



# CHILD CARE STARTUP GUIDE



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# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The City of San Mateo has been a leader in the County to address the need for more quality and affordable child care options since 2001. Efforts toward facilitating the development of quality, licensed child care options for families have been a priority for both the community and City Council. A key action was the implementation of a Child Care Impact Development Fund that can assist in the costs of that development. This guide is part of the City's effort to help remove barriers and provide some general information for both child care centers and Family Child Care Home (FCCH) providers navigating the City's permit process and related building requirements. It provides some of the basic, key information about local and state requirements that address licensing, property use, facility requirements, parking, health, fire, safety, and accessibility issues.

Depending on your experience and familiarity with either licensed child care and/or development and construction, this Guide may present some new concepts and new language. Processes described or highlighted also require interacting with several State and City departments and agencies that regulate child care programs. This Guide is intended to help you clarify which regulations govern which types of child care and where you can find more information or assistance as you move through the process.

Regulations and their interpretations change over time. This guide is intended to help you be aware of the breadth of planning and decisions you'll need to make. It will be important for you to research all topic areas before making any financial or construction decisions.



Figure 1: Creator: A1C Hunter Brady  
Credit: 20th Fighter Wing Public Affairs; Copyright: Public Domain

**Section 1:** Poses some questions about key considerations for your project.

**Section 2:** Describes quick tips about developing a business plan.

**Section 3:** Summarizes basic State licensing requirements and the steps to obtaining your State license.

**Section 4:** Provides zoning and planning information. It also highlights the Special Use Permit for child care facilities in San Mateo.

**Sections 5 - 7:** Explains the building and safety requirements, talks about fire safety inspections, and provides information about permits if you are planning to construct, alter or change the use of any building.

**Sections 8 – 10:** Provides additional information about how to obtain a City business license, how to be a good neighbor, and shares organizational resources. There is also information about financial assistance through the City. These funds are limited to capital expenses for expansion to increase the number of child care spaces or for a new facility.

# SECTION 1: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

More information will be provided in the following sections with regards to definitions, requirements, and resources. The questions below are some key considerations as you are thinking about and developing your child care business plan for the type of location you may be considering.

## Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)

**One of the most challenging steps can be determining if your home is appropriate for family child care.**

In the City of San Mateo, both Small and Large Family Child Care Homes are legally “allowed by right”, meaning the City does not require any special permit. That is different from the requirement of the State to obtain a child care provider license. Consider the following questions before you decide to open, expand, or remodel:

- What is the child care need in San Mateo?
- How much space do you have in your home for quality care, both inside and outside?
- How many children will you be able to serve with that space?
- Where is the dedicated pick up & drop off area?
- Where is there enough parking for staff and clients?
- How will you finance any necessary renovation to your home?
- What are the costs of startup and operation?
- What are the licensing requirements?
- Have you talked with your neighbors? Are they supportive?
- What training requirements are necessary before you begin providing care?
- What training is required for continuing professional development?
- Do you have a well-conceived business plan?

## Child Care Centers

**Please consider the following questions before you decide to build, expand, or remodel a facility:**

- What is the child care need in San Mateo?
- Do you have a well-conceived business plan?
- Is your selected location allowed to have child care facilities in that City zone?
- How much space do you have in your facility for the quality care required by licensing, both inside and outside?
- How many children will you be able to serve with that space?
- How much parking is available at that site?
- Is there currently a safe location for drop off and pick up of the children? Or is there a space that can be altered to meet that need?
- Based on your plan, will the property need renovation or construction? If so, to what extent?
- How will you finance any necessary renovation or construction?
- What are the costs of startup and operation? Do you have enough financial resources to cover the need?
- How long can you operate before you receive any income from fees and other sources?

# SECTION 2: DEVELOPING A BUSINESS PLAN

Developing a business plan is important in your planning for success. It will make you think about your goals, the resources you may need, and help you anticipate problems that might otherwise come up by surprise.

Some things to consider when developing your business plan include:

**Goals.** Setting short and long-term goals will help guide the development of your child care business.

**Setting fees.** The fees you charge your clients will provide the financial base for your business and your income. The Child Care Coordinating Council, known as 4Cs, is San Mateo County's nonprofit resource and referral agency. It is a source that may help inform current market rates and how to assist lower-income families with subsidy programs.

**Recordkeeping.** Identify and organize the records you must keep such as attendance, incident reports, medical information, payment, and emergency contact information. Be sure to find out what other information may be required by state regulations. Accurate and complete records are essential to running a successful business and prepares records for filing your state and federal income tax returns.

**Contracts.** Contracts can help address and ease possible misunderstandings between you and the families in your program. Contracts clarify the rights and responsibilities of each party, payment, policies, hours that you provide care, and other important details.

