

## Childcare Center White Paper

The following notes are targeted towards Minnesota Rule 3 Childcare Center Licensing.

1. Survey Staff for Child Count & Ages and Interest Level
2. Develop a Project Plan, Timeline & Budget
  - Be prepared to add to plan as you continue through the process
  - Decide on a target opening date –
    - i. IRT estimated 6 months from start to finish. IRT began the process in August 2020 and opened February 2021.
3. Register Business with State/Federal (if applicable)
  - Determine name and legal ownership of the business
  - *Suggestion:* Use LegalZoom or similar service for registration.
  - *Reminder:* Don't forget to register for MN Unemployment Insurance (if applicable)
4. Select License Type
  - Rule 2 – Family Childcare Unit OR Rule 3 – Childcare Center
  - IRT obtained Rule 3 Licensing
    - i. Pros: More flexibility with enrollment capacity; Ability to grow beyond immediate needs
    - ii. Cons: Detailed application process; navigating legal aspects of staffing; multiple inspections to coordinate for licensing
  - Determine capacity you will offer for each age group
    - i. Consider Staff to Child ratio requirements
    - ii. Allow for more spots than staff survey count
    - iii. Consider spots for kids who will age into other rooms
    - iv. Square footage available to the area
      1. Infant Rooms – subtract crib space from square footage
5. Determine where the center will be located
  - Plan for space to meet specific codes & possible need for renovations.
    - Building Code – you will need a final inspection from Building Inspector for the application
    - Fire Code – you will need a final inspection from Fire Marshall for the application
    - Minnesota Department of Health – for Kitchen Spaces
      - Kitchenettes (no stove/oven) are required to meet the MDH code for Kitchen Spaces
      - Contact MDH PRIOR to construction/renovation of any kitchen spaces
      - You will need separate sinks for handwashing and meal prep/dishes
      - Kitchens must have cabinetry on 6" stainless steel legs with removable kick boards so you can clean under
      - All appliances need to be industrial rated

- Dishes must be washed per MDH code;
          - *Suggestion:* Purchase industrial dishwasher that meets temperature and sanitization requirements
        - DHS Requirements – room requirements, space per child, handwashing stations, etc.
        - Playground/Outdoor Area Code
      - *Suggestion:* For renovations or new construction, work with a contract who is familiar with childcare or daycare centers.
6. Download License Application & Document List (Minn. Rule 3 Childcare Center)
    - Review in Detail
    - Refer to Document “Guidelines for Developing Policies and Procedures for Licensed Childcare Centers”
      - The licensor will review your submitted documents to this document, exactly as the listed. If you are missing any pieces, you will have to resubmit which can extend the timeline.
    - Attend Licensing Webinars Offered by the DHS
    - *Suggestion:* Download all available and use MN DHS forms and other documents noted on application. Revising or making your own runs the risk of missing information required for licensing.
  7. Partner with Health Consultant
    - Health Consultants must review your policies and procedures and provide a certificate of review PRIOR to application being submitted
    - *Suggestion:* Select a Health Consultant who sells pre-written policies and procedures to use
  8. Hire a Childcare Director
    - *Suggestion:* Hire a Childcare Director as early in the process as you can, especially if you are an employer who is implementing a center for employees
    - Make sure the Director meets education and experience requirements per the Minnesota Rule you will be licensing to
    - Director should take required training as soon as possible & be prepared to offer training to employees for topics that cannot be taken online/in person
  9. Create & Establish Required Policies, Procedures & Forms Required for Minn. Rule 3
    - You will need two separate policy handbooks -- one for parents and one for employees.
      - i. Make sure policies match between the two handbooks where there is crossover such as first aid policies, administration of medicine, etc.
    - See notes No. 6 regarding document list & guideline document and No. 7 regarding Health Consultant
  10. Purchase Equipment
    - Some equipment cannot be “used” without documentation of its condition

- Purchase Cribs that can be used for Fire Emergencies/Exits
- Keep an inventory of items purchased; use DHS equipment checklist

11. Purchase/Establish Workers' Comp Policy & Other Insurance

12. Purchase Subscription to Childcare Center Application

- We use Brightwheel – parents can check in/out, billing, communication with parents, etc.

13. Submit Application

- Verify ALL pieces have been included in the application
- Make sure your page numbers match table of contents for handbooks (parent & employee)
- *Suggestion:* Place all application documents into a binder with labelled tabs.
- There will be a follow up to your application with a request for more documentation— this is where you will need to start staffing and recruiting families as you will need to provide sample or full files to the DHS