



Child Care Provider Business Plan Reference Guide & Workbook

Los Angeles County Specific

Introduction – Purpose of the two part Reference Guide and Workbook

This business plan workbook and reference guide was created in collaboration by Public Counsel’s Early Care & Education Project (ECE Law Project) and Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) to assist child care center operators in Los Angeles County with planning, preparing and developing a child care center business plan. The purpose of this business plan workbook and reference guide is to provide a roadmap on how to draft your business plan. It includes explanations of each business plan section and references to additional resources. This guide highlights some of the many Los Angeles County specific rules, regulations and procedures governing the planning and operation of a child care center.

There are two types of child care facilities – family child care homes and child care centers. Please note that this reference guide focuses primarily on child care centers, although many of the resources herein will be the same for both types of facilities.

Part I – Reference Guide

Part I is a reference guide that explains each section of the business plan, provides worksheets to help you think through your business and references other available resources to further assist you. This reference guide also highlights Los Angeles County specific regulations and resources in order to support you in your research.

Part II – Workbook

Part II is a blank workbook that outlines a business plan in a section-by-section summary template. Within each section of the workbook template, there exists a series of questions that will help guide you in analyzing, researching and describing essential aspects of your child care center business. The workbook is formatted so that it can be used in conjunction with the reference guide to assist in drafting and gathering the necessary information to complete your final business plan.

A quality business plan is one that will speak to the intended reader(s) and give him/her a clear picture of your business’ strategies, goals, and historic challenges and achievements.

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Part I: Business Plan Reference Guide

A. GETTING STARTED

Why create a business plan?

A business plan is a three to five year roadmap of your child care business. Drafting your business plan is essential. It will assist you with planning, preparing and operating your child care business. The business plan, which is basically a detailed description of each aspect of your business, is divided into various sections as outlined below. The business plan's structure will help guide you in describing the key components of your business. Once completed, the business plan is the best tool for turning your business idea into reality or taking your current operations to the next level. Also, keep in mind that a business plan will be required when seeking financing for your business (e.g. obtaining a loan from a bank).

It is important to update your business plan regularly so that it is an accurate reflection of the current state of your business.

What's in a business plan?

A business plan starts with a Cover Sheet, which includes the name of the business, logo, address, date of plan, contact information, etc.

The body of the business plan normally consists of the following sections:

1. Executive Summary
2. Business Description
3. Business Organization
4. Management
5. Operations
6. Marketing
7. Financials
8. Evaluation
9. Appendices

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are a number of business plan drafting guides and workbooks designed specifically for child care businesses. Please refer to the below resources to assist you in developing your business plan.

“How to Start a Quality Child Care Business”

By the U.S. Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov)

http://archive.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/sba_homepage/pub_mp29.pdf

SBA is an associate administrator of the offices of Small Business Development Centers (SBDC). SBDC are local and regional offices that provide individual consultation, training, educational seminars, resources and other services on business development. The SBA's published guide entitled “How to Start a Quality Child Care Business” is a detailed explanation of starting and operating a child care business. This publication discusses all the issues and factors to consider in understanding how to start a child care business.

For more information, please download and review Appendix 1 now.

“The Child Care Center Business Plan Workbook”

<http://www.ccc-oc.org/Resource/Business>

A collaborative team of business consultants and early childhood specialists created this fill in the blank “question and answer” workbook, which guides you through a step by step design of your business plan.

“Developing a Childcare Center Business Plan”

By First Children's Finance (www.firstchildrensfinance.org)

<http://www.liifund.org/PROGRAMS-NEW/CHILDCARE>

First Children's Finance is a non-profit organization that assists child care centers in obtaining financial literacy and funding. The article referenced above is a bullet point outline of the items required for each business plan section.

“Child Care Operator Resource Guide”

By Public Counsel

<http://www.publiccounsel.org/publications?id=0002>

Public Counsel provides free legal services to low-income licensed and non-profit child care centers. This resource guide references the various phases of opening or acquiring a child care center, ranging from the planning, predevelopment, development and through to the start-up phases. Further, this operator resource guide consists of a valuable directory of many organizations and resources to assist you.

Sample Child Care Business Plan: “Child Day Care Services Business Plan – Kid's Community College”

http://www.bplans.com/child_day_care_services_business_plan/executive_summary_fc.cfm

Bplans' website offers an array of sample business plans that could be used a guide when preparing your own business plan.

B. BUSINESS PLAN OUTLINE

The following sections consist of the body of the business plan. This reference guide will describe portions of the business plan in detail, provide worksheets to assist you in analyzing and planning your business, as well as reference available resources. Refer to Part II – The Business Plan Workbook while drafting your business plan with this guide. If you will be presenting the business plan to someone, you will want to include a cover letter.

Where appropriate and for your convenience, Los Angeles County specific regulations, procedures and references will be highlighted.

SECTION 1: Executive Summary of Business

The Executive Summary is a snapshot of each section of the business plan's contents. It highlights and summarizes the significant elements of your child care business. In short, this section depicts a captivating summary of the entire document.

- Write this section AFTER you have completed all other sections of the business plan.
- It should be less than two pages in length and consist of:
 - ✓ One or two paragraphs about who you are, what you do and why you will be successful
 - ✓ Highlights from each section in one to three sentences

SECTION 2: Business Description

Overview:

1. Description of Child Care Center and Services
2. Mission Statement
3. Industry Analysis
4. Business History
5. Vision, Goals & Objectives
6. Competitive Position
7. Collaborative Partners

The purpose of the business description is to objectively explain and justify your business' operations and strategies in a positive and passionate manner. This section describes the nature and purpose of the business and includes the seven items noted above.

1. Description of Child Care Center and Services

Describe the child care center, including (i) number of children the child care center is licensed for, capacity (ii) age of children served, also known as Program Type* per Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) (iii) type of services and (iv) program philosophy. The description should be complete enough to give the reader a clear idea of your services, but not be overly detailed or technical. For your reference, below is a table that shows the age range for each Program Type.

