

# Family Child Care

## Lets get started!

It's as easy as 1-2-3

### Step 1

*Making your decision, is family child care right for you?*

Starting any new business is a risk, and takes commitment and WORK! Family child care is no exception. Here are some things to think about as you consider whether family child care is right for you...

#### Will family child care work for me?

Take the family child care self-assessment and discover what strengths, interests, and ideas you bring to the profession, as well as what challenges may be ahead.

After completing this self-assessment, do you have questions? Think about these things...

#### Successful providers have and maintain a strong personal commitment to their work with young children

Family child care is hard work. Most providers report working an average of 55-60 hours per week either caring for children or doing things they need to do to keep their business in operation (grocery shopping, recordkeeping, home maintenance and cleaning, etc.). Although liking children and enjoying them is a great starting point, it takes much more to be a successful family child care provider. A knowledge of basic child development is key to being able to offer a high-quality program that meets the individual needs of each child. Being calm during times

CHILD CARE SELF-ASSESSMENT	ABSOLUTELY	I'M NOT SURE
	I'm ready for this challenge.	I need to think about this or learn more
I like being around children and enjoy their interests.		
I have a basic understanding of child development, and understand what children need to grow and thrive.		
I have the support of my family, children, and spouse.		
I am a calm and organized person.		
I would like being my own boss, setting my own work hours, and working out of my home.		
I can tolerate a certain level of noise and disorder in my home.		
I have good health and a fair amount of energy, and can handle working 10-12 hours per day.		
My home can be adapted to include necessary space, toys, and equipment for children in my care.		
I have the available resources I will need to make my home safe for children.		
I feel confident in my ability to communicate effectively with parents of children in my care.		
I am willing to invest time and resources for my own professional development by reading books, attending classes, and networking with other family child care professionals, keeping my motivation and skill level high.		
I have the skills to handle the "business side" of things (tracking income from parents and business expenses, basic recordkeeping), or have someone in my household that will help me with this.		
I have enough financial security to purchase what I will need to start my business, and to support my family for several months until my business is established and children are enrolled.		
I respect parents' decision to work outside the home and believe that good child care is good for children.		
I feel I can make a commitment of offering family child care for at least two years.		

of stress or crisis, and being organized are also important. Successful partnerships with parents take effort and good communication skills.

#### Having the support of your family matters

How your family feels about your business is important to your success, your sanity, and the well being of your family unit. You will need to customize your business to

# step one...

ITEM	HAVE	NEED	COST
Child size table and chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Booster seats, high chairs, infant seats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Individual crib or playpens for each infant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Beds, cots or nap pads for each older child, plus sheets and blankets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Changing table or mat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Variety of art materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Books for children of all ages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Games and puzzles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Sorting and stacking toys	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Dolls and props for pretend play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Building materials such as wooden blocks, Legos®, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Musical instruments, CD player, tape recorder or radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Some way to provide water and sand play, giving children the opportunities for scooping and pouring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Outdoor play equipment such as riding toys, swings, climber, large balls and hoops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Storage bins or drawers for the children's personal belongings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Fenced yard (may be required for licensing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Bulletin Board for parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Smoke detector, fire extinguisher (required for licensing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Safety items (outlet covers, doorknob covers, cabinet latches)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>

best fit your family's needs. You have to find a balance between your own family and your family child care families. Consider how the space in your home will be utilized for the business. Will your children have to share their toys and room with the child care children? Will the child care space be shared with your family's living space, or will it be separate? Will you need to rearrange your family space to accommodate your business needs? Talk about how your business will change your household operation, including both the positives as well as the challenges. The way you portray your job and your feelings about it, will have a lot to do with how your family views a family child care business in their home.



## Starting any new business costs money

Although the start-up costs for family child care are typically much less than most other businesses, you need to have access to the resources you will need to get started. What it will actually cost varies greatly, depending on what equipment and materials you may already have and what you may need to purchase. It is also important to understand that your income as a self-employed business owner may be irregular, and particularly unstable during the first year as you establish your business and build your enrollment.

Consider this checklist of basic equipment and materials needed for family child care, remembering that some things are required to begin your business and some can be added as you go.

Remember, what you will need to get started depends on what ages of children you plan to enroll. Utilize garage sales and "second-hand stores" to lessen your start-up costs.

# step two...

## Step 2

### Contact your local health agency for help with regulatory process

Anyone caring for one or more unrelated child(ren) for more than 20 child care hours per week or caring for more than two unrelated children away from the child(ren)'s own home must be regulated, according to Kansas law.

Contact the health agency in your county to sign up for an orientation session. At the session, child care licensing staff will explain all the regulations and give you the application paperwork.

There are three types of regulated family child care — registered, licensed, and group licensed. Each category has unique features, but many similar requirements.

