

Establishing or Expanding a Childcare Operation in the District of Columbia

Child Development Home (CDH)

- Permitted in all residential zones
- Not permitted in multi-family buildings with 3 or more units
- Must be the operator's principal residence
- Up to 9 children permitted as a matter of right (including resident children), and up to 12 as a special exception
- Requires a **Home Occupation Permit (HOP)** from DCRA
- Subject to Zoning regulations for HOPs & Appendix M of the Building Code for CDHs
- May require a Building Permit
- HOP required to secure an OSSE license
- Does not require a business license

1. Decide to establish or expand a CDH
2. Ensure your home is in compliance with the HOP and Building Code regulations*
 - o A Building Permit may be required to achieve compliance
3. Complete the HOP application packet, which includes:
 - o Application form
 - o Written fire evacuation plan
 - o Graphic fire evacuation plan
4. Submit the application packet to DCRA
5. Schedule an inspection to verify your evacuation plans*
6. Receive issued HOP permit when the inspection is passed and the application is approved

Child Development Center (CDC)

- Permitted as a matter of right for properties zoned for daytime care uses
- Not permitted in most residential zones unless as a special exception
- The number of occupants is determined by the size of the space based on building code requirements
- Requires a **Certificate of Occupancy (C of O)** from DCRA
- Subject to applicable Zoning & Building Code Regulations
- May require a Building Permit
- C of O required to secure an OSSE license
- Does not require a business license

1. Decide to establish or expand a CDC
2. Ensure your facility is in compliance with the Zoning and Building Code regulations*
 - o A Building Permit may be required to achieve compliance
3. Complete the C of O application packet, which includes:
 - o Application form and required documents
 - o Written and Graphic fire evacuation plans
 - o May require an approved Building Permit
4. Submit the application packet to DCRA
5. Schedule a C of O inspection
6. Receive issued C of O permit when the inspection is passed and the application is approved

*DCRA is partnered with OSSE to achieve Mayor Bowser's initiative of increasing access to childcare in the District. As part of this initiative, DCRA offers specialized services for Access to Quality Childcare Expansion (A2Q) Grant applicants, including site visits to review proposed CDH and CDC spaces for general regulatory compliance and verify CDH evacuation plans. If you are interested in taking advantage of these and other program services, or have questions about the regulatory and permitting process, please contact **Hillary Seybold at (202)899.3621, hillary.seybold@dc.gov**, or visit her at Permit Center station #29 on the second floor of DCRA at 1100 4th St SW. Please visit <https://dcra.dc.gov/service/childcare-permitting-and-regulations> for more information.