Program Type*	Age of Children
Infant Program	Birth to 24 months
Infant Program with Toddler Option	Infant: Birth to 24 months and Toddler: 18 to 30 months
Preschool Program	2 years to entry into 1 st grade
School Age Program	Enrolled in kindergarten or above, minimum age 4 years & 9 months
Mildly Ill Program	All age groups
<i>Please note: Each program must be physically separate and distinct.</i>	

Helpful questions to keep in mind when completing the description section are listed below:

- Who is the customer?
- What types of child care services are provided?
 - Preschool
 - Day Care
 - Night Care
 - After School Care
 - Special Needs
 - Parent/Adult Education
- What are the operational details?
 - Hours of operation
 - Transportation options (if any) – if so, fee or inclusive
 - Food provided – fee or inclusive, hot meals, snacks
- What areas of Los Angeles County do you intend to serve?

- What do the curriculum and other program philosophies and practices consist of?
- How will the programs be assessed for quality (i.e. NAEYC accreditation, ECERS, CLASS, or other standardized quality measure)?

2. Mission Statement

This is a written statement that concisely describes an organization's overall objective, direction and guides decision making for all levels of management. An example from First Children's Finance Developing a Childcare Center Business Plan is as follows:

"My mission is to provide high quality childcare with a focus on developmentally appropriate activities for children."

Mission statement characteristics are:

- **Visionary:** It should offer a vision of what a business aspires to be by helping people understand what the business is about and how they can contribute to the achievement of the vision.
- **Broad:** It should be able to withstand most changes that occur over time in your product or service offerings, or customer base.
- **Realistic:** It should be practical and effective. Mission statements that include everything or over-promise will not give a clear indication of what the business is about.
- **Motivational:** It should be written in such a way that it inspires commitment among employees, customers, partners, and funding agencies about what the company will do or produce.
- **Short and concise:** It should typically range from 25 words to 4 sentences long.
- **Easily understood:** It should use plain language that is convincing and easy to understand.

Here are some other mission statements from other companies and organizations:

- **The Coca-Cola Company:** *"Our Roadmap starts with our mission, which is enduring. It declares our purpose as a company and serves as the standard against which we weigh our actions and decisions.*
 - *To refresh the world...*
 - *To inspire moments of optimism and happiness...*
 - *To create value and make a difference."*
- **Levi-Strauss:** *"We will market the most appealing and widely worn casual clothing in the world. We will clothe the world."*
- **OHCHR:** *"The mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is to protect and promote all human rights for all."*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Child Care Business Mission Statements:

http://www.missionstatements.com/daycare_mission_statements.html

<http://www.businessplans.org/mission.html>

3. Industry Analysis

The industry analysis section gives the reader the big picture about what the business will do and how it will succeed.

A suggested way to begin this section is with an analysis that defines the industry in which the business will operate (e.g., childcare or early childhood education) and uses reliable and objective data to show the future prospects of the industry and your business.

Helpful questions to ask yourself when completing the industry analysis section include, but are not limited to the following:

- In general, using relevant statistical information, what is the state of the child care industry in your area of Los Angeles County?
- Is the industry growing, stable or declining?
- Why is there a need for child care in your area of Los Angeles?
- How many childcare centers and family child care homes are there in your area?
- Are more childcare centers needed in the same area?
 - If so, how does your business serve that need?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

General Statistics:

Federal Statistics: <http://www.fedstats.gov>

Small Business Administration: <http://www.sba.gov>

Bureau of Economic Analysis: <http://bea.gov>

Bureau of the Census: <http://www.census.gov>

Early Child Care Statistics:

Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs032.htm>

Los Angeles Economic Development Center: <http://www.laedc.org/>

L.A. County Office of Child Care: <http://ceo.lacounty.gov/ccp/>

“Economic Impact of Early Childcare Education in Los Angeles County”

By L.A. County Office Child Care

<http://ceo.lacounty.gov/ccp/pdf/LA%20Economic%20Impact%20Report-Jan08.pdf>

Here you can find an economic impact report for 2008 as a guide.

4. Business History

Depending on how developed your business is will dictate the information within the business history section. The objective of the business history section is to give the reader an idea of who you are and why you have or desire to have a business in the early child care industry.

For example, describe whether you are a start-up child care center, an existing child care center, or a family child care home expanding into a child care center.

For an existing business, some helpful questions to ask yourself when completing the industry analysis section include, but are not limited to the following:

- How was the business started?
- How many years has business been in existence? If the business is in the developmental stages, what is the progress to date?
- What is the size of the business? Was it always this way?
- What is the reputation of the business within the community? How did it get to that point?
- What are the major successes, failures and lessons learned from being in business this far?
- If you are acquiring a previously owned business, what is the prior owner's business history and customer base?
- Are you part of any industry related professional associations?

For a young or start-up business, also answer these helpful questions:

- What is your relevant work history or education level?
- Do you have any additional personal experience that is relevant to the new business?

5. Vision, Goals and Objectives

The business plan maps out the next three to five years of the child care center. It is important to have a company vision which projects the growth of your business. In order to define how your business will grow, it is necessary to discuss your short term and long term business goals in tangible and measureable terms. Business goals, although not limited to this list, can be discussed in terms of revenue, the number of children served, capturing a specific percentage of the population within a target market and/or the penetration of a new target market, staffing requirements, educational background of staff, space requirements, services provided, parent engagement, financing, expansion, etc. Objectives describe the action or condition that needs to take place in order to achieve the business goal.

A popular tip for writing useful goals is using the SMART method. The characteristics of a SMART goal are:

- **Specific:** Indicates exactly what, where and how the need is to be addressed.
- **Measurable:** Indicates exactly how much, how many and how well the goal will be achieved.
- **Actionable:** Uses "activity indicators" to ensure that something will and is able to be done. With goal-setting, use action-oriented verbs such as deliver, implement, establish and supply.
- **Realistic:** Can be reasonably achieved given the time allowed.
- **Time-bound:** Includes a specific date for its achievement.

