



Town of Knightdale

Staff Report

Title: ZTA-1-25: Quarterly Updates

Staff: Donna Goodman, ADSD

Date: June 9, 2025

Director Signature: JB

Asst. Town Manager Signature:

Town Manager Signature:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Town regularly updates the Unified Development Ordinance to remain current with standards and best practices. Included in this text amendment are an increase to the number of children permitted in a home-based day care and revisions to the street cross-sections language to make it consistent with the CTP and Standard Specifications & Details Manual.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

1. Ch. 3: Base District Specific Standards
 - a. Section 3.1.C.3.f: “Child/Adult Day Care Home”
2. Ch. 5: Use Specific Standards
 - a. Section 5.4.E: “Child/Adult Day Care Home”
3. Ch. 10: Infrastructure Improvement Standards
 - a. Section 10.4: General Infrastructure Design Guidelines
4. Ch. 15: Definitions

STAFF ANALYSIS:

ZTA-1-25 includes various amendments to several chapters. The major changes are summarized below:

Child/Adult Day Care Home

This use is currently permitted by-right in all residential zoning districts as an accessory use within an existing residence. Presently, the UDO allows for the care of a maximum of five children/adults in a day care home. Below are the UDO’s current definition and additional standards for the use.

- **Child/Adult Day Care Home Definition (Ch. 15):** Supervision or care provided on a regular basis as an accessory use within a principal residential dwelling unit, by a resident of the dwelling, for five (5) or fewer children/adults who are not related by blood or marriage to, and who are not the legal wards or foster children of, the supervising adult.
- **Use Specific Standards for Child/Adult Day Care Homes (Ch. 5):**
 1. Rear yards shall be fenced or walled. In addition to meeting the requirements of Section 7.6, the minimum height for such walls or fences shall be six (6) feet
 2. All equipment shall be stored in the rear yard. Front yards shall not be used as playground areas
 3. Hours of operation shall be permitted only from 6:00 am until 9:00 pm.



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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) is the agency tasked with ensuring the health and safety of children in childcare programs across North Carolina and issuing operational permits for childcare facilities, including Family Child Care Homes (FCCH).

In accordance with NCGS § 110-86, a FCCH is generally defined as “...an arrangement located in a residence where, at any one time, more than two children, but less than 11 children, receive child care...” While ten is the overall maximum amount permitted by DCDEE, the maximum can be less depending on the age of the children, as shown below and defined in NCGS § 110-91(7)b.

1. A maximum of **eight** children, with no more than five children who are from birth to 5 years of age, plus three school-age children.
2. A maximum of three children from birth to 24 months of age, plus three children from 2 to 5 years of age and three school-age children up to 13 years of age, for a total of **nine** children.
3. A maximum of **10** children if all children are older than 24 months of age.

The DCDEE recognizes that local zoning ordinances may limit the number of children a FCCH operator may enroll and therefore follows the local zoning ordinance when determining a FCCH’s licensed capacity. The following scenario is presented using the current UDO standards that set a maximum of five children, regardless of age:

A child care provider wishes to establish an in-home day care where they will only care for children older than 24 months. The State’s regulations would allow the operator to care for 10 children. However, the Town would only allow for the care of five children. Therefore, since local zoning approval is required for licensure, the State would only issue a license for the care of five children. This deficit not only impacts the operator’s business but also impacts the wider community by limiting childcare options.

Across the state, there is a substantial deficit of childcare providers. Facilities are in high demand with long waitlists. Increasing the number of children permitted in a home-based program will help expand and increase access to additional childcare options.

General Infrastructure Design Guidelines

In the last couple of years, there have been several transportation related changes to Knightdale plans and policies. The Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), adopted in November 2022, included new street cross section designs. After discovering a discrepancy in the curb and gutter dimensions in the CTP and UDO, staff pursued a text amendment in March 2024 (ZTA-1-24) to correct the dimensions, making the cross sections consistent with the Town’s past and current standards. In November 2024, a revised and updated Standard Specifications & Details Manual was adopted. The primary goal of the update was to incorporate the street sections from the CTP and two new cross sections were also introduced – a public utility alley and local street with on-street parking.



