Opening a Family Child Care (FCC) Program

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS



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

In Massachusetts, opening a Family Child Care (FCC) program requires meeting specific standards for the space, completing background record checks for all individuals at the location, and ensuring the educator has the necessary professional qualifications to keep children safe.

This document outlines key considerations and questions for anyone exploring the idea of starting a FCC program.

Physical environment

When planning the licensed space for your FCC program, consider:

- **Residential use:** Is the home currently occupied for living purposes? (See 606 CMR 7.03(5)(e))
- **Association rules:** If your home is part of an association (apartment, condominium, HOA), do you need permission to operate a business?
- **Ownership or rental:** Do you rent or own your home?
  - If renting, have you informed your landlord or management company of your intent to open a Family Child Care business?
- **Local permits:** Does your city or town require a business permit?
- **Building level:** Is your residence located on the third floor or below?
- **Lead paint:** Does the home have peeling paint accessible to children?
  - If you know that your house contains lead, you must disclose this to families (See 606 CMR 7.07(6), (7) and 606 CMR 7.07(15)(a))

- **Exits:** Are there at least two separate hazard-free exits?
  - If you have a basement that will be licensed for child care, does it have two means of egress directly to the outside? (One may be the stairs to the first floor; see 606 CMR 7.07 (15)).
- **Outdoor hazards:** Are there significant hazards outdoors (e.g., busy street, water, poisonous plants) that may require fencing? (See 606 CMR 7.07(7),(9), and (13))
- **Space requirements:** Is there sufficient indoor and outdoor space for eating, active and quiet play, and napping?
- **Additional guidance:** For more on location requirements, see 606 CMR 7.03(5)(e)

Specifications for the physical space

- **Indoor activity space**
  - Minimum of 150 square feet for 1-2 children
  - Minimum of 225 square feet for 3-6 children
  - 35 square feet per child wfor programs serving 7-10 children
- **Outdoor space**
  - 75 square feet per child of approved outdoor space
    - If you do not have enough outdoor space at your home, is there a park or playground within walking distance?
- **Transportation**
  - If you are providing transpotation, you must follow the requirements in 606 CMR 7.13

Household members

Consider who will be in your licensed location and who may need to complete ongoing Background Record Checks (BRCs).

- **Children in the home:** Any children ages 0-10 at your home may affect your licensed capacity. See regulations 606 CMR 7.03(2) and (5)(c) for details.
- **Adults and older teens:** All individuals age 15 or older who live in or regularly spend time at your home must agree to complete a Background Record Check (BRC) and be found suitable.
- **An EEC Background Record Check includes:**
  - Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check through the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS)
  - Department of Children and Families (DCF) check for supported findings of abuse or neglect
  - Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) check through the Massachusetts Sex Offender Registry Board (SORB)

- Fingerprint-based check of state and national criminal history databases, plus a search of the National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR)
- When applicable, an out-of-state search for any known criminal history, child welfare records, or sex offender information for any state, territory, or region where the candidate has lived in the past five years
- For more information on BRCs, visit mass.gov/eec-background-record-checks (See 606 CMR 14.00)

Professional qualifications

Review your background, experience and readiness to work with children.

- **Minimum qualifications**
  You must have at least one of the following:
  - EEC teacher, lead teacher or director certification
  - One year of experience as a parent
  - One year of full-time experience caring for children under 12 years old
  - Nine months of full-time experience caring for children under 14 years old **and** 15 hours of EEC-approved training (excluding the EEC educator orientation)
  - Six months of full-time experience caring for children under 12 years old **and** 30 hours of EEC-approved training (excluding the Potential Educator Meeting or PEM)
  - For more details, see EEC's Professional Certification or regulation 606 CMR 7.09(15)
- **Health requirements**
  You must be able to obtain medical clearance from a doctor confirming that you are in good mental and physical health to care for children (606 CMR 7.09(14)
  - Review and complete the required medical form, which must be submitted with your Family Child Care Licensing application
  - Provide proof of immunization for measles, mumps and rubella, or documentation of an approved exemption (606 CMR 7.09(11)-(12)).

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

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
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mass.gov/EEC