Remember that the accomplishment of goals helps the organization achieve its overarching mission. This is the opportunity to show the reader that foresight has been given to the quality and future of the business.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself when completing the vision, goals and objectives for your business:

- Will my services be limited to only a specific part of Los Angeles County?
- Am I interested in expanding to other parts of Los Angeles County?
- Who is my target market? Why?
- How will I market my services to reach the desired population?
- If you are requesting funding, where will the additional capital be allocated to assist in your growth?
- Do I want to offer more services? Why?
- Is my program engaging the parents of the children served? Is that important to me?
- What factors will make your business successful?

Example Goal:

- *“My early childcare program will be staffed by lead teachers who, at a minimum, have a Bachelor’s Degree in an ECE related field.”*

Example Objectives:

- *“Develop a budget for employee salaries and wages.”*
- *“Develop and implement a staff recruitment and retention plan.”*
- *“Determine class size and staffing needs to meet a desired teacher-child ratio.”*

For a quick reference guide to help in creating goals and objectives please download and review Appendix 2.

6. Competitive Position

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities** and **Threats** involved in a project or in a business venture. It is a model to analyze the competitive position of a company.

A brief description of each section of the SWOT analysis with some ideas specific to child care centers businesses can be found below.

- **Strengths:** A company's strengths are its resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for developing a competitive advantage. Answer the question – *What factors give my business a competitive edge?* Examples of strengths include:
 - Having a good reputation in the community
 - Substantiating a high level of quality child care and early childhood education
 - Offering unique services such as a quality curriculum, specialty classes (such as music, dance or gymnastics), parent engagement activities, field trips, picking-up/dropping-off children
 - Staffing employees with strong industry experience and/or education in early childhood education and care
 - Having a low adult-to-child ratio
 - Being located in a highly visible area
- **Weaknesses:** The absence of certain strengths may be viewed as a weakness. Answer the question – *What factors give my business competitive disadvantages?* Once the business' weaknesses are identified, go on to explain how you will overcome them. Examples of some weaknesses include:
 - Having a poor reputation in the community
 - Offering undifferentiated services from other childcare centers in the area
 - Being new and unknown to the community
 - Having a higher than average adult to child ratio
 - Being located in a secluded, low traffic area
 - Being located in a characteristically transient community
 - Having high employee turnover rates
- **Opportunities:** The external environment analysis may reveal certain new opportunities for profit and growth. Answer the question – *Are there any external conditions that are helpful to achieving my objective?* Examples of some opportunities include:
 - Market research may show that there is a need for quality childcare in your zip code based on the number of children ages 0-5 and the number of childcare centers in your community
 - There may be additional organizations providing grants to childcare centers (or to parents/guardians for childcare) in your area
 - A childcare center in your community may have recently closed its doors
- **Threats:** Changes in the external environment may uncover potential challenges for profit and growth. Answer the question – *Are there any significant challenges in the*

early care and education industry? Once threats to your business are identified, go on to explain how you will overcome such challenges. Examples of some threats include:

- Market research may show that there is not a strong need for quality childcare in your zip code based on the number of children ages 0-5 and the number of childcare centers in your community
- New licensing regulations may be coming to fruition that your center is not currently equipped for
- New childcare centers may be opening up in your area

Please download Appendix 3 for a matrix that can be used to complete a SWOT analysis.

In addition to the template, more information can be found at:

www.businessballs.com/swotanalysisfreetemplate.htm

7. Collaboration Partners

Determine which agencies in your area are or have the potential to be collaboration partners for the work that you do. There may be some that you already have established relationships with and others you might wish to with collaborate in the future. It may be as simple as choosing to collaborate with your local resource and referral agency or joining a professional association to build valuable relationships.

Building relationships with others helps ensure long term sustainability of your business since these relationships are likely to assist you in providing a high quality program and in leveraging resources.

Download Appendix 4 to access the list of early childhood education related organizations specific to California and/or Los Angeles County. A brief description is included for reference. Inclusion of these organizations does not imply endorsement by LAUP or Public Counsel.

SECTION 3: Business Organization

Overview:

1. Legal Structure
2. Licensing Requirements
3. Governmental Requirements Checklist

1. Legal Structure

In order to start your business, you should consider the legal structure of your center. First, you must determine whether to operate as a for-profit child care center or a non-profit center. Appendix 17 is a presentation by Public Counsel to LAUP Preschool Providers titled “Choice of Legal Entity for Child Care Providers.” **Please download and review Appendix 17 now.**

For-profit entity types are listed below. They are each very unique from the other and pose different advantages and disadvantages that should be considered before selection.

- Sole Proprietorship
- C-Corporation
- S-Corporation
- General Partnership
- Limited Partnership
- Limited Liability Company (LLC)

For those interested in becoming a non-profit, Appendix 18 is a quick reference guide for becoming a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. **Please download and review Appendix 18 now.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“Legal Issues for Small Business and Nonprofit Agencies”

By Public Counsel & Southern California Edison’s Economic & Business Development Group
<http://www.sce.com/NR/rdonlyres/36254861-99E8-4F2F-8756-6B51AD058078/0/BusLegalIssuesSmallBusinessesandNonProfit2002.pdf>

Center for Non-Profit Management: www.cnmsocal.org

Public Counsel’s Community Development Project (CDP) Resources for the Formation of a Tax Exempt California Non-profit Corporation
<http://www.publiccounsel.org/pages/?id=0022>

Tax Basics for Exempt Organizations (on-line tutorials) by the IRS

<http://www.stayexempt.org/Mini-Courses/Navigating-IRS-Resources/navigating-irs-resources.aspx>

2. Los Angeles County Licensing Requirements

In order to start your business, your child care center must obtain a license. All child care facilities in California are regulated by the Department of Social Services’ (“DSS”) Community

Care Licensing Division (“CCLD”)¹ in accordance with the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1-3 (“Title 22”).²

Providers are responsible for fully understanding Title 22 regulations in order to best design and operate a business legally. This resource guide will discuss only some of the requirements under Title 22.

