

About the Children's Services Facility License ([MCC 4-75](#))

A Children's Services Facility license is required for the business activity of day care center or children's play center as defined under [MCC 4-75](#).

Children Services Facility business activity classifications:

- **Children's Play Center** - any institution or place, where the primary business activity is to provide recreational activities to children under 17 years of age.
- **Day Care** - any institution or place, regardless of nomenclature and with or without a stated educational purpose, including, but not limited to, any day care center, where three or more children six years of age or younger, who are not of common parentage and who are apart from their parent or guardian, are cared for during all or part of the day.

Pre-Application Checklist

The following activities must be completed **BEFORE** applying for any business license.

- ✓ [Check your Zoning designation](#). Verify that your proposed business activities are allowed at your potential business location.
 - DO NOT enter into any financial commitments (i.e. Commercial lease, Construction/build-out) unless you are certain that you are in the proper zoning district that allows the proposed business activity.
 - DO NOT assume the previous owner's zoning designation applies.
- ✓ [Register your business with ALL of the appropriate government agencies](#).
- ✓ [Check state or federal laws and requirements](#).

How do I apply?

You may apply for a license by going online at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp, and then click on [Apply for a License](#), or in person at the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) office in City Hall, 121 North LaSalle Street, Room 800. An appointment is recommended and can be made by calling (312) 74-GOBIZ / (312) 744-6249, or by going online at www.cityofchicago.org/bacp, and then click on [Schedule An Appointment With A Business Consultant](#).

STEP 1: LICENSE APPLICATION

- A separate license shall be required for each separate business location.
- All activities and services to be provided must be described on the application.
- License application fee: **\$165.00** per location. Fee is based on a two-year term.

Standard application requirements and documentation may be found in our [License Application Requirements Information](#) web page.

Additional application requirements:

1. A fingerprint-based criminal history investigation is required for every owner, corporate officer or any person who has a 25% or more interest in the business, as well as every on-site manager. A cost recovery fee of \$40 per person will be assessed for the service of fingerprint processing.
2. Certificate of Insurance exhibiting commercial general liability coverage, with limits of not less than \$300,000 per occurrence, combined single limit, for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage.

The following individuals are ineligible for a Children's Services Facility license:

- Any person having contact with children who has been convicted of offenses against children.
- Any person found guilty, or liable, within the past ten years of a felony of any nature; unless the person has been determined to be rehabilitated.
- Any person who has had a license of this type revoked in within the last 4 years. A license will not be issued if a license at the location of the business has been revoked within 1 year of the date of the application.

The following activities are prohibited for a Children's Services Facility license:

- Hold a liquor license for the sale of alcohol at the licensed facility;
- Hold a license for the sale of tobacco products at the licensed facility;
- Permit the consumption of alcohol at the licensed facility;
- Hold or conduct any amusement at the licensed facility, other than those amusements authorized

STEP 2: ZONING REVIEW

Every business license, location expansion and change of location application requires review and approval from the Zoning Unit of the Department of Housing and Economic Development.

The City of Chicago is divided into distinct zoning districts that reflect the diversity of business and neighborhood uses. Each zoning district has different regulations regarding the types of business activities that are permitted.

During a review, the Zoning representative looks at the following:

- Proper classification of the business activity/ies.
- If the business activity/ies is/are allowed in a specific district.
- Compliance with parking, landscape and building requirements.
- Proper building permits have been applied for/issued.

Applicants for the "Day Care" business activity are required to obtain a "Parking Determination Letter" (PDL), issued by the department of Housing and Economic Development (DHED) – Bureau of Planning & Zoning, room 905. The PDL will indicate required parking, drop-off spaces and other traffic issues.

Only one CHILDREN'S SERVICES FACILITY license is required to conduct ANY OR BOTH of the following activities. However, zoning must approve all specific activities at any given address.

STEP 3: INSPECTIONS AND PERMITS

An inspection of your business location is required for certain business activities, and is scheduled within 5-10 business days of license application fee(s) payment.

BUSINESS ACTIVITY	ONSITE INSPECTION TYPES				
	DOB – Electrical, Plumbing, Ventilation	DOB - SIP	CFD	CDPH - Food Protection	CDPH – Health Surveillance
Children’s Play Center		✓	✓		
Day Care Facility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The **Chicago Department of Buildings (DOB)** – DOB is the department which conducts building inspections and processes and issues building permits.

- a. A building permit is required for any structural build-out, including rehab of a location. Structural work includes, but is not limited, to: plumbing, electrical, natural gas line, HVAC, drywall, demolition or construction. A more complete list of structural work requiring a permit is available here. All structural work must be completed before the building inspection.
- b. Prior to receiving a Children’s Services Facility license the premises must pass an onsite inspection by DOB.

The **Chicago Fire Department (CFD)** – CFD is the department which ensures that fire safety and fire prevention measures are in place.

- a. Fire inspectors will conduct an onsite inspection to check for safety measures to ensure that the site is fire resistant and easy to evacuate in case of an emergency.
- b. Prior to receiving a Children’s Services Facility license, the premises must pass an onsite inspection by CFD.

The **Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) – Food Protection** – CDPH is the department which ensures food safety and sanitation to prevent the spread of food-borne disease.

- a. The Food Protection division educates food businesses, inspects food establishments, addresses food related emergencies, and otherwise acts in the public interest.
- b. Prior to receiving a Children’s Services Facility license for a Day Care Facility business activity, the premises must pass an onsite inspection by CDPH – Food Protection.

The **Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) - Health Surveillance** – Health surveillance inspectors ensure that day care facilities are properly staffed, staff is properly trained, facilities are clean, and that necessary equipment is properly maintained.

STEP 4: SIGNAGE AND USE OF THE PUBLIC WAY

In addition to issuing business licenses, BACP, through its Public Way Use (PWU) unit, is the department which handles general Grants of Privilege for the use of the public way. These permit applications are necessary when a business owner wishes to hang a sign, awning, or anything above, on or below the public way.

- a. Prior to hanging or constructing any sign that hangs over the public way, the applicant must file a Sign Permit Application with BACP. This detailed process includes obtaining additional permits from DOB as well as approval from the City Council. Because a sign contractor must be licensed with the City in order to obtain a sign construction permit, please see the [list of approved sign contractors](#).
- b. For temporary use of the public way (such as the temporary obstruction of a sidewalk or street for installation or construction work), contractors must obtain a Public Right of Way Use Permit from the Chicago Department of Transportation. Information about this permitting process is available at the [Regulations for Construction in the Public Way](#) web page.

For additional information, please go to our [Public Way Use](#) web page.



STEP 5: STATE AND FEDERAL COMPLIANCE

In addition to the City of Chicago regulations outlined above, new Children's Services Facilities may need to comply with State of Illinois and Federal regulations related to taxation, employment, health, and disability, along with other requirements.

In particular, applicants that conduct the activity of a Day Care must be licensed by the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). State licensure is required by law for day care facilities that operate in Illinois. The State of Illinois issues a license that governs the staffing and program standards of the day care center operations.