



COLORADO

Office of Early Childhood

Division of Early Care & Learning

BUILDING REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Division of Early Care and Learning, licenses family child care homes and non-home child care facilities.

Each type of child care facility has unique licensing rules, procedures and fee structures. This document is meant to be used as a guide to building requirements for child care facilities.

To learn more about these requirements and others, visit ColoradoOfficeofEarlyChildhood.com. Be sure to also review the General Rules for Child Care Facilities 7.701 and the Child Care Application Submission Guide.

GENERAL BUILDING REQUIREMENTS FOR A CHILD CARE LICENSE

Typically, child care centers are located on property zoned for commercial use.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR INFANT PROGRAMS

Infant programs must be located on the ground level. If the infant program is in the same building as a facility caring for children of other ages, the infant program must be physically separated from rooms used for children of other ages.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TODDLER PROGRAMS

Toddler programs must be located on the ground level. If the program is combined with a large child care center or infant program, toddler facilities, both indoor and outdoor, must be separate from facilities for other age groups.

A toddler program located in a drop-in child care center licensed for five (5) or fewer toddlers may be separated from the rest of the center by a five (5) foot wall.

PLANS AND CONSTRUCTION

Facilities must be in compliance with local zoning, building and planning ordinances, and homeowner association covenants. You can usually acquire this information at your city or county planning and zoning office.

Prior to construction, plans for new buildings or remodeling must be submitted to the Colorado Department of Human Services, your local fire department and your local building department to ensure the space is suitable to care for children.



The capacity, or the number of children allowed to be cared for in a child care facility, is determined by the amount of indoor and outdoor space designated for child care. Local zoning requirements may also impact the allowed capacity.

INDOOR AREAS MUST HAVE



An open, indoor play space of at least thirty (30) square feet of floor space per child, including space for movable furniture and equipment.



Adequate storage space for indoor and outdoor equipment and supplies.



Diaper change area located and arranged to provide privacy for older children in need of diaper changing.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN ALLOWED IN ONE ROOM

Age of Children	Maximum Number Per Room	Staff to Child Ratio
6 weeks to 18 months	10 infants	1:05
12 months to 18 months	10 infants	1:05
12 months to 36 months	20 toddlers	1:05
18 months to 24 months	20 toddlers	1:05
24 months to 36 months	28 toddlers	1:07
30 months to 36 months	28 toddlers	1:07

SQUARE FOOTAGE REQUIREMENTS PER CHILD

Age of Children	Separate Play Area	Separate Sleep Area	Combined Sleep and Play Area
6 weeks to 18 months	35 square feet	Not allowed in new construction	50 square feet
12 months to 36 months	30 square feet	30 square feet	45 square feet
2-1/2 years to 5 years	-	-	30 square feet
5 years and over	-	-	30 square feet

OUTDOOR AREAS MUST BE



Adjacent to or safely accessible to the indoor facilities.



A minimum of seventy-five (75) square feet of space per child for a group of children using the total play area at any one time.



Fenced or have natural barriers at least four (4) feet high, to restrict children from unsafe areas and designed so that all parts of the fence are visible.



Have at least two (2) different types of surfaces. Each type of surface must cover at least ten percent (10%) of the playground area.



Have a shaded area of at least one hundred fifty (150) square feet, provided by means of trees or other cover to guard children against excessive sun and heat.

REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIC TO INFANT AND TODDLER PROGRAMS

The minimum indoor space per infant for sleep and activities is fifty (50) square feet.

Sleep area must be separated by sturdy dividers from the area used for activities, and cribs must be arranged so that all babies and cribs are easily accessible to staff members.

Outdoor play area must be a minimum of four hundred (400) square feet for infants and seven hundred fifty (750) square feet for toddlers.

The total outdoor play area for toddler age groups must be a minimum of seven hundred fifty (750) square feet if licensed for ten (10) toddlers and one thousand fifty (1,050) square feet if licensed for fourteen (14) or more toddlers, or seventy-five (75) square feet per child for the largest group size for which the program is licensed.

In infant and toddler programs, the outdoor play area can be shared by infants, but infants and toddlers must not be allowed to use the play area at the same time.

BUILDING REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIC TO FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

Facilities must be in compliance with local zoning, building and planning ordinances, and homeowner association covenants. You can usually acquire this information at your city or county planning and zoning office.

Family Child Care Homes provide less than twenty-four (24) hour care at any time for two (2) or more children that are unrelated to each other or the provider and are cared for in the provider's place of residence.

Mobile homes used as family child care homes must have at least two (2) exits, be secured, attached, skirted and properly installed and stabilized.

All stairways must be free from hazards, and those with more than five (5) steps must be equipped with banisters or handrails within reach of children. The slats on all railings must be no wider than four (4) inches apart or modified to prevent entrapment.

INDOOR AREA REQUIREMENTS



Open, indoor play space of at least thirty-five (35) square feet of floor space per child, including space for moveable furniture.



Any level where child care occurs must have two (2) means of escape. A basement exit may include a window large enough for the provider, employees, substitutes, volunteers, visitors and children to individually exit.



Upper levels where child care occurs, without a second exit, must have escape ladders designed specifically for the purpose of evacuation of children.

OUTDOOR AREA REQUIREMENTS



At least seventy-five (75) square feet of useable outdoor play space must be available for each child.



The outdoor play space must be enclosed with at least a forty-two inch (42) fence or natural barrier. If the home does not have a fenced play space, provisions must be made for outdoor play in an area approved by the Department of Human Services.