

Child Care

HOW-TO GUIDE



This guide is intended for general guidance only. Not all requirements identified in this guide are applicable to every child care proposal, and other requirements not identified may arise. It is the child care provider's responsibility to understand and comply with all provincial and municipal regulations and requirements before opening a child care facility.

For assistance, please see Section 5 of this guide for helpful contacts and resources.

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1.0 ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Quality child care is an essential building block in a community's social infrastructure, positively impacting the local economy and enhancing the overall health and well-being of the entire community. According to the District of North Vancouver Child Care Action Plan, more than 2,000 additional child care spaces are needed by 2030 to meet projected demand. The District of North Vancouver is committed to being an active partner in the development and maintenance of an accessible and safe child care system that meets the community's needs.

This guide is intended to provide easy-to-use information and step-by-step assistance for starting, expanding, or relocating a child care facility in the District of North Vancouver.

2.0 CHILD CARE IN THE DISTRICT

The District of North Vancouver [Zoning Bylaw](#) defines a child care facility as:

any premises used for group day care, family day care, kindergarten, preschool, out of school care, or child-minding.

Child care facilities are generally permitted in all zones in the District. Learn the current zoning of your property online at DNV.org/zoning-map.

All child care facilities in the District are regulated by the Provincial *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and *Child Care Licensing Regulation*, which are administered by Vancouver Coastal Health, as well as the District's Child Care Facilities Business Regulation Bylaw.

OVERVIEW OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<p>District of North Vancouver</p> <p>For more information, visit: DNV.org</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sets zoning regulations which identifies where child care uses are permitted in the community• Issues Building Permits• Issues Business Licences under the Child Care Facilities Business Regulation Bylaw• Conducts inspections of child care facilities to ensure compliance with provincial and federal code requirements
<p>Vancouver Coastal Health</p> <p>For more information, visit: vch.ca/public-health/licensing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues Community Care Facility Licences under the Provincial <i>Community Care and Assistance Living Act</i>, <i>Child Care Licensing Regulation</i>, and the standards of practice for licensed child care facilities• Monitors and inspects licensed child care facilities• Responds to and investigates complaints or allegations of unsafe, inappropriate, or abusive care
<p>Child care provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures the health, safety, and well-being of children through compliance with all provincial and municipal licensing regulations and provincial and federal code requirements• Obtains all required provincial and municipal licences and permits to operate a child care facility