For recipients of child care service funds through the California Department of Education (state subsidized child care centers), the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Division 1, Chapters 19 and 19.5, Sections 18000 through 18434 (“Title 5”) applies. Title 5 defines the program requirements for government subsidized child care centers. Note that under Title 5, the requirements for education qualifications, staffing ratios, etc. may be more stringent than under Title 22.

More resources can summarize at:

<http://ceo.lacounty.gov/ccp/pdf/FINAL%20Provider%20Guide-Revised%207-07.pdf>

Los Angeles Regional Offices:

Licenses are granted by CCLD for the (i) licensee, (ii) address, (iii) capacity, and (iv) population (age group, program type and ambulatory status). All applicants must attend (i) Application Process Orientation and (ii) Operations and Records Keeping Orientation held by the Community Care Licensing Regional Office nearest you. Orientations require a non-refundable orientation attendance fee of \$50 for child care centers and \$25 for family child care centers.

Within Los Angeles County, there are two regional child care offices that hold application orientations, as well as issue licenses and provide a continuing review and oversight of your license. They are a resource to answering your application questions.

Los Angeles East Regional Office
1000 Corporate Center Drive
Suite 200B, MS:29:15
Monterey Park, CA 91754
(323) 981-3350

Los Angeles Northwest Regional Office
6167 Bristol Parkway
Suite 400, MS:29-13
Culver City, CA 90230
(310) 337-4333

¹ Overview of Preschool Licensing in California from <http://www.childcarelaw.org/docs/Preschool%20Licensing%20in%20CA.pdf>

² Specifically, California Health and Safety Code’s Child Day Care Facilities Act (Sections 1596-1597, et. seq.) (Chapters 3.4 – 3.6) and Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1 of California Code of Regulations (“Title 22”)

Dates and times for orientation schedules may be found at: www.CCLD.ca.gov/PG534.htm

Complete application along with necessary forms may be found at:
www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/lic281a.pdf

The below listed documents are necessary items for licensing. Note that many of the forms correspond to information already necessary for the various sections of your business plan.

Application Forms	Supportive Documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for Child Care Center License • Application Information • Criminal Record Statement • Designation of Facility Responsibility • Administrative Organization • Monthly Operating Statement • Balance Sheet • Personnel Record • Health Screening Report – Facility Personnel • Emergency Disaster Plan • Earthquake Preparedness Checklist • Facility Sketch • Fire Inspection Authority Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Agreement, Articles of Incorporation or Articles of Organization • Verification of Administrative/Director Qualifications • Job Descriptions • Personnel Policies • In-Service Training for Staff • Parent Handbook • Schedule of Daily Activities • Admissions Agreement • Sample Menu • List of Furniture / Play Equipment • Control of Property • Bacteriological Analysis of Private Water Supply

Procedural Steps & Requirements for License:

Submit an application and pay the licensing application fee. When submitting your application, note that the non-refundable application and licensing fees are calculated based on capacity (number of children) as well as on the program (infant, preschool, school-age). Such license fee will be due annually.

Capacity of:	Application Fees
1 – 30	\$ 400
31 – 60	\$ 800
61 – 75	\$1,000
76 – 90	\$1,200
91 – 120	\$1,600
121 +	\$2,000

1. Application Review: Upon submittal of application, applicant will receive a receipt for fee with a pending facility number(s). Your application will be assigned a CCLD analyst and additional instructions will be provided to you.
2. Complete Live Scan fingerprint clearance for all adults on site: Fingerprints with the California Department of Justice, FBI and Child Abuse Index are required for all adults working at the facility and for applicants. Fingerprint application and processing are available through LIVESCAN facilities. Fees vary according to each LIVESCAN facility. The locations that LIVESCAN are performed may be found at:
www.ag.ca.gov/fingerprints/publications/contact.htm

3. Fire clearance is ordered by District office.
4. Component II: Interview with analyst
5. Pre-Licensing Inspection: You must pass a site inspection. A Licensing Program Analyst will contact you to schedule a pre-licensing inspection of your site. Corrections (if any) to the facility must be cleared and verified with the analyst prior to final review of your application. Once licensed, please remember that the CCLD will have at least one unannounced random site visit every five years to ensure full compliance with Title 22.
6. Clearances: Child abuse and fire clearances are both required. Staff must also have criminal records clearance. Exemptions are required for all crimes, except for minor traffic violations. Criminal exemptions are processed by the Caregiver Background Check Bureau (CBCB) in Sacramento. Finally, all staff must have undergone a tuberculosis test clearance.
7. Component III: Category specific training
8. Finally, the application will either be approved and a license will be issued or the applicant will receive a denial.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1 Regulations

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/ord/PG587.htm>

Licensing Regulations Highlights

By CCLD

<http://www.CCLD.ca.gov/res/pdf/CCCRegulationHighlights.pdf>

Title 5 Regulations

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/lr/>

CCLD Evaluator Manual (providing detailed explanations, interpretations & procedures of Title 22)

By CCLD

www.cclcd.ca.gov/PG395.htm

Capacity – Number of Children:

A license is issued for a specific capacity, which is the maximum number of children that can be cared for at any given time. Capacity is determined by a number of factors including, but not limited to:

- (i) physical space
- (ii) staff-to-student ratio requirements
- (iii) other factors

(i) Physical Space Requirements

Title 22 governs how many children a center may care for based upon the physical space requirements outlined below. Each child needs a certain number of square feet of indoor/outdoor space including available toilets and sinks.

Indoor space	35 sq.ft. per child
Outdoor space	75 sq.ft. per child
Number of Toilets	1 for every 15 children
Number of Sinks	1 for every 15 children

A facilities map must be completed for the CCLD License Application, which will aid you in determining your facility’s square footage. You may consider utilizing an architect or a professional to ensure an accurate calculation of your physical space and layout. Occupancy permits should be obtained from the (1) City Building Inspector (2) City Fire Marshal, and (3) State Licensing Evaluator. Zoning, building and safety regulations may hold various restrictions and/or requirements.