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This proposed text amendment is meant to update the UDO descriptions to match the adopted cross section standard details and incorporate the two new cross sections. No changes are proposed to cross section design elements, including but not limited to right-of-way width and other dimensions, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, parking, or street trees.

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY:

A joint public hearing with the Town Council and Land Use Review Board was held on May 15, 2025. Two members of the public, both operators of child care homes in Knightdale, spoke in favor of the text amendment. They shared personal experiences with running an in-home child care facility, spoke to the number of families on their waitlists, and reiterated the importance of raising the allowance to meet the needs of the community.

The Council and LURB asked several questions related to state-regulated aspects of child care homes (square footage to child ratio, teacher/adult to child ratio). Additional information was requested regarding standards in other municipalities. The amendment was referred to the Land Use Review Board for review, recommendation, and advisory statement.

Town staff has been in contact with a Lead Child Care Consultant with the Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC Department of Health and Human Services. Additional information and clarification is provided below.

Neighboring Municipalities:

The following reflects updated information for other municipalities from what was previously presented. Six municipalities (Garner, Morrisville, Raleigh, Zebulon, Rolesville, and Fuquay Varina) follow the state's current option for up to 10 children (depending on age). Holly Springs, Apex, Wendell, and Wake Forest allow up to eight children. Cary caps the maximum at 6, the next lowest after Knightdale.

Other State Regulations:

The Lead Child Care Consultant shared that there is not a square footage requirement or ratio per child for in-home facilities; nor is there a required teacher-to-child ratio. Alternatively, day care centers (commercial operations) do have square footage and teacher ratio requirements.

Town vs. State:

The elements of in-home day cares that the current UDO regulates are specifically related to zoning and compatible uses, such as hours of operation, outdoor play areas, and overall maximum capacity. All other elements, such as licensing, inspection, and number of children allowed per age range, fall under the State's regulations.

Examples of FCCH elements regulated by the State (not exclusive):

- Hours of care provided each day
- Age range and number of children
- Care giver qualifications (age, education, health, criminal history, etc.)
- Medical training & certification (i.e. First aid, CPR, ITS-SIDS)
- Snacks, meals, and nutritional standards
- Inspections (announced & unannounced)



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- Building requirements (ground level location, fire extinguishers, air temperature, etc.)
- Emergency preparedness & response
- Screen time limits
- Discipline practices
- Play and exercise areas
- Local municipal zoning & HOA approvals

Additional resources on NC DHHS requirements:

- [Family Child Care Home Licensure – At a Glance](#)
- [NC Administrative Code Chapter 9](#) – Family Child Care Home starts at Section .1702 (pg. 47)

Based on the discussion and feedback at the joint public hearing and conversations with NC DHHS, staff recommends revising the UDO language to require that day care homes “comply with all applicable State of North Carolina regulations, including maximum capacity restrictions” rather than setting a specific maximum number. This will allow the number to fluctuate depending on State regulations and will not require additional text amendments to increase numbers in the future.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CONSISTENCY:

North Carolina General Statute §160D requires that the planning board advise and provide a written recommendation on whether the proposed action is consistent with the comprehensive or land-use plan.

It is staff’s opinion that the proposed text amendment is consistent with the KnightdaleNext V.2 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDED WRITTEN ADVISORY STATEMENT:

“The proposed zoning text amendment is consistent with the KnightdaleNext v.2 2035 Comprehensive Plan, which serves as the foundation for determining effective public policy that provides an ongoing framework for informed and directed public investment and private development. Further, it is reasonable and in the public interest as it aligns the Town’s Unified Development Ordinance with North Carolina state regulations and clarifies community design standards, resulting in a more inclusive, safe, and livable town.”

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Recommend approval of ZTA-1-25 and forward the recommended advisory statement of plan consistency to the Town Council.