

# Creating Child Care Space in Richmond



## Disclaimer

*This booklet offers information and guidance as child care operators work towards opening a new child care centre. While every effort is made to keep this booklet up to date, it is the operator's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of and comply with the current regulations and requirements for opening and operating a licensed child care centre. This is not a legal document and any relevant bylaws, codes, regulations and policies shall be the legal authority.*



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## General Information

The City of Richmond acknowledges that licensed and affordable child care is an essential service for families. High quality child care spaces promote the well-being of children and families and support the overall economic stability and growth of Richmond.



## Research and Planning

Before applying for a child care licence and/or a building permit for a child care space, it is important to do the appropriate research and planning in order to ensure the facility will comply with all zoning, bylaws and regulations. It is recommended that potential operators read and understand relevant legislation, regulations and requirements, including:

- City of Richmond Bylaws and Zoning requirements;
- Community Care and Assisted Living Act;
- Child Care Licensing Regulation;
- BC Building Code; and
- BC Fire Code.

It is important to ensure there is a need for the type of child care program you are thinking of operating. The City of Richmond's Child Care Strategy and Planning webpage provides strategic documents that identify the types of child care programs that are needed in each neighbourhood of the city. It can be used as a resource to help operators to plan for and anticipate the need for new or expanded child care spaces.

The Richmond Child Care Locator, developed with assistance from Vancouver Coastal Health, is an easy-to-use map that displays all licensed child care programs in Richmond, along with related contact information. This can be a helpful tool to understand the child care programs already available in specific areas of the City.

These resources can be found on the City of Richmond website at [www.richmond.ca](http://www.richmond.ca).



## Regulatory Process

The governing bodies outlined below enforce provincial and local regulations and requirements for the operation of child care facilities. It is recommended that you review the Handbook for Child Care Providers, produced by the Government of British Columbia, for an extensive overview of the process for opening child care.

### 1. Province of British Columbia

Provincial legislation requires that child care programs and facilities providing care to three or more children who are not related to the operator by blood or marriage are required to have a Community Care Facilities Licence to offer child care.

Licensed child care programs must meet the requirements of provincial legislation, including:

- [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#)
- [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#)

### 2. Vancouver Coastal Health

Child care programs in Richmond are regulated by **Vancouver Coastal Health**. In order to licence a child care program, you must apply for a Community Care Facilities Licence through Vancouver Coastal Health. A Licensing Officer will assist you with your application and review the plans for your child care space. Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond Office offers orientation sessions for prospective child care operators. Contact the VCH Licensing Office for more information 604-233-3147.

### 3. City of Richmond

Child care facilities must adhere to City regulations, similar to other businesses in the city. These regulations and requirements may differ based on the property type and the child care licence type. Examples of City regulations and requirements include:

- Zoning requirements;
- Parking bylaws;
- Business licensing;
- Building, sprinkler and plumbing permits; and
- BC Fire Code.

# Licensing a Child Care Program

## Steps for Licensing a Child Care Program in a Home (including Family Child Care and In-Home Multi-Age Child Care)

**1. Find a suitable child care space.**

Identify the address for the proposed facility and confirm zoning and existing building plans with the City of Richmond.



**2. Apply for a Community Care Facilities: Child Care Licence (VCH).**

Complete a Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Community Care Facilities: Child Care Licence Application form.



**3. Coordinate a visit with a VCH Licensing Officer.**

Meet with a VCH Licensing Officer to review plans for the proposed child care space and to coordinate an assessment of the space. Provide the Licensing Officer with documents including an employee plan, and site and floor plan drawings.



**4. Apply for a Building Permit through the City and coordinate a building inspection with Building Approvals.**

If no renovations are planned or required, no Building Permit is needed but you must apply for a Non-Permit Site Inspection. If renovations are planned, you will need to submit a Building Permit application, including in three (3) copies of the child care space and site drawn to scale.

Both of these options require inspection visit(s) and payment of associated fees.

Once any necessary work has been completed and the building inspection is successful, you will be provided with a Site Visit Notice (if you applied for a Non-Permit Site Inspection) or a Final Inspection Card (if you applied for a Building Permit). Both are considered municipal approval of your child care space.



