Initiatives of Dubai Women Establishment to produce these National Child Care Standards and to establish child care centres in the workplace, which were supported by the Executive Council of the Government of Dubai, aim to address two main objectives of the UAE Federal Strategy unveiled by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai.

*The changing times and the nature of the challenges prompt us to think in a different way and to adopt international best practices.*

Federal Strategy, 2007

The UAE Federal Strategy Emphasised the need to improve the quality and standards of education, at all levels in the public and private sector, to meet society's expectations. Hence the preparation of advanced Child Care Standards, which will no doubt improve the overall outcome of children in formal and higher education, as early care and education is the foundation of the education process.

# Statutory Framework

These standards have been prepared in implementation of:

- Federal Law No. 5 (1983) on Child Care Nurseries.
- Ministerial Decision No. 1 (1989) for the implementation of the Federal Law No. 5 issued in 1983 on Child Care Nurseries.
- Council of Minister Decision No. 19 (2006) regarding the establishment of child care centres in Government Departments and Public Institutions for the provision of care for the children of female workers, if the number of workers reached 50 employees and the number of their children in the age group up to 4 years reached 20 children.
- The UAE Federal Strategy unveiled on 17 April 2007 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai, in particular, the social development and education strategies, and the emphasis on the role of woman in the development process.
- The Dubai Women Establishment's initiative in establishing childcare centres in government institutions from 2008.

# Applications

These standards apply to all child care services as defined in the Federal law No. 5 (1983), to include any premises dedicated to the care of children up to four years of age, including nurseries attached or annexed to a school. (1)(2)

- Child care centres and nurseries in the workplace.
- Nursery Schools.
- Nurseries attached or annexed to a school Children Clubs receiving children aged up to 4 years for more than 4 hours per day.

Child care and child-minding services receiving children aged up to 4 years for more than 4 hours per day. Excluding child care centres for sick children in hospitals and medical centres.

- (1) The Law and Standards does not apply in the case of:  
Nursery schools established by foreign states or organizations in accordance with bilateral agreement with the United Arab Emirates, and nursery schools dedicated for the children of the diplomatic staff of any one country.
- (2) Applying the Standards does not relieve child care centres from complying with the requirements of the relevant Government Departments responsible for planning, health, security and safety.

# General Objectives

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The National Standards aims to define the minimum acceptable qualitative and quantitative requirements for the setting and the services that should be provided by all types of child care settings, to offer a safe and healthy environment that fosters children's physical, intellectual, psychological, social and emotional development.

## Contents of the Standards

- The National Child Care Standards is divided into 8 specific objectives representing the minimum requirements that should be met in a child care setting.
- The National Standards laid down, for each of the required specific objectives, a set of procedures and measures representing the minimum requirements to be met to realize the specified objectives.

## Inspection of Child Care Establishments

- Inspection of the child care establishments will verify the extent of compliance with the objectives, procedures and requirements set out in the National Child Care Standards .

## ■ 1. Licensing and Administration

The child care provider should be licensed by the relevant Government authorities in accordance with the prevailing laws. It should be administered by a licensed person who is responsible for its organisation and operation in accordance with a policy and procedures manual that complies with the National Standards, including record keeping for children and staff and a system for admission and accounting.

## ■ 2. Building and Equipment

The child care building should be a safe and healthy setting that comprises ample indoor and outdoor areas proportional to the number and ages of children. It should be equipped in a manner that produces a pleasant setting satisfying the needs of children and stimulating their physical, intellectual and social development.

## ■ 3. Child Care Organization

The environment shall be administered and organized in a manner that ensures the continuous supervision and care of children by an adequate number of qualified carers and assistants, proportional to the number of children as set out by these Standards.

## ■ 4. Care and Learning Activities

Provide activities that foster children's physical, intellectual, social and emotional capabilities, taking into consideration each child's individual needs and abilities, based on a scientific system of observation and assessment.

## ■ 5. Safety and Security

Take all necessary measures to ensure that children are safe and protected against risks both inside the nursery or child care centre, or during outings, and that all staff are fully aware of the safety and security requirements and procedures.

## ■ 6. Health Care

Promote the good health of children and take all necessary precautions to prevent contamination and the spread of diseases, with appropriate measures for dealing with injuries and sick children.

## ■ 7. Nutrition

Provide children with meals and drinks in adequate quantities, variations and at set times, to meet children's nutritional needs, in compliance with their individual dietary requirements.

## ■ 8. Partnership with Parents

A close cooperation should be developed between child care staff and children's parents and guardians in the best interest of the child, through exchange of information, periodical reports and continuous enhancement of their knowledge about the educational aims and objectives.



