

Obtaining Local Government Approval for Your Child Care Facility

Overview

The following zoning information is offered as a tool for prospective child care operators. It is not a substitute for becoming well informed about local planning policies.

Working with local government officials should be viewed as an interactive process. Be sure you are consistent in the terms you use, and be very clear about what you intend to do. For example, some local planning staff do not understand that a family child care home is not the same as a “preschool”. Be sure you make those distinctions clear, and use consistent terms.

Zoning

The following matrix summarizes the zoning requirements for child care facilities in one county. Zoning is a form of regulation used by Cities and Counties to determine what kinds of activities occur in different areas within their boundaries. Zoning is intended to prevent conflicts in terms of noise, traffic, air quality, and visual blight.

In California, State law requires that local zoning treat any small family child care home (serving up to six or up to eight children) as a Residential use, meaning that zoning cannot be used to impose any requirements that are not imposed on any home in the Residential Zones.

California State Law does permit local governments to impose limited requirements on large family child care homes (serving up to 12 or up to 14 children), but still requires that they be treated as a Residential use. For example, zoning may require a review of the site by the Planning Department, or may require a Conditional Use Permit which is granted by the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission after a public hearing. However, they may only impose “reasonable” standards. State law limits local government to regulating only four types of neighborhood impact. If you feel local policies are too stringent, you should consult with your Resource and Referral agency.

Zoning of child care centers is more like zoning for business uses. Child care centers may be permitted in some zones, may require administrative review, or may require a Conditional Use Permit. These may be required even where a center is using an existing building.

Different local governments use different terms, but in general Administrative Review (or “nondiscretionary” or “Minor” Use Permit) refers to approval granted by Planning Department staff without a public hearing. Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) refers to a permit granted after notifying all neighbors within a specified area (if applicable) and review in a public hearing by the Planning Commission.

Fees

Local governments do not receive funding to carry out these regulatory functions, and use fees to pay for these functions. You should expect to pay fees for each permit

application. These may be prohibitive, so be sure to ask what fees are required before you begin the permit process. Keep in mind that you may have to obtain permits from different departments and agencies, especially for new construction of a child care center.

If you are developing a center for a nonprofit organization, or if you are using public funds such as Community Development Block Grant or Redevelopment, you may be able to negotiate for waiver or reduction of some fees.

Timing

Permit applications and approvals can cause delays in a project if you do not plan for them. Be sure to ask for a time estimate for each permit before you begin your project. Some permits cannot be granted until certain work has been done. Typically, fire inspections cannot be completed until all construction is complete.

Other Permits

Fire inspections are required by Community Care Licensing both for centers and large family child care homes.

Plan checks and design review will be imposed on new construction. These reviews are to assure the facility meets building codes, and may also be required to assure that the architectural design is compatible with existing buildings in the area.

Building inspections will be required for new construction, remodels, and some site improvements in child care centers. In some jurisdictions, permits will be required for very specific improvements, such as installation of a dishwasher or garbage disposal.

Environmental review can be required for new construction, or where the use changes (for example, a former office building is converted to a child care center).

Zoning and General Plan Amendments may be used if you wish to develop a facility in a zone where it is not permitted. Zoning and General Plan Amendments can be expensive and time consuming. One strategy is to include the child care center as part of a larger development proposal (such as an office park or large housing development), so that the local government can consider how the facility fits into the overall plan. The costs for permits, attorneys, and planning consultants can be spread over the whole development. The child care center may be viewed as an “amenity” that will make the development more attractive to local government, so that the developer is willing to pay additional costs to include it.

Historical Resources review may be required even for some facilities that are not on a Historic Registry. If the proposed facility is in an older building or historic district, it is worth asking the Planning Department if this review will be required.

