OFFICE OF THE STATE
SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Child Care Program Licensing Process: Steps for Getting Licensed in DC

To operate a child development facility in DC, an individual or business must be licensed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). An individual or business may not operate a child development facility without first obtaining a license issued by OSSE.

There are three types of child development facilities in DC:

- Child development centers;
- Child development homes, which care for up to six children in the provider's home; and
- Expanded child development homes, which care for up to 12 children.

Almost all child care programs in DC must be licensed. A list of programs that do not need a license is available here. Step for completing the licensing process for all types of child care programs are below.

For questions about the licensing process, contact OSSE.ChildCareLicensing@dc.gov or (202) 727-1839.

Step 1 Complete licensing orientation and quiz based on the type of child development facility seeking a license:

- Orientation webinar and quiz for child development centers

Step 2 Obtain Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) or Contract with DCPS and Facility Use Agreement

Step 3 Obtain Fire Safety Inspection from Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS)

Step 4 Obtain Lead Certification **OST facilities in school buildings may request a waiver for this requirement*

Step 5 Obtain Clean Hands Certificate

Step 6 Obtain Insurance (Liability, Molestation & Abuse, Umbrella "centers only")

Step 7 Complete and submit child care licensing application to OSSE

A $75 application fee is due at the time the application is submitted

Step 8 Assigned licensing specialist will contact applicant to schedule inspection and provide technical assistance prior to the inspection

Step 9 Prepare for initial inspection

Step 10 Initial inspection conducted

Step 11 Follow-up inspection (if applicable)

Step 12 Validation visit

Step 13 Issuance of license