Indoor Space

There shall be at least 35 feet per child of usable indoor activity space. Usable space does not include areas that are occupied by permanent furniture, mat storage or any other space not able to be used for child care activities.

Age groups must be physically separated. Staff restrooms, isolation area for sick children, children’s restroom, food preparation areas and storage space/cubbies/napping equipments must all be separated as well.

Note that indoor space for infants must also have infant related requirements, such as separated crib area, changing tables in arms reach of a sink, 1 sink per 15 infants, 1 potty chair per 5 infants being toilet trained, as well as no walkers or bouncers in the infant area.

Outdoor Space

There shall be at least 75 feet per child of outdoor activity space, and such space shall be enclosed by a minimum 4 foot high fence. Outdoor space requirements are governed by CPSC Public Playground Requirements – www.cpsc.gov.

(ii) Staffing Ratio Requirements

Teacher-child ratios are delineated in Section 101216.3 of Title 22. Staffing ratios are the minimum number of adults required to be present for every certain number of children.

Non-School Age Children

Teachers Present to Supervise	Maximum Number of Children
1 teacher	Up to 12 children
1 teacher plus 1 aide	Up to 15 children
1 teacher or aide	Up to 24 <u>napping</u> children, provided the “awake” ratios are immediately available

School Age Children ³	
Teachers Present to Supervise	Maximum Number of Children
1 teacher	Up to 14 children
1 teacher plus 1 aide	Up to 28 children

3. Governmental Regulations Checklist

There are many rules and regulations that govern a child care center business. You are required to be in compliance with all governmental jurisdictions. It is essential that you research and make inquiries with the various government agencies to ensure your thorough understanding and full compliance with the laws.

Checklist of Governmental Requirements & Available Resources:

[California Code of Regulations](#)

	Regulation	Resource
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Space Requirements	Title 22. Division 12. Chapter 1. Article 7. Physical Environment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health Requirements (Immunization)	Title 22. Division 12. Chapter 1. Article 6. §101216. Personnel Requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff : Child Ratios	Title 22. Division 12. Chapter 1. Article 6. §101216.3. Teacher-Child Ratio.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food Preparation	Title 22. Division 12. Chapter 1. Article 6. §101227. Food Service. Additional resource on menus: http://ncrlap.org/Resources/UploadedFiles/UploadedResources/USDAMealGuidelines%20%28iFileID_1%2012-2-2007%206-51-54%20PM%29.pdf
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Procedures	Title 22. Division 12. Chapter 1. Article 3. §101174. Disaster and Mass Casualty Plan. Also review resources from Office of Environmental Health and Safety http://www.lausd-oehs.org/schoolsafetyplans_v1.asp

³ School-age centers licensing have different requirements and licensing requirements. Licensing is governed pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 1597.21. Director and teacher qualifications may be found in Section 101215.1 - 101216.2.

		http://www.lausd-oehs.org/schoolsafetyplans_v2.asp
<input type="checkbox"/>	Record Keeping	Title 22. Division 12. Chapter 1. Article 6. Continuing Requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discipline	Title 22. Division 12. Chapter 1. Article 6. §101223.2. Discipline.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sanitation	http://ncrlap.org/Resources/UploadedFiles/UploadedResources/Health%20Reminders%20for%20IT%20EC%20FC%205-8-2008%20%28iFileID_1%205-7-2008%2012-22-06%20PM%29.pdf
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business Tax Registration Certificate	Office of Finance, Tax and Permit Division www.lacity.org/finance/
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insurance	Please refer to page 23 – 24 and check Title 22. Division 12. Chapter 3
<input type="checkbox"/>	Zoning, Building & Fire Regulations	“Zoning, Building and Fire Regulations -- Los Angeles Child Care Provider Guide” http://cao.lacounty.gov/ccp/pdf/FINAL%20Provider%20Guide-Revised%207-07.pdf

SECTION 4: Management & Organization

Overview:

1. Organizational Structure
2. Staff Qualifications and Requirements

1. Organizational Structure

The management and organization section of the business plan describes the organizational structure as well as the management team. It includes an organizational chart of all personnel, the histories and capabilities of the management team, board members and outside advisors. In describing the qualifications of the management team, include their educational background, certifications and relevant work experience.

The primary individual responsible for managing a child care center is the director. All child care centers must have a director on record. The director must be present on-site at all times to manage the day-to-day operations of the child care center. The director is responsible for all site operations, staff oversight and communications with Community Care Licensing Division. Other personnel may include teachers, teacher aides and interns.

2. Staff Qualifications and Requirements

Education Requirements under Title 22

Directors and all other personnel, including teachers and teacher aides, must fulfill the mandated educational requirements under § 101215.1 – 101216.2 of Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1, Article 6, Continuing Requirements. The educational and personnel requirements under Title 22 may be found at: [California Code of Regulations](#)

You must obtain proof of qualifications for staff by obtaining transcripts from the accredited school with verification confirming required experience, a copy of child development site supervisor or child development program director permit (as applicable for directors).

Health & Safety Requirements

Directors and teachers must have completed 15 hours of health and safety training pursuant to the Health & Safety Code Section 1596.866. Further, all staff must complete a mandatory tuberculosis test. Verification for both must be obtained and on file.

Director and Staff Education Qualifications Table

(ECE/CD: Early Childhood Education/Child Development; GE: General Education)

Role	Title 22 Requirements*
Pre-School Director	<p>✓ 12 ECE units (core) and 3 administration or staff units + 4 years teaching experience in supervised child care center</p> <p><i>Alternatives:</i></p> <p>(i) AA degree in child development + 2 years teaching experience and (3) administration units</p> <p>(ii) BA degree in child development + 1 year teaching experience and (3) administrative units</p> <p>(iii) Child development site supervisor permit or program director permit</p>
Infant Director	<p>✓ 12 ECE (core) units, including 3 infant care + 3 administration units + 4 years teaching experience with children under age 5</p>
School-Age Director	<p>✓ Meets pre-school director requirement</p> <p>✓ May substitute alternative coursework and experience</p>
Teacher	<p>✓ 12 (core) semesters in ECE/CD + 6 months of experience</p>
Supervisor	<p>✓ 12 ECE units (core) + 3 administration units</p>

*Please note that these requirements are as of June 2011 and are subject to change without notice, please check with the Department of Social Service for updated information.

SECTION 5: Operations

Overview:

1. Description of Operations
2. Staffing Policies
3. Admissions and Payment Policies
4. Insurance
5. Supplies, Equipment and Technology
6. Record Keeping
7. General Care and Safety Procedures

1. Description of Operations

The operations section of the business plan describes the day to day functions of your child care center. It will include your key operational features including number and age-mix of the children cared for at the child care center, hours, food service, etc. You should also describe the logistics of the physical location, the day to day operations and upkeep of the program.

2. Staffing and Employee Policies

A policy for salaries, benefits and other employee policies (vacation, illness etc.) should be developed. A continuous annual or bi-annual feedback and evaluation process should be developed and documented.

3. Admissions, Payment Policies and Registration Packet

This section addresses admission, emergency, pricing and payment policies based upon a firm understanding of your target market, competition and financial requirements. Once you have made such determination, document these admissions and payment policies in a Parent – Provider Admissions Contract or a Registration Packet.

Some areas to consider when determining your policies and registration packet may include the following (list is not exhaustive):

- Statement of consent
- Emergency contact info
- Late fee price schedule
- Late pick-up schedule
- Deposits (refundable or non-refundable)
- Registration fees (one-time or recurring)
- Special services price list
- Transportation price list

Appendix 5 is a sample registration packet from Rainbow River Daycare that can be used for your reference. **Please download and review Appendix 5 now.**

4. Insurance

Not only will insurance minimize your liability risk, but it is also a licensing requirement. You can use this information as a starting point – at a minimum, LAUP preschool providers maintain the types of insurance below (please note that the insured amount will depend on the size of your business as well as any requirements you may have from other agencies with which you are working):

- General Liability – a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage, personal injury and completed operations
- Worker’s Compensation – at least the minimum mandated by state law
- Automobile Liability (if applicable) – all drivers transporting children in the program must have at least the minimum automobile liability insurance mandated by state law

5. Supplies, Equipment and Technology

This section should focus on supply, equipment and technology needs necessary to run the program on a day-to-day basis. You should not only enclose a start-up budget for these costs but also give some detail on such costs and how often you will need to replace or upgrade these items. For example, while some child care centers order program supplies on a monthly basis, others order on a quarterly basis. Shop around and compare prices to give yourself options. Most vendors have very reasonable prices for small businesses and are very familiar with child care center set ups.

6. Recordkeeping

Besides being a requirement under Title 22, it is important to maintain organized and up-to-date records. Your child care center business will operate much more efficiently and profitably with well maintained records. Good records are necessary in the event of any potential litigation or payment disputes. In addition to the Title 22 requirements, the IRS has important guidelines around record keeping, supporting documentation relating to all income and expenses on file as well. Your record keeping system should be detailed in this section including the types of documentation you keep on file, how it is secured, how long it is maintained for and how the files are kept organized.

7. General Care & Safety Procedures

Your child care center may have various other policies and procedures to ensure adequate supervision and care of the children in the child care center. In accordance with Title 22 requirements, your center must develop, implement, and maintain a policy around admissions, child records, and daily signing in and out of children attending the program. See Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 1, Article 6. Continuing Requirements for an inclusive list.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Recordkeeping:

Internal Revenue Service – Small business resources related to recordkeeping guidelines and requirements.

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=98575,00.html>

General Care and Safety Procedures:

All About the ECERS-R by Debbie Cryer, Thelma Harms, Cathy Riley

SECTION 6: Marketing

Overview:

1. Market Analysis of Target Market
2. Competitive Analysis
3. Marketing Strategy

The marketing section assists you in understanding the marketplace, including your target market and how you will penetrate the target market. The marketing plan should include (1) the market analysis, (2) competitive analysis and (3) the marketing strategy.

1. Market Analysis of Target Market

Demographics & Trends

This section should provide analysis of child care needs of the community where you intend to operate your program. Profile your target market in the area you are located. Target markets are the customers, defined as the parents of the children that your child care center will serve. Analyze the demographics of the area with respect to your target customers – age, race, ethnicity, education level, income, lifestyle, location and other relevant information. Focus strictly on the area where you are located. The market analysis tool created by LAUP may be of assistance. **Download and review Appendix 6 now.**

2. Competitive Analysis

This section should be used to assess the competition in your area and stress how you plan to address any perceived weaknesses on the part of your competitor. The first step in a competitive analysis is to identify the current and potential competition. Include the strengths and weaknesses of your competitors, and then compare these areas to your own strengths and weaknesses taken from your SWOT analysis (described in Section 2.6 and Appendix 3).

Some questions to ask yourself include, but are not limited to the following:

- Are there child care centers operating in your area and, if so, how many? What do they offer and how do you plan on differentiating yourself?
- What are the operating hours – how do the hours match the parents work schedules?
- What types of services are offered?
- Is extended evening care offered?
- Where is the center located? Is it convenient and easily accessible?
- Do the staff members have degrees or training in early childhood education?
- Is there a curriculum? What is the structure of the day?
- Are there unique characteristics to the center such as hours, staffing, fees and activities?
- What are the ratios in the classrooms?

3. Marketing Strategy

Promotional / Advertising Strategies

The marketing strategy should assist you in reaching your goals for your child care center. In this section, you will describe where you will advertise and promote your business and how you plan to raise awareness and reach potential clients. This should be described at the start-up phase as well as for future growth. In order to maintain lower start-up costs, you may choose to rely on low cost strategies to obtain customers. Once your business has generated some income, you may elect to spend a portion of your revenue on marketing strategies, such as radio, advertisements, or neighborhood papers.

Strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Word of mouth
- Newspapers
- Print Materials (e.g. fliers, brochures, business cards, posters)
- Referral agencies
- Yellow pages
- Networking
- Referrals from doctors, teachers, schools, community centers, etc.
- Radio, Television
- Social Networking (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Linked In)
- Community Events
- Signage

Creating a marketing and advertising campaign

Part of creating an advertising campaign will include creating a budget for it. You may also be interested in tracking your advertising expense to see how each method translates into children enrolled in the program. For example, for each child enrolled, you would ask the parent how they initially became interested in the program (i.e. banner, flyer, word of mouth, signage, etc.). Some advantages of doing this include:

- Learning how to efficiently advertise
- Finding out the cost of enrolling a new child.
- Finding out what works and what doesn't
- Tracking and analyzing data that will help you make important decisions about your business
- Proactive termination of unsuccessful campaigns, (i.e. end advertising that is costing money and not yielding results before more money is spent)
- Increase efforts in campaigns that yield enrolled children

The budget versus actual tool (Appendix 19) can be used to create and budget for an advertising campaign, then track the expenses and enrollment results. Keep in mind that there are two tabs (one is a template and the other is an example). **Please download and review Appendix 19 now.**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Breakdown of 3 year olds by Service Planning Area (SPA) and zip code (Appendix 8)
Kindly download and review Appendix 8 now.

HealthyCity

<http://www.healthycity.org>

HealthyCity.org is an online community service and policy research tool for all of Los Angeles County. Healthy City provides unprecedented access to the largest database of community resources and localized demographic and health data on a cutting-edge GIS mapping platform.

U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder

<http://factfinder.census.gov/>

American FactFinder is an excellent source for demographic information at the city and zip code. This website can provide economic, gender, housing and ethnicity information at the city and zip code level. In addition to providing information on community resources, this website also allows the user to identify other Early Child Care Centers operating within a specified community.

LA County Office of Child Care Program

<http://cao.lacounty.gov/ccp/pub.htm>

First Five LA

<http://www.first5la.org/First-5-LA-Research>

FedStats

<http://www.fedstats.gov/>

FedStats provides access to statistical data from over 100 Federal agencies including:

Small Business Administration - <http://www.sba.gov/>

Bureau of Economic Analysis - <http://www.bea.gov/>

Bureau of the Census - <http://www.census.gov/>

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) - <http://www.bls.gov/>

BLS child care statistics - <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cq/cqs032.htm>

SECTION 7: Financials

Overview:

1. Personal Financial Statement
2. Financial History and Analysis
3. Funding Requirements and Start-Up Costs
4. Future Projections

1. Personal Financial Statement

Lenders, and most equity investors, want to know not only about the financial position of the business, but also about the personal financial profile of those who own the business. A personal financial statement assesses a person's net worth by showcasing a complete listing of all [assets](#) owned and [liabilities](#) owed. **For clarity in classifying certain items on a personal financial statement please download and review Appendix 7 now for a list of definitions.**

Before preparing a personal financial statement some documentation should be gathered. Here is a list of some items that may be of assistance:

- Documentation that may be needed for the *Assets* section of the personal financial statement
 - Bank Statements
 - Government and Corporate Bond coupons
 - [Listed](#) and [unlisted](#) securities
 - Schedule K-1 (for partnership interests)
- Documentation that may be needed for the *Liabilities* section of the personal financial statement
 - Loan statements
 - Credit card statements
 - Mortgage statements
 - Taxes owed
 - Any other accounts or payments due
- Documentation that may be needed for the *Sources of Income* section of the personal financial statement
 - W-2
 - Paycheck stubs
 - Dividend income received
 - Real estate income payments
 - Any other income documentation

Please download and review Appendix 9 for a personal financial statement template. The personal finance template outlines information that conventional lenders will want to know

about a business owner's personal finances, from a description of assets and liabilities to identification of sources of income.

2. Financial History and Analysis

Financial History and Analysis are critical pieces of your business plan as they show historically how your business has operated financially and can be used to help plan for the future.

Items that you may want to include in the Appendices of your business plan are as follows:

- **Year-End Balance Sheet** - The balance sheet shows the assets, liabilities, and shareholder equity as of a specific date for your company. This gives a view of the financial position of the company. To learn more about what is included in assets, liabilities, and shareholders equity please refer to this website:
http://www.canadaone.com/ezone/nov01/balance_sheet.html.

Additionally, please download and review Appendix 10 for an example of a year-end balance sheet template for a center based preschool (includes an example).

- **Historical Profit and Loss Statement** - An Income Statement shows the net income/(loss) of a company for a specified period of time. For more information, please refer to this website:
<http://accountingaide.com/examples/incomestmt.htm>.

It will be beneficial to include a history of your profit and loss statements (1-3 years) to see how the company has performed historically. **Please download and review Appendix 11 for a template and example of a profit and loss statement for a center based preschool.**

- **Business Income Tax Returns** - Include this information for the past three years.
- **Most current Balance Sheet** - If available, please include your most recent balance sheet statement as this will give a clear picture of how your assets / liabilities / shareholders equity has changed since your last year-end. Appendix 10 includes an example of a balance sheet statement.
- **Most current Profit and Loss Statement** - Please include your most recent profit and loss statement. Appendix 11 includes an example of a profit and loss statement for a center based preschool
- **Debt Schedule** - A debt schedule details each note payable on your most recent balance sheet. **Please download and review Appendix 12 for an example.**

3. Funding Requirements: Start-Up Costs

Determining an appropriate amount of funding for initial start-up costs, as well as ongoing cash for day-to-day operations is critical to ensure that all expenses are covered. A schedule to determine start-up costs can be found here:

<http://www.score.org/downloads/Start-up%20Expenses.xls>

It is essential to understand the estimated monthly operating statement, which establishes your estimated gross profit based on income from children's care, less operation costs.

4. Financial Plan: 3-Year Projection

A financial plan is an essential portion of your business plan as it projects your company's financial position.