Alpine County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home	Child Care Center	Contact
Alpine County	Zoning does not specifically address large Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) or Child Care Centers. Under Home Occupations (Chp. 18.70), small FCCH are an allowed use. Home Occupations are conditional in Neighborhood Commercial and Commercial zones, which also permit “Any other commercial use or services which the commission finds to be consistent..” as Conditional uses.		Alpine County Planning Department 17300 State Route 89 Markleeville, CA 96120 530-694-1878 acplan@alpinecountyca.com

Colusa County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
Colusa County	Conditional use in residential zones	Minor CUP (Admin.)	Current zoning does not address. Application for center has not been received in recent past.			Planning Department 220 12 th ST Colusa, CA 530-458-0480 kjohanns@colusanet.com
City of Colusa	Conditional use in residential, commercial zones	Major CUP	Current zoning does not address.			PO Box 1063 452 Webster ST Colusa, CA 95932-1063 530-458-4740
City of Williams	Conditional use as "private institutions" in all zones		Conditional use as "private institutions" in all zones			PO Box 310 810 E ST Williams, CA 95987 530-473-2948 bldg1@colusanet.net

El Dorado County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
El Dorado County	Community Care Facilities serving more than 6 individuals are a conditional use in Residential and General Commercial zones. They are a permitted use in Commercial and Planned Office Commercial Districts. Site plan approval may be required in Commercial zones				Defines large family child care home as serving up to 12 children.	El Dorado County Planning 2850 Fairlane CT Placerville, CA 95667 530-621-5355 co.el-dorado.ca.us
City of Placerville	Conditional in all zones.	CUP	Conditional in all zones. Site plan approval may be required in Commercial zones	CUP		City of Placerville 487 Main ST Placerville, CA 95667 530-642-5252
City of South Lake Tahoe	Regulated by Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Planning Area Statements, which designate Day Care Centers/ Preschools as either an allowed or special use. City of South Lake Tahoe has adopted these Plan Area Statements.					City of South Lake Tahoe 1900 Lake Tahoe Blvd. South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150 tjamin@ci.south-lake-tahoe-ca.us

Nevada County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
Nevada County	Residential, Rural	Devel. Permit	Residential, General Ag., Forest, Neighborhood, Community Commercial	Use Permit	Defines Day Care Center as one caring for more than 14 children, as a Residential Use	Nevada County Planning 950 Maidu AV Nevada City, CA 95959-8617 co.nevada.ca.us
Grass Valley	Conditional in R-1, R-2, C-1, C-2, C-3, M-1, M-2	CUP	Permitted in O.P. Zone.		Has adopted General Plan to 2020. Child Care Centers are included in Institutional-Nongovernmental zone. Zoning defines "Day Care Center" as more than 6 children.	City of Grass Valley 125 E. Main ST Grass Valley, CA 95945
Nevada City	Information not provided by local agency.					City of Nevada City 317 Broad ST Nevada City, CA 95959
Truckee	Conditional in Residential zones, Neigh. Commercial, Downtown Mixed Use zones	Permitted use if part of single family dwelling. Admin. Review with 10 day public notice.	Residential zones, Downtown Mixed Use, Manufact. ----- Neigh. Commercial, Downtown Visitor Lodging, Public Facilities	CUP ----- Permitted Use	Large FCCH defined as up to 14 children. Child Care Centers defined as having 13 or more children.	City of Truckee 10183 Truckee Airport RD Truckee, CA 96161 530-582-7820

Placer County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
Placer County	Permitted with some review requirements in Residential, Farm and some Commercial zones	Zoning Clearance, Admin. Review; CUP in Commercial Planned Development	Conditional in most Residential, Farm and some Commercial zones	MUP or CUP depending on zone		Placer County Planning 11414 B AV Auburn, CA 95603 530-886-3000 planning@placer.ca.gov
City of Auburn	Permitted in Residential zones	Zoning Clearance, Admin. Review;	Permitted in Multifamily zones	CUP where not identified in Zoning Ordinance as a Permitted use.		City of Auburn 1225 Lincoln WY Auburn, CA 95603 530-823-4211 www.auburn.ca.gov
City of Colfax	Administrative Review in all zones.		Residential and Commercial zones	Admin. Review or CUP depending on size of facility	Zoning Ordinance is being updated and revised.	City of Colfax PO Box 702 33 South Main Colfax, CA 94713 530-346-2313 Colfax@foothill.net
City of Lincoln	Conditional Use in Residential Zoning Districts only.	CUP	Conditional in Residential, Industrial, Public/Quasi Public and Open-Space Zoning ----- Permitted in Commercial Zone	CUP ----- Admin. or Design Review	Has adopted Child Care Ordinance. Separate definition for Employer-sponsored Child Care Center. Conditional Use Permit packet for Day Care Uses provided.	City of Lincoln Planning 640 Fifth ST Lincoln, CA 95648 916-645-3320 www.ci.lincoln.ca.us
Town of Loomis	Conditional in Single Family and Medium Density Residential; Permitted in other Residential Zones	Zoning clearance with specific standards in all zones	Conditional in all Residential zones. Permitted in Office Commercial, General Commercial, Tourist/Dest. Commercial	Zoning clearance with specific standards in all zones	Zoning Ordinance adopted 3/11/03	Town of Loomis 6140 Horseshoe Bar RD Ste. K Loomis, CA 95650 916-652-1840 www.loomis.ca.gov
City of Rocklin	Conditional Use in all Zones	CUP	Conditional Use in all Zones	CUP		Community Dev. Dept. 3970 Rocklin RD Rocklin, CA 95677 916-625-5160 www.ci.rocklin.ca.us
City of Roseville	Permitted in Residential Mixed Use; Admin. Conditional in all other Residential zones, Conditional in most Commercial zones.	Admin. In Residential except Resid. Mixed Use; CUP in Commercial zones	Permitted in most commercial zones. Conditional in Historic District zone.	CUP where not a permitted use.		Planning Department 316 Vernon ST #104 Roseville, CA 95678 916-774-5276 planningdept@roseville.ca.us

Sacramento County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
Sacramento County	Permitted for up to 12 children.		Conditional in Residential zones	CUP	Centers permitted in Office Park, Business Professional, Shopping Center, Limited Commercial, General Commercial, and where part of a hotel/motel complex in Highway Travel, Commercial zones	Sacramento County Planning 827 7 th ST Room 230 Sacramento, CA 95814 916-874-6141 www.co.sacramento.ca.us
			Permitted in specified Commercial zones	See Planning Department for specific application requirements		
City of Citrus Heights	Conditional in Residential	CUP	Permitted in several Commerical zones.	See Planning Department for specific application requirements	Child Care Centers Permitted in Ltd. Commercial, General Commercial, Shopping Center. In Business/Professional, permitted if less than 15% of total floor area, otherwise conditional use.	Planning Department 6237 Fountain Square DR Citrus Heights, A 95621 916-727-4740 planning@ci.citrus-heights.ca.us
			Conditional in Office Park Zone	CUP		
City of Elk Grove	Permitted for up to 12 children.	CUP	Permitted in some Commercial zones Conditional in Residential if serving more than 8 children	CUP in Residential, Commercial zones where not permitted use		Elk Grove Planning 8400 Laguna Palms Way Elk Grove, CA 95768 916-478-2265 www.egplanning.org
	Homes serving more must have CUP					
City of Folsom	Permitted in Residential Multifamily and Gen. Apartment zones. Conditional in all other Residential zones	CUP except specific Residential zones where it is a permitted use	Permitted in some Commercial and in Multifamily and General Apartment Residential Zones.	CUP except where a permitted use.	Permitted in Central Business, and General Commercial zones. Conditional in Neighbor. Business, Bus. Professional zones.	City of Folsom 50 Natoma ST Folsom, CA 95630 916-355-7222 www.folsom.ca.us
City of Galt	Permitted in Residential		Information not provided by local agency.			City of Galt 495 Industrial DR Galt, CA 95632 209-745-6995
City of Isleton	Information not provided y local agency.					City of Isleton 101 Second ST Isleton, CA 95641 916-777-7770
City of Rancho Cordova	Newly incorporated effective July 1, 2003. County zoning ordinance will apply beginning July 1, 2003.					City of Rancho Cordova 3328 Mather Field Rd. Rancho Cordova, CA 95670 916- 361-8700 www.cityofranhocordova.org
City of Sacramento	Permitted in residential zones		Conditional in Residential, Industrial zones. May be permitted in some zones where meet specific criteria	See Planning Department for specific application requirements	Child care center defined as facility serving more than 14 children.	City of Sacramento 1231 I ST #300 Sacramento, CA 95814 916-264-5567 www.cityofsacramento.org

Sierra County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
Sierra County			“Day Nurseries” Conditional in R3 zone	CUP	Zoning does not specifically address day care as a use.	Tim Beals Sierra County Planning PO Box 530 Downieville, CA 95936 530-289-3251
City of Loyalton	Information not provided by local agency.					Tim Beals Sierra County Planning PO Box 531 Downieville, CA 95936 530-289-3252

Sutter County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
Sutter County	Conditional in Residential zones	Zoning Clearance	Conditional in Residential zones	CUP		Sutter County Community Services 1130 Civic Center Blvd. Yuba City, CA 95993 530-822-7400 tgaschke@co.sutter.ca.us
			Permitted in Neighborhood, General Commercial zones			
City of Live Oak	Zoning does not address family child care homes		Permitted in all Commercial zones			City of Live Oak 9955 Live Oak Blvd. Live Oak, CA 95933 530-666-8775
City of Yuba City	Permitted in R-1,2,3, conditional in other Residential zones	CUP in Residential zones where not a permitted use.	Conditional in R-1,2,3 Permitted in Neighborhood, Community, and General Commercial zones	CUP in Residential zones where not a permitted use.	Large home defined as up to 12 children. Facilities serving more than 12 must meet Center requirements.	City of Yuba City 1201 Civic Center Blvd. Yuba City, CA 95993 530-822-4700

Yolo County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
Yolo County	Conditional	Minor or Major CUP depending on location			Current Zoning Ordinance is out of date and is being revised	Yolo Co. Planning & Public Works 292 Beamer ST Woodland, CA 95695 530-666-8018 www.yolocounty.org
City of Davis	Permitted in all Residential zones.		Conditional in all Zones	CUP		Planning and Building 23 Russell Boulevard Davis, CA 95616 530-757-5610 www.ci.davis.ca.us
City of West Sacramento	Permitted in all Residential, in Agriculture, and some Commercial zones		Permitted in R2, R3, R4 zones and many Commercial zones. Conditional in some Commercial zones.	CUP except where permitted.	Separate Child Care Element in the General Plan	Community Development 1110 West Captiol AV West Sacramento, CA 95691 916-617-4645 ci.west-sacramento.ca.us
City of Winters	Conditional in all Residential zones	CUP	Information not provided by local agency.			Community Development Dept. 318 First ST Winters, CA 95694 530-795-2101 planning@afes.com
City of Woodland	Conditional in Residential zones	CUP	Conditional in Residential and most Commercial Zones	CUP	Defines large FCCH as more than 12 children	City of Woodland 300 First ST Woodland, CA 95695 530-661-5820 ci.woodland.ca.us

Yuba County
Zoning and Permit Requirements

Jurisdiction	Large Family Child Care Home		Child Care Center		Comment	Contact
	Zoning	Permit Req.	Zoning	Permit Req.		
Yuba County	Conditional in Residential, some Commercial zones	CUP with specific development standards.	Permitted in Commercial and Rural Commercial Zones		Request application form for large family child care homes. Defines large FCCH as up to 12 children.	Yuba County Planning 938 14 th ST Marysville, CA 95901 530-741-6419 www.co.yuba.ca.us
City of Marysville	Permitted in General Apartment District, Conditional in other Residential zones	CUP except in General Apartment District	Conditional in all Commercial zones	CUP	Zoning definition uses “Community Care Facility” including child care. Defines large FCCH as serving 6-12 children.	Planning and Community Develop. PO Box 150 526 C ST Marysville, CA 95901 530-749-3904
City of Wheatland	Information not provided by local agency.					City of Wheatland 313 Main Street Wheatland, CA 95692 530-633-9102