**Insurance Requirements.** All child care centers are required by law to carry insurance on their employees. Insurance is also important for various business liabilities. It is important to consult with insurers and/or tax professionals to review the specific requirements.

**Marketing.** Several months prior to opening, you should develop your marketing plan. Your plan should include your strategy on initial and continuous enrollment, as well as operation of your child care center. It's important that you meet regulations about advertising and the inclusion of your license number or status of licensing. Confirm the most current regulations through your licensing process.

**Meeting Quality Standards.** Once you are established, you may want to consider participating in training or other programs that focus on quality improvement. The San Mateo County Quality Counts program is available to eligible providers who have been licensed for 2 or more years. The program *"works to empower and support programs and educators to develop professionally and improve early learning"*.

There are a wide variety of resources publicly available online, at libraries, and bookstores that provide guidance, recommendations, specific ideas, and even templates on how to develop a good business plan.



# SECTION 3: STATE LICENSING

## Child Care Regulators

In the State of California, the Department of Social Services (DSS) Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) regulates and licenses child care centers and small and large family child care homes. The DSS website provides a wide variety of information and resources for both providers and parents, including links to the laws and regulations for all types of facilities.

This website is a good source of information that should be your primary resource for the most current information to use in your planning process.

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-licensing/how-to-become-licensed>



## Legal Definitions of Child Care

There are two primary types of child care, Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) or Child Care Centers (CCC). There are two sources of laws and regulations that govern child care. The laws are defined in the [California Health and Safety Code, Division 2, Chapter 3.5 for Day Care Centers](#) and [Chapter 3.6 for Family Day Care Homes](#). Regulations are in the [California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 12](#), Chapter 1 for Child Care Centers and Chapter 3 for Family Day Care Homes.

The definitions in the [City of San Mateo Zoning Code Chapter 27.04.130 Community Care Facility](#) are consistent with the following DSS regulation definitions.

## Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)

These child care businesses regularly provide care, protection, and supervision of children in the caregiver's own home in which they reside. These services are provided for periods of less than 24 hours per day while the parents or authorized representatives are away. Please note that it is important to review the licensing guidelines regarding the staffing ratios and the specific limitations for specific ages.

**Small Family Child Care.** Licenses may be for six (6) or eight (8) children, depending on the age of the children, adult ratio, and noticing to parents regarding additional children.

**Large Family Child Care.** Licenses may be for twelve (12) or fourteen (14) children, depending on the age of the children, adult ratio, and noticing to parents regarding additional children.

The provider of a large family day care home is to have successfully operated a small family child care home for one year prior to applying for large family care home status unless a waiver is granted by State for equivalent experience.

## Child Care Centers (CCC)

Child Care Center means any child care facility of any capacity, other than a family child care home, in which less than 24-hour per day nonmedical care and supervision are provided to children in a group setting.

There are four types of Child Care Centers licenses issued based on the ages of the children.

**Infants.** Care provided for children from birth through two years (or three years in some cases).

**Toddlers.** Care provided for children from 18 to 30 months. (This age group would be reflected as an optional component of either the infant or preschool portion of the license.)

**Preschool Age.** Care provided to preschool-aged children from two years through six years of age, depending on whether they are pre-kindergarten.

**School Age.** Care usually provided to children from 4 years, 9 months, and enrolled in kindergarten to 12 years. (May be up to 18 years.)



## Obtaining a State License

This Guide does not provide details on how to obtain a license, but the following provides some general information on the process. To obtain the most current information on the licensing process, it is important to review the Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) resources and information online at the website below.

<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/child-care-licensing/how-to-become-licensed>

All potential licensees – both centers and FCCH – must start with an orientation. You may go to the orientation in person or online.

To be eligible for financial assistance from the City of San Mateo, you will be required to either provide proof of current licensing applicable to the type of child care, or documentation that you are currently engaged in the licensing process.

## Basic Steps to a License

### **1. Register and attend the applicable orientation meeting for your desired license.**

This is a general overview of the licensing requirements and process, additional required trainings, and the role and responsibilities of the licensing agency. It will help identify the materials and process to continue for the applicable license.

**2. Site selection.** If you haven't already identified a site, this can be the most challenging part of starting your child care business. The City is available to provide some feedback and assessment of viability for your selected site. If you are a renter and you want to run an FCCH, be sure you've provided a 30-day notice to the landlord. To learn more about legal protections for family child care providers: "[Fair Housing Law Protects Child Care Providers \(DFEH- Dept. of Fair Employment & Housing\)](#)" If you are considering applying for financial assistance from the City's Child Care Facilities Fund (CCFF), a site assessment will be a required process. A brief description and further information about the CCFF is in Section 10.

**3. Initiate completion of application and all required documentation.** Application processing will not begin until all applicable forms are submitted to the State's CCLD with the nonrefundable application fee. You may also need to have completed all required trainings as defined for the license you are applying for. Be sure to keep a copy of all submitted documentation. The CCLD will review the information to confirm you meet the minimum. You should be assigned a Licensing Program Analyst (LPA) upon the receipt of your application who will help you through the process.

### **4. Obtain a permit from the City of San Mateo.**

There is more important information about location selection considerations, zoning requirements, and City permitting provided in Sections 4-7. The importance noted here is that the site, the project, and your desired changes may impact your development needs. The permitting process may take many months and may be costly to complete. It is very important to **start early** with the selection and processes for any site and modifications to the property. Be prepared with a contingency for both time and budget.

**5. Obtain City Business Tax Certificate.** A City Business Tax Certificate (commonly known as a Business License) is only applicable to and required of Child Care Centers and the certificate is issued by the City's Finance Department. This is an annual fee.

**6. Insurance.** Obtaining the appropriate insurance protects you and your business. Check with your homeowner's or renter's insurance provider for FCCH, and centers will require a variety of business coverages, such as Worker Compensation, Fire, Liability, Theft, etc.

### **7. Obtain final inspections and site visits.**

Based on the type of facility, this should include the CCLD LPA site visit and/or any required Fire and Building Safety inspections.

**8. Receive license, market and recruit.** Once you've received confirmation of your CCLD license, you're ready. Now you just need to have your qualified staff ready to go and fill the spaces!

# SECTION 4: SELECTION OF LOCATION

## Family Child Care Homes

This section applies most to Child Care Centers. However, you may decide that your residential property may need some modifications to best accommodate the child care business and meet the licensing requirements.

It is important that it's your home, so become aware of the need to obtain the appropriate building permits for any modifications to the property. This may include additions or changes to bathrooms, expansion of living rooms, kitchen/dining room remodel, etc. You will be expected to comply with the same planning, building, and fire codes that are applicable to all single family or multi-family residences within the City. You will also be required to comply with the same Municipal Code requirements regarding noise, parking, etc.



## City Staff Facility Site Assessment

The City of San Mateo has a strong interest in the successful creation and operation of more child care facilities within San Mateo. To help meet that goal, the City has developed a service that can help provide the information you need to make your most important business decisions. The service is a cross-departmental staff team that will provide "hands on" help with information and guidance as it applies to the property you've identified.

***This opportunity is a critical and early first step in your overall planning process.*** It can help determine the viability of the site and if it can be all you wish it to be. It can help confirm the allowable uses for that property; identify some of the key improvements and/or modifications to the property that may be required to become a licensed child care center; or possibly help better inform your decision regarding buying or leasing a property. Any provider that plans on requesting Child Care Facilities Fund assistance will be required to complete this site assessment process and submit the report with the application.

For a successful assessment review, you will need to have some basic information about the property and your planned operation. To request a Site Assessment, you will complete a few questions and submit the completed request form. Staff will then help schedule either an in-person or remote visit the Building Division, Planning Division, Public Works Department, and the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department will review your submitted information. They will point out the high-level issues observed, provide other recommendations as applicable, and then provide a summary report for you. This assessment and the information provided does not include every detail that may be encountered, nor is it any form of project approval, but it will be a great tool to discuss with your team to plan and budget your project.

## Zoning and Planning Review

Depending on the Zoning District of the location and the scope of any improvements to establish a child care center, a Planning Application may be required. The location of your project will determine the type and length of the process. We highly recommend that you discuss your project site with the City's Planning Division before you start spending any money.

Child care centers located within some residential and commercial zones must obtain a Special Use Permit (SUP). A SUP is intended to allow uses and development in areas that may have special impact, or uniqueness where their effect on the surrounding neighborhood cannot be determined in advance of the specific proposed project. The following is a quick description of zoning areas and whether a SUP is required.

- In Low-Density Residential (R1 & R2), allowed with SUP only if in a public or quasi-public building (school, church, etc.); otherwise not allowed.
- In Multi-family Residential, (R3 through R6-D), Central Business Districts (CBD and CBD/S), Open Space (OS): SUP is required.
- In Commercial (C1 through C4), Office (E1 and E2), and Manufacturing (M1) zones: No SUP required.

## Conditions

**Structure.** A child care center must conform to all development standards of the zoning district in which it is located. For example, any new structures and additions are subject to floor area ratio (FAR), setbacks, and other standards that could affect the size and location of structures.

### Parking Requirements and Passenger Loading/Unloading.

On-site parking and space required for the loading and unloading of children for day nurseries, including preschools and nursery schools must meet specific provisions as defined in Section 27.60.160 (5) (b) of the City's Municipal Code. Because each site may have unique conditions, it is important to understand the specific requirements for your site. Information about parking is available from the City Planning Division.

## Special Use Permit Process

The Special Use Permit (SUP) application process reviews the location, design, configuration of improvements, and potential impact on the surrounding area.

A SUP application is reviewed at a Public Hearing before the Planning Commission and any action by the Planning Commission can be appealed to the City Council. Physical changes to the exterior of the property may also require Site Plan and Architectural Review and approval.

The processing of a SUP application may take several months. It's important to understand that this is a technical application for which you will need to have a skilled professional to assist you. It is also important for you to understand the related costs for processing this application. If one is required for your project, it will be the primary phase to plan for in your project schedule.

You may obtain additional information and an application from:

Planning Division Public Counter  
330 West 20th Avenue, San Mateo, 94403  
Telephone: (650) 522-7212  
[planning@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:planning@cityofsanmateo.org)  
<https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/planning>



# SECTION 5: BUILDING AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

## Hire an Architect Early in the Process

With few exceptions, state law requires that a licensed architect prepare plans for the construction or alteration of a child care center.

For information about hiring an architect, you may contact:

California Architects Board  
2420 Del Paso Road, Suite 105  
Sacramento, CA 95834-9673  
Phone: (916) 574-7220  
Email: [cab@dca.ca.gov](mailto:cab@dca.ca.gov)  
<https://www.cab.ca.gov/>

You may want to obtain a copy of their "Consumer's Guide to Hiring an Architect", available free online.

There are some important building and safety code requirements applicable to new child care centers. These requirements are important to consider when selecting an appropriate child care site. A pre-inspection by an architect, known as a due diligence survey, is advised to determine if the existing construction has any violations.

## Family Child Care Homes

You may wish or need to make some minor changes to the residence to accommodate the state licensing requirements or for your own operational space. It's important to remember that your home will be required to meet all codes applicable to the type of residence and location. If you plan to modify the property in any way, be sure to first check with the Planning and Building Divisions regarding what is allowed and/or what permits will be required.

## Making it Accessible

Child care centers must be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. This means that centers must be built in compliance with the ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

This is not only for the participation of children with disabilities but for parents, guardians, or prospective customers with disabilities. If removing barriers is readily achievable, that is, if the barrier removal can be easily accomplished and can be carried out without much difficult or expense, then it must be done. Examples of barrier removal that might be undertaken to allow a child with a disability to participate in a center based early childhood program could include: installing offset hinges to widen a door opening; installing grab bars in toilet stalls; interior or exterior ramps; curb ramps; access ramps; nonslip floor surfacing; stair tread stripping; rearranging tables chairs, and other furniture; and, clear floor maneuvering dimensions. Centers run by government agencies must ensure that their programs are accessible unless making changes imposes an undue burden, these changes will sometimes include changes to the facilities.

Questions regarding these requirements may be directed to the Building Division.

You may also find more information at:

U.S. Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division  
Disability Rights Section  
<https://www.ada.gov/childqanda.htm>  
*"COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
ABOUT CHILD CARE CENTERS AND THE  
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT"*

# SECTION 6: CONSTRUCTION PERMIT AND APPROVAL PROCESS

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Permits are required to construct, alter, add to, or change the use or occupancy of any building. All newly constructed buildings/projects shall comply with the City's local codes, Title 24 and 2019 California Building, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, Energy and Green Building Codes as applicable. Unless you are buying an existing child care center that was legally established and do not intend to alter it, your project will most likely require a building permit for the Tenant Improvement (TI). You must obtain your construction loan before permits are processed. The following steps will help provide some tips and guide you through the construction permit and approval process.

## Step 1: Tips on Hiring a Licensed Contractor

Construction contractors and the services they provide can be the primary key to a successful project and one of the most important contracts you will need to solicit, negotiate, execute, and track. Good, transparent communication and trust are two of the most critical elements in making the right decisions. Certainly, the phrase "trust but verify" is applicable to selecting the right contractor.

Your architect, designer, or contractor may be your representative in the permitting process, but you are the one who is most dependent on the legal "on time and on budget" completion. For all and each of those professionals you may contract with, you need to know your rights as a consumer, understand the work being provided, for how much, and how long will it take. You also need to understand that construction can often run into unknown conditions, unavoidable delays, and unanticipated expenses, so it's best to consider these possibilities in your contingency planning.

Although your architect and/or your project manager may have recommendations for contractors and they may be the day-to-day connection to the contractor, it is important that you as the responsible party are involved in the selection and negotiation and stay engaged throughout the construction process.

There are many resources available online that provide good information and tips, but the primary source is the State of California Department of Consumer Affairs Contractors State License Board. They provide suggestions on research, requesting and selection of bids, and what to verify. Their website is also where you can research if the contractor is currently licensed.

For more information about hiring a contractor, extensive information is available online at Contractors State License Board: <https://www.cslb.ca.gov>

## Prevailing Wage

If you are considering a request for financial assistance from the City's Child Care Facilities Fund (CCFF), it is critical that you understand the requirement to hire contractors that pay prevailing wage. This requirement will typically increase the contract price significantly, so it's important to decide, plan, and budget for that based on your project needs. [California Labor Code Section 1720](#) requires any construction activities paid for with City funds are legally required to pay prevailing wage. This is an administrative responsibility on behalf of the contractor to implement and the CCFF recipient to monitor the payment of wages.

The City's CCFF loan document templates, available on the City's website, help define the monitoring responsibilities for all projects. The Prevailing Wage program is enforced by the State of California Department of Industrial Relations, for more information: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/Prevailing-Wage.html>

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## Step 2: Apply for a Building Permit

After receiving any necessary approvals from the Planning Division (See Section 4), you may submit your construction drawings and building permit application to the City's Building Division. Your application will require drawings & plans so they can be routed to all appropriate City departments for review. You may submit the application and plans electronically through the [City's Customer Self-Service \(CSS\) portal](#) or paper documents at the Permit Center in City Hall. Depending on the scope of your project, you may also need to submit other documents such as structural calculations and energy calculations (T-24 Energy report).

## Step 3: Complete the Plan Review Process

Normally within four weeks after plan review payment has been received, applicants will receive a comprehensive list of any outstanding requirements from City departments. All City staff members who review your application will be available for assistance. Contact information for your project manager and all staff reviewers will be included with your review comments.

Most submitted plans require some modifications to conform to local and state requirements. After making any necessary corrections to the plans and providing any additional documentation requested, resubmit your plans to the Building Division. Resubmitted documents normally take two weeks to review, unless significant new information is provided, which may necessitate additional comments. Once City staff verifies that all plan corrections are made and any remaining concerns have been addressed, the building permit will be ready to issue.

## Step 4: Obtain your Construction Permit

After completion of the plan review process, only the property owner or a licensed contractor may obtain the permit upon payment of all required fees. Contractors must have a state contractor's license and City business license, to obtain the permit. Property owners must have proof of ownership and complete the Owner/Builder verification form stating they take responsibility for the project and understand that any person who comes on the site must have workers compensation insurance, or the property owner will provide a policy for them so that if they get hurt on the job the property owner will not be sued. Tenants of buildings may not obtain any permits unless they provide an Owner/Builder verification form completed by the property owner indicating they have authorization to act on behalf of the property owner in this regard. The form must be notarized, or a copy of the owner's Driver's License must be provided.

## Step 5: Have Construction Work Inspected

Most construction work requires periodic City inspections. Generally, no work may be covered until the appropriate City inspector has inspected and approved it, such as, do not hang sheetrock until electrical/plumbing inspected or concrete cannot be poured until rebar is inspected, etc. Since each project proceeds at its own rate, the contractor or owner must request inspections when any work is completed to the point that a progress inspection is required. You will be given the information on how to request an inspection when you obtain your permit.

## Step 6: Obtain Final Approvals and Permission to Occupy

Upon completion of any required construction and approval from the necessary City departments, the Building Division will finalize the permit, or for new construction, issue a Certificate of Occupancy. The completion of either of those steps will authorize you to use the building as a day care center. This is the final step of the construction approval process. It is important that you flexibly plan the opening of your child care business to accommodate any delays in this final approval process.

# SECTION 7: FIRE SAFETY & HABITABLE HOMES

## Fire Safety Inspections

A key component of the State's child care licensing program is the confirmation that all sites meet all fire safety related codes, this applies to both Large Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) and Child Care Centers (CCC).

Your fire safety inspection will be required after your licensing orientation and your site inspection. Once the Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) has approved your site, they will request your local fire authority to do a fire safety inspection.

The fire authority should contact you to arrange the inspection of your proposed site. Inspectors visit the site and then approve or deny your application within 30 days of receipt of the inspection request from the State. They will inspect for general safety, code compliance, and maintenance requirements. They may also recommend and ask about your monthly fire drill plans and rehearsals.

There are a number of requirements to meet the fire safety codes. It's important for you to be aware of the requirements and assuring you're following the most current codes.

You may wish to contact the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department Bureau of Fire Protection for further information.

<https://www.smcfire.org/>



## Homes Must Be Habitable

The dwellings providing child care must also meet the habitability standards of State housing law. These standards include provisions for electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems in good working order, proper weather protection, freedom from rodent and insect infestation, structural safety, and proper disposal of trash and debris. All portions of the building must have been constructed with valid permits and inspections. All elements of the home must be maintained in conformance to the requirements of the permit and building code the house was built under. Common elements to maintain are:

- Structural members that will carry imposed loads with safety
- Safe electrical, plumbing, and mechanical equipment
- Safe fireplaces or chimneys
- Hot and cold running water to all plumbing fixtures
- Adequate heating
- Waterproofing of habitable rooms
- Lack of infestation of insects, vermin, or rodents
- Premises free of an accumulation of weeds, vegetation, junk, dead organic matter, debris, garbage, offal, rodent harborages, stagnant water, combustible materials, and similar materials or conditions that constitute fire, health, or safety hazards.