Items that you may want to include in the Appendices of your business plan are as follows:

- **Projected Profit & Loss (3 years) including assumptions and comments** – A projected three year profit and loss statement shows the expected net income/(loss) of a company over the specified time period. It is a great tool to help you think about your company's future and whether or not it will be fiscally sustainable or if you need to make adjustments to your plans. The further out you forecast the less accurate the numbers will be, so round numbers except when you know exact amounts. More importantly, the assumptions should be detailed out in the narrative section of the template. This will communicate your plans for the company's future. **Please download and review Appendix 13 for an example of a 3-year profit and loss statement template for a center based preschool.**
- **Projected Cash Flow (3 years) including major assumptions** – A cash flow projection shows how your company plans to generate or expend cash over a specified period of time. It is important because it lets you know when your expenses are too high or when you will have a cash surplus so that you can plan on how to spend that cash. The cash flow is very similar to the profit and loss statement except that it only includes cash items (not accrual items, depreciation, or amortization). If you handle your accounting on a cash basis, your cash flow projection will equal your projected profit and loss statement. As with the projected profit and loss statement, it is important to include detailed assumptions in the narrative section. **Please download and review Appendix 14 for an example of a projected cash flow statement.**
- **Projected Balance Sheet** – Projecting your balance sheet is an important piece of your business plan as it will tell the reader what your business's financial health condition looks like in the future. It will let the reader know what assets will be owned by your company, how much will be owed or payable to others (liabilities), and the amount of equity the company will have (the difference

between total assets and liabilities.) Using your most recent balance sheet as a starting point, you can project out your business's financial health to see what it will look like by the end of the period covered in the profit & loss projection, and cash flow projection. The following website can be referred to for some helpful hints on filling out a projected balance sheet:

<http://www.score.org/downloads/Balance%20Sheet,%20Projected.xls>

In addition, please download and review Appendix 15 for an example of a projected balance sheet.

- **Break-Even Analysis** – A break-even analysis is a powerful tool as it will help you determine the appropriate revenue in order to cover your expenses, including both variable and fixed expenses. Revenue can be adjusted primarily by two factors: (1) number of children enrolled (2) amount charged or earned from this enrollment. You can use the break-even analysis to look at various possible scenarios. For example, if rent costs increased, how many additional children will you need to enroll to cover that additional expense? Or for instance, if you wanted to increase your salaries and wages, how much more could you charge parents while still remaining competitive to other centers in your area in order to cover the additional cost? It could also be simply used as a tool if you are currently projecting a loss, and want to determine what needs to be done in order to break-even. Please refer to this template as a guide in filling out a break-even analysis:

<http://www.score.org/downloads/Break-Even%20Analysis.xls>

In addition, please download and review Appendix 16 for an example of a break-even analysis for a center based preschool.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

First Children's Finance

www.firstchildrensfinance.org

SCORE (to download financial templates)

<http://www.score.org/resources>

SECTION 8: Evaluation

Overview:

1. Evaluation from a fiscal perspective
2. Evaluation from a programmatic perspective

The evaluation section of the business plan details how you will measure the success of your plan. Your definition of what it means for your business to be successful should be explicit. Describe keys to success (i.e. how will you know if and when the plan is successful?). Identify financial and operational benchmarks and program outcomes to measure progress.

1. Evaluation from a fiscal perspective

You may evaluate success based on return on investment (“ROI”). ROI is a performance measure used to evaluate the efficiency of an investment. To calculate ROI, the return of an investment (gain from investment minus cost of investment) is divided by the cost of the investment. If an investment does not have a positive ROI, or if there are other opportunities with a higher ROI, then the investment should not be continued or undertaken.

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Gain from investment} - \text{Cost of Investment}}{\text{Cost of Investment}}$$

2. Evaluation from a programmatic perspective

Some ways to measure programmatic success are listed below:

- **Intake Surveys** - You can administer a survey to prospective parents when they tour the facility in order to assess the success and effectiveness of your marketing plan. An intake survey asks parents to share how they heard about the program and what made them visit your site. You can also survey your parents formally or informally as they participate in your program, checking in with them on a regular basis may help you gauge your everyday successes and potential areas for improvement.
- **Enrollment** - This is the simplest way to measure program success. It is important to know the following numbers for your business (1) how many children do you need enrolled in order to turn a profit and (2) how many children do you need enrolled to at least break-even and not incur debt. You should monitor both numbers in order to gauge the programmatic success of your preschool.
- **Turnover rate** - You will want to keep track of the number of children enrolled that will need to be replaced regularly. Consider that children will leave your program for various reasons during various times throughout the school year. Keeping track of turnover rate serves two purposes (1) it gives you a good indication of how large your wait list should be in order to replace any children you may lose and (2) turnover rate is an important gauge of how happy your families are with your program. If you are experiencing a lot of turnover it is an indication that there are things about your program that can be improved.

SECTION 9: References

For a business plan to flow smoothly and to enhance its readability, it is important to minimize excessive details and background information. That's where the appendices come in handy. Instead of including a lengthy piece of information directly in the body of your plan, you can make reference to it and request that the reader refer to the appendices for further details. Appendices should include any exhibits, supporting documents or data that you referred to or referenced within the written sections of your business plan. Make sure all copies that you include are legible and complete.

Here is a list of what can often be found in a business plan's appendices:

- Management Resumes
- Blueprints or Diagrams
- Legal Contracts or Documentation
- Leases or Rental Agreements
- Personal Financial Statements and Credit Reports
- Demographic Data
- Newspaper or Magazine Articles
- Letters of Reference
- Marketing Plans
- Financial Pro Formas
- Product Samples and Marketing Literature
- Press Coverage or Clippings
- Photos of the Business or Product
- Customer Contracts or Letters of Intent
- Vendor Estimates and Quotes
- Organizational Charts and Diagrams
- Parent/Provider Admission Agreement & Policies
- Employee/Employer Agreement
- Employee Handbook
- Parent Handbook

You'll be surprised. Some of the most sought after documentation can be found in the appendices of a business plan. Make sure yours includes all necessary information that best supports and validates your business idea.⁴

⁴ Overview of *What should be included in a business plan?* from http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_should_be_included_in_the_appendices_of_a_business_plan