	Registered	Licensed	Group
Has an annual inspection from your local licensing surveyor	varies	X	X
Annual fire inspection may be required	X	X	X
Requires first aid training	X	X	X
Must maintain complete health records on all children and adults, including up-to-date immunizations	X	X	X
Requires initial and ongoing training		X	X
All members of the household must pass a KBI background check	X	X	X
Annual written renewal paperwork required	X	X	X
Provider must be at least 18 years of age	X	X	X
All household members must have a physical examination and a TB test on file for anyone over 16 years of age	X	X	X
Pets must be certified as healthy from a licensed, practicing veterinarian, with updated vaccinations	X	X	X

People in the process of becoming licensed to offer family child care may be issued a temporary permit, valid for ninety days. A provider with a temporary license must follow all of the same regulations as a provider with a permanent license.

These are just a few of the requirements for licensing or registration. At your orientation session, you will receive a copy of the regulation book, and have the opportunity to ask questions.

REGISTERED FCC PROVIDER CAPACITY	6			
Max. no. of children under 18 mo.	3			
LICENSED FCC PROVIDER CAPACITY	10	10	9	8
Max. no. of children under 18 mo.	0	1	2	3
Max. no. of children 18 mo. to Kindergarten age	7	5	4	3
Kindergarten to age 11	3	4	3	2
LICENSED GROUP FCC PROVIDER CAPACITY	12	12	12	10
Max. no. of children under 18 mo.	1	2	3	4
Max. no. of children 18 mo. to Kindergarten age	8	7	6	4
Kindergarten to age 11	3	3	3	2

NOTE: Children Kindergarten age and over may be substituted for younger children in the license capacity.



# step three...

## Step 3

### Contact ERC

Once you have attended orientation and have made a decision to proceed with your plan to open a business, ERC offers a variety of services to help you as you establish your business, outlined in the Provider Services brochure included in this folder. Some of these services include:

**Child Caring newsletter**, full of information about programs and services, upcoming events, and activity ideas (sample included in this folder).

**Ongoing professional development opportunities**, with the training calendar published both in ERC's newsletter and on our website, [www.ercrefer.org](http://www.ercrefer.org).

**Resource Lending Library**. A \$10 annual library membership fee is required for borrowing privileges. With a membership, you may check out:

- Teacher resource books and videos (includes topics such as age appropriate activities, nutrition ideas, holiday/seasonal themes, music and art ideas, behavior and guidance, environments, business resources (contracts and policies, marketing, recordkeeping), working with families, and more!
- Prop Boxes for check out (dramatic play thematic unit)
- StoryTotes for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (literacy based thematic unit)

You don't need a library membership to visit and review resource materials in the office, or to access:

- Pamphlets and brochures for providers and parents
- A die cut machine to cut letters, numbers and other shapes for games, bulletin boards, or name tags for use by providers, free of charge (bring your own paper or felt)
- A laminator for use by providers (26" width, self-service cost \$0.50 per running foot, \$.75 cost if ERC staff laminates for you)
- Copy machine (\$.05 per copy)

Additional information about the library is enclosed in your folder, including a list of the story totes, prop boxes, and die cuts currently available.

**Scholarship opportunities** through ERC vary by county for professional development, college coursework, and national credentialing.

**Technical assistance**, by phone or onsite at our office or your home, providing information for you to answer your questions and concerns about topics such as:

- enrolling families by marketing your business
- knowing how much to charge
- recordkeeping and tax issues
- creating a professional development plan
- organizing the space in your home, and



- developing a contract and provider policies for your business

ERC offers special support to family child care providers who care for infants or toddlers (children under age three) through the Infant/Toddler Project. An Infant/Toddler Specialist can provide both telephone or onsite assistance to you as you begin your business.

ERC also has Early Care & Education Specialists who can offer information and assistance to providers who care for children with special needs or disabilities. Please see the booklet *Inclusion in Family Child Care*, and call if you have questions.

Come in and see us! The ERC staff welcomes you, and wants to help! ERC is typically open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended hours available. Check the *Bright Beginnings* newsletter for extended hour days/ times, or call ERC for information at 785-357-5171 or 1-800-279-2372 (long distance only).

# tips...

## Tips to help your business grow and thrive

### Promoting your business and enrolling families

- Contact ERC and list your vacancies. We will refer families to you once you have your temporary license.
- Print business cards, and carry them with you everywhere! Look for opportunities to meet people and tell them about your service. Tell everyone you know about your child care business. Chances are, if they (or someone they know) do not need your services now, they may at some other time.
- Set professional goals for yourself and your business. Once your business is established, consider accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care, and/or earning your CDA (Child Development Associate) credential.
- Use an answering machine so that you won't miss calls from perspective clients. Make sure that it has a professionally sounding greeting. Keep a record of families who have contacted you for future reference.
- The best way to build your business is to offer a high-quality service. Make sure you do your best, each and every day, to serve the children in your care.

