



Licensed Child Care Center: First Steps in Getting Started

1. Consult appropriate officials about licensing rules—included in the Group Day Care Inquiry Packet, or view them online—zoning codes, information on sanitation rules, building, fire, and safety provisions.
2. Determine the need for child care in the community and decide what kind of center you will operate. Your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency is a valuable source of information.
3. Complete the Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) Group Child Care Business Start-Up Worksheet that was included with the Inquiry Packet, and mail it to SFTA. A Technical Consultant (TC) will be assigned to help you. You may wish to postpone this step until you are more certain your plans will materialize.
4. Look into locations. Determine costs for building, purchasing, leasing or using donated space. Consider renovations needed and take bids.
5. Review building inspection checklist. Contact a building inspector to request a preliminary inspection for child care. Talk to the inspector about current zoning status and steps needed to change zoning if necessary. If zoning variance is needed, plan on spending 2-4 months working on this process.
6. Meet with your TC to discuss layout (room sizes, groupings, ages, staffing, etc.).

Discuss with your Attorney

1. Decide on the form of organization, (corporation, partnership or proprietorship), and, if corporation, discuss advantages and disadvantages of a “for profit” or a “not-for-profit.” For more information, visit Wisconsin's [Business Growth Resources](#) website.
2. File, receive incorporation papers if a corporation; file true name certificate if proprietorship. Call the [Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation](#) (WEDC) at (855)-INWIBIZ ((855)-469-4249)
3. If not-for-profit:
 - File and receive tax exemption forms—contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
 - File and receive state tax exemptions—contact [WI Department of Revenue](#) at (608)-266-2776.

Get your Finances in Order

1. Develop and collect data for [start-up and operating budget](#). Call your local Resource and Referral Agency to get information on current wages and child care rates. Include Unemployment Compensation Tax and FICA.
2. Survey sources, cost of insurance: property, premises, liability, vehicle (if applicable), workers' compensation.
3. Establish business bank accounts.
4. Pursue funding. (Possible sources: foundations, grants, bank loans, contributions, employer subsidy, fund-raising, self-financing). You may need to write a grant or prepare a business plan to get the funding you desire.

This is a complex and lengthy process but it is worth it. We are always here to help!

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Cultivating systems across WI to promote quality, strengths-based, early childhood services in all communities