# LICENSING AND ADMINISTRATION

# 1 - LICENSING AND ADMINISTRATION

**The child care provider should be licensed by the relevant Government authorities in accordance with the prevailing laws. It should be administered by a licensed person who is responsible for its organization and operation in accordance with a policy and procedures manual that complies with the National Standards, including record keeping for children and staff and a system for admission and accounting.**

## ■ 1.1 Licence Holder

- The Licence Holder shall have the overall responsibility for applying these Standards, and for ensuring the adherence thereto by all the staff of the child care setting.
- If the Licence Holder is a governmental or a corporate body, he should nominate the Manager who will bear the responsibilities of the licence holder relating to the application of the Standards.

## ■ 1.2 The Manager

- The Manager shall be responsible for the preparation of the Policy and Procedures Manual in compliance with the requirements of the National Standards, and shall oversee its implementation by all the staff of the child care setting .

## ■ 1.3 Policy and Procedures Manual

- The Policy and Procedures Manual for the child care provision shall be prepared to set out the rules, regulations and procedures that will be applied to realize the objectives and criteria set out in the National Standards.
- The Policy and Procedures Manual should include, in particular, the following subjects:
  - General and Childcare Objectives.
  - Child Care Programme.
  - Licences.
  - Buildings, Furniture, Equipment and Maintenance.
  - Organization Structure.
  - Employment and Employees Affairs.
  - Working time and Holidays.
  - Daily Timetable.
  - Admission and Registration Procedures.
  - Accounting System.
  - Fees and Payments.
  - Safety and Security Procedures.
  - Health Care Procedures.
  - Nutrition Procedures.
  - Parents Relations.

## ■ 1.4 Records

- The child care provision shall keep records and files to organize its operation that should include, in particular:
- Children Records and Files.
- The application form including name, nationality, date of birth, admission date, parent's work address, home address, phone numbers, with copy of the child's birth certificate.
- Medical Report showing the child's health status at the time of admission.
- Parents or Guardian instructions related to the child's health.
- Child progress reports incorporating any remarks and necessary remedial actions.
- Staff Records and Files.
- Application and employment contract.
- Essential documents including copies of work permit, passport, academic qualifications, experience certificate, certificate of good behaviour and health card.
- Rewards and written warnings and periodic evaluation reports.
- Attendance Register.
- Children daily attendance register.
- Staff daily attendance register.
- Accidents Register.
- Accident reports and actions taken.

## ■ 1.5 Accounts

- The child care provision should maintain a separate accounting system, including budgeted and actual accounts.
- keep records of all financial transactions including receipts and payment slips.



BUILDING AND  
EQUIPMENT

## 2- BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT

**The child care building should be a safe and healthy setting that comprises ample indoor and outdoor areas proportional to the number and ages of children. It should be equipped in a manner that produces a pleasant setting, satisfying the needs of children and stimulating their physical, intellectual and social development.**

### ■ 2.1 Location

- The child care setting should be located in a quiet area and should allow for the safe arrival and departure of children.

### ■ 2.2 Building

- The Building should be on the ground floor or first floor of a multi-storey building.
- Government or Corporate workplace child care centres located on higher floors of its buildings may exceptionally be licensed, subject to obtaining a special permission from Dubai Civil Defence, the Municipality and the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- Pre-fabricated and temporary buildings are not acceptable.
- The child care setting should obtain the necessary licences and comply with the conditions of the Municipality, Directorate of Civil Defence and Public Health Department.

## ■ 2.3 Indoor Spaces

- All rooms should be adequately air-conditioned with natural ventilation, and provided with natural and artificial lighting suitable for each room's intended use. Activity rooms should have natural lighting through windows of 10% of wall area.

### Activity and Play Rooms

- A separate activity and play room shall be provided for each group of children, according to age groups and net floor areas:

Age	Group Size Max	Net Area* Min
Birth –2 Years	12 Child	2.5 sq.m/child
2- 4 years	24 child	3.0 sq.m/child

- The following shall not be included in the calculation of net floor areas: bedrooms, corridors, toilets, changing areas, food preparation areas, storage spaces, offices, rooms allocated for adults.

### Children Sleeping Rooms

- Separate rooms away from the activity rooms shall be dedicated for sleeping infants under 2 years of age, with no more than 6 infants per room and an area not less than 1.5 sq.m per child. The rooms should be fitted with glazed windows to allow for observation of infants from the activity play rooms.

## Children Toilets and Washrooms

- A toilet and washbasin that can be used independently and safely by children over 2 years under staff supervision, should be provided in the immediate vicinity of activity rooms, at the rate of one toilet/washroom per 8 children over 2 years of age.