### Schedules, routines, and activities

A predictable schedule is important to children, and will help your days be calmer and more organized. A daily schedule helps children learn the order of their day. Children feel secure when they know they can depend on certain routines. Your schedule reflects your unique situation. It should allow for flexibility, as well as allow you to take advantage of teachable moments— unexpected learning opportunities such as the discovery of a bird's nest, or an ant hill!

### Planning your daily schedule and activities

- Your schedule should provide time for play and child care routines such as diapering, snacks, meals, and rest time.
- Parents will want to know about your curriculum, or daily activities. Base everything you do on your knowledge about child development, and how children learn.
- Plan activities that offer a balance between quiet and active play, free play and structured activities, with activities that interest and challenge the children in your care.
- Limit the use of television to less than two hours each day. Be selective about what the children watch, making sure it is both educational and appropriate for young children.
- Manage working with children of different ages by planning your schedule and activities in a way that gives you time with infants when older children are playing or napping, and by offering activities that work well with children of varying ages and abilities.

## Business strategies

There are two things you do to increase the amount of money you earn from your business — increase income and reduce expense.

### Ways to boost your income

- Contract with SRS—Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, 1-888-369-4777.
- Participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which will reimburse you for healthy meals and snacks you serve.
- Make sure the fees you are charging are competitive with other providers in your area offering a similar program and services.
- Collect fees from parents on time by having (and enforcing) a well-written contract and provider policies.
- Keep your enrollment full by offering a high-quality service that meets the needs of working families.
- Consider extending your hours of operation.

### Ways to reduce your expenses

- Educate yourself by reading a book and/or attending a tax workshop on family child care taxes to decrease your tax liability.
- Use a tax preparer that is knowledgeable about family child care taxes.
- Keep careful records about all income and expenses.
- Invest wisely in your business by prioritizing your "wish list," and by purchasing used equipment and materials when appropriate.
- Teach children to use supplies and materials wisely to avoid waste.
- Take advantage of programs that provide FREE materials and supplies for your business.

### Protect yourself, reduce the risks of doing business

- Follow all registration or licensing regulations. Go over the house rules and safety procedures with the children to avoid dangers.
- Establish policies and procedures on how medical, weather, and other emergencies will be handled.
- Review insurance policies to make sure your business is covered in all areas. Many people falsely believe that their homeowner's policy will cover their business, and that their automobile insurance will cover them when they transport children enrolled in their child care program. The fact that you are operating a business changes your insurance coverage! Consider all insurance needs and areas of coverage.
- Screen and closely supervise anyone hired to help care for the children.
- Report all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to SRS. The Kansas Toll-Free number is 1-800-922-5330.

ERC Resource & Referral is a not-for-profit organization and has been providing referral services since 1978.

The agency is a member of the Kansas Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (KACCRRA) and has earned the national Consumer Education Quality Assurance award through the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA).



Funding for ERC is made available through numerous sources including the Kansas Children's Cabinet, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services as administered by KACCRRA, United Way of Greater Topeka, the ERC Designers' Showhouse and memberships and donations. Call 785-357-5171 or 1-800-279-2372 for more information on how you can support ERC.



## Important things to remember

### Communicate regularly with parents

Take time to build strong relationships with your parent/clients. Use various communication tools (a contract and policies, daily notes, phone calls, parent/family conferences, parent evaluations of your services, etc.) in order to build the partnership relationship with families. Invite their participation in a variety of ways, and remember that happy clients are an extremely effective marketing tool for your program!

### Build a support network

Sometimes family child care providers may feel isolated, because they have limited contact throughout the day with other adults. Remember... you are not alone! ERC is here to help, just a phone call away. We welcome your questions, and want to support you in your business of providing high-quality care for young children.

Additionally, there are also provider support groups and associations that offer information and support from peers, other people who offer child care in their homes that can share their knowledge with you.

**The National Association for Family Child Care** (NAFCC) is the organization at the national level. NAFCC offers an accreditation program for family child care providers, publishes a newsletter, performs advocacy work at the national level, and sponsors an annual conference. Learn more at [www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org).

**Child Care Providers Coalition of Kansas** (CCPC) is the state association in Kansas. CCPC publishes a newsletter and sponsors an annual conference. Check them out at [www.ccpcofkansas.com](http://www.ccpcofkansas.com).

Local organizations are also available in some counties. Contact ERC for information about groups in your area.

Membership information about many of these associations is available at the ERC office.



## Resource & Referral

1710 SW 10th St., Suite 215  
Topeka, KS 66604

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

785-357-5171 or 800-279-2372

[www.ercrefer.org](http://www.ercrefer.org)

Funding provided by:

