How Does a Child Care Center Become Licensed in Ohio?

September 2015
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Types of Child Care and Requirements
Types of Child Care and Requirements

**TYPE B HOME**
One to six children cared for in the provider's personal residence. No more than three children may be under 2 years of age. The provider's own children under 6 years of age must be included in the total count. Anyone can operate a Type B Home without a license. However, care for more than six children requires a license. Type B homes must be licensed by ODJFS, through the county department of job and family services if the child care is paid for with public funds.

**CHILD CARE CENTER**
Thirteen or more children at one time, seven to 12 children if not in a personal residence. Child care centers must be licensed by ODJFS.

**TYPE A HOME**
Seven to 12 children (or four to 12 children if four children are under 2 years of age) cared for in the provider's personal residence. The provider's own children under 6 years of age must be included in the total count. Type A homes must be licensed by ODJFS.

**CHILD DAY CAMP**
A program that operates for less than seven hours a day and only during public schools’ vacation, cares only for school age children, and is based at least 50 percent outdoors. Child day camps must register with ODJFS each year. If child care is paid for with public funds, the camp must also meet American Camping Association Accreditation standards, or be approved by ODJFS.
If you are interested in becoming a licensed **child care center**, please continue to review this information.

If you are interested in becoming a licensed **Type A home**, please contact the Child Care Help Desk at 1-877-302-2347, option 4.

If you are interested in becoming a licensed **Type B home**, please contact your county department of job and family services (CDJFS). Staff there will be able to assist you in the licensing process. Your local CDJFS can be found at the website listed below.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Q. How do I obtain an application?
A. To apply for a child care center license, follow these steps:

1. It is recommended that you attend the “How to Start” training that is available through the local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies.

2. Center owner/administrators must attend the “ODJFS Child Care Licensing Plan of Operation Orientation,” which is offered monthly throughout the five child care licensing field offices.

3. At the end of your Plan of Operation Orientation, you will receive a training verification number and have the opportunity to complete the initial application for a child care license.
Q. *Is the application fee due before or after a provisional license is issued?*

A. The fee is due at the time the application is filed; before the license is issued. The application fee for a child care center is $500.
Q. How long is the initial licensing process, from beginning to receiving a provisional license?

A. The initial process can vary depending on approvals from other agencies, delivery of equipment, staff and administrator requirements, and how soon training sessions are completed. Please allow at least 180 days.
Q. Do I need to have building, fire and food service approvals before I request an application?

A. No, the approvals from other agencies must be submitted with the completed Plan of Operation, after the orientation training is completed.
Q. What’s the difference between my application number and my license number?

A. Your application number will be a 7-digit number (that begins with 800). You will receive this number when your application is submitted electronically.

Your license number will be a 6-digit number that is assigned to you once a license is issued. It will be on your license face and should be included on all documents submitted to the licensing specialist after your program is licensed.
Q. When I look at the rules, what do all the numbers at the top mean?

A. Reading the rule is easier once you understand what each part of the number represents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example: 5101:2-12-18.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Agency Level Designation Number ¹ | Division Number ² | Chapter Number ³ | Rule Number ⁴ | Supplemental Rule Number ⁵ |

1- The ODJFS agency number is always 5101.
2- The division for child care is always 2.
3- The chapter number for child care center rules is always 12.
4- The rule number changes for each rule. It is the number to be most familiar with as rules are often referenced by this.
5- Only used occasionally, this indicates that it is a rule that deals with topics similar in nature, the rule number will stay the same, but additional supplemental numbers will be added. (For example, 5101:2-12-18, 5101:2-12-18.1 and 5101:2-12-18.2 all relate to transportation.)
Q. What do ORC and OAC stand for?
A. ORC stands for the Ohio Revised Code. These are Ohio laws, passed by the Ohio Legislature. The Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) contains the rules written by the agency to explain how the law will be administered. The OAC rules provide the details of the requirements originally set in law.
Q. Are all staff at the center required to have a complete file before the program can obtain a provisional license?