**5. Coordinate a fire inspection with Richmond Fire-Rescue.**

Once the Site visit Notice or Final Inspection Card has been received, contact Richmond Fire-Rescue for a fire inspection. There may be an associated fee.

Once the fire inspection is complete, you will be provided with correspondence confirming BC Fire Code Compliance.



**6. Provide VCH with municipal and fire approval from the City.**

Give copies of the documents from the City of Richmond Building Inspector and Richmond Fire-Rescue to the VCH Licensing Officer. The Licensing Officer will then review all other required documents and conduct an inspection(s) to complete the process to obtain a licence to operate the child care program.

**Note:** Issuance of a Building Permit, necessary inspections and approval of a Community Care Facilities Licence to operate licensed child care including approval from the City of Richmond, Richmond Fire-Rescue and Vancouver Coastal Health, Child Care Licensing can take an extended period of time. This is dependent, in part, on the site selected, level of renovation or alteration required to comply with all relevant regulations and requirements and the operational details of the child care program. Please account for this in your planning.



## Steps for Licensing Group Child Care Programs (including new builds, construction, or renovations to non-residential spaces)

**1. Decide the location, address and type of child care program to be offered.**

Research the community need for child care, including the types of licensed child care programs or areas of greatest need. Confirm the zoning, bylaw and building permit requirements of the site as early as possible. Develop and confirm a budget for the start up of your program including the costs of renovations, permits and licences.



**2. Apply for a Community Care Facilities: Child Care Licence (VCH).**

Complete a Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Community Care Facilities: Child Care Licence Application form.



**3. Design a suitable child care space and coordinate a visit with a VCH Licensing Officer.**

Meet with a VCH Licensing Officer to review plans for the proposed child care centre. Provide a detailed description of the care program(s), site and floor plans and financial and budgetary information. This may take multiple meetings to ensure that you are creating a healthy space for children.

Complete this step prior to submitting a Building Permit application in order to reduce delays in obtaining the permit. VCH approval is required prior to the Building Permit being issued.



**4. Apply for a Building Permit through the City and coordinate a building inspection with Building Approvals.**

Apply for a Building Permit through the City's Building Approvals Department. You will need to provide three (3) sets of site plans (drawn to scale) if submitting a hard copy application. If the plans comply with the requirements contained in the BC Building Code, Zoning Bylaws, Building Bylaws and other related regulations, and VCH has cleared them, a Building Permit will be issued.



**5. Begin construction on your child care space and coordinate necessary building, plumbing, and fire inspections.**

Coordinate building and plumbing inspections with the Building Approvals Department and fire inspection with Richmond Fire-Rescue. During the building inspection process, the inspector will advise you of any issues requiring your attention. If your building inspection is successful, you will be provided with a Final Inspection Card (municipal approval).

Once this is completed, you will need to contact Richmond Fire-Rescue for a fire inspection. If the fire inspection is successful, you will be provided with correspondence confirming BC Fire Code Compliance.



**6. Provide VCH with building and fire approval from the City.**

Give copies of the documents from the City of Richmond Building Inspector and Richmond Fire-Rescue to the VCH Licensing Officer. The Licensing Officer will then review all other required documents and conduct an inspection(s) to complete the process to obtain a licence to operate the child care program.



**7. Obtain a Business Licence from the City.**

If the child care facility will be licensed for more than ten children, a business licence is required from the City.

**Note:** Issuance of a Building Permit, necessary inspections and approval of a Community Care Facilities Licence to operate licensed child care including approval from the City of Richmond, Richmond Fire-Rescue and Vancouver Coastal Health, Child Care Licensing can take an extended period of time. This is dependent, in part, on the site selected, level of renovation or alteration required to comply with all relevant regulations and requirements and the operational details of the child care program. Please account for this in your planning.

# Types of Child Care

Licensed Child Care Programs are described below, as outlined in the Child Care Licensing Regulation.

## Child Care Provided In-home

Licence Type	Maximum Number of Children & Other Specifications
Family Child Care	Maximum of seven children.
In-Home Multi-Age Child Care	The licensee must be an early childhood educator and a maximum of eight children.
Multi-Age Child Care	Care to a group with a maximum of 8 children of various ages.
Occasional Child Care	No