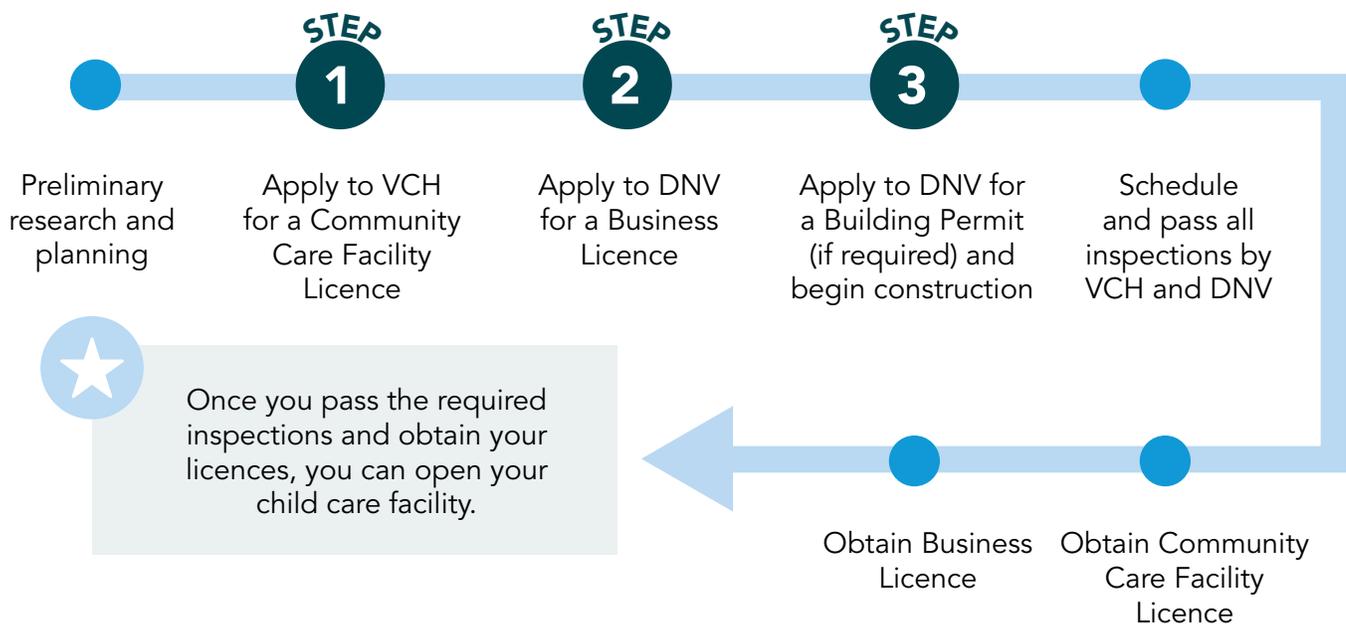
3.0 LICENSING & PERMIT APPROVAL PROCESS

Child care providers offering care for three or more children (who are not a sibling group and are not related to the caregiver or provider) are required to hold the following licences:

- a valid **Community Care Facility Licence** issued by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), and
- a valid **Business Licence** issued by District of North Vancouver (DNV).

A Building Permit issued by the District of North Vancouver may be required if you are proposing renovations or a change of use to the building. If your property is within a Development Permit Area (DPA) and exterior renovations are proposed, you may also be required to obtain a Development Permit before applying for a Building Permit. To learn if your lot is located within a DPA and for requirements, visit DNV.org/DPA.

The following sections provide step-by-step assistance and general information on how to obtain a Community Care Facility Licence, a Business Licence, and a Building Permit.



The different licence and permit approval processes may occur at the same time or in a different order; however, you can only open your child care facility once a Community Care Facility Licence and a Business Licence are issued and a Building Permit (if required) is completed.

Follow steps in Diagram 1 on the following page to determine common requirements for starting, expanding, or relocating a child care facility based on your proposal.

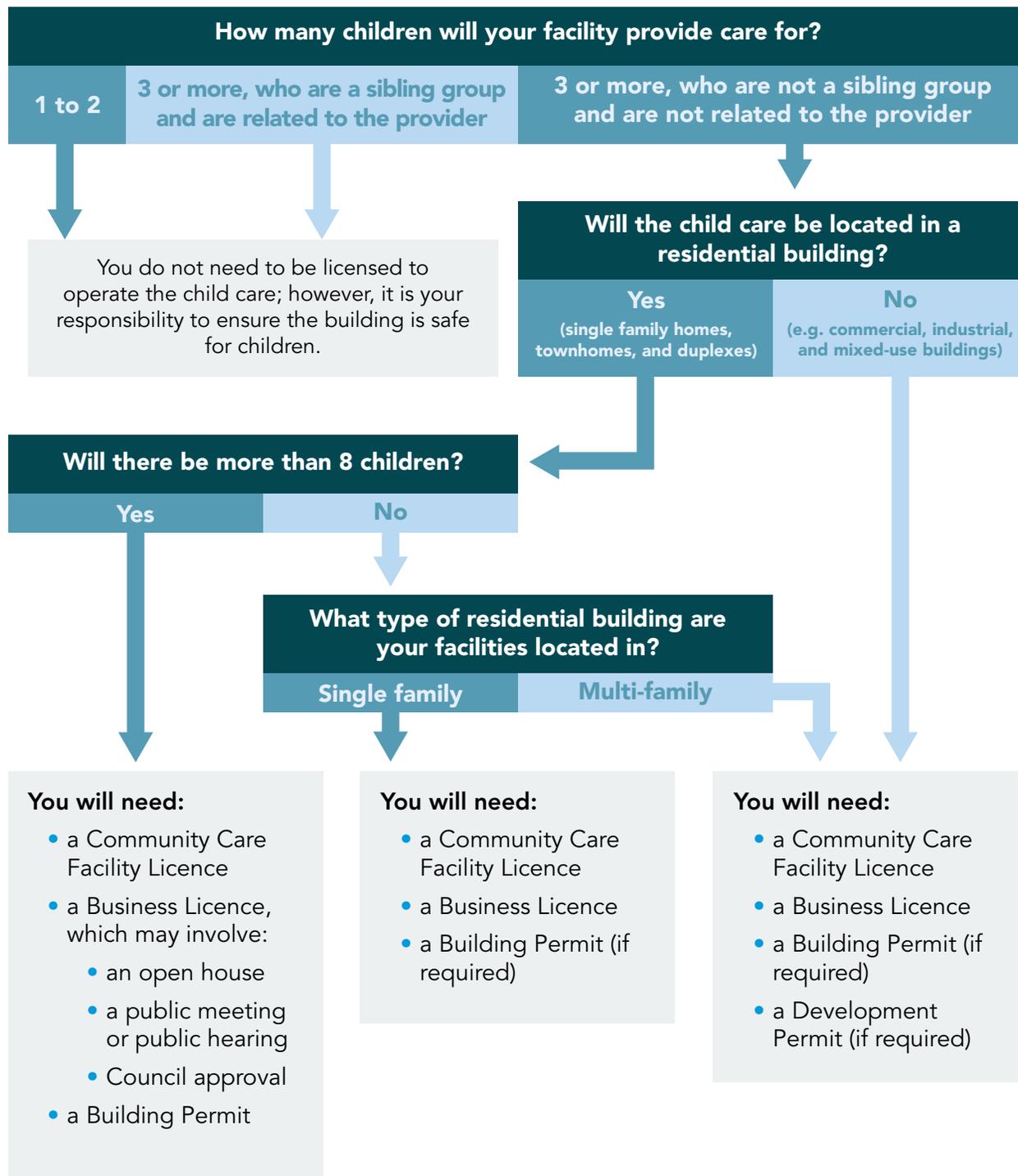


Diagram 1: Licence and Permit Requirements



3.1 BEFORE YOU START

Before signing a lease, purchasing a property, or applying for the required licences and permits, it is recommended that you conduct preliminary research into the community's child care needs, provincial and municipal licensing regulations and requirements, and the type of facility you plan to operate.

To assist you with developing your child care proposal, this section provides you with a list of suggested documents to review and identifies other important considerations.

SUGGESTED DOCUMENTS TO REVIEW

- **Provincial [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#)**

Licensing requirements and procedures for all licensed community care facilities (including child care) and assisted living residences.

- **Provincial [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#)**

Licensing regulations specific to child care facilities, including application requirements, staff-to-child ratios, staff qualifications, and space requirements.

- **Provincial [standards of practice for licensed child care facilities](#)**

Policies and standards for active play, family child care, safe play space, and water safety for licensed child care facilities.

- **District of North Vancouver [Child Care Facilities Business Regulation Bylaw](#)**

Local Business Licence regulations for child care facilities in the District of North Vancouver.

- **Planning Guidelines for Child Care in Residential Buildings** (*See Appendix A*)

Planning guidelines and Business Licence application requirements for child care facilities located in residential buildings (also known as home-based child care facilities) with more than 8 children.

- **District of North Vancouver [Child Care Action Plan](#)**

Information on the District's current child care space and program needs, key issues, and estimated child care needs to 2030.

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Choose a suitable space

Check the zoning regulations and consider any outdoor and indoor space requirements for the capacity of children proposed, including the provision of required parking and outdoor play space. A realtor may be able to help you find a suitable space for your child care operation.

- ! **Tip:** The number of children and the location of the facility will have an impact on the licensing and permit requirements. See Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

Determine if you need a Development Permit

If your property is within one or more Development Permit Areas (DPAs), any proposed exterior renovations may need to comply with guidelines. Contact the District's Development Planning Department early to understand if you will need a Development Permit.

- ! **Tip:** Learn if your property is within Development Permit Areas and get the requirements online at [DNV.org/DPA](https://dnv.org/DPA).

Research current child care space and program needs

You should consider current and projected child care space and program needs across the community.

- ! **Tip:** Review the District's [Child Care Action Plan](#) to start.

Talk to your landlord, if you are renting

If you will be renting the space, you should check that the landlord supports a child care operation and/or any necessary renovations. Written permission from your landlord will be required.

Talk to your neighbours

Talking to your neighbours early on is always a good idea to reduce conflict down the road. Early input can take many forms, such as letters or an informal chat over the fence.

Engage a professional

It is recommended that you engage a professional (such as a registered architect) early to understand if any renovations or building upgrades will be needed. They can also assist you with preparing licence and permit application requirements, such as scaled architectural drawings and site plans.

Prepare a business and financial plan

To understand if your proposal is financially feasible, prepare a business and financial plan. The plan should include start-up costs (including renovation costs, rent, staffing costs, and utility fees) and an operating budget (such as monthly revenue, grant funding, and expenditures).





STEP 1

3.2 COMMUNITY CARE FACILITY LICENCE

A Community Care Facility Licence issued by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) is required for all child care facilities providing care for three or more children who are not a sibling group and are not related to the provider by blood or marriage.

The different types of licensed child care programs include:

- Family child care
- Group child care (under 36 months)
- Group child care (30 months to school age)
- Group child care (school age)
- School age care (on school grounds)
- Preschool
- Multi-age child care
- In-home multi-age child care
- Occasional child care
- Recreational care
- Child-minding

Licensed facilities must comply with provincial licensing regulations that include specific health and safety requirements, staff training, staff-to-child ratios, space and equipment, and more. Table 1, on the following page, provides a summary of the approval process by VCH.

You need to apply for a new community care facilities licence when:

- starting a new child care facility,
- the business owner changes, or
- the existing child care facility changes location.

If you have an existing licence and you wish to change the facility name, programs offered, capacity, use of rooms at the current location, or manager, you will need to apply for an amendment to your existing licence. You should notify VCH as early as possible if you plan to amend your existing licence.



HOW TO GET A COMMUNITY CARE FACILITY LICENCE

1. Contact VCH's Community Care Facilities Licensing Department to obtain information on licensing a child care facility and basic requirements.
2. Review the Community Care Facility Licence application requirements, which can be found in [Schedule B of the Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).
3. Complete and submit the [Community Care Facility Licence Application form](#) with all required documents.
4. VCH staff will review your application and send a request letter to the District of North Vancouver to initiate the required site and building inspections. These inspections will be completed as part of the District's Business Licence approval process.
5. While the District conducts inspections, VCH staff will continue working with you to meet other licensing requirements.
6. Once all inspections by the District have been successfully completed, the District will notify VCH. VCH will complete a final inspection, and a Community Care Facility Licence may be issued.

Table 1: Community Care Facility Licence approval process by Vancouver Coastal Health





STEP 2

3.3 BUSINESS LICENCE

A Business Licence issued by the District of North Vancouver is required for all child care facilities providing care for three or more children who are not a sibling group and are not related to the provider by blood or marriage. The Business Licence application review and approval process will vary depending on the location of the child care facility and capacity of children. Table 2, on the following page, provides a summary of the Business Licence approval process by the District.



Business Licence applications for a **home-based child care facility with more than 8 children** will be reviewed by the District's Community Planning Department using the Planning Guidelines for Child Care in Residential Buildings (see Appendix A), which identifies additional application requirements. Council approval of your application and a public meeting or public hearing may also be required depending on the number of children proposed at the child care facility.

- **9-10 children:** A public meeting may be recommended by the Community Planning Department if there are concerns about location, health, and/or safety
- **11-20 children:** Council approval and a public meeting are required
- **More than 20 children:** Council approval and a public hearing are required

The annual Business Licence fee for a child care facility must be paid with your application and can be found in the District's [Fee and Charges Bylaw](#). There is no fee for registered non-profit organizations.

Applications for a Business Licence are reviewed for compliance with all applicable municipal bylaws and will involve building, mechanical, electrical, and fire inspections, regardless of the number of children, to ensure the child care facility complies with municipal, provincial and federal requirements. If a Building Permit is required, additional inspections will occur during the Building Permit approval process.

Generally, you need to apply for a new business licence when:

- starting a new child care facility,
- the existing child care facility changes location, or
- the existing child care facility changes ownership.



HOW TO GET A BUSINESS LICENCE

1. After Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) notifies the District's Business Licence Department that a Community Care Facility Licence application has been submitted, District staff will contact you to complete and submit the [Business Licence Application form](#) with all required documents, and pay the Business Licence fee.

If your proposal includes more than 8 children in a residential building, see Planning Guidelines in Appendix A for additional document requirements.

2. District staff will review your application. If a public meeting or public hearing is required or recommended by the Community Planning Department, follow the additional steps below before proceeding.
3. District staff will schedule and conduct the required inspections, and you will be advised of any deficiencies that need to be corrected. Re-inspections may be required, and re-inspection fees may apply.
4. Once all inspections are successfully completed, District staff will notify VCH to initiate a final inspection.
5. Upon issuance of a Community Care Facility Licence by VCH, a Business Licence may be issued.

ADDITIONAL STEPS (IF APPLICABLE):

1. It is recommended that you host an open house (at your expense) to obtain input from your neighbours that are within a 50 metre radius of the proposed child care facility. District staff will assist you with sending notification letters to your neighbours, and a record of public input will need to be provided to District staff after the event.
2. District staff will prepare an information report for Council outlining your proposal and the public input received at the open house. A Council meeting may be required prior to a public meeting or public hearing.
3. Once a public meeting or public hearing is scheduled, public notification requirements will be undertaken (see page 14).
4. At the public meeting or public hearing, Council will hear from your neighbours. It is recommended that you attend to give a presentation or respond to any concerns or issues.
5. Council will make a decision to approve or decline your Business Licence application at a subsequent Council meeting.

Table 2: Business Licence approval process by the District of North Vancouver

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

Public meetings and public hearings provide the public with an opportunity to speak to Council and express their opinions about your Business Licence application to operate a child care facility. Council considers the public input received at the public meeting or public hearing when making a decision on your application.

Public meetings and public hearings follow a similar format. However, public hearings have additional legal public notification and public input requirements as discussed in this section.



The format of public meetings and public hearings are subject to change from time-to-time, and may be held in a hybrid format with a combination of in-person and online participation. For updates on the current format or for more information, visit [DNV.org/public-hearing](https://dnv.org/public-hearing).

Process

1. The Chair (such as the Mayor) or their designate opens the public meeting or public hearing.
2. District staff will briefly outline the proposal.
3. You will present your proposal.
4. Members of the public express their opinions.
5. District staff answers any questions that Council has, and the applicant may also have the opportunity to address any concerns expressed.
6. The Chair ends the public meeting or public hearing.

Public input

Any interested resident can share their input by speaking in-person or submitting their comment in writing. Public hearings must follow legal requirements for the receipt of submissions from the public.



Location

District of North Vancouver Municipal Hall Council Chambers



Note: Public meetings and public hearings may be held in a hybrid format where virtual attendance may be permitted.

Public Notification Requirements

Letters are mailed out to all residents within 50 metres of the subject site at least 10 days in advance of the scheduled public meeting or public hearing. Public hearings must also follow statutory requirements for public notification, including a notice in the local newspaper, and you must install a notification sign on the property (at your expense). The notification sign must be in accordance with specifications set out in the District's [Development Procedures Bylaw](#).

BUSINESS LICENCE INSPECTIONS

Building, mechanical, electrical, and fire inspections are required before you are issued a Community Care Facility Licence and a Business Licence, and before you can operate your child care facility. These inspections are separate from the inspections required for a Building Permit and other permits, and would occur once you have set up your child care space.

Business Licence Inspections are conducted in areas of the home that are accessible by the children only. Generally, inspectors are checking that municipal requirements and all provincial and federal code regulations have been met to ensure the safety of children.

The following are examples of items that are checked by inspectors:

Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interior and exterior stairs, guards, and handrails• Size of nap room windows for light, ventilation, and exits• Fireplaces• Access to furnace, boiler, and storage areas• Condition of the fence for outdoor play area• Previous Building Permit documents on file
Mechanical (plumbing and gas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toilets and hand washing sinks for children to easily access• Gas range and appliances must be in perfect working order• Dials on ranges or fireplaces must not be accessible to children• Furnaces• Gas appliance clearance must conform to code
Electrical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plugs, switches, and fixtures must be mounted and covered• Ground fault protection switches in bathrooms• Ground fault protection in service panel and plugs in outside play area
Fire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire Safety Floor Plan must be posted in place at every exit• Location of portable fire extinguishers• Smoke alarms installed on each floor and within every sleeping room• Carbon monoxide alarms installed on each floor



Inspectors will advise you of any deficiencies that need to be corrected to comply with code regulations, which may result in the need for a Building Permit or other related permits.

3.4 BUILDING PERMIT

Child care facilities must meet municipal bylaw and [BC Building Code](#) requirements, which vary depending on the building type and the number and age of children at the facility. If renovations or a change of use are proposed, a Building Permit issued by the District of North Vancouver is required.

You must have approval from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) for the proposed work before submitting a Building Permit application to the District. An architectural drawing stamped by VCH must be submitted with your Building Permit application. Table 3 on the following page provides a summary of the Building Permit approval process.

Building Permit fees are based on the value of work and are outlined in the District's [Fees and Charges Bylaw](#).



NOTABLE BC BUILDING CODE REQUIREMENTS

- All child care facilities are classified as an assembly occupancy (Group A, Division 2) under Part 3 of the BC Building Code.
 - **Exemption:** Child care facilities with 8 or less children in a single family home will remain classified as a single family building under Part 9 of the BC Building Code.
- For **child care facilities with more than 8 children in a single family home**, significant building upgrades may be required to comply with the assembly occupancy classification. Common upgrades include fire separations between floors, accessibility, and a second means of exit from the floor where the child care is located.
- For **child care facilities with children under 30 months of age**, additional requirements will apply related to, but not limited to, fire sprinkler systems, fire alarm systems, and location of the facility in a building.

Please review the current edition of the BC Building Code for more information. It is recommended that you talk to a professional (such as a registered architect) as early as possible to review the BC Building Code requirements for your building and understand if a Building Permit is needed.



HOW TO GET A BUILDING PERMIT

1. The first step will depend on your proposal:

For child care facilities with 8 or less children in a single family home, complete a [Building Permit Requirements Questionnaire](#).

For all other child care facilities, contact the District's Building Department to discuss Building Permit application requirements with a commercial plans reviewer and arrange a pre-application meeting, if necessary.

2. Complete a [Building Permit Application form](#).
3. Submit the application form and all required documents (including drawings stamped by VCH) to the Building Department. 50% of the Building Permit fee, which is non-refundable, will be charged.
4. If the proposed renovations or upgrades comply with municipal bylaws and provincial code requirements, a Building Permit may be issued and the remaining Building Permit fee and other permit-related fees will be required.
5. Once your Building Permit has been issued, you can apply for any other permits you may need, such as electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and gas.
6. Schedule permit inspections throughout construction. Re-inspections may be required, and re-inspection fees may apply.
7. Once all permit inspections have been successfully completed, an Occupancy Permit may be issued.

Table 3: Building Permit approval process by the District of North Vancouver



4.0 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I have a registered secondary suite in my home. Can I still operate a child care in my home?

Yes, a single family home may have both a secondary suite and a child care, as long as the child care is completely separated from the suite and all provincial licensing requirements are met. Criminal record checks of suite occupants may be requested by VCH.

If I want to operate a home-based child care, does someone have to live in the home?

Depending on the type of building, the operator or primary business owner must live in the building. If the child care is a non-profit organization, at least one staff member must live in the building. For more information, please review the District's [Child Care Facilities Business Regulation Bylaw](#).

Can the licensing and permit processes be expedited?

While best efforts are made to expedite applications related to child care, municipal and provincial approval processes require careful review of any given child care proposal to make sure the building is safe and meets all requirements. Submission of an incomplete application or inconsistent information may also result in delays.

What renovations do I need? Do I need a Building Permit?

Necessary renovations or building upgrades will depend on the building type and the number and age of children at the facility. It is recommended that you consult a professional (such as a registered architect) to assess the applicable BC Building Code requirements, the extent of renovations or upgrades, and if a Building Permit is needed.

Do I need to hire an architect or engineer?

A registered architect is required where the child care facility must comply with assembly occupancy (Group A, Division 2) classification, such as if the child care is:

- located in a non-residential building,
- located in a multi-family home, or
- located in a single family home and provides care for more than 8 children.

A professional engineer may also be necessary depending on the scope of renovations.

Can I operate a child care in a building if I am not the registered property owner?

Yes. If you are currently renting or plan to rent a space for your child care facility, please ensure the landlord supports the proposal and you obtain their written permission.

How many off-street parking spaces do I need for my child care facility?

Part 10 of the [Zoning Bylaw](#) requires a child care facility to have 1.25 parking spaces per classroom, including an auditorium and gymnasium. For a child care facility in a single family home, 2 spaces are required, and 1 additional space per 10 children is encouraged as per the Planning Guidelines in Appendix A.

How do I schedule permit inspections by the District of North Vancouver?

Permit inspections are typically booked by the relevant contractor online at [DNV.org/inspections](https://dnv.org/inspections). To request an inspection for your electrical permit, the contractor must submit an [Electrical Contractor Authorization and Declaration of Compliance form](#).

5.0 CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

For assistance with community care and facilities licensing:	Vancouver Coastal Health <i>Community Care Facilities Licensing Central Community Health Centre 604-983-6700</i> Helpful online resources: Design Resource for Child Care Facilities Child Care Licensing FAQs
For assistance with zoning enquiries, Development Permits, and child care grants:	District of North Vancouver <i>Planning Department 604-990-2480 planning@dnv.org</i> Helpful online resources: District-wide Zoning Map Child Care Grants
For assistance with Business Licences and inspections:	District of North Vancouver <i>Property Use Department 604-990-2480 businesslicences@dnv.org</i>
For assistance with Building Permits and inspections:	District of North Vancouver <i>Building Department 604-990-2480 building@dnv.org</i>
For services for child care providers, early childhood educators, and families:	North Shore Community Resources Society <i>North Shore Child Care Resource & Referral Program 604-985-7138 nscr@nscr.ca</i>
For provincial start-up grants and operational funding:	Ministry of Family and Child Development <i>Child Care Capital and Community Services 250-356-6501 mcf.cccf@gov.bc.ca</i>



APPENDIX A PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR CHILD CARE IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Approved by Council on January 6, 2014

Planning for child care in residential areas needs to consider community context, site planning, neighbourhood character, accessibility, and parking. These guidelines only apply for Business Licence applications for home-based child care facilities providing care for more than 8 children, and are intended to:

- assist residents and child care providers to plan for child care services that promote the health and well-being of children in residential areas, and
- assist District of North Vancouver staff to evaluate applications for child care in residential areas that promote safe and healthy communities.



BUSINESS LICENCE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

To demonstrate how your proposal complies with these guidelines, the following documents must be prepared and submitted with your Business Licence application:

- Context map
- Site plan
- Transportation plan: location of parking, mode share of parents, number of sibling groups, staggered pick-up and drop-off times
- Interior floor plans
- Landscape concept plan

Target Under-Served Areas

To promote an even distribution of services across the community, it is encouraged to locate new child care facilities in areas that are currently under-served.

Locate Near Community Amenities

When finding a location for your child care facility, consider locations within a walking distance of community amenities (such as schools, playgrounds, parks, recreation centres, and libraries).

Enhance Site Accessibility

Child care facilities should be highly accessible from the street by all modes of travel. When finding a location for your child care facility, look for locations with the following accessibility features:

- convenient vehicle entry and exit
- close to main (arterial) roads
- close to transit
- if located on an arterial road, plenty of space on site for vehicle drop-off, pick-up, and turnaround activities
- safe pedestrian paths to and from parking, drop-off, and pick-up areas

Mitigate Transportation Impacts

To help reduce traffic impacts, child care facilities should provide:

- two parking spaces for staff and residents
- one additional parking space per 10 children for pick-up and drop-off activities
- safe and non-disruptive vehicle entry and exit zones

Site Grade Considerations

To encourage safe and healthy child care facilities, child care facilities are recommended to be located at or above grade to address emergency evacuation issues and increase natural light.

Maintain Neighbourhood Character

Child care facilities within residential areas should respect the existing neighbourhood character, particularly with regards to privacy and noise impacts. Child care facilities should be planned to:

- maintain the character of the existing streetscape
- introduce landscaping features that enhances privacy and mitigates noise impacts
- ensure the required outdoor play space is appropriately located and completely fenced and secured

Be a Good Neighbour

Any proposal for a child care facility should include early discussions with your neighbours. A public meeting or public hearing may be required to provide your neighbours with the opportunity to comment on the proposal. Any concerns should be mitigated with reasonable measures.

Indoor and Outdoor Connections

The child care facility site must have adequate outdoor and indoor space and comply with the *Provincial Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and *Child Care Licensing Regulation*. When planning indoor and outdoor spaces, consider:

- locating outdoor and indoor spaces at the same level (that is, within 0.5 metre grade difference)
- outdoor and indoor spaces are planned to allow for inter-related indoor and outdoor activities
- outdoor play spaces are oriented to allow surveillance from the primary indoor activity area



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