## Adults Toilets and Washrooms

- Adequate number of toilets and washbasins dedicated to adult's use should be provided in locations away from children toilets and children shall not be permitted to access adult's toilets.

## Children Diapering Station

- Provide a diapering area for infants and toddlers, equipped with a counter with a non-absorbing surface, with a hand wash area and infant wash basin.
- Diapering area should be located away from the food preparation areas.

## Nurse's Room

- Provide a room for the nurse and visiting physician, equipped in accordance with the requirements of the Public Health Department, including first-aid equipment and provisions for the temporary care and isolation of a sick child.

## Food Preparation Area

- Provide and equip a food preparation and storage area in hygienic conditions protected from contamination, taking all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of staff and children.

## Bottle Preparation Area

- Child care settings serving children under 18 months must allocate an area for the preparation of feeding bottles and equip it in a manner that ensures that bottles are prepared in hygienic conditions safeguarded from contamination.
- Bottle preparation areas should be located away from toilets and diapering areas.
- Provide a quiet area for mothers wishing to breast feed their children.

## Administration and Staff Rooms

- One or more rooms should be allocated for administration and staff, in proportion to their number, with sufficient areas for the use of the manager, visitors, staff rest during breaks and record keeping and storage. The administration room should be separated from children areas but close enough for monitoring and supervision.

## ■ 2.4 Outdoor Spaces

### Outdoor Activities and Play Area

- An area outside the child care setting should be allocated for children's activities and play, with a floor area not less than: 2 sq.m. for every child under two years and 4.5 sq.m. for each child above 2 years of age.
- In the case of child care centres in the workplace that do not have adjacent external areas, outdoor activities and play areas of the required size should be provided within a safe walking distance from the centre. Alternatively, an additional indoor space with an equivalent area shall be provided and prepared to accommodate gross motor activities and an indoor garden with natural plants.
- Outdoor areas should be designed to be suitable for the safe use for age appropriate variety of play activities.

### Fences and Gates

- The outdoor activities and play area should be provided with a perimeter fence and a gate that prevents children entry and exit unless accompanied by a supervisor.

### Gardens and Plants

- Provide a garden with natural plants to allow children to experience, interact with and be stimulated by the natural environment.

## ■ 2.5 Furniture

### ■ Child care setting furniture should have the following criteria:

- Child-sized.
- Sufficient quantity.
- Readily accessible.
- Comfortable for children.
- Durable.
- Easily movable.
- Easily cleaned and maintained.
- Natural materials as much as possible.
- Neutral colours as much as possible.

## ■ 2.6 Equipment

- The child care setting should be provided with a broad range of equipment to allow for different types of activities and play.
- All equipment, materials and toys should be age-appropriate, washable, safe and non-toxic.
- The equipment should include didactic materials compatible with the adopted child care programme.

CHILD CARE  
ORGANIZATION

# 3 - CHILD CARE ORGANIZATION

**The environment shall be administered and organized in a manner that ensures the continuous supervision and care of children by an adequate number of qualified carers and assistants, proportional to the number of children as set out by these Standards.**

## ■ 3.1 General Organization

- The manager shall, in addition to her administrative duties, be responsible for the overall supervision of the environment, including the preparation of the work programme and daily timetable, the assignment of duties and supervision of staff and parents relations.
- The manager shall nominate one of the supervisors to act as a supervisor-in-charge to undertake all the duties of the manager in her absence.
- A qualified childcare supervisor shall be responsible for the care and supervision of a specific group of children, assisted by an adequate number of qualified childcare assistants and nurses.

## ■ 3.2 Children Groups

- Children shall be divided into groups in accordance with their age and the number of children in a group shall not exceed:

Birth to 2 years	12 children
2 years-4 years	24 children
- Children over 18 month can be moved to the older group if their development allow them to integrate with older children.

### ■ 3.3 Staff/Child Ratio

- The ratio of the number of staff to the number of children shall not be less than:  
Birth to 2 years            1/4 (1 Staff for each 4 children)  
2 years-4 years            1/8 (1 Staff for each 8 children)
- The staff/child ratio shall be calculated based on the number of staff with qualification to work with children. The ratio shall not consider any administrative, cleaning, security or other non-qualified staff.
- Suitable arrangements should be made to maintain the minimum required ratio during staff absences and leaves.
- The ratio shall be increased by 30% during outings.

### ■ 3.4 Staff Qualifications

- All staff working in child care should have specialized qualifications and practical training that qualifies them to work with pre-school children.
- Qualifications and curriculum vitae of each member of staff wishing to work in early care setting should be submitted with supporting documents, in order to issue the necessary professional licence that permit her to work in this field.
- The licence shall establish, based on the education level and practical experience, the level of responsibility that can be assigned to her in child care settings.
- The Child Care Professional Licence will have 4 levels:  
Level 4            Child Care Manager  
Level 3            Child Care Supervisor  
Level 2            Child Care Assistant Supervisor  
Level 1            Child Care Nurse

- Appendix No. (1) to these Standards outlines the required qualifications and experience required for each level of the Child Care Professional Licence.
- The Licence can be upgraded to the next higher level upon completion of the education and experience requirements.

### ■ 3.5 Training

- Trainees are allowed to practice in child care settings provided that their number shall not exceed 20% of the qualified staff, and that their work with children shall be under the supervision of the manager or a supervisor.
- The child care setting work plan should incorporate an ongoing staff training programme for their staff to improve performance and introduce staff to new developments in child care.

### ■ 3.6 Visitors

- Visit to the child care centre during working hours should be limited to inspectors, parents and prospective parents, and should be arranged in a manner, and during periods, that will cause minimum disturbance to the children.

### ■ 3.7 Mixed Use Child Care

- Child care provisions operating a mixed full-time (nursery) and part-time (club) operations should separate the two activities to minimize disturbance of settled full-time children.

# CARE AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## 4 - CARE AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

**Provide activities that foster children's physical, intellectual, social and emotional capabilities, taking into consideration each child's individual needs and abilities, based on a scientific system of observation and assessment.**

### ■ 4.1 Basic Principles

- Provide a secure environment to facilitate the transition of the child from home to the centre, with the knowledge that the ensuing relation formed between the child and the carer is an important precondition to his feeling of security, which enables the child to interact with the environment and benefit from the development and learning activities.
- Recognize that children's innate potential to discover and learn through interaction with people and exploration of the world around them.
- Recognize that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates according to his potentials and capabilities.
- Set down a clear system of observation and assessment to identify children's potential and their stages of development in the various areas, in order to prepare appropriate activity programmes, and to identify the requirements for improvement.

### ■ 4.2 Child Care Programme (Birth to 2 Years)

- Develop the child's sense of security in the environment.
- Develop the feeling of self-confidence.
- Develop physical abilities in a safe environment.
- Develop the senses and the interaction with the environment.
- Develop the urge for discovery and reasoning.
- Develop the child's ability to express himself and interact with others.

### ■ 4.3 Child Care Programme (2 - 4 Years)

- **The program should be child-centred.**
- **A holistic programme nurturing all developmental areas.**
  - Physical Development – gross and fine motor skills.
  - Personal, social and emotional development.
  - Intellectual, logical and mathematical development.
  - Cultural development and general knowledge.
  - Introduction to Islamic teaching and local values.
  - Linguistic development and communication.
  - Creative development, discovery and learning



SAFETY AND  
SECURITY

# 5- SAFETY AND SECURITY

**Take all necessary measures to ensure that children are safe and protected against risks both inside the nursery or child care centre, or during outings, and that all staff are fully aware of the safety and security requirements and procedures.**

## ■ 5.1 Children Safety

- Children should be supervised at all times.
- Building entrances should be secured in a manner that will not permit unauthorized access nor allow children to leave the premises unless accompanied by their parents or guardians or by a person authorized in writing by them.
- Materials and tools that could harm children, such as cleaning materials, medicines and sharp tools, should be kept out of children's reach.
- Adequate protection should be provided for stairs, climbing ladders and swimming pools accessible by children, including the provision of safety gates and handrails of adequate height on both sides.
- Adequate protection should be provided for all windows and glazed doors.
- All power outlets should be placed out of children's reach and provided with adequate protection.

## ■ 5.2 Fire Protection

- Compliance with all the directives of the General Directorate of Civil Defence, ensuring, in particular, the adequacy and validity of alarm systems, fire extinguishers, electrical systems, stairways, exits and direction signs.
- Establishing clearly defined procedures for emergency evacuation of the building, and periodically carrying out fire drills with the children.

### ■ 5.3 Insurance

- Take and maintain insurance against all risks (flood, fire and theft), and accident insurance covering children and staff, and third party liability.

### ■ 5.4 Transport and Outings

- Take all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of children during outings, including the utilization of approved carriers, and increasing the number of workers and supervisors accompanying the children.

