

Citywide Childcare Inventory and Preliminary Study

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

September 15, 2016

Purpose

Conduct an overview of existing child care facilities in the City of Alexandria, Virginia to determine:

- Regulatory requirements for child day care outdoor play area
- Number of existing licensed facilities
- Park areas within the vicinity of child care facilities
- High use areas and enrollment figures



Regulatory Authorities

- Childcare programs including Child Day Centers, Certified Preschools, Family Day Homes, and Religiously Exempt Child Day Centers are licensed and regulated by the **Virginia Department of Social Services**:
<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/about/licensing.html>
- Family Child Care Homes for up to five children are licensed and regulated by the **City of Alexandria Department Community and Human Services (DCHS)**. DCHS regulates and enforces State standards for these child care homes.
- **The City of Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning** regulates land use through the Special Use Permit (SUP) process. If child care use is not by-right, an SUP is required. The Department also reviews drop off and pickup for day care operations.
- Administrative SUPs are required for child care homes with six to nine children, and for daycare operations in churches and schools.

For the purposes of this study, family day homes of one to five children were not inventoried.



Spatial Standards: Outdoor Play Areas

Virginia State Code--- Licensed Child Day Centers

- 22VAC 40-185-E

When children are in an outdoor play area, at least 75 square feet of space per child shall be provided at any one time.

City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance

- Section 7-500(B)(2)(3)-**Child Care Homes**

Unless exempted by section 7-500(B)(3) below, a minimum of 75 square feet of outdoor play area shall be provided for each child above the age of two and shall be shown on the recorded plat of the lot in question. Such play area shall be fenced unless the applicant can show that the play area provides proper protection from traffic and other hazards and to neighboring yards.

No play area shall be required when the child care home is located within 500 feet of a park or playground that has sufficient capacity to accommodate the children and for which the park owner's permission has been obtained.



State Requirements

Outdoor Play Areas

- VAC 40-185-330
- Playgrounds shall be located and designed to protect children from hazards and age appropriate.
- Where play equipment is provided, resilient surfacing shall comply with minimum ASTM standards F1299-00.
- Ground supports shall be covered with materials that protect children from injury.
- Swing seat shall be constructed with flexible materials, unless in a separate infant or toddler play area.
- A shaded area shall be provided on playgrounds during the months of June, July, and August.
- Sandboxes with bottoms which prevent drainage shall be covered when not in use.



