



HOW TO OPEN A PRESCHOOL & DAYCARE

The Complete Startup Checklist

1 — LEGAL & LICENSING

- Research your state's licensing requirements for childcare facilities
- Choose a business structure (LLC, sole prop) and register your business
- Apply for an EIN with the IRS
- Get general liability & childcare insurance
- Complete CPR & First Aid certification
- Schedule health, safety & fire inspections
- Apply for & receive your state childcare license

2 — LOCATION & FACILITY SETUP

- Choose a space meeting square-footage-per-child rules
- Childproof: outlet covers, cabinet locks, corner guards
- Set up areas for learning, play, naps & meals
- Stock cleaning, sanitizing & handwashing supplies
- Install fire extinguishers, smoke detectors & first aid kits
- Create & post an emergency evacuation plan

3 — STAFFING

- Determine required staff-to-child ratios by age group
- Write job descriptions for teachers & aides
- Require background checks & CPR certification for staff
- Create a staff handbook with policies & expectations

4 — ENROLLMENT & FAMILY POLICIES

- Create an enrollment application & signed contract
- Draft a parent handbook (hours, fees, holidays, illness policy)
- Set up emergency contact & medical/allergy forms
- Establish tuition, payment schedule & late-fee policy
- Decide on a waitlist & priority enrollment process

5 — CURRICULUM & DAILY PROGRAMMING

- Choose a curriculum approach (play-based, Montessori, themes)
- Build a sample daily schedule
- Plan age-appropriate activities, themes & seasonal units
- Set up a system to track developmental milestones
- Plan parent communication (daily reports, photos, app)

6 — PRICING & BUDGET

- Research what comparable programs charge in your area
- Calculate monthly operating costs (rent, supplies, payroll)
- Set tuition rates & weekly/monthly payment plans
- Budget for one-time startup costs
- Set up a simple bookkeeping system

7 — MARKETING & FILLING YOUR FIRST SEATS

- Create a simple logo & consistent brand look
- Set up Instagram & Facebook pages
- Build a simple website or landing page
- Create flyers for community boards & pediatric offices
- Ask first families for reviews & referrals
- Host an open house before opening day

Want done-for-you templates for every step?

Get the full "How to Start a Successful Preschool & Daycare Business" bundle — enrollment forms, parent handbook, classroom decor, curriculum & a marketing toolkit, ready to customize in Canva.

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