

# BERGEN NEW JERSEY *County*

## Department of Human Services, Office for Children

### 7 Steps to Starting a Child Care Facility

Thank you for contacting the Bergen County Office for Children to ask for information on how to open a child care business.

**Please note** that if you are planning to provide childcare for **fewer than six children** in your home, you can voluntarily register as a **Family Child Care Provider**. This is a different application and application process. For more information on becoming a Family Child Care Provider, please contact Tiffany Breton at 201-336-7179 or by email ([tbreton@co.bergen.nj.us](mailto:tbreton@co.bergen.nj.us)) for more information.

If you are planning to open a Daycare, you need to obtain a license from The Department of Children and Families (DCF): <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/about/divisions/ol/licensing.html>

#### **Step 1: Location**

Do the research. How many childcare slots are available in the area you are considering? Will you be filling a need? Will the area demographics support your program? Make sure you chose a site that complies with the zoning laws. You will need to contact your municipality to confirm that you can operate a child care center at your location. After obtaining your Certificate of Occupancy, contact the Office of Licensing at 1-877-677-9845 for a courtesy inspection.



**James J. Tedesco III**  
*Bergen County Executive*

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## **Resources to look at:**

The latest market rate survey for NJ Childcare: <https://www.childcarenj.gov/getattachment/Resources/Reports-and-Statistics/2017-New-Jersey-Child-Care-Market-Price-Study-pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

One of the best websites for childcare information in NJ is: <https://www.childcarenj.gov/>

Also check out: <https://acnj.org/>

In addition, consider looking at the latest information on childcare deserts by the Center for American Progress: <https://childcaredeserts.org/2018/?state=NJ>

## **Step 2: Licensing Requirements**

Read your licensing requirements. Everything you need to know is in the [Manual for Child Care Centers](#). It includes requirements for health and safety procedures, record-keeping, staff qualifications and anything else that will be required of you.

The state has provided resources to make sure you meet all of the requirements. The [Understanding License Packet](#) contains over 60 pages of checklists, forms and templates, including a helpful self-assessment checklist that can bring your center up to the current state standards.

## **Resources to look at:**

[DCF Website](#)

## **Step 3: Prepare to Apply**

The New Jersey Child Care Licensing application requires documentation on your Center's status as a business entity.

Business entity requirements include:

**FEDERAL EMPLOYER ID NUMBER (FEIN):** The FEIN is an identification number used by the IRS for employment tax reporting purposes. It can be obtained on the [IRS Website](#).

**CERTIFICATE OF FORMATION OF CORPORATION:**

Check with [Online Business Formation Portal](#) for more information on forming your business.

#### **Step 4: Submit Application and Pay Fees**

Once you have completed the previous steps and reviewed your packet and checklists, it is time to submit the application. New Jersey has an [online child care licensing application](#) on the New Jersey Child Care Information System website (NJCCIS).

To apply, register for an account: select Applications on the navigation menu ⇒ choose Child Care Center New Application ⇒ Submit your licensing fee.\*

\*The fee scales with the size of your center and ranges from \$110 to \$250.

#### **Step 5: Obtain Background Checks**

In order for anyone to work in a child care facility they need to have a criminal background check. The [Child Abuse Record Information \(CARI\)](#) must be requested from the state after the child care provider application is sent. You will need background checks for all representatives of your business and regularly scheduled staff.

There is a \$10 processing fee associated with each CARI form. Contact the Office of Licensing at 1-877-667-9845 for more information.

#### **Step 6: Prepare for Licensing Inspection**

A representative from the Office of Licensing will contact you to arrange an inspection visit of your center. You must demonstrate compliance with all of the requirements you learned about in the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. Review your facility with the checklist provided in the application to ensure that everything is up to the necessary standard before the representative from the Office of Licensing is sent to your location.

#### **Step 7: Obtain Provisional License**

Now that you have completed the licensing inspection visit, you will be issued a provisional child care license for up to **six months**. During this provisional licensing period there will be announced inspections at your center. If you maintain compliance during the entire provisional licensing period, you will receive your child care license. Congratulations! You will need to renew your license every three years and maintain current standards.