



Family Child Care FAQs

Q: Are background checks required?

A: YES. Once a completed application is submitted, the licensing office will do a background check on the licensee along with anyone living in the home ages 10 and older and the child care center will complete background checks on anyone having direct contact with the children including staff, volunteers and substitute caregivers. For more information, visit the [Wisconsin Department of Children & Families website](#).

Q: Do I need policies or contracts?

A: Policies, guidelines that describe and maintain various aspects of your program, **are required**. [Click here](#) to see how to develop policies that meet WI requirements. Other sample policies are available from the [Wisconsin Child Care Information Center](#) but be sure what you write reflects your own ideas and philosophy. Your Technical Consultant will review the draft you develop using a [Policy Checklist](#).

If you will have regular employees, you are strongly advised to create personnel policies that include job descriptions, pay, benefits, etc. If you, the licensee, will NOT be providing care at least 50% of your licensed hours, you must have a personnel policy, and include it with your other policies when you submit your completed application. A [checklist for Family Child Care personnel policies](#) is available from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.

Contracts are documents that finalize the financial and legal aspects of your relationship with the parents or guardians. While contracts **are not required** for licensure, they are **strongly recommended**, for your own protection.

Q: Is Insurance Required?

A: NO. While it is strongly recommended, under Wisconsin law, you are only required to inform parents in your written policies, whether you do or do not have liability insurance on your child care business operations and your property. However, pet liability insurance is required if cats or dogs are in areas accessible to children during licensed hours. **If you provide transportation liability insurance is required.**

Q: Is zoning an issue I need to be concerned about?

A: If you wish to operate a licensed family child care center somewhere other than your own residence, ask your local zoning commission if this is allowed in your community, and if so, if any permit or special appeal is needed.

Q: What set-up is required of the home environment I provide?

A: There are multiple things to consider in order to successfully meet environment requirements:

1. In order for care to be provided on a lower level of your home, more than 6' below grade, there must be a second exit from that level –either a second stairway, or an exit door in an “exposed” basement, or a legal exit window (one at least 20" x 24", that can be opened from the inside without the use of any tool). Spiral stairways may **not** be used. The two exits should be located in different areas of the basement, i.e., the exit window should not be next to the stairway.
2. If children are cared for on an upper level of a single family home, more than 6' above grade, a window (as described in #1) may serve as the second exit. It is not required to have a fire escape or balcony.

3. If the center is located in the upstairs of a duplex then there must be two exits leading directly to the ground floor, or, a door leading to a platform/roof with railings. The platform/roof must have an area of at least 25' that is at least 4' long, and not be more than 15' above ground level. Railings must be 36" in height and designed to prevent the passage of an object with a diameter larger than 4" through the bars.
4. If any children are cared for on an upper level, (as described above), there must be interconnected smoke alarms, and no more than 2 such children under age 2 may be cared for on these levels by one provider.
5. Fencing or permanent enclosure at least 48" high is required around outdoor play space whenever any potential hazard is present. "Hazards" include proximity to high speed and/or high volume traffic, sharp changes in elevation, presence on or near property of water—streams, lakes, pools, etc. In the absence of definite hazards, a licenser has the option of granting an exemption, which means requiring that the provider be outside directly supervising the children at all times.
6. A permanent enclosure not less than 4' high shall be provided to protect the safety of children in care. If a center has no outdoor play space available on the premises of the center, the licensee may request an exemption from the requirements under subd.3 for the center's outdoor play space. An exemption may be applied if the licensee has less than 600 square feet of land on their property.
7. Safety issues are as follows: the facility must have a fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 2A-10BC; smoke detectors are required on each level of the center and in nap areas; cribs and playpens with wood slats must have no more than 2 3/8" space between slats; high chairs must have safety straps that go between the legs. **All** cribs must be manufactured after June 28, 2011.
8. Smoking is not permitted anywhere in licensed space, indoors or outdoors, when children in care are present. This includes rooms used by children, bathrooms, halls and entryways, and lobbies used by children to leave and enter the child care center.
9. Factors which can result in delay or denial of license include, but are not limited to, broken steps or rails; cracked or broken glass; torn carpeting; holes in the ground, floor, or porch; toy boxes without safety hinges; unprotected basement stairwells or window wells; failure to have references reply to request for information, and failure to pass the background check.
10. For more extensive details on what is required of my home [click here](#).

Q: What training must I have?

A: 2009 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS BY DCF RULES

A family childcare provider must get training in early childhood education. This may be obtained through technical colleges, 4-year colleges, or independent study courses. Such classes may also be offered by some other agencies, with DCF approval. [The Registry](#) may have information on sources of such approved trainings.

Introduction to the Child Care Profession: is needed by family child care providers as well as by assistant teachers in group centers. Some training agencies split the "Introduction" course into Module A and Module B, so that "A" meets certification requirements and "A+B" meets licensing requirements. Training on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is included in this course.

Fundamentals of Family Child Care: covers the business aspects of operating a family child care program.

Fundamentals of Infant and Toddler Care: is needed in order to be licensed to care for children younger than 2 years. SIDS and SBS issues are covered in this course, too.

Providers who complete all training prior to receiving their licenses get off to a better-prepared start. However, you are eligible to receive your license once you have completed "Introduction to the Child Care Profession" and "Fundamentals of Family Child Care." If you have had a 3-credit course in child psychology, child development, or a similar broad-based

course specific to early childhood education, or if you have taken an entry-level non-credit class to work in a group childcare center, this will count as equivalent to, "Intro to the Child Care Profession."

If any child in care (other than your own) will be younger than 2 years of age, you must also complete "Fundamentals of Infant and Toddler Care" **within** 6 months of receiving your probationary license.

For information on training available to you, contact:

- Your Technical Consultant (*See the SFTA Pre-licensing web page)
- Your local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agency (*See the SFTA CCR&R web page)
- Your [local area technical colleges](#)
- [The Registry](#)
- DCF's Approved [Entry-Level Training for Child Care Workers](#)
- Home-study versions—some on-line—are offered at the institutions listed below. (If you find other sources of such training, be sure the courses are Wisconsin-approved before enrolling)

Questions to ask:

- How soon may I begin?
- How many lessons are there?
- Are there any exams? If so how/where are they taken?
- What are the total costs to enroll? Ex: registration fee, materials fee, tuition, anything else?

CARE Courses	800-685-7610	Infants & Toddlers
Early Education Station, Inc.	414-546-3960	All 3 courses offered
Family Connections CCR&R	800-322-2046	All 3 courses offered
Mid State Technical College	888-575-MSTC	All 3 courses offered
Northeast WI Technical College	800-422-NWTC	All 3 courses offered
Southwest WI Technical College	800-362-3322	All 3 courses offered
WI Indianhead Technical College	800-243-9482	All 3 courses offered
Work and Family Consulting, Inc.	920-339-2765	All 3 courses offered

Q: Will I need a building inspection?

A: NO, unless you wish to have a licensed family day care any place other than a one or two-family dwelling, or in a unit that you do not live in. If you do, then a commercial building inspection may be required and your building will need to be inspected by one of the following: (there may be a fee involved)

1. Certified local building inspector
2. Wisconsin registered architect or engineer
3. Commercial building inspector certified by the Wisconsin Dept. of Commerce

For more information about building inspectors in your area, visit the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services [inspector search](#).

Q: Will I need a water test?

A: YES. If you have a private well, water must be tested annually for bacteria. If you wish to care for children under 6 months of age, it must also be tested for nitrates. [Click here](#) for more information.