



Opening a Child Care Center

BUSINESS GUIDE



A collage of colorful toys including rings, blocks, and a hand playing with a red toy. The background is a mix of bright colors like red, yellow, green, and blue. In the foreground, a hand is seen interacting with a red toy that has a spherical top. Other toys include a yellow ring, a green ring, a red ring, a yellow block with the number '0', and a blue block.

Introduction

There are many things to consider when starting a new child care business. This guide will help you think through the steps you need to take to open a child care center.

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ARE YOU READY TO START A CHILD CARE CENTER?

Before you begin the process of opening a child care center, it is important to understand what a child care center is and which local resources can support you through the start-up process.

Child Care Centers

Child care center programs have a dedicated director and numerous staff. Child care centers are generally operated out of non-residential, commercial buildings, and children are often grouped by age. Some child care centers may operate as a non-profit. They may be owned by an individual, faith-based organization, public school or government agency. Other child care centers may operate for profit and may be owned by an individual or a corporate chain.



Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Most areas of the United States are served by one or more Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, or CCR&Rs. One of the functions of a CCR&R is to help families find child care that meets their needs by providing referrals to regulated child care programs. However, many CCR&Rs also work with child care programs to provide support and resources. They may have many tools for your business and professional development needs. Your local CCR&R will be an important partner for you and your center before, during and after the licensing process.

Take a moment to find your local CCR&R agency [here](#). Record the contact information below so that you can return to it if you need assistance or have questions.

Name of Child Care Resource and Referral Agency

Contact Person

Phone Number

Email

Child Care Licensing Office

A second key resource for the start-up process is your state or local child care licensing office, especially if your area is not served by a local CCR&R. You can reach out to your child care licensing office with many of your start-up questions. Find your licensing office contact information [here](#). Choose your state, then click the Child Care tab to find the licensing resource. Record the contact information below for future use.

Child Care Licensing Contact

Licensing Office Phone Number

Licensing Website

Becoming familiar with the aspects of a child care center and your local supports is helpful as you prepare to get started. However, the following resource will be important to help you evaluate why you want to start a child care business.

RESOURCE 1: Are You Ready to Start a Child Care Center?

This resource is meant to help you think about the reasons why you want to open a child care center and if it is the right choice for you. There are both personal and professional considerations for you to think about as you start your journey.

Personal Considerations

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you have a passion for helping children and their parents?			
Do you enjoy being with young children and have the patience to care for them for many hours each day?			
Are you able to manage conflict successfully if it arises with staff and/or families?			
Are you able to get along with multiple types of families and children, even if their parenting style or culture are different than yours?			
Do you have the physical and emotional strength to run a child care business?			
If you have children or other people in your life who need you during child care hours of operation, have you identified someone to care for them if they become sick or need something?			
Do you have a positive attitude, even when challenges arise?			
Does your family support your decision?			



Professional Considerations

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Are you a self-starter?			
Do you have the required education needed in your state or local area to operate a child care center?			
Do you have the knowledge and previous experience to run a child care center?			
Do you know where to go to for training or help in running your child care center?			
Are you comfortable working with licensing requirements and government regulations?			
Do you have the time to learn the necessary skills or are you willing to hire staff with different skill sets that you need to have a successful child care center?			
Are you able to plan and organize well? Think about managing staff, planning for children and ensuring families receive timely communication from you.			
Do you have experience in hiring, training and supervising employees?			
Are you comfortable with the potential legal, professional and personal risks associated with starting a new business?			
Have you undertaken similar responsibilities that have demonstrated you have the motivation and determination needed to make your business successful?			
Do you have access to funds you may need to start your business?			
Are you aware of the required amount of business and professional liability insurance you need for your child care program?			



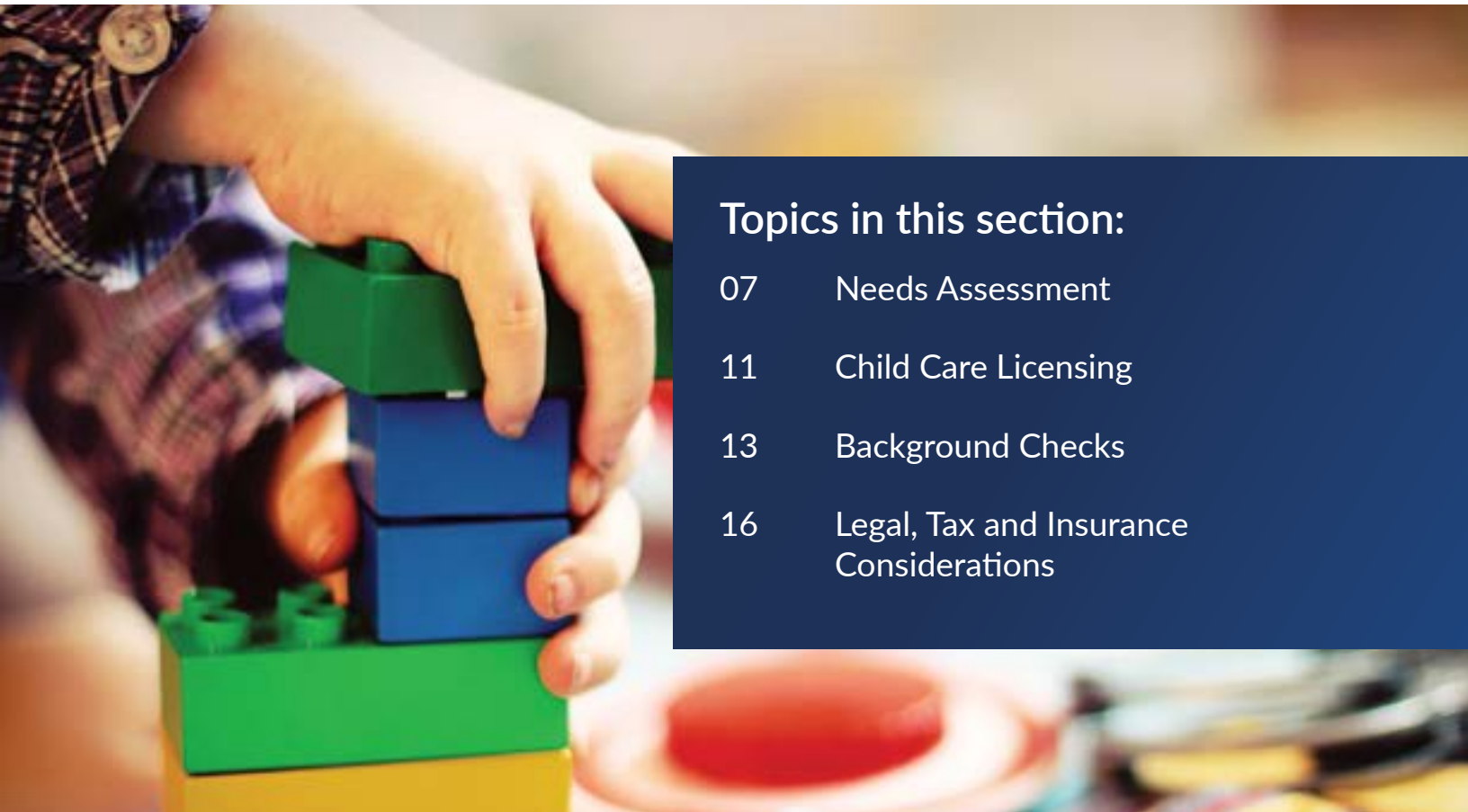
If you checked “Yes” to all of these items, you are ready to continue exploring the next steps in starting your child care business!