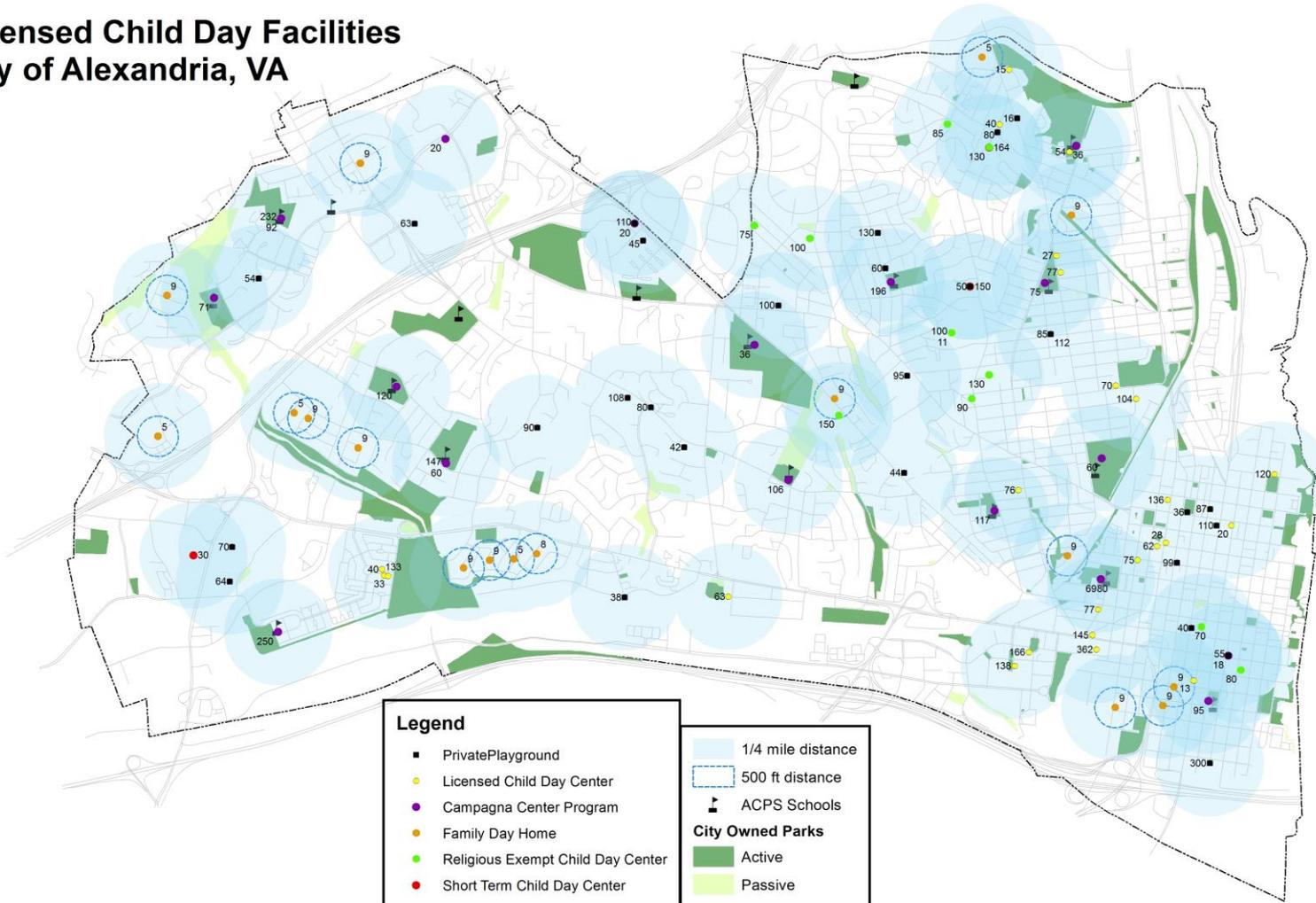
State Requirements Outdoor Activities

- *Toddlers (Age 16 months up to two years)*
- *Pre-Schoolers (From age two years up to eligibility to attend public school five years)*
- *School Age children (age five-thirteen) non-school activities*

| Facility Type | Duration |
|---|-------------------------|
| Center operates more than three hours per day or session | Fifteen Minutes per day |
| Center operates between three and five hours per day or session | Thirty Minutes per day |
| Center operates more than five hours per day or session | One Hour per day |

Existing Licensed Child Day Facilities

Licensed Child Day Facilities City of Alexandria, VA



N

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Note: Numbers represent number of children enrolled based on the most recent state inspection.



Existing Child Day Facilities

| Facility Type | Total Number of Licensed Providers | **Total Approx. Provider Enrollment | **Min. Provider Enrollment | **Max. Provider Enrollment |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Licensed Child Day Center | 52 | 4,337 | 13 | 362 |
| State Licensed Family Day Home | 17 | 136 | 5 | 9 |
| Religious Exempt Child Day Center | 11 | 1,021 | 11 | 150 |
| Short Term Child Day Center | 3 | 344 | 30 | 164 |
| Campagna Center Program* | 20 | 1,900 | 18 | 250 |

*Campagna Center was identified because of the number of programs they operate on school properties through City partnerships

** Enrollment figures were derived from the state website based on most recent state inspection

Key Findings

- Over 55% of providers have an on-site outdoor play area.
- Campagna Center operates at many ACPS School sites, that are used for Head Start and after-school programs. Many ACPS sites are shared use and maintained by RPCA.
- Areas north, east, and south of Old Town have limited outdoor play opportunities.
- Certain areas in Old Town and Parker Gray have denser concentrations of private providers, and smaller park sites.

Next Steps

- To the extent possible identify providers using City parks through the State and SUP process.
- Consider developing a process for providers that want to regularly use City parks, either through a PARKnership agreement or other type of shared use agreement, based on provider enrollment figures.
- Engage key stakeholders including private providers, non-profits, Campagna Center and the Playspace Technical Advisory Group.