A. Yes. A complete file for a child care staff member includes verification of graduation from high school, a signed medical statement, a signed Nonconviction Statement, a signed Employee Policy Statement and verification that criminal background records checks have been requested. Results of the records checks must be reviewed and approved by the administrator before the child care staff member can be left alone with children.
Q. Are there any training requirements that must be met before receiving a license?

A. Before an application is offered, the owner/administrator must complete the trainings outlined in FAQ #1. During all hours of operation, there must be at least one staff person onsite who has completed training in First Aid, Management of Communicable Disease, CPR and Child Abuse Prevention. This coverage can be provided by one person or several different staff who have completed one or more trainings.
Q. What are the requirements for background checks for owners, administrators and staff?

A. Administrators and owners of a center or Type A home must follow the directions listed on “Instructions for Processing Background Checks” and have the results sent electronically to ODJFS.

Staff must have criminal record check results sent directly to the center or Type A home and do not follow the instructions on the link above.

Results must be reviewed and approved before the child care staff member has care, custody or control of children.
Q. What is the Plan of Operation?

A. The JFS 01250 is the “Plan of Operation.” This document, which is completed by the administrator, is the center’s written plan as to how the program will meet the requirements of the child care licensing rules and law.
Q. Where can I get funds to help with getting started?

A. Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency to see if any grants or funds are available. You should also check with local service agencies (such as the Lion’s Club, the Elks, The Eagles, Kiwanis, etc.).
Q. Where can I get a copy of the child care center rules that I will have to follow?

A. The child care rules for centers can be found here: Child Care Center eManual. You are responsible for printing and maintaining your own copy of the rules.
Q. How long will my license be valid?

A. A child care program is issued a provisional license, which is valid for 12 months. During this time, the program must demonstrate that it is able to operate in compliance with Ohio’s child care licensing rules and law. If the program is found to be in compliance during inspections in the provisional period, then a recommendation for a continuous license is made. The continuous license then remains valid as long as the program maintains compliance with the child care licensing regulations.
Q. *I already have two licensed programs with a good licensing compliance history. Do I still need to attend the training sessions?*

A. Program administrator/owners who already have a licensed program do not need to attend the “How to Start” training.

Program administrator/owners who have opened a child care center and completed the ODJFS Child Care Licensing Plan of Operation Orientation within the past two years are not required to attend again, as long as there are no ongoing licensing compliance issues with the current program(s).
How to Open a Child Care Center in Ohio
The first steps of the licensing process:

Be informed and have a plan! Many resources are available to help individuals who are interested in starting a child care program in the home or a separate building. Much work must be done before starting the licensing process.

For example, you should:

- Assess the community’s need for a child care program.
- Develop a business plan which ensures that adequate funding is available to cover the start-up costs and day-to-day expenses for the first few years.
- Select a location.
- Define your program’s philosophy.

If these areas are not appropriately addressed, it is unlikely that the program will succeed.
Next steps:

Through the [Ohio Professional Development Registry training website](#), you can sign up for the “How to Start” training (which is available through many of the R&Rs) or for the “Plan of Operation Orientation.”

The “How to Start” training is optional and includes the topics that need to be considered during your planning/pre-development stage. This training helps potential applicants understand the child care field, and helps them determine whether they are ready and able to proceed.
The “ODJFS Child Care Center Licensing Plan of Operation Orientation” (also called simply the “Plan of Operation Orientation”) is mandatory. During this training, the licensing specialists will review and discuss how to complete the Plan of Operation, child care rule requirements and where to find valuable child care resources.

Please read all the child care licensing rules prior to attending this training.
Trainings can be accessed directly through the Ohio Professional Development Registry at:

registry.ocrra.org
While you are completing the orientation training(s), you also can work on securing the approvals you will need for your facility. You will need approvals from:

- Zoning
- Building
- Fire
- Food Service
How to Open a Child Care Center

• **Zoning**

Many communities have zoning requirements, which need to be cleared with local (city or county) zoning boards. You will need to contact your local government body for this information.
• Building

Inspections are done by the Ohio Department of Commerce, the Division of Industrial Compliance and Labor. You will need to discuss several topics with them: the areas of the building that you are considering using for child care or related services, the ages of the children you plan on caring for, and where you will care for children who are 2½ years old and younger. ODJFS will need to receive a copy of your Certificate of Use and Occupancy that the building department will issue once your building is approved. Instructions for obtaining this certificate can be found by clicking here: DIC 3019.

*Please note you must have a copy of your Certificate of Use and Occupancy to give to your licensing specialist before your onsite inspection is completed.
How to Open a Child Care Center

• Fire
The facility must be inspected and approved before an onsite inspection by ODJFS can be completed. Contact your local fire official first. If they choose not to conduct the inspection, or are not certified to do the type of inspection your facility needs, the Code Enforcement Bureau fire safety inspector will conduct the inspection. You will need to discuss the following topics with the fire inspector: the areas of the building that you are considering using for child care or related services, the ages of the children you plan on caring for, and where you will care for children who are 2½ yrs and younger.

The inspection and approval must be documented on a JFS 01303 “Fire Inspection Report.”
• **Food Service**

Your program will need to contact the local health district that has authority over the area in which your program is located. You and the sanitarian will discuss your plans for serving food or for having food supplied by parents or a caterer, and what type of licensure is required. You will need written approval from the local health district before a provisional license can be issued.

Even part-time programs that serve only snacks need to contact their local health district to find out the food service requirements.
When you have completed The Plan of Operation training, you will be able to return to the ODJFS Child Care website, access the COLTS-SOLAR web page and fill in the information required to complete the Child Care Application.
Once the application is submitted, you must print a payment voucher and mail it with the required initial application fee.

You must save, sign and click the submit button for the application to be submitted.

* Do not send your payment and voucher until you have hit the “Submit” button.
Complete the Plan of Operation, obtain all required attachments, and submit them to your assigned licensing field office. An onsite inspection will be scheduled once the complete Plan of Operation and attachments have been received and you notify your licensing specialist that your facility is ready. At that time, your facility must be ready as if children were to attend the next day. (See the Initial Onsite Inspection Checklist.)
Licensing Process Checklists

Things to do to get ready...
Administrator Qualifications

To be a child care center administrator you must have:

• Verification of having completed a high school education AND either
• Two years of college (60 semester/90 quarter hours) with four Child Development (CD) courses (12 semester/18 quarter hours) OR
• 24 months’ experience in a licensed child care program and a currently valid Child Development Associate Credential OR
• 24 months’ experience in a licensed child care program and four CD courses OR
• Pre-Kindergarten Associate Certificate OR
• an ODJFS Administrator Credential OR
• Montessori Pre-Primary/Early Childhood Credential

(See Rule 5101:2-12-24 for more details.)
Playground Requirements

Playgrounds must have:

• Appropriate equipment/grounds for daily outdoor play in suitable weather

• 60 square feet of usable space per child using the area at one time

• Well-defined boundaries with a fence or natural barrier

• A provided shaded area

• Grounds that are free of foreign objects and rubbish

• Quarterly inspections (JFS 01281 – prescribed form)

• Equipment that is safe and appropriate for the age range of children using the play area

• Appropriate fall zones under and around equipment (See Appendix A of Rule 5101:2-12-14)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Equipment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inf – Infant (0-18 mo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tod – Toddler (18-36 mo)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre – Preschooler (3-5 yr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>S/A – School-age Child</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Inf</th>
<th>Tod</th>
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<tr>
<td>Art</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blocks</td>
<td>◆</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation toys</td>
<td>◆</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language arts and auditory equipment and materials</td>
<td>◆</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pretend or dramatic play materials</td>
<td>◆</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross motor equipment</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music equipment</td>
<td>◆</td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science and nature equipment</td>
<td></td>
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<td>O</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensory motor materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manipulatives</td>
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Required Postings

☑ In Each Classroom:

- JFS 01310 – Required Staff/Child Ratios for Child Care Centers
- JFS 01242 – Medical/Dental/General Emergency Plan (in each room and by all phones)
- JFS 01201 – Dental First Aid Chart
- Fire/Weather Emergency Plans with diagram for evacuation routes

☑ Check this out!
Required Postings

☑️ Required to be posted in at least one location in the center or home:

- Current center or Type A home license
- Licensing inspection/complaint reports for the past two years
- Administrator hours of availability
- Fire and weather drill record
- Food Service License
- No smoking sign
- No weapons sign
- Daily program schedule (for all age groups of children being served)
- Ohio Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart
- Weekly Menus (for all meals and snacks)
Staff Files

- Verification of high school education*
- Medical Statement (JFS 01296 – sample form)
- Signed Nonconviction Statement (JFS 01328 – prescribed form)
- Criminal Records Checks (FBI and BCI – results reviewed and approved by the administrator before staff member can be left alone with children)
- Employee Policy Statement (JFS 01246 – prescribed form)
- Copies of any in-service training that staff have completed

* Not required for employees who do not care for children and are not used in the staff/child ratios.

☑ Required to be on file for every child care staff member employed with the program

☑ Check this out!
Initial Pre-licensing On-site Inspection Checklist

All equipment must be present and set up in the rooms to be used. This includes:

- Equipment present in all categories for each room and age group
- Storage area for children's personal belongings
- Designated quiet area in each room
- Electrical outlets covered
- Cots assembled
- Cribs assembled and arranged at least two feet apart
- Crib area separated from the play area by a physical barrier
- Diaper changing areas set up and ready to use
- Towels and soap by sinks; toilet paper in restrooms
- Sinks and toilets at proper height or suitable platform in place
- Appropriate protective ground cover by outdoor play equipment
- Outdoor play equipment securely anchored, unless portable by nature
- Outdoor play area usable and fenced, if applicable
Employee Record Chart is filled out, and complete employee files are available for review. (Remember, documentation must be on file to verify coverage in First Aid, Communicable Disease, CPR and Child Abuse Recognition.)

All interior and exterior construction must be completed and cleaned up.

Cleaning supplies must be labeled and properly stored.

Center has a working telephone.

Supplies needed to properly care for an ill child are stocked.

First aid kit(s) are complete and properly stored.
Role of the Licensing Specialist
What ODJFS Regulates

**Plant**
- Facility has all approvals and adequate square footage, inside and out
- Safety and sanitation requirements
- Equipment and supplies

**Program**
- Supervision, guidance and care of children
- Nutrition
- Balance of quiet/active play
- Developmentally appropriate activities

**People**
- Staff/child ratios
- Employee requirements
- Children’s paperwork
- Incident reports
What Your Licensing Specialist Will Do

• Review your Plan of Operation and attachments.

• Assess if your program is meeting the requirements of the licensing rules by doing an onsite inspection before a license is issued.

• Recommend licensing actions to the director of ODJFS, based on information submitted and observed during the onsite inspection.

• Monitor the program’s compliance with licensing laws and rules through unannounced inspections after a license is issued, and provide written notification of the findings of these inspections.

• Assist you in developing ways to comply with licensing requirements.

• Investigate any complaints that ODJFS receives regarding your program, and review those findings with you once the investigation is complete.

• Provide consultation in the areas of nutrition, health, administration, programming and other aspects of child care.

• Welcome any comments, input and recommendations you may have about licensing rules and procedures.
Resources and Links
http://emanuals.odjfs.state.oh.us/emanuals
Child care rules, transmittal and procedure letters, forms

http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp
ODJFS forms, searchable by form name or number

http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/childcare.stm
Ohio’s child care website; links to forms, rules, child care licensing inspection reports, and information on trainings and Ohio’s child care programs

http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/index.stm
The front page for the ODJFS Office of Families and Children (OFC), which offers links to all of Ohio’s protective services for children and adults

http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/policies.stm
OFC’s page for rules and policy; links for signing up to receive electronic clearance notices, weekly JCARR notices, ORC and OAC rules and info on federal law governing ODJFS
http://www.cdc.gov/
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Offers valuable, credible information on many illnesses and prevention methods.

http://www.cpsc.gov/
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Offers information on all items that have had recall notices issued. The playground safety handbook is also available under the “Publications” heading.

NAEYC
The National Association for the Education of Young Children is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and development services for all children from birth through age 8.

OAEYC
The Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children, “The Voice of Ohio’s Early Childhood Professionals.”
Child Development and Child Safety/Nutrition

http://nrckids.org/
National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education (NRC). The NRC’s primary mission is to promote health and safety in out-of-home child care settings throughout the nation. “Caring for Our Children” can be accessed through this site.

http://www.healthychildcare.org/
Healthy Child Care America, a program of the American Academy of Pediatrics, offers many resources for early education and child care.

http://playgroundsafety.org/
The National Program for Playground Safety offers training, information and many resources on providing safe play areas for children.
The Office of Child Care
The Office of Child Care supports low-income working families through child care financial assistance and promotes children's learning by improving the quality of early care, early education and after-school programs. The Office of Child Care was established in September 2010 and replaces the former Child Care Bureau.

Caring For Our Children (CFOC)
“Caring for Our Children” has been a yardstick for measuring what has been done and what still needs to be done in the child care field, as well as a technical manual on how to do it.

http://www.zerotothree.org
Zero to Three is a national, nonprofit organization that informs, trains and supports professionals, policymakers and parents in the lives of infants and toddlers.
Child Development and Child Safety/Nutrition

http://www.naccrra.org/
Child Care Aware, formerly the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, is the nation's leading voice for child care. The group works with more than 700 state and local child care resource and referral agencies nationwide. These agencies help ensure that families in 99 percent of all populated U.S. ZIP codes have access to high-quality, affordable child care. To achieve its mission, the organization leads projects that increase the quality and availability of child care professionals, undertakes research, and advocates child care policies that positively impact the lives of children and families.

http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov
Healthy Meals Resource System provides information to persons working in the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs.

http://nrckids.org/default/index.cfm/parentsguardians/
This website is for parents of children who attend child care programs. This guide aims to meet your needs for current, expert information and leads you to other useful resources.
AAP and Child Care Disasters
These resources will be helpful for early education and child care providers, child care health consultants, pediatricians, and others working to strengthen disaster preparedness in child care programs.

Household Products Database
What's under your kitchen sink, in your garage, in your bathroom and on the shelves in your laundry room? Learn more about what's in these products, their potential health effects, and about safety and handling.

http://childcarelaw.org/
The Child Care Law Center is a national, nonprofit legal services organization that uses legal tools to make high-quality, affordable child care available to every child, family and community.

www.ada.gov
Commonly asked questions about child care centers and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
**Safecar.gov - Parents Central**

Every year, thousands of children are tragically injured or killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes. In fact, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children age 3 and older in the United States. Securing your children properly in age- and size-appropriate child safety seats — in the back seat of your vehicle — is the most effective thing you can do to protect them in the event of a crash.

**Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention**

The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI) is a five-year grant made possible by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. TACSEI takes the research that shows which practices improve the social-emotional outcomes for young children with, or at risk for, delays or disabilities. The center also creates free products and resources to help decision-makers, caregivers and service providers apply these best practices in the work they do every day.
Now that you know how a child care program becomes licensed...

Are you still interested?

First steps to take:

- Review rules and laws and keep a copy of each
- Develop your business plan
- Register for and attend the trainings
- Contact and secure inspections for zoning, building, fire and food service

Good luck and remember to use the resources suggested here.