

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?		

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?		

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?		