# **SECTION 8: OBTAINING A CITY BUSINESS TAX CERTIFICATE**

In accordance with California law SB234, Family Child Care Homes are not required to pay any taxes or fees to obtain a Business Tax Certificate, which is also known as a Business License.

All child care centers in the City of San Mateo are required to obtain a Business Tax Certificate. City business licenses are non-transferable. If you are the new owner of a child care center, you must apply for a business license in your name at the address of the child care center facility.

If you are opening a second location for your child care center, a separate license is required for each site. Each location must also comply with zoning regulations, as discussed in Section 4 of this guide.

If you are developing a new child care center, the City Planning Division must approve the Business Tax Certificate Application to make sure the project complies with City zoning requirements. If a Special Use Permit (SUP) is required, a business license cannot be approved until the SUP has been approved and applicable conditions of approval met.

## **Non-Profit Child Care Centers**

A child care center defined as a nonprofit corporation is exempt from paying the business tax; however, you must submit an application to ensure that you meet various other City requirements.

## **For-Profit Ownership or Corporation**

When a child care center opens as a for-profit business, the business tax shall be based upon your total annual gross receipts for the preceding year. If not in business for a full year, your tax shall be based upon an estimate of your gross receipts for a 12-month period. For further information on the business license tax for child care center operators, contact the Finance Department Business License office.

To obtain a City business license, you may apply in person at the Finance Department or online on the City's web site:

<https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/304/Business-License>



# SECTION 9: BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

## Tips for Child Care Programs

Early childhood programs are a very important resource in any community. For children, attending a quality early childhood education program either part-day or full-day (often referred to as child care) lays an important foundation for their later success in school and life. As a business, child care provides our community members opportunities to work, attend educational programs, and pursue other activities. Child care is important to the economy of our community for a myriad of reasons, including providing employment and income-generating business opportunities that supports quality of life and economic stability.

It is also very important for any early childhood program to be a good neighbor by working to minimize negative impacts that can result from their operation. All child care centers need to be sensitive to neighbor concerns about traffic, parking and noise, and to be proactive, along with parents, in preventing problems.

The following are some suggestions for measures that can help to create and maintain good relations.

- Take the time to get to know your neighbors, to explain your hours of operation, routine, including indoor and outdoor time, ages, and number of children cared for in your center.
- Invite your neighbors to visit your program. They may end up being a wonderful resource for volunteers.
- Encourage them to talk with you first if they have a concern or complaint. Be willing to compromise. Use a mediation service to help resolve issues, if necessary.
- Providing written instructions to parents, and sharing those with neighbors, can demonstrate your willingness to be a good neighbor and to ensure children's safety.

## Parking, Traffic and Safety

- Establish a designated pick-up and drop-off location and policy for parents. Discuss the policy and procedures with your neighbors.
- Request parents of children you care for to be considerate of neighbors. Provide them instructions, such as:
  - Do not block, turn around in or park in neighbors' or other business's driveways.
  - Do not double park when picking up children.
  - Supervise children carefully between vehicles and your home, to keep them from running into the street or across neighbors' yards. If parents park across the street, they must escort children even more carefully.
- Do not allow children to cross or play on neighbors' property without their permission.
- Set up your schedule in a way that allows parents to come and go over a period of time, to reduce the parking impact or impede traffic.



# **SECTION 10: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE & OTHER RESOURCES**

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## **City of San Mateo Child Care Facilities Fund**

Child care is a City Council priority for the San Mateo Community. The City implemented a Child Care Development Impact Fee in 2004. The funds collected from this fee are held in the dedicated Child Care Facilities Fund (CCFF). These funds are available to financially assist with the development of new child care facilities of all kinds that will result in more quality child care spaces within the City.

These funds are available in many ways depending upon the type of project and property owner. One way is through the deferred, forgivable loan program. Those funds may be used for capital expenses to acquire, build, remodel or otherwise improve a property to become a licensed child care facility. These funds are not eligible for the purchase, assistance of purchase, or additions to any existing FCCH properties. Funds are available to both child care centers, private and nonprofit organizations, and for some limited assistance for FCCHs. Detailed information on eligible activities and how to access these funds is available on the City's website: [www.cityofsanmateo.org/ChildCareFacilitiesFund](http://www.cityofsanmateo.org/ChildCareFacilitiesFund)

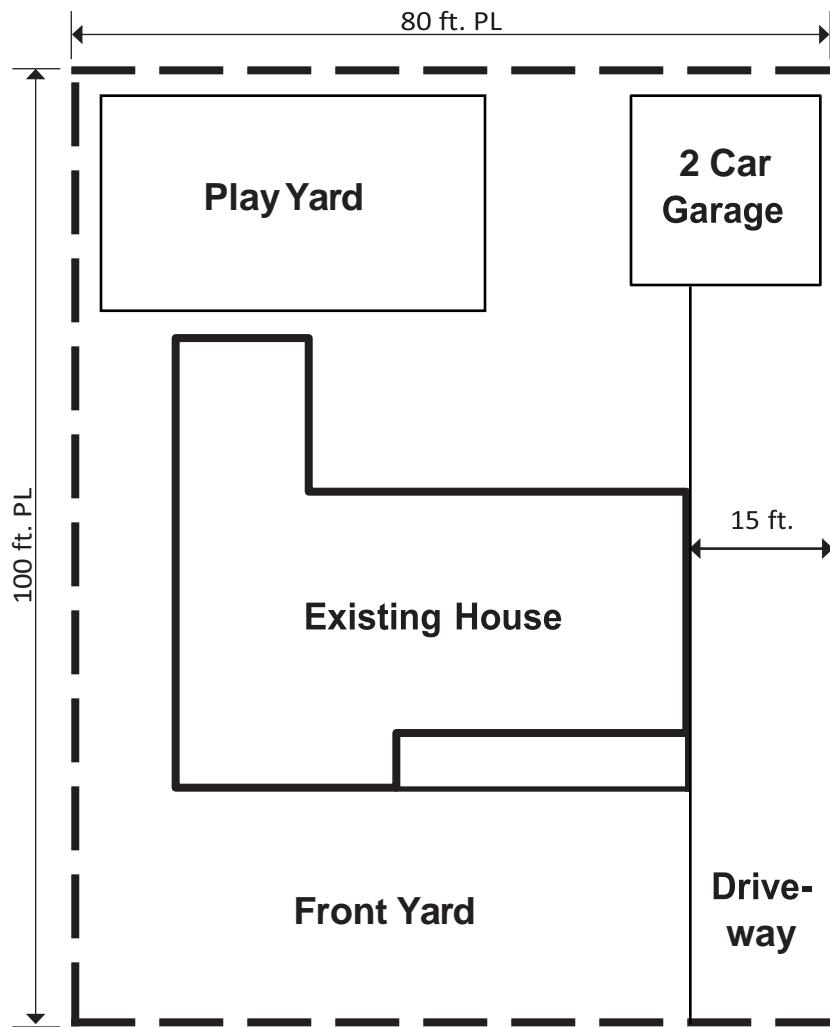
## **Non-Profit Resources**

There are non-profit resources to assist in planning for and preparing to become a licensed child care provider. The City has worked collaboratively with these organizations for many years to help develop policy and programs that will help address the gap in child care spaces. These would be the local organizations to reach out to early in your initial decision-making process.

- **4Cs, Child Care Coordinating Council for San Mateo County:** A Resource & Referral (R&R) agency that supports parents, providers, and our local community in finding, planning for, paying for, and accessing affordable, quality child care.
  - <https://sanmateo4cs.org/>
  - (650) 517-1460
  - [info@sanmateo4cs.org](mailto:info@sanmateo4cs.org)
- **Build Up for San Mateo County:** *Build Up* utilizes paid staff, volunteer community advocates, and a high-level, cross-sector Advisory Body to work with cities, developers, employers, school districts, and faith-based organizations to increase child care. This collaborative is hosted by 4Cs.
  - [BuildUpSMC.com](http://BuildUpSMC.com)
    - provides additional info, resources, and handouts
  - 650.517.1436
  - [buildupsmc@sanmateo4cs.org](mailto:buildupsmc@sanmateo4cs.org)

# APPENDIX A: SAMPLE SITE PLAN

This is just an example of a site plan that would be helpful to create as you start your planning process. This one reflects a home that may become a Family Child Care Home (FCCH). It does not need to be a formal architectural rendering or plan, but as shown, it provides the layout and the measurements of the property.



## 1234 Street Site Plan



# APPENDIX B: CITY & FIRE CONTACTS

City counters operate on a first-come, first-served basis

Building Division	(650) 522-7172 building.info@cityofsanmateo.org <a href="https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/Building">https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/Building</a> Building Division, Community Development Department, City Hall 330 W. 20th Ave. San Mateo, CA 94403  Please check the Building Division website for the most current Permit Center service hours, applicable for both Building and Planning Division.
Business Tax Division	(650) 522-7113 <a href="https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/304/Business-License">https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/304/Business-License</a> Business Tax Division, Finance Department, City Hall 330 W. 20 <sup>th</sup> Ave. San Mateo, CA 94403 Business Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm
Planning Division	(650) 522-7212 planning@cityofsanmateo.org <a href="https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/Planning">https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/Planning</a> Planning Division, Community Development Department, City Hall 330 W. 20th Ave. San Mateo, CA 94403  Calls to the Planning Division are returned by 5:00 p.m. the next business day. <i>For immediate service, planners are available at the Permit Center counter.</i>
Public Works Engineering	(650) 522-7300 publicworks@cityofsanmateo.org <a href="https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/137/Public-Works">https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/137/Public-Works</a> Public Works Engineering, Public Works Department, City Hall 330 W. 20th Ave. San Mateo, CA 94403
San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department - Bureau of Fire Protection and Life Safety	(650) 522-7940 <a href="https://www.smcfire.org/divisions/community-risk-reduction/bureau-of-fire-protection/">https://www.smcfire.org/divisions/community-risk-reduction/bureau-of-fire-protection/</a> San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department 1040 E. Hillsdale Boulevard Foster City, CA 94404  San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department is an independent, Joint Powers Agreement agency and is not part of the City of San Mateo organization.

# APPENDIX C: PROJECT PLANNING REMINDER CHECK LIST

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As you go through the Child Care Center development process, we know there is a lot to do! This list is just a start, but it can help you track your progress and what still needs to be done. We know many things are probably going to happen all at the same time, so we encourage you to take this and expand it to make it work best for you.

Have I....

- Contacted Build Up San Mateo County for information and referrals regarding developing child care?
- Prepared a thorough business plan?
- Contacted City Planning to determine the City's zoning of the proposed Child Care Center site?
- Determined the type of permit needed from City Planning, if any?
- Determined if there is a need for remodeling, renovation, or new construction?
- Determined acceptable parking circulation layout and other loading/unloading areas?
- Determined if it is necessary to hire an architect, engineer, or other building professional?
- Submitted required application materials for a Special Use Permit or any other Planning Applications, if applicable?
- Called the State of California Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) to obtain a child care center orientation meeting schedule?
- Attended CCLD orientation(s), received a certificate of attendance, and obtained a license application and current fee information?
- Completed the CCLD application forms and submitted them?
- Applied for a Building Permit, if applicable?
- Obtained a clearance from the Fire Department and an Annual Operating Permit?
- Scheduled a site visit with a State Licensing Program Analyst?
- Obtained a City Business License
- Introduced myself and talked with my neighbors?
- Identified any additional "to do" tasks that aren't listed already?



# APPENDIX D: SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT

The [Site Assessment](#) is used when a specific property is identified. This document may also provide some questions to answer. Providing as much as possible first will help staff to help with some key early answers.



## CHILD CARE FACILITY FUND SITE ASSESSMENT REPORT

**CITY OF SAN MATEO**  
330 West 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
[www.cityofsantamateo.org](http://www.cityofsantamateo.org)

The intent of this report is to provide a broad summary of the conditions, requirements, and/or recommendations of this property as a child care facility. The report will be based on the details provided below, researched information, images provided, and other information acquired from a remote or on-site assessment. The report will not include every detail that may be encountered, nor is it intended to be any kind of project approval. The service is offered to help interested parties and/or applicants confirm decisions about the viability of the identified property, inform project planning, and to prepare sufficient budgets. All Child Care Facilities Fund loan applicants will be required to complete this process and it will help and assure the loan request amount will be appropriate to meet those needs.

Requestors need to do some initial planning and research. Use this form to help gather the key information for your project and please review the *Child Care Start Up Guide* on the City's website for additional information and resources. Complete *Part 1 – Project Information* below prior to requesting an assessment. Once completed, contact City Staff to schedule the visit at (650) 522-7164 or [childcarefacilitiesfund@cityofsantamateo.org](mailto:childcarefacilitiesfund@cityofsantamateo.org).

### Part 1 – Project Information

Pre-Applicant Name	
Property Address	
Legal Property Owner Name <small>if different from Pre-Applicant</small>	
Is this location a New or Expanding Family Child Care Home (FCCH)? If yes, which?	
If yes, provide brief description below of what is you want to do at the home. Please also answer questions 1- 3 below.	

1	Target ages?
2	How many students of each age range?
3	Target total number of students?
4	Estimated number of employees?
5	What is the current use of the building? <i>i.e. offices, warehouse, church, existing day care</i>
6	Is the intent to use the whole building or part of the building?
7	What is the property zoned?
8	How many on-site parking spaces does the property have?
9	Based on child care licensing requirements and number of students, what is the <b>TOTAL OUTDOOR PLAY</b> space square footage needed for this site?
10	Based on child care licensing requirements and number of students, what is the <b>TOTAL INDOOR ACTIVITY</b> space square footage needed for this site?
11	What floor level will the day care be located on? <i>i.e. ground floor, basement, 3rd story</i>
12	Does the building currently have a fire sprinkler system?
13	Does the front door of the building face the street?
14	Are you aware of any easements that are on the property?