



Maryland

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Family Child Care Home Application Resource Guide

Division of Early Childhood, Office of Child Care, Licensing Branch

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MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Document Control Information

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Purpose and Definition

The Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Early Childhood, Office of Child Care (OCC) is responsible for all child care licensing and regulation in Maryland. OCC's goal is to make sure that safe child care is available to all Maryland families. OCC maintains [13 Regional Licensing Offices](#) around Maryland, each of which is responsible for all child care licensing activities in its geographical area.

A family child care provider is a person who uses their residence to provide child care. Child care is defined as care provided to one or more children who are not related to the provider for which the provider is paid in cash or in kind. In order to ensure a safe environment, the State of Maryland limits the number of children in a family child care home. A provider may have a maximum of eight (8) children, with no more than two (2) children younger than two (2) years old. The provider's own children younger than six (6) years old are counted within the group of eight (8).

Is This the Career for Me?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I enjoy working with children?
- Am I knowledgeable about child development or willing to take classes about child development?
- Would I like to be able to set my own hours and/or wages?
- Am I interested in running a competitive business in my own home?

If you answered "yes" to all of these questions, then you may be a good candidate for a career in family child care.

Child Care Regulations

In Maryland, family child care is regulated under the Code of Maryland Regulations [COMAR 13A.15](#). These regulations require a person to obtain a "certificate of registration" (which is a form of license) before the person may operate a family child care program. Being registered means that your home meets certain child health and safety requirements. It also makes you eligible for tax deductions and certain subsidies. These benefits make your family child care home attractive to parents and more profitable as a business. COMAR 13A.15 may be found online at <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/regulations>.

Steps to Become a Registered Family Child Care Provider

1. Take the Family Child Care Orientation

If you are interested in applying to become a family child care provider, you must take the family child care orientation. The orientation is largely designed to inform you about the application process and the requirements you'll need to meet to receive a certificate of registration.

Information is available on the "Orientation" page of the MSDE website at:

<http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/licensing/orientations>.

2. Contact the OCC Regional Licensing Office In Your Area

Call the OCC [Regional Licensing Office](#) responsible for the county where you reside to let them know that you are interested in applying to become a registered family child care provider. That office will be responsible for processing your application, inspecting your program to make sure it meets regulatory requirements, issuing your certificate of registration, and providing you with technical assistance.

3. Submit an Application

You must submit an application for a family child care home. The application consists of the following items, all of which are discussed in detail during the orientation:

- OCC application form for a family child care home
- A substitute form for all substitutes
- Environmental Health Survey
- Written plan of operation
- List of residents of the home, substitutes and any other program personnel.
- Documentation of compliance with local zoning, building, health, and fire codes
- Evidence of child care liability insurance, if applicable
- Fire evacuation plan
- Written contract that includes fees, child discipline procedures and, the presence of pets in the home, if applicable
- Results of a criminal background check application for the applicant and each employee, volunteer, substitute or adult resident of the home
- Release of information form to grant permission to examine records of abuse and neglect of children and adults. This is required for the applicant, each adult resident of the premises, each employee, volunteer, substitute and/or any adult who may interact with children in care
- Medical evaluation for the applicant, each resident of the home and each employee, substitute and/or volunteer
- Documentation showing that all required training has been completed

4. Criminal Background Checks

You, all residents eighteen (18) years old and older, and all other adults associated with your program will be required to get criminal background checks using an approved Maryland Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) processing location. All individuals getting fingerprinted must use the regional office's authorization number. Additional information may be found here:

- <https://www.dpscs.state.md.us/publicservs/fingerprint.shtml>
- <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/fingerprinting>

5. Required Training

- 24 clock hours of pre-service training
- Emergency Preparedness
- Medication Administration
- Including All Children and the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Supporting Breastfeeding Practices
- First Aid and skills-based CPR certification
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), if applicable

6. Make Sure Your Home Is Safe and Properly Equipped

A safe physical environment is critically important for child care. Examples of how you can make sure that your home is "child safe" include:

- Using safety gates to restrict access to potentially hazardous areas such as stairs
- Covering electrical sockets
- Making household cleaners, medicines, tools, sharp instruments, weapons, and other harmful items inaccessible to children by placing them under lock and key
- Having operable smoke detectors in each room where the children will nap or rest
- Maintaining a first aid kit
- Making sure your home is properly equipped for child care will be important for the proper growth and development of the children in your program. The following are examples of equipment family child care providers usually need:
 - Cribs, playpens, cots and/or mats for children to nap or rest
 - A variety of age-appropriate toys, games, and books
 - Highchairs or booster seats
 - Outdoor play equipment and toys
 - Strollers

7. Pass OCC, Fire Safety, and Other Required Inspections

Your home will need to be inspected by the local fire authority to make sure that it meets all applicable fire codes. Depending on where the home is located, other pre-registration inspections by the Health Department or other local government agencies may also be required. An OCC

licensing staff person will schedule an inspection with you to make sure your home meets family child care regulations.

8. Fees

There are no fees for any inspections conducted by the regional licensing office. However, there may be fees for inspections by the local fire authority, health department, and/or other local agencies. There may be fees for the required training courses.

9. Application Completion Process

The application process is self-paced as determined by the applicant. The applicant has up to six (6) months to complete the application process. Once all the application documents and the home inspection have been completed, the office has up to thirty (30) days to review and approve or deny the registration. You will be notified in writing of the decision.

10. Inspections

All registered family child care homes receive at least one (1) annual unannounced inspection to determine if child health and safety requirements are being met. Additional unannounced inspections may be conducted as necessary to investigate complaints and to ensure the health and safety of the children in care.

11. Technology and Data Tracking

The Licensing Branch utilizes the Child Care Administration Tracking System (CCATS), Child Care Inspection System (CCIS) and Electronic Licensing Inspection System (ELIS) to track and manage data regarding applications, registrations, licenses, provider profiles, complaints, serious injuries and incidents, inspection reports and enforcement actions.

Forms

All forms are located on the MSDE website at: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/licensing/licensing-forms>

For other resource information, you may click on “Resource Documents” in the right margin of that website.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long is the application considered valid or active?

The application will be tracked and monitored for 6 months. After that time, incomplete applications may be considered withdrawn, and you will be notified in writing.

2. What could delay the application process?

The Licensing Branch tracks and monitors your application documents and requirements to ensure there are no delays. However, there could be delays related to the 8-point background checks, prerequisite approvals from the local jurisdictions, and other agencies that are not within the control of the Office of Child Care.

3. What happens when the application has been completed?

Once all of the application documents and the home inspection have been successfully completed, the office has up to thirty (30) days to review and approve or deny the registration. You will be notified in writing of the decision.

4. How long is my registration in effect?

The initial registration is valid for up to two (2) years. The provider may apply to convert the initial registration into a continuing registration. Each continuing registration is valid for up to two (2) years.

Resources

The Office of Child Care maintains a website that contains resources to help you operate your business:

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/>.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) - The [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered in Maryland by MSDE's School and Community Nutrition Programs Branch. Child care programs that participate in the program are eligible to receive reimbursement for program food costs.

Maryland Family Network - <https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/>

MD Infants and Toddlers Program - <https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Special-Education/MITP/index.aspx>

Child Care Scholarship Program - <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-scholarship-program>

Maryland EXCELS - <https://marylandexcels.org/>