HEALTH CARE

# 6- HEALTH CARE

**Promote the good health of children and take all necessary precautions to prevent contamination and the spread of diseases, with appropriate measures for dealing with injuries and sick children.**

## ■ 6.1 General Hygiene

- Implement a comprehensive procedure for cleaning, disinfecting and sterilization of the place, equipment and furniture as necessary, and after each use, to ensure the protection of children at all times.
- The setting shall be periodically treated and sprayed by a pest-control specialist.

## ■ 6.2 First-Aid

- Provide and maintain in efficient order a fully equipped first-aid kit, and place it in location known to all staff away from the reach of children.

## ■ 6.3 Visiting Doctor

- The child care provider shall have a contract with a practicing pediatrician registered in the same city to make periodic visits, whose timing shall be set to allow each child to be checked at least once in each month.

## ■ 6.4 Sickness and Medications

- Sick children should not be brought to the child care setting until recovered.
- In the event that symptoms of illness are noticed on a child, his parents should be notified to arrange necessary treatment. Until their arrival, the child should be kept under constant observation.
- The child care provider shall not administer any medication to the children except in the case of chronic illnesses that require long term treatments, such as diabetes or asthma, where medication shall be administered in accordance with written instructions from the parent, accompanied by a medical prescription specifying the medication, dosage and method of administration.

## ■ 6.5 Accidents and Emergencies

- In the event of a serious illness or injury to a child, the staff shall immediately apply first-aid treatment if applicable, and, based on the severity of the case, call the emergency services or accompany the child to the nearest hospital and notify the parent.
- Maintain a register of all accidents detailing the time, circumstances and actions taken by staff in attendance, and provide the parents with a copy of the report.

## ■ 6.6 Children with Special Needs

- The child care provider should adopt a policy for the inclusion of children with special need. The policy should be progressively applied based on the capabilities of the centre as far as the available equipments and the number and specializations of its supervisors, and the type of special needs children who can be included with the centre's children.
- The number of admitted children with special needs should not exceed 10% of the total number of children.
- Special arrangements and condition of admission should be agreed with the parents of children with special needs, regarding the number of hours in attendance and the need to allocate a dedicated supervisor or assistance to supervise the child, and the ensuing additional costs.
- The Child Care staff should cooperate fully with the parents and other specialists overseeing the child to follow up his progress and exchange information about the optimal course of action to achieve the best possible results.

NUTRITION

# 7- NUTRITION

**Provide children with meals and drinks in adequate quantities, variations and at set times, to meet children’s nutritional needs, in compliance with their individual dietary requirements.**

## ■ 7.1 Meals Preparation

- The child care provider shall make adequate preparations to provide meals and drinks for the children, either prepared at the centre or provided by a specialist catering provider. In all cases, ensure that all meals are healthy, prepared in hygienic conditions in compliance with the guidelines of the Public Health Departments and that it contains fresh ingredients .
- The child’s file should indicate any special dietary requirement, cultural, religious or health related, that should be made available to the staff and adhered to in preparing the child’s meal.

## ■ 7.2 Infant’s Meals

- Meals for infants below the age of 18 months should be provided by parents with clear written instructions regarding type, quantity and feeding intervals.

# PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

# 8 - PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

**A close cooperation should be developed between child care staff and children's parents and guardians in the best interest of the child, through exchange of information, periodical reports and continuous enhancement of their knowledge about the educational aims and objectives.**

## ■ 8.1 Dissemination of Information

- Parents should be offered information about the strategies and philosophy of the child care setting.
- Provide parents with periodical reports about their children's progress and settlement in the child care setting.

## ■ 8.2 Cooperation and Awareness

- Develop positive relationships with parents that are based on mutual trust and open communication.
- Encourage parents to participate and volunteer in their children's activities like outings and sports events.



# Appendix 1

## PROFESSIONAL CHILD CARE LICENCE

Level	4	3	2	1
Title	Manager	Child Care Supervisor	Child Care Assistant	Child Care Nurse
Educational Level	College	High School	Intermediate	Qualified Nurse
Previous Experience (Years)	1	2	0	1
Child Development Theory				
Physical	•	•	•	•
Communication & Language	•	•		
Intellectual	•	•		
Social & Emotional	•	•		
Cultural	•	•		
Creative	•	•		
Practical Applications				
Indoor & outdoor activities		•	•	
Learning through play		•	•	
Communication skills		•	•	•
Educating the senses		•	•	
Reasoning		•	•	
Life skills		•	•	•
Local customs		•	•	
Knowledge of the world		•	•	
Arts, music and drama		•	•	
Educational methods	•	•		
Observation and Assessment	•	•	•	•
Child Nutrition	•	•		•
Child Health & Care	•	•		•
First-Aid	•	•	•	•
Classroom Management	•	•		
School Management	•			



