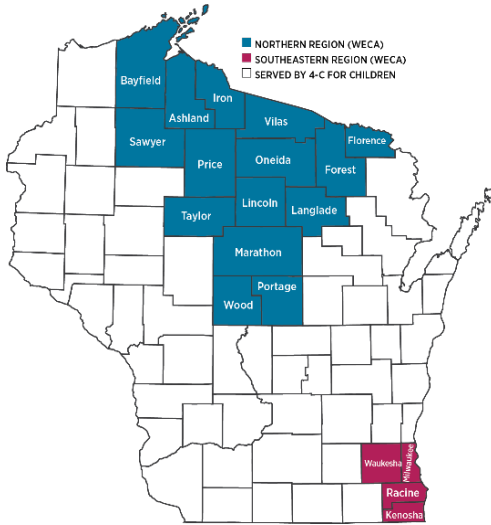




Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

Pre-Licensing Road Map for Group Child Care



The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) requires prospective providers to go through pre-licensing, a free service for people interested in starting either a licensed family child care center or group child care center in Wisconsin.

WECA provides pre-licensing services in the **Northern** and **Southeastern** licensing regions of Wisconsin. Your Pre-Licensing Technical Consultant is here to help you every step of the way, offering business resources and expert licensing advice, and working with you to ensure the success of your business and program.

Note: The information below has been simplified. There will be other steps to complete, such as hiring staff, marketing, and working with zoning in your community. For a more in-depth list, see [Procedure for Obtaining an Initial License to Operate a Group Child Care Center](#).

1. Determine if you are [qualified](#) to open a licensed child care program.
2. Find a [building](#) that meets [licensing requirements](#) and is [safe for children](#). In addition, a [building inspection](#) and checking with your local municipality to ensure proper zoning is required.
3. Fill out the [Expression of Interest](#) form to apply for pre-licensing. Learn how to set up an account [here](#).
4. Within three business days, a Pre-Licensing Technical Consultant (TC) will contact you and discuss next steps, including filling out a Business Start-Up Worksheet.
5. You are required to attend or complete one Pre-Licensing Information Session. A live, virtual meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of every other month, 6:30-8 p.m. Sign up directly here: [Information Session](#). You can also watch a [recorded Information Session](#).
6. Gather and send in all required documents for Pre-Licensing, as described in the Information Meeting.
7. Work with a Pre-Licensing Technical Consultant (TC)
 - In-person visits
 - Regular virtual meetings
 - Resources and support
8. Take required trainings for [directors/administrators](#) and [teachers](#), if not already completed. Visit the [Registry Training Calendar](#) for courses currently being offered.
9. Prepare the building and outdoor space for child care.
10. Ensure you have all the items [required for licensing](#).
11. Create policies and fill out the [policy checklist](#) – share with the Pre-Licensing Technical Consultant who will review policies.
12. Virtual visit with TC: Start reviewing [Initial Licensing Checklist](#), go over policies together.
13. Final visit in person with TC: Finalize the [Initial Licensing Checklist](#), receive licensing application.
14. Complete and sign the Initial License Application and turn in all required materials as noted on the last page of the application. Be sure to include a check or money order as requested.
15. Licensing will contact you for your first visit.

If you have questions, please email us at pre-licensing@wisconsinearlychildhood.org or call 608-620-8165.

If you are interested in starting a child care business in one of the other regions, please contact [4C for Children](#).