



Starting a Child Care Center Checklist

Once you've made the decision to start a child care center there are specific steps you must take to gather the information you need to get started.

Below is a checklist that will assist you in your endeavor.

Step 1

Assess your readiness to start a child care business. Go to the tool—[Are you Ready to Start a Child Care Business?](#) This short questionnaire can help you assess your strengths and weaknesses as a potential business owner or center director.

Step 2

Check out the licensing requirements (see links to state-specific licensing entities on your state page). It will be important for you to research your state's requirements before you get too far in your planning, to determine any state and/or county specific regulations

Step 3

Define your business goals and establish your mission. [Go to the tool—Center Business Plan.](#) Among other topics you want to be able to discuss the following:

- Why are you starting a child care business?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- What is your target market and why?
- Location research including competition.

Step 4

Define what makes your child care center unique. By utilizing the tool—[Promoting Benefits of your child care](#)—you will be able to articulate not just the features of your child care (hours, ages of children) but also what benefit children and their parents will receive for using your child care center.

Step 5

Establish your business structure. You need to determine how you want to structure your child care business. Depending on the state you operate in there may be several choices. You may want to have a discussion with your tax accountant to see which structure will work best for you.

Step 6

Get an employer identification number (EIN) from the IRS www.irs.gov.

Step 7

Establish a business name and register the name with your state's Secretary of State's Office. You will want to first check with the Secretary of State's Office to make sure the name you want is available before spending resources submitting the paperwork. Many states' Secretary of State's Offices have made this information available online, free of charge.

Step 8

Assess your insurance needs.

Step 9

Develop a Business and Marketing Plan. We have two tools that will support your efforts.

1. [Center Business Plan](#)
2. [Developing a Marketing Plan](#)

Although this may take time and effort, by articulating your goals and how you will accomplish them, you are developing a plan for starting your own center!

Step 10

Get connected with your local child care resource and referral agency.

If you're unfamiliar with your local agency, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies www.naccrra.org links to your state and local child care resource and referral agency that will refer parents to your program and offers training and other services for providers. Since your local agency is often the major source of referrals to your program, you will want to get to know them as soon as possible and update your listing on a regular basis.

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