If you checked “No” or “Not Sure” to some of the items, reach out to your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency for help.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Begin by learning some of the basic information about child care and opening a child care center in your area. The following sections will guide you through topics you should learn about before taking steps to open a child care business.



Topics in this section:

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Needs Assessment

Understanding the community need for child care is critical for your business to be successful. As you think about opening a child care center, take the time to do a complete and thorough needs assessment. This is an important first step toward building your business plan, and it is critical for determining whether your community needs your services. Business owners of all types are more likely to succeed when they continually consider the needs of their consumers.

RESOURCE 2: Child Care Center Needs Assessment

There are three parts to the needs assessment. First, you need to have data on what type of child care is being offered in your community. Second, you will want to understand more about the families that you might serve through your child care business. Finally, you will want to know what other child care centers in your area charge for child care. This will help you build your budget.

Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) for help completing the needs assessment.

Part 1: Current Child Care Landscape

Question	Answer/Comment
<p>Who else is providing child care in your area?</p> <p><i>Ask your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) about the number of center-based and in-home child care providers in your area.</i></p>	<p># of licensed centers:</p> <p># of family child care homes:</p> <p># of school-based providers:</p> <p>Other:</p>
<p>Where are the other child care programs located?</p> <p><i>In the geographic area where you want to open your business, who provides child care services and where are they located? Think about churches, local community centers and schools as well as traditional child care providers.</i></p>	
<p>Is there a need for child care for a specific age group?</p> <p><i>Think about the current providers in the area and what age groups they are serving. Ask your local CCR&R if there is a need for infant/toddler care or care for other age groups.</i></p>	<p>Infants (birth-12 months):</p> <p>Toddlers (1-2 years):</p> <p>Preschool (3-4 years):</p> <p>Pre-K (4-5 years):</p> <p>Before/after care for school-age children (5+ years):</p>
<p>Is there a need for child care during a specific time of the day?</p> <p><i>Think about whether you might provide before or after-school care to school-age children or children in part-time pre-k programs. Ask if there is a need for evening, weekend, 24-hour or overnight child care options.</i></p>	
<p>Will the need for child care change in the next 2-5 years? Why?</p> <p><i>Think about whether companies are growing or closing, whether schools are providing child care or other factors that could influence need.</i></p>	

Part 2: Family Demographics

Question	Answer/Comment
<p>How many families with young children live in your area? How many families have school-age children?</p> <p><i>Consider families with children birth-5 years, as well as families with school-age children.</i></p>	
<p>How many of the families with young children in your area might need child care? How many families with school-age children may need care before or after school and during the summer?</p> <p><i>Ask your CCR&R for current statistics on the number of families that may need care.</i></p>	
<p>Where do local parents work? What are typical working hours?</p> <p><i>Think about the families who might use your program. Some businesses, such as hospitals, factories, emergency services, etc. are open during non-traditional hours. Some families may work for organizations that have more typical work hours. You will want to think about family needs in designing your program.</i></p>	
<p>How long is the typical commute?</p> <p><i>Do families live in suburban areas and commute to a more urban area for work? Are you in a rural area where commute times may be shorter or longer, depending on where parents work? You will need to consider these things as you think about your hours of operation.</i></p>	

Part 3: Determine Costs

Question	Answer/Comment
<p>What are the typical fees (the market rate) for child care in your area?</p> <p><i>Check with your CCR&R for this information.</i></p>	<p>Child care center average rate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants: \$ _____/week • Toddlers: \$ _____/week • Preschool: \$ _____/week • Pre-K: \$ _____/week • School-Age: \$ _____/week <p>Family child care average rate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants: \$ _____/week • Toddlers: \$ _____/week • Preschool: \$ _____/week • Pre-K: \$ _____/week • School-Age: \$ _____/week
<p>Do parents in your area typically get help to pay for child care, such as through the state child care subsidy program?</p>	<p>Yes No</p>
<p>Will your program be eligible to accept subsidies?</p>	<p>Yes No</p>
<p>What would your program need to do to be eligible to accept subsidies?</p>	
<p>Based on the number of children you plan to enroll, what is your expected cost per child?</p> <p><i>Contact your local CCR&R for help in calculating this information.</i></p>	<p>Infants: \$ _____/week Toddlers: \$ _____/week Preschool: \$ _____/week Pre-K: \$ _____/week School-Age: \$ _____/week</p>
<p>What fees do you need to charge parents to have a profitable program? Can parents in your area afford the fees?</p> <p><i>Contact your local CCR&R for help in calculating this information.</i></p>	<p>Infants: \$ _____/week Toddlers: \$ _____/week Preschool: \$ _____/week Pre-K: \$ _____/week School-Age: \$ _____/week</p>
<p>How much will it cost you to start a new child care business? How much will it cost you to operate your child care business on an ongoing basis?</p> <p><i>Contact your local CCR&R for help in calculating this information or use the Provider Cost of Quality Calculator.</i></p> <p>https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/pcqc</p>	
<p>How many staff do you need to hire? What will you pay the staff? Will you be able to offer any benefits?</p>	

Child Care Licensing

A child care license addresses the minimum acceptable health, safety and program standards for the legal operation of child care programs. Child care regulations vary by state. In some areas, local city and county governments may also create and enforce their own licensing requirements. Some programs may be exempt from licensing, depending on the type of program, where and when it operates, and the number of children in care.

Topics Covered by Licensing

There are a variety of topics covered by a child care license. Although states will vary, most will cover the following areas:

- The maximum number of children allowed in each room or class (group size) and the minimum number of adults required for a specific number of children (adult-child ratio), based on the ages of the children
- Nutrition and food preparation
- Fire and safety drills
- Record keeping
- Health and safety standards, such as immunizations, handwashing, diapering, medications, reporting of accidents and illnesses, safe sleep procedures, playground safety, and emergency preparedness plans
- Minimum education requirements and ongoing training for providers
- Family involvement





Licensing Cost

There are several fees you may need to pay during the licensing process. These can include an application fee, background check fee, fees for required inspections or others. Fees will vary depending on your location and, in some cases, the size of your child care center.

Licensing Process

Each state has a different process for becoming licensed. Most states will require an application, background checks, licensing and fire inspections, and certain training hours to be completed before a license is issued. Your state or local area may require you to submit proof of certain insurance coverage before you can receive a child care license. You will need to have an understanding of the licensing requirements that you must meet in order to open and

operate your business. You will also need to have your location selected, as it must be approved as a safe and appropriate space for child care.

Additional Licenses and Permits

Your local area may require you to have additional licenses or permits in addition to your child care license. This may include a general business license, a food service permit or a certification to administer medications.

Contact your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R) or your child care licensing office to learn more about the requirements, processes and fees associated with child care licensing in your area. Use the resource on [page 14](#) as a guide when you speak to a CCR&R representative.

Background Checks

Required Checks

Child care licensing regulations require that child care center owners, directors and staff complete comprehensive background checks. This will include not only the caregivers and teachers but also staff that work in the building such as a cook, janitor, bus driver or any other individual that you employ. Comprehensive background checks include federal, in-state and out-of-state checks for any state where the individual has lived in the past five years. The following checks are conducted:

- National FBI criminal history check (with fingerprints)
- National sex offender registry check
- In-state criminal history check (with fingerprints)
- In-state sex offender registry check
- In-state child abuse and neglect registry check
- Out-of-state criminal history, sex offender and child abuse and neglect registry checks for every state where the individual has lived in the past five years

Disqualifying Crimes

There are a number of disqualifying crimes that would prohibit an individual from opening or working in a child care center. Your CCR&R agency or child care licensing office can help you learn what offenses may keep someone from being able to work in child care.

Request a Background Check

The process to request a background check varies depending on your state or local area. You may be able to choose between mail-in and online processes, and there may be a fee for part or all of the process. Use the following resource as you talk with your local CCR&R agency to learn the steps you will need to take to complete the background check process.



RESOURCE 3: Licensing and Background Checks

Use this checklist to ask questions of your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) or your state licensing consultant to help you think through the steps you need to take to become a licensed child care business and to obtain a background check.

Question	Response	Comment
Do I need a license to open a child care center?	Yes No	
If yes, what kind of license(s) will I need?	State child care license County or city child care license Business license Food service permit Other_____	
Do I need a degree or certification to operate a child care center in my state?	Yes No	
Is there a fee to get licensed, and if so, how much?	Yes No If yes: \$_____	
How many children can my program care for at one time?	Infants: _____ Toddlers: _____ Preschool: _____ Pre-K: _____ School-age: _____	
Does my program have to be inspected before we can receive a license?	Yes No	
Who conducts the initial inspection(s)?		
How frequently do inspections occur after we become licensed?	Frequency: _____	
Do I need to get a background check?	Yes No	
How much does it cost?	Cost: \$ _____	
How often will I need to do a background check?	Frequency: _____	
Will my staff need a background check?	Yes No	
Will volunteers need a background check?	Yes No	
How often will staff and volunteers need a background check?	Frequency: _____	

RESOURCE 3: Licensing and Background Checks

Question	Response	Comment
<p>What is the process to request a background check for myself or my staff/volunteers?</p>	<p>Steps to obtain background checks:</p>	
<p>What type of training do I need to open a child care center? What costs are associated with the trainings? Who offers the trainings?</p>	<p>Infant-Child CPR Cost:\$ _____ Contact: _____ First Aid Treatment Cost:\$ _____ Contact: _____ Health and Safety Cost:\$ _____ Contact: _____ Food and Nutrition Cost:\$ _____ Contact: _____ Other: _____ Cost:\$ _____ Contact: _____</p>	
<p>Is there an annual requirement for training hours that I will need to meet? What topics or trainings must be covered?</p> <p>What ongoing training requirements will my staff need to meet?</p>	<p>Training hours required annually for staff: _____ Topics: _____</p> <p>Training hours required annually for owner: _____ Topics: _____</p>	
<p>What proof of insurance do I need to submit during the licensing process?</p>	<p>Fire insurance Liability insurance Other: _____</p>	
<p>What type of equipment and supplies do I need?</p>	<p>Equipment:</p> <p>Supplies:</p>	

Legal, Tax and Insurance Considerations

Choose a Legal Structure

Here are some ways in which you can structure your child care business:

- **Sole proprietorship:** You own an unincorporated business by yourself.
- **Partnership:** Two or more persons or companies join to own a child care business. You divide your profits and losses among partners.
- **Limited Liability Company (LLC):** This is a business structure that combines features of both a corporation and a partnership or sole proprietorship model. It protects your personal assets so that you are not personally liable for the company's debts or liabilities.
- **Tax-exempt organization:** As a tax-exempt organization, any money after expenses is returned to the operation of the program. To claim this status, you must meet Internal Revenue Service (IRS) eligibility requirements.
- **Incorporation:** Your business is set up so shareholders exchange money, property or both for the corporation's capital stock. This structure protects your personal assets.

Your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) may have trainings or information to help you with these business decisions, or you may need to consult legal advice to decide how to set up your business.

Register Your Business

Depending on your location and how your business is structured, you may need to register it with the proper local or state authorities. Once you have selected a business name, learn more about how and where to register your business here: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/register-your-business>

Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN)

After you have registered your business, you may apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN). An EIN may also be called a Federal Tax Identification Number. An EIN is used to identify a business entity, and most businesses will need one. You may apply for your EIN online for free through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website, and after you apply you may receive your number immediately. Find information about which businesses need an EIN and how to apply online at <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers>.

It is possible that you will also need a state EIN. Check with your state's Department of Revenue or Tax Services to learn whether that will be necessary and how to apply.

Business Taxes

As a small business, you will need to file business income tax information with local, state and federal agencies unless your business is tax-exempt. Taxes should be a part of any budget for a child care business. The main types of federal business taxes that you may need to pay include income, estimated, self-employment, employment and excise taxes. For state taxes, the two main types of taxes to plan for are income tax and employment tax. Learn more about different types of business taxes at the federal and state levels here: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/manage-your-business/pay-taxes>

You may want to consult with a tax professional, such as an accountant or a lawyer that specializes in business practices, to help you determine your tax obligations and how to factor taxes into your budget.

Insurance Considerations

Insurance protects you when emergencies or disasters occur. Your state may require that licensed child care centers meet certain requirements for insurance, such as fire and liability insurance coverage. There are a variety of insurance types that you will want to investigate, even if it is not required for your child care license.

Business owner's insurance generally is a combination of liability and property insurance. Buying the package is usually less expensive than buying separate policies.

- General liability insurance covers bodily injury or property damage that occurs during the course or because of your business. It is important to verify that it covers medical expenses for children injured in your care and coverage of lawsuit expenses.
- Property insurance covers all of your business equipment inside and outside of your program.
 - Business income and extra expense coverage is something you may want to consider adding. It covers loss of income (employee payroll) and expenses if you must temporarily close due to an emergency.
 - Fire insurance is a form of property insurance that covers damage and loss





Professional liability insurance insures you and your staff for losses due to your negligence while operating your business. If your professional liability insurance does not include coverage for abuse and molestation, talk to your insurance agent about adding this coverage. Sexual or physical abuse coverage is important for businesses that work with children, and it insures you for loss if one of your employees or others with access to children in your program abuses a child in your care.

You may be required to have worker's compensation insurance in place the day your first employee is hired. This insurance pays benefits when an employee is injured while working.

An insurance agent can discuss these options with you in greater detail.

Risk Management

Opening a child care business comes with risk. It is impossible to eliminate all risk, but you can take steps to manage and reduce it as much as possible. Limiting risk begins with ensuring that you are following all state and local licensing requirements, developing staff and family handbooks that clearly communicate policies and expectations, and obtaining the proper insurance coverage.

Risk management also means thinking about situations within your business that could lead to injury, suffering or major expenses and then putting practices in place that will minimize the chances that those situations will occur. This is an ongoing process; you will need to go through an assessment and planning process, and you will need to continue to evaluate your risks and risk management practices over time.

Some areas of risk to consider include:

- **Physical injury:**

- Areas where staff, children, or families could slip, trip or fall
- Objects that could cause injury when lifting, bending or squatting
- Equipment that could cause injury if combustion or malfunction occurs
- Chemicals or hazardous substances that pose a risk of poisoning or fire
- Animals or insects that could injure or cause an allergic reaction
- Child abuse
- Vehicle accidents, if your center offers transportation
- Other areas where physical harm could occur

- **Illness:**

- Transmission of viruses and bacteria
- Food-borne illness
- Presence of mold or mildew

- **Mental health:**

- Bullying, harassment or discrimination
- Workplace stress for self or employees

- **Disasters and emergencies:**

- Natural disasters
- Fires
- Active shooter situations
- Lost child
- Pandemics
- Other disasters or emergencies that could occur in your area

Create a list of any potential hazards. You can find information on evaluating risk in your physical space in the *Finding a Location* section. However, be sure that your list covers potential risks from all of the categories listed above. Your list of potential risks will inform your risk management plan.

A risk management plan should include steps that will be taken on a daily basis to evaluate and minimize risks. Specify who will be responsible for each step and how you will ensure the plan is being followed. Your plan can include procedures to address potential risks for staff and families. Additionally, some

of the steps you will need to take will already be covered by licensing requirements, such as proper background screening of staff, staff training in certain health and safety topics and creating an emergency preparedness plan.

In addition to securing the proper insurance and implementing a risk management plan, you should think about how you will access legal aid if you need it. When you purchase business liability insurance for your center, find out if your policy can hire a lawyer for you at no cost to defend your business in an injury claim, licensing action or other

lawsuit. Low-income Americans may be eligible for free legal aid through the Legal Services Corporation (<https://www.lsc.gov/what-legal-aid/find-legal-aid>), or you can research legal services in your area to find a lawyer who you can call if legal issues arise.

Federal and State Employment Laws

Any child care business that has hired staff must follow federal, state and local employment laws. Some of the areas covered by employment laws are listed below.

- **Discrimination:** It is illegal to treat an employee, child, or family differently or unfairly due to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.
- **Minimum wage:** This is the minimum amount you can legally pay an employee per hour. There is a federal minimum wage (\$7.25 an hour, as of Spring 2021), but it may be higher in some states, cities or counties.
- **Overtime compensation:** The federal Fair Labor Standards Act requires all non-exempt employees to be paid one and a half times their normal hourly rate for any time worked over 40 hours in a work week. For more information visit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa>.
- **Training:** In most situations it is required to pay employees for training hours. If you have questions about this, contact your state's Department of Labor for additional information.
- **Breaks:** Your state's employment law may or may not require paid breaks. However, the federal Fair Labor Standards Act states that if any work is expected of an employee during their break, whether it is active or inactive, it must be counted as paid working time.
- **Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA):** FMLA allows eligible employees to take unpaid leave for certain family or medical reasons without losing their job. To learn more, visit <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/employerguide.pdf>.



You can find detailed information on the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and the state labor laws using the links below:

- **Federal Fair Labor Standards Act:** <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/46-flsa-daycare>
- **State Labor Laws:** <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/state>

Cities and counties may also have laws in addition to those at the state and federal level. It is important to check with your local CCR&R to learn about local requirements.

You may be legally required to post specific labor notices in a visible area for employees. Learn more about workplace poster compliance here: <https://www.dol.gov/general/topics/posters>. You may be able to obtain free posters from the federal Department of Labor and from your state's Department of Labor, or you may choose to purchase a subscription for poster updates from one of many businesses that offer this service. This meets the legal requirement to post state and federal information and helps employers stay informed.



RESOURCE 4: Legal and Insurance Considerations

Starting a business will require you to think about legal and insurance issues to make sure you are covered in case of an accident or injury. You will also want to take steps to reduce risk in your business and ensure that you are following all labor laws when hiring and managing your employees.

The questions below and your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) will help you think through some of these considerations. You may also want to consult a lawyer and a tax professional before you start your child care business.

Legal Considerations

	Yes	No	Comments
Have you consulted a lawyer to help set up the legal structure and other areas of your business?			
Have you decided whether to operate as a non-profit or a for-profit?			
Have you decided on a business structure? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sole proprietorship (self-employed) • Partnership • Limited Liability Company (LLC) • Corporation 			
Have you created a business name?			
Have you registered the business name with your state/county/city?			
Have you obtained a business license, if required?			
Have you applied for and obtained a federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)?			
Have you applied for and obtained a state Employer Identification Number (EIN), if required?			
Have you consulted with a tax professional to help you determine your business tax responsibilities?			

Insurance Considerations

	Yes	No	Comments
Have you talked to your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency or child care licensing office to understand what insurance coverage you might need?			
Have you obtained at least two quotes from insurance agents that represent different insurance companies (for comparison)?			
Have you purchased business owner's insurance, which should include general liability, property and fire insurance?			
Have you purchased professional liability insurance, and does this insurance cover you if one of your employees or others with access to the children in your program abuses a child in your care?			
If you are providing transportation, have you purchased commercial automobile coverage?			
Have you purchased worker's compensation insurance?			

Risk Management

	Yes	No	Comments
<p>Have you evaluated all areas of your center (indoors and outdoors) for potential hazards and the risks associated with those hazards?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical injury of self, staff, children, families • Illness • Mental health of self, staff, children • Disasters and emergencies <p><i>If you have not yet chosen a location, see the finding a location section for more on evaluating risks in the physical space.</i></p>			
<p>Have you created a plan for how you will minimize risk in all areas where it was identified?</p>			
<p>Does the risk management plan specify which tasks will be assigned to staff members? Does the plan include how you will ensure that everyone knows their role in reducing risk?</p>			
<p>Do you have a back-up plan in case a staff member is unable to perform their risk management responsibilities?</p>			
<p>Does your plan include how you will determine that the risk management steps are being followed and whether changes are needed?</p>			
<p>Does your plan include the frequency that you will revisit the plan to determine if you need to make changes?</p>			

Federal and State Employment Laws

	Yes	No	Comments
<p>Have you reviewed the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act?</p> <p>https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/46-flsa-daycare</p>			
<p>Have you reviewed your state's labor laws?</p> <p>https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/state</p>			
<p>Have you consulted your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R) and/or a lawyer if you have questions about federal and state labor laws?</p>			
<p>Have you checked with your local CCR&R to determine if there are additional local labor laws that you need to be aware of?</p>			
<p>Do you know whether you are required to post notices of certain labor laws in a visible location for your employees?</p>			
<p>Do you know where to obtain the required posters, if needed?</p>			

ACTION STEPS

Now that you know the basics, it is time for action! The next few sections will go over the different steps you will need to take to prepare to open a new child care center.



Topics in this section:

- 27 Prepare a Budget
- 30 Find a Location
- 36 Develop Policies and Procedures
- 38 Recruit and Hire Staff
- 42 Market Your Program

Prepare a Budget

Preparing a budget gives you an idea of whether your projected income will cover your expected expenses. You will need to think about how many children you plan to serve, as well as:

- tuition fees
- staffing costs
- start-up costs such as application/licensing fees, equipment, materials, marketing, food, cleaning products and insurance
- other items or services you may need to purchase before your child care opens

One of your major expenses will be payroll and employee benefits. You will need to pay your employees at least the minimum wage in your state. However, you should plan to

budget for a competitive hourly rate for your employees in order to recruit and retain staff with education and experience in the child care field. For more information on competitive pay rates for your area, reach out to your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R).

The Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (PCQC) can help you estimate the annual cost and revenue of a child care center at different levels of quality. Visit <https://www.ecequalitycalculator.com/Login.aspx>. You may also use the following budget worksheet to help you think through how much cash you expect to come into your business (revenue and support) compared to how much cash you expect to spend (expenses). You may be eligible for loans or grants to get you started. You can check with your local CCR&R to ask if there are opportunities available for start-up funds.



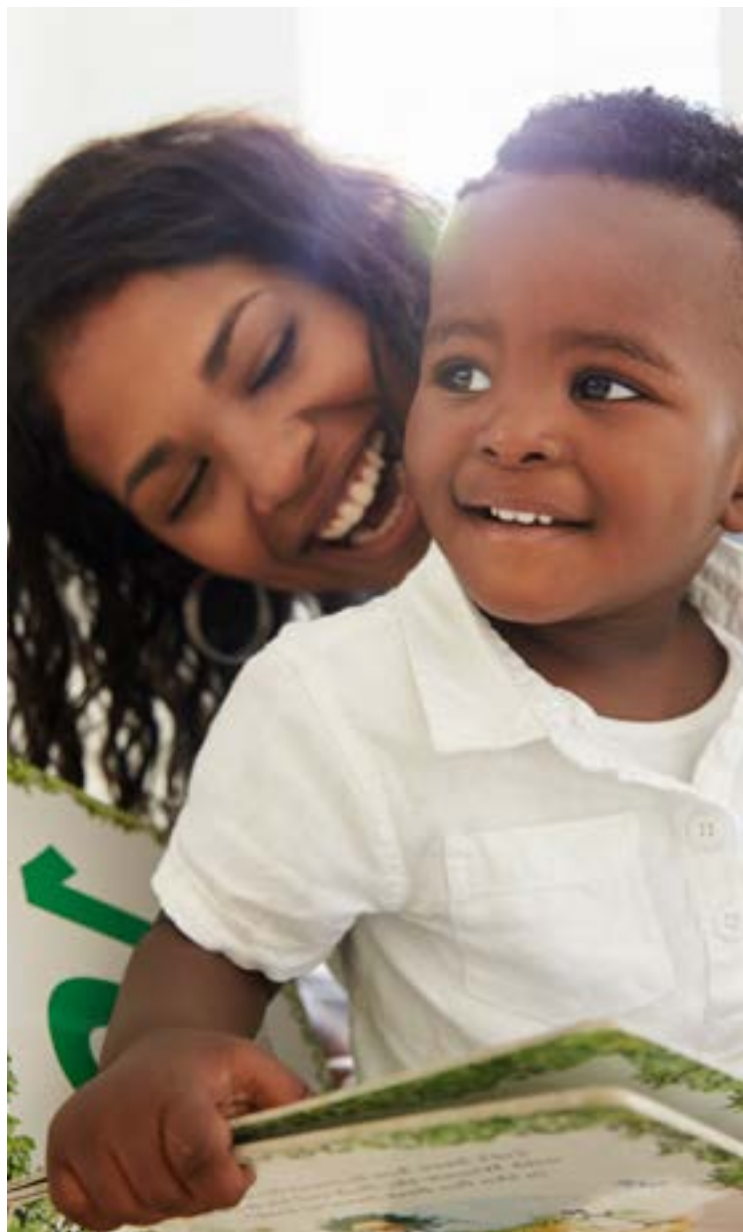
Explore Funding and Financing Opportunities

Use the resources below to learn about funding sources and financing that may be available for child care:

- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a food reimbursement program that allows qualified child care providers to be reimbursed for a portion of their child care food costs. Learn more about CACFP at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>.
- The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federally funded grant to states that supports child care subsidies. State subsidy programs vary by name, application process and eligibility. There are health and safety requirements that participating child care programs must meet. Ask your local CCR&R how you can apply to receive subsidy payments for eligible families.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers information on loans, grants and other financing opportunities for small businesses at <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs>.

Most banks and some credit unions offer loans that can be used to purchase property and/or cover business start-up costs, equipment, and supplies. To apply for a loan, you must have a written business plan prepared. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers business plan templates and information at <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>. You can also ask your local CCR&R for assistance in developing a business plan for your child care center.

Be sure to check with your local CCR&R for ideas on other possible funding and financing opportunities to open or sustain your business.



RESOURCE 5: Budget Tool

Find an interactive budgeting tool such as a budget builder for next year [here](#).

BusinessName: _____ CurrentYear: _____

Revenue and Support *(list annual total for each line)*

Revenue	Child Care Fees:	
	Parents Pay (Tuition)	\$
	Child Care Assistance Program	\$
	Food Subsidy Program	\$
	Registration Fees	\$
	Activity Fees	\$
Support	Foundation and Corporate Grants	\$
	United Way	\$
	Contributions and Donations	\$
Other	Events and Fundraising	\$
	Interest	\$
	All Other	\$
	TOTAL INCOME:	\$

Expenses *(list annual total for each line)*

Personnel	Payroll	\$
	Payroll Taxes	\$
	Health Benefits	\$
	Other Benefits	\$
	SUBTOTAL PERSONNEL:	\$
All Other Expenses	Food	\$
	Transportation	\$
	Child Care Supplies	\$
	Office Supplies	\$
	Utilities	\$
	Marketing and Promotions	\$
	Insurance: Business/Liability/Real Estate	\$
	Accounting/Legal	\$
	Repairs/Maintenance	\$
	Printing	\$
	Postage	\$
	Rent or Mortgage Interest	\$
	Dues and Subscriptions	\$
	Training/Education - Staff	\$
	Taxes/Licenses	\$
	Depreciation	\$
	Miscellaneous	\$
	TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$
	NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT:	\$

Find a Location

You may already have a building or location in mind for your child care center, or you may still be searching for the right place. Either way, make sure that you have completed a community needs assessment (see [page 8](#)) to confirm that there is a need for child care in the area you are considering.

Additionally, certain factors may influence where you can locate your child care center. For example, if you decide to buy a franchise, the parent company may have specific guidelines regarding where you can locate your child care business. There may also be zoning laws or restrictive covenants that you will need to investigate to ensure that you are able to open a business in a certain location. Learn more below, and check with your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) to learn about the specific requirements in your area before you determine a location for your child care center.



Zoning Laws

Zoning laws may limit small businesses in your community. Zoning ordinances can set restrictions and charge fees for permits for the businesses that they do allow. Local governments pass zoning laws to make sure businesses fit in with the community. They are used to keep most business activities out of residential areas. These laws may affect where you can locate your child care center.

If zoning laws do not allow businesses where you plan to open your child care center, you cannot open a business unless you get an exception. This is true even if your child care center meets all state or local licensing requirements.

Check with the office that regulates zoning in your city or county (often this will be called the Planning office, the Zoning office, or Development Services) to get information about zoning regulations, or call your local CCR&R for assistance in finding this information.

Restrictive Covenants and Homeowner Association Regulations

If you want to locate your child care business in a residential setting, check to see if there are any restrictive covenants before you rent or purchase the property. Housing developers can include restrictive covenants in deeds and Homeowner Association (HOA) agreements. These restrictive covenants may limit business activity in the community. The HOA will have information on any restrictions. If you rent your property, you will need to check with the property owner or the community's HOA about any rules.

If covenants do not allow businesses, you cannot open a business unless you get an exception. This is true even if a child care program meets all state or local licensing requirements.

Evaluate the Space

Once you have found a potential location, you need to evaluate the space and surrounding area to make sure it is suitable for child care. Check with your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R) and your licensing office to ensure that the space you have in mind will meet licensing requirements as well as the needs of your business.

Think about risk management in the physical space. Plan to walk through the center with other staff members or parents, considering each area from the point of view of adults and from the height and level of children. Make a note of any hazards or potential hazards that you can think of, both inside and outside of the center. Look for places where staff, families, or children could possibly suffer an injury or become trapped. Check for openings or blind spots that could lead to a child being left unattended. Think about situations that could allow a child to gain access to hazardous materials or objects. Your inspection and evaluation must include classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, the lobby, storage closets, eating areas, outdoor play spaces, sidewalks, parking areas, and any other places that staff, children, or families could access. Plan for how to consistently minimize the risks noted. You should do this initially and once all areas and equipment are set up for the children and staff.

RESOURCE 6: Finding a Location

Once you have established that there is a need for child care in your community and reviewed child care licensing requirements, you can begin the process of selecting a location for your child care center. If you are considering building, purchasing or renting a space, think about opening your business in an area where families live or along their route to work. You may also want to contact a local realtor who can help you locate properties that would be suitable for a child care center.

- 1** I have completed the needs assessment and identified the best location for my child care business based on the most recent data available to me.

Yes No
- 2** I checked with my state or local licensing office and asked about any building or structural requirements for child care centers.

Yes No
- 3** I checked local zoning laws to make sure I can open a business in this area.

Yes No
- 4** I checked neighborhood covenants and Homeowner Association (HOA) covenants to make sure I can open a business in this area. *This will apply if you are planning on opening a child care center in a residential area.*

Yes No
- 5** I checked with my local Child Care Resource and Referral agency to see if I need a business license to operate a child care center in my area.

Yes No
- 6** If I am renting a space, I checked the lease agreement to make sure that I can operate a child care business in the rental property.

Yes No

If you have not checked “yes” to the questions above, please take the time to find out the state or local licensing requirements for child care centers, zoning laws and restrictive covenants before you go any further.

RESOURCE 7: Evaluate Your Space

The following questions can be used as a guide as you consider spaces for your child care center. This is NOT a licensing compliance checklist. Check with your licensing office and your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) regarding specific requirements that you will need to follow.

Structural Questions	Yes	No
Have you reviewed your state or local licensing regulations regarding structural requirements for a child care center?		
If you are renovating an existing space, have you checked state or local licensing requirements regarding needed updates?		
Have you checked your state or local licensing regulations to ensure you can legally operate a child care program on the floor of the building you wish to operate? (Some areas have restrictions on whether the child care can be located on an upper or lower level of a building.)		
Are there at least two exits on your ground floor that lead to the outside?		
Does the space have handwashing and toileting areas in the rooms occupied by the children?		
Is there sufficient storage and janitorial space that are not accessible to children?		
Does the center have space for staff to take a break away from the children?		
Is there adequate parking for families and staff?		
Are families easily able to enter and exit the parking lot?		
Does the space have an adequate kitchen to meet the size of the program planned, and does the kitchen meet required licensing and health standards?		
Does the kitchen meet fire safety standards?		

RESOURCE 7: Evaluate Your Space

Physical Space	Yes	No
Have you reviewed your state or local licensing regulations to learn about the indoor and outdoor space requirements for child care centers?		
Have you reviewed state or local child care licensing requirements to learn how many square feet are required per child indoors and outdoors? Does your space meet these requirements?		
Is there enough space for each child to move freely? A minimum recommendation is 35 square feet of usable space per child.		
Will you have a separate space (not shared) for each child's personal belongings?		
Will you have a space that you can designate for children who become ill and need to be isolated until they can be picked up by a parent or guardian?		
Can you maintain adequate air flow and a comfortable room temperature in all weather conditions?		
Are you able to keep your hot water heater at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit so that children are safe from being scalded with hot water?		
Is the physical layout of the facility arranged so caregivers can view all areas at all times?		
Will you have places for children to play, rest and eat?		
Is there room for storage of cleaning supplies, staff belongings and additional items where they are not accessible to children?		
Do you have a safe outdoor play space, or is there a playground nearby that you will be allowed to use? Check with your state or local licensing agency to determine what constitutes an outdoor play area for child care centers.		
Is the surface under outdoor play equipment soft and free of hazards to prevent injury?		
Is there a fence or natural barrier around your outdoor play space?		
If you have a swimming pool, is there a locked fence around it that meets the height required by your state or local area?		
Have you checked the area surrounding your child care center for potential water safety hazards (lakes, ponds, creeks, fountains, etc.) and consulted your state or local licensing agency regarding safety protocols?		

RESOURCE 7: Evaluate Your Space

Health and Safety	Yes	No
If you rent or purchase an older building (built before 1975), has it been tested for lead, asbestos or other toxic materials? (Your local health department or child care licensing office can refer you to experts who can take samples of paint and other materials for testing.)		
Is the air quality in and around the child care center adequate?		
Is the source for drinking water regularly tested, and does it meet required health standards?		
Is the child care center located in an area away from gas stations where there are underground or above ground gas/oil storage tanks?		
Is the child care center located away from other known environmental hazards?		
Have you been in contact with your local fire station or other state fire officials to learn about local fire safety rules (https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/all-codes-and-standards/list-of-codes-and-standards/detail?code=101)?		
Have you reviewed the Americans with Disabilities Act to make sure you understand how to plan an accessible design (https://www.ada.gov/childqanda.htm)?		
Risk Management	Yes	No
Have you done a walk-through of the indoor space to note any potential risks and hazards?		
Have you evaluated the outdoor spaces (include areas for parking and drop-off, play, transitions, etc.) to note any potential risks and hazards?		
Can you make a plan to adequately and consistently minimize the risks presented by the space you are considering?		

Develop Policies and Procedures

It is important to outline policies and procedures for operating your child care business for your employees and families. These will include important topics that can help your business run smoothly. Your policies and procedures should reflect the Code of Ethical Conduct for the early childhood field: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/ethical-conduct>

Staff/Team Handbook

The staff handbook outlines the expectations you have for your employees. If you want your staff handbook to be a binding agreement between you and your employee(s), make sure you review it with each staff member. Consider having them sign a document stating they read and understand the contents. The following topics are often included in staff handbooks:

- Mission and philosophy of your program
- Benefits and pay scale
- Job descriptions, evaluation procedures, hiring and termination policies
- Information on child abuse prevention, identification and reporting
- Child behavior and guidance policies
- Health and safety procedures
- Family communication and engagement
- Professional development requirements
- Sick leave policy and/or absences due to illness



Family Handbook

The family handbook outlines your program's policies and procedures and includes other important information for families. Your state or local area may require you to have certain written policies available to families. Whether or not it is required, it is strongly encouraged to provide a family handbook to help families learn about your program and shape their expectations. Encourage families to read the handbook and ask questions. Family handbooks often include the following topics:

- Mission and philosophy of your program
- Description of your program, including your operating hours and the ages of children you serve
- Information on whether your program is part of your state's Quality Rating and Improvement System or nationally accredited
- Information on when payment is due and a policy regarding late payments
- Description of the curriculum and daily schedule for children
- Description of family engagement activities
- Required forms for families to complete such as the registration form, health forms, medication administration forms, emergency contact information and field trip permission forms
- Information on policies regarding communication with families, guidance and discipline, drop-off and pick-up procedures, emergency closings, fee and payment arrangements, food and nutrition, program closings, health policies (including when a child is required to be excluded from care due to illness), and transportation policies
- Description of your disaster and emergency plans



Emergency Preparedness Plan

One of the most important policies and procedures your center will establish is your written emergency preparedness plan. This plan should help you prepare for any type of disaster or emergency that could happen in your area. This includes weather-related disasters like earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes and blizzards; man-made disasters like active shooter situations and threats/acts of terrorism; and environmental emergencies such as a pandemic or unsafe levels of mold or radiation in the child care center.

Make sure that your emergency preparedness plan includes:

- types and frequency of drills you will conduct in order to practice for emergency situations
- location and contents of emergency kits that you will have available (as well as a plan for checking and restocking them regularly)
- evacuation plans and procedures (including how you will contact families in the event of an evacuation)
- how you will care for children for an extended period of time in the event of a shelter-in-place or evacuation scenario
- information and resources about how to recover and support your staff and the children in your program following an emergency

Many states have specific templates or forms that child care programs must use to create their emergency plan. Your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) or your child care licensing office can direct you to the correct template or form, if your state offers one.

If your state does not have a specific form or template to use, Child Care Aware of America's Emergency Preparedness and Response website shares emergency planning resources from a variety of sources. Available resources include webinar recordings, training courses, templates, manuals and more. Visit <https://childcareprepare.org> to find helpful resources on creating a thorough and effective emergency plan.

Recruit and Hire Staff

The staff you will need for your child care center depends on a variety of factors. While you will certainly need to recruit and hire a director (and possibly an assistant director) and caregivers/teachers, you may also need to hire or contract with other staff who can perform non-caregiving duties. Your state may have minimum education and experience qualifications that your staff may need to meet in order to work in a child care center.

Determine Staff Positions Needed

The minimum number of caregiving/teaching staff you need depends on the ages and number of children in your program and your operating hours. Staff to child ratio is the number of staff needed for a specific number of children. Your state or local licensing regulations will tell you the ratios that your center must follow.

You will also need to consider the number of usable square feet in your program, which may affect how many children you can care for at one time as well as your classroom group sizes. Keep in mind that you may have a maximum number of children allowed in your program, but you may also choose to keep group sizes smaller in order to help child care staff provide responsive and nurturing care.

The following are recommendations¹ for ratios and group size by age group for a child care center:

Age of Child	Number of Children per Adult	Maximum Group Size
0-12 months	3-4	8
13-23 months	4	8
2 years	4-6	12
3 years	7-9	18
4-5 years	8-10	20
6-8 years	10	20
9-12 years	12	24

Your state requirements may allow for larger group sizes for some age groups than what is listed above. Check with your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R) to learn more about specific ratio and group size requirements in your area.

Develop staffing patterns that meet licensing requirements to ensure that you always have enough staff on site. You may not need all caregivers/teachers on site during opening and closing hours, and you may need additional staff to provide extra support during meals and other breaks for staff. Ask your CCR&R what the requirements are in terms of how many staff are required on site at any time, and ensure that your staffing plan meets or exceeds those requirements.

¹ Based on the recommendations from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/early-learning/staff_child_ratio_0.pdf and the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. CFOC Standards Online Database. Aurora, CO; National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education; 2020. <https://nrckids.org/CFOC/database>.

In addition to caregiver positions, you may need to hire or contract staff for other day-to-day tasks. For example, determine if you will need a cook, a driver, a custodian or someone to handle maintenance duties for your program. Think about how many hours a week each job would require.

Depending on your skill set or those of your director and teachers, you may also need to hire or contract with a person or people with expertise necessary to run your business. This may include an accountant, a lawyer, a graphic designer or other professionals. Think through all these things and determine if you would need someone to perform full-time, part-time or contractual work.

Decide on Position Qualifications

Check with your local CCR&R to ensure that you know the minimum qualifications for child care staff in your area. Generally, these requirements for staff include:

- Minimum age, usually 18 years
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Initial and ongoing training

Your state may also require child care staff to be certified in infant/child CPR and first aid. You may consider including this in your job descriptions or you may ensure that applicants are willing to become certified before beginning work.

Once you know the minimum qualifications required for caregivers in your area, decide if you would like your staff to have any additional qualifications. Determine if you would like your staff to have a minimum number of years of experience caring for children, speak a certain language or possess other skills necessary to carry out their duties at your center. See *Staff Training Options and Opportunities* for more information about what you may choose to require in terms of education, training and credentials.

Develop Position Roles and Responsibilities

Think through what each position should entail. Develop position descriptions that include qualifications, roles and responsibilities. This will be helpful in recruiting, as you can post the job description information on job websites for applicants to respond, as well as sharing expectations for what a position will involve once a hire is made.



Staff Training Options and Opportunities

You may want your staff to have or earn additional qualifications in order to work with children. Child Care Aware® of America recommends all child care center staff have at least 40 hours of initial training, including CPR, first aid and other basic safety and health training, and training on child development, as well as 24 hours of annual training. You may want to look at training sessions available through your local CCR&R and local colleges/universities if you or your staff are interested in or need to earn additional training hours.

You may also want to think about requiring staff to have a degree or credential in the early childhood field. One option is the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The CDA is a nationally accepted early childhood credential awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition (<https://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda>). There are different options to earn a CDA credential, including taking classes with an instructor or online.

Understand Employment and Labor Laws

As a business owner that employs staff, you will be required to follow federal, state and local employment laws. Information on legal hiring practices and treatment of employees can be found under the *Legal, Tax and Insurance Considerations* section of this guide. Ensure that you understand and follow all federal, state, and local labor laws as you recruit and hire staff for your child care center.



Market Your Program

Developing a marketing plan will help you think about why families should choose your program. A marketing plan also gives your program a sense of identity or brand. Use the steps below to create a marketing plan that works for your business.

Know Your Mission, Values and Program Philosophy

Think about what makes your program unique and how it can meet the needs of children and families. What benefits beyond the hours of operation and the ages of children you plan to serve will you offer to families? What does your program believe that makes it a great choice for children and families? Create a mission statement and program philosophy that reflect your program's values, priorities, and goals.

Understand the Child Care Market

Use your findings from the needs assessment to help you answer questions about the need for child care in your area, what age groups might need care, and where families live and work.

Know Your Community

It is important to know who else is providing child care services in your area. You may want to visit other child care programs to get a sense of what they offer to children and families.

Determine Your Audience

Think about what type of families you want to serve and who would benefit most from your program.

Develop Marketing Strategies

Think about where your audience is likely to look for information and consider different strategies you can use to attract families to your program. You can create a logo, design a website, develop a social media presence and distribute flyers about your program. Have a sign created for the front of your child care business, and plan to reach out to businesses to get the word out about your program. Decide on the budget you may need for each strategy.

Set Objectives

You will need to be able to evaluate your plan to know what types of strategies work for you. Before putting a strategy into practice, decide what your goal is and when you will revisit the strategy to see if it is successful or should be adjusted.

Create a Communication Plan

Your marketing plan should highlight the unique aspects of your program, including your strategies to attract families to your program, and your marketing budget. Be sure that your plan includes steps, budget line items and timelines for both the creation and distribution of your marketing materials.

It is helpful to market your program whether you are just opening or if you have been open for years. Contact your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R) for support with your marketing plan and reaching your target audience.

RESOURCE 8: Marketing Plan Template

1 Program Mission and Philosophy

Your mission defines what you do and sets the goals for your child care program. Your philosophy explains common beliefs, ideas and values that will allow you to reach your goals. Think about what makes your child care program unique from other programs in your community. Your program mission should be two to three sentences long and your philosophy can be longer (three or four principles), but it should remain simple. Write your program mission and philosophy.

2 Market Analysis

What are the demographics of the families in the area where you want to open your child care business? Is there a need for another child care program because of shifting demographics or new employers moving into the area? What are the child care needs in your area? Use information from the needs assessment ([page 8](#)) to help you complete this.

3 Community Child Care Analysis

What other child care programs are in the same area as your program? You may want to look at different types of programs, such as other licensed child care centers, family child care homes, community center programs and other types of child care in your community. When you have an idea of the different types of programs in your area, you may be better able to define your program's strengths and opportunities for growth.

RESOURCE 8: Marketing Plan Template

4 Determine Your Audience

What audiences do you want to reach? Is your child care business located near a major employer? What type of families do you want to attract to your center? Are you interested in serving dual language learners or children with special needs?

5 Develop Strategies

Do you have a logo to identify your program to prospective families? Do you have a website, and will you be able to keep it up to date? What strategies will you use to draw families to your program? Will you use social media or printed materials? What steps do you need to take and how much money will it cost to implement your strategies? Use the marketing strategies and budget ([page 45](#)) to help you think through these steps.

6 Set Objectives

How will you know if your marketing plan is successful? Set benchmarks for your marketing objectives so you know what types of marketing strategies work for you.

RESOURCE 9: Sample Marketing Strategies and Budget

The information below is designed to serve as an example of how you might complete this resource. Fill in your own strategies, people responsible, timeframes and budget according to your needs.

Marketing Strategy	Person Responsible	Start Date-End Date	Budget

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

As with any industry, the child care profession requires owners and staff to have the proper training in order to provide high quality services. Your state may have certain training requirements that you will need to meet before you obtain your license or before your staff begin working with children.



Required and Recommended Initial Training

Each state sets their own training requirements for child care providers. Generally, certain health and safety topics such as CPR, first aid and safe sleep may be required. Your state may also require you to complete a series of health and safety trainings before obtaining your license. Check with your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R) for a list of required initial training topics.

Whether or not it is required by your state, it is important for child care professionals to be trained in health and safety, emergency

preparedness and response, child development, and early learning. When staff are knowledgeable about how children grow and learn, they are better able to provide nurturing and attentive care and a quality learning environment for children.

Ensure that your training plan also includes opportunities for you to learn business management skills and strategies. Important topics may include financial management and budgeting, record-keeping, grant writing, child care business automation, developing thorough policies and procedures, and employee management and development, among others.

Ongoing Training

Ongoing training and professional development help reinforce best practices and help child care educators learn new information and skills. Similar to initial training, there may be requirements for annual training hours that you and your staff must meet. You may also choose to ensure that you and your staff take specific trainings each year in order to stay up to date on the latest information and recommendations for child care. Your local CCR&R can share information about what trainings may be required and help you find training options that meet the requirements and needs of your program.

For both initial and ongoing trainings, required and recommended, you may have options for in-person or online opportunities. Some trainings may be more in-depth or offered over a period of time, and some may award certificates or a credential upon successful completion. Check to see if trainings offer continuing education units (CEUs) for a fee. This might help you or your staff earn credits toward a college degree.

Education

For child care owners, directors, and staff, it can be helpful (and in some states required) to have a degree or credential in an early childhood-related field. Whether or not it is required, continuing your education can help you provide quality child care and is an important characteristic of high-quality programs. If you choose to have your program pursue national accreditation or participate in your state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), you or your staff may need to have higher levels of education.

There are different ways you can continue your education in the early childhood field. Contact your local CCR&R to learn more about different programs in your area that can help you or your staff earn your Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, associate degree, or bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development. You can also check with local and online colleges and universities that offer degree programs in child-related fields.

RESOURCES

Child Care Aware® of America:

- CCR&R Finder: <https://www.childcareaware.org/resources/ccrr-search-form/>
- State by State Resource Map: <https://www.childcareaware.org/resources/map/>
- Emergency Preparedness and Response: <https://childcareprepare.org>
- Coronavirus Hub: <https://www.childcareaware.org/coronavirus-hub/>
- Budget Builder: <http://childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Child-Care-Budget-Worksheet.xlsx>

Additional resources, templates and information on operating a successful family child care home are available with a Child Care Aware® of America membership. For guidance on how to become a member, visit <https://www.childcareaware.org/about/membership/>.

Department of Labor:

- Wages and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa>
- Daycare Centers and Preschools under the FLSA: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/46-flsa-daycare>
- The Employer's Guide to the Family and Medical Leave Act: <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/legacy/files/employerguide.pdf>
- Find your state's labor laws: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/state>

Small Business Administration:

- Registering your business: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/register-your-business>
- Business tax information: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/manage-your-business/pay-taxes>
- Funding programs: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs>
- Write your business plan: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>

Other resources:

- Provider Cost of Quality Calculator: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/pcqc>
- Employer Identification Number (EIN) information: <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers>
- Find legal aid: <https://www.lsc.gov/what-legal-aid/find-legal-aid>
- Child and Adult Care Food Program: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>
- Americans with Disabilities Act and Child Care FAQ: <https://www.ada.gov/childqanda.htm>
- NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/position-statements/ethical-conduct>
- Council for Professional Recognition CDA information: <https://www.cdacouncil.org/credentials/apply-for-cda>

