

Northwest Regional Child Care Coalition – Child Care Technical Assistance Team

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Interested in starting or expanding a licensed child care program in Region 2 (northwest lower Michigan)? We would love to help you move forward! Please contact Norika Kida Betti (norika.kidabetti@networksnorthwest.org) or Woody Smith (ssmith@avenueisr.com) to learn more, or feel free to connect with any of the partners identified below.

“CTAT” = Child Care Technical Assistance Team of the Regional Child Care Coalition

“Resource Center” = The Great Start to Quality Northwest Resource Center

“Licensing” = Child Care Licensing Bureau

“Regional EDOs” = Economic Development Organizations (Networks Northwest, Alliance for Economic Success, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, etc.)

HB = “home-based”; CB = “center-based”

\$\$ = indicates paid services are available to help; Free = indicates free services are available to help

There are four basic phases to starting or expanding a child care program.

Phase 1: Feasibility and Business Planning				
Activity	Detail	Resource	\$\$ or Free	Setting
Market Analysis & Readiness	Determine child care needs of community, employees, etc. through data, mapping and/or surveys	CTAT	Free	HB, CB
	Determine if other licensed providers have capacity to meet the need	Resource Center, school districts	Free	HB, CB
	Learn about licensing rules and readiness	Licensing (orientation)	Free	HB, CB
Facilities Feasibility	Identify a site suitable for high quality child care, can meet local zoning and has the appropriate square footage	IFF, Regional EDOs, First Children’s Finance, Nest Community Partners	\$\$	CB
	Conduct preliminary fire safety review to determine needs	Arthur E. Shaw, contractor	\$\$	CB
	Obtain estimates of capital needs to meet safety and quality	IFF, First Children’s Finance	\$\$	CB
Financial Feasibility & Business Planning	Develop reasonable pro forma estimates for capital investment and ongoing revenue/costs	SBDC, Venture North, IFF, First Children’s Finance	\$\$	HB, CB
	Create a business plan specifying for-profit or nonprofit, establishing program priorities and uses of space, staffing plan, all pro formas, etc.			
	Identify project manager(s) to lead the work from planning to opening	Several being identified now		CB
	(if needed) Form new business entity – for profit or not for profit		\$\$	CB
	(if needed) Obtain any necessary sources of funding for capital and operating budgets	Venture North for capital stacking; working to secure facilities grants	Free	HB, CB

Phase 2: Facility Development

Activity	Detail	Resource	\$\$ or Free	Setting
Design & Construction	(CB) Working with an architect, develop plans for building and playground; submit plans to Bureau of Fire Safety for review / modification	Various	\$\$	CB
	(if needed) Apply for a Special Land Use Permit or other permit required by local zoning	Networks Northwest	\$\$	CB and some HB
	(CB) Identify a general contractor and/or construction management company to secure bids and manage construction	Comstock Construction, Cunningham Limp, BurdCo	\$\$	CB
	(HB) Identify tradespeople, service providers and vendors to complete renovations	Ace Handyman	\$\$	HB
	Identify and obtain all needed fixtures, finishes, furniture and installed equipment to provide quality care	Several mentioned; to be updated	\$\$	HB, CB
	Complete all necessary work and local inspections for occupancy			

Phase 3: Licensing & Policy Development (overlapped with Phase 2)

Activity	Detail	Resource	\$\$ or Free	Setting
Licensure	Identify <u>qualified</u> center administrator or HB child care business owner to complete license application and lead program			HB, CB
	Contact Licensing to address questions related to the licensing application	Our Strong Start , Licensing Resource Center	Free	HB, CB
	Complete online Child Care Licensing application and submit the application fee; address any questions	Our Strong Start, Licensing	Free	HB, CB
Policy Development	Create policies for safety, emergency preparedness, hygiene and health	Licensing, Resource Center	Free	HB, CB
	Create employee handbook, set wages/benefits and plan for staff development and quality improvement	Licensing, Resource Center	Free	HB, CB
	Create rates, contracts and policies for families in care	Child Care Back Office	\$\$	HB, CB

Phase 4: Opening & Ongoing Operations				
Activity	Detail	Resource	\$\$ or Free	Setting
Prepare for Opening	Recruit and train staff; ensure all have completed background checks and fingerprinting requirements			HB, CB
	Obtain and set up materials, learning aids and toys			HB, CB
	Participate in Great Start to Quality rating system and build public profile			HB, CB
	Promote imminent opening of program to regional employers, community groups, social media groups and others; enroll families	Child Care Back Office	\$\$	HB, CB
	Obtain any needed insurance, ideally working with an agency with an understanding of child care	Several mentioned; to be updated	\$\$	HB, CB
	Set up scheduling and enrollment systems, bookkeeping, billing, accounting	Child Care Back Office Bright Wheel		
	Join one or more professional networks, e.g. Family Child Care Network, chamber of commerce, etc. for mutual aid and support			
Open and Ongoing Operations	Hold grand opening – congratulations!			
	Work with an accountant or other tax professional with an understanding of child care for ongoing tax prep	Child Care Back Office	\$\$	HB, CB
	Work to continuously maintain and enhance program quality, celebrate success and potentially consider expanding capacity	Resource Center quality improvement coach	Free	HB, CB