Opening a Family Child Care (FCC) Program

BEFORE THE LICENSING VISIT



Make sure to review the complete "Opening a Family Child Care (FCC) Program" guidance series

1. INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS
2. **BEFORE THE LICENSING VISIT**
3. PREPARING TO OPEN

Congratulations on beginning the exciting journey of opening a Family Child Care (FCC) program! FCCs are an essential part of supporting young children's development, and your dedication to a building safe and healthy environment will be the foundation of your success.

Before the EEC Licensing visit, please consult this checklist of key steps and considerations.

☐ Administration

Documentation showing completion of the following:

- In-Person Potential Educator Meeting (PEM)
- EEC Essentials 2.0 training
- Family Child Care Potential Provider Meeting 1 (FCC PPT1)
- Family Child Care Potential Provider Meeting 2 (FCC PPT2)
- Infant/Child First Aid and CPR (must include in-person skills practice)

☐ Equipment and materials

Indoor and outdoor toys, furnishings, and equipment that are safe, sturdy, and developmentally appropriate.

- Enough variety for infants, toddlers, and preschool children.
- Check the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website for recalls.

☐ Family involvement

- A Parent Handbook that includes all important information about your program.

☐ Health and safety

- All adults working in the program:
  - Current certification in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid (with in-person skills testing).
  - EEC-approved Background Record Check (BRC) suitable status.
- Napping materials: Each child has their own age-appropriate item (crib, playpen, cot, mat, etc.).
- Diapering area: Separate from food preparation and eating areas.
- Pets: Licensed, vaccinated, and cared for in a safe, sanitary way. Outdoor play areas must be free of animal waste.
- Firearms/ammunication (if applicable):
  - Firearms stored in a secure, locked place, out of children's reach.
  - Ammunition stored separately from firearms.
- First Aid kit must include:
  - Family contact information
  - Medical information, allergies, and medications for each child
  - Authorization for emergency treatment
  - Supplies such as adhesive tape, bandages, gauze, non-latex gloves, instant cold pack, scissors, tweezers, thermometer, CPR mask
- A written Emergency Preparedness Plan in place.

☐ Mealtime, food, and food preparation

- Refrigerator temperature: 32–40°F with a thermometer inside to verify.

☐ Physical facilities

- Indoor space: Must meet minimum square footage requirements for the number of children in care (e.g., 150 sq. ft. for 1–2 children; 225 sq. ft. for 3–6 children; 35 sq. ft. per child for 7–10 children).

- Electrical safety: Outlets covered; cords secured and not hazardous.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors: Installed on every level of the home, outside of sleeping areas, including levels not licensed for child care.
- Water temperature: Hot water less than 120°F.
- Exits and evacuation routes:
  - At least two separate, hazard-free exits.
  - Exit signs posted where there is direct outdoor access.
  - Pathways kept clear at all times.
  - Licensed basements must have two ways to exit (one may be stairs to the first floor).
- Windows: If accessible to children, must be screened, locked, or secured so they cannot open unsafely. Blind cords must be inaccessible.
- Indoor/outdoor areas: Free of peeling paint, broken plaster, debris, or other hazards
- Hazardous materials: All cleaning products, sharp objects, medications, cosmetics, batteries, small toys (choking hazards), and other unsafe items stored out of children's reach.
- Stairways: Must have secure handrails and barriers.
  - Barriers required at both top and bottom of stairwells in child care areas (unless prohibited by fire/building regulations).
  - Top barriers must be permanently installed (no pressure-mounted gates).
- Heating sources:
  - Safe, code-compliant installation of stoves, radiators, fireplaces, and hot water pipes.
  - Portable space heaters are not allowed.
  - Indoor temperature maintained at 65°F minimum.
  - Children protected from extreme heat or burns.
- Pest control: Indoor space kept clean and free from vermin. Safe, effective pest elimination methods used. No pesticide use during program hours.

☐ Outdoor space

- Enough outdoor space for number of children in care (e.g., 6 children = 450 sq. ft.; 8 children = 600 sq. ft.; 10 children = 750 sq. ft.)

- Outdoor area free of hazards (traffic, water hazards, sharp objects, poisonous plants, debris, unsafe equipment).
- Playground equipment must meet EEC Playground Safety Policy.
- Porches/decks must comply with EEC regulations.
- Pools must follow EEC water safety rules.
- Well water (if used) must be tested and meet MA drinking water standards.

If you have questions about opening a Family Child Care program, please contact your EEC regional office.

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
617-988-6600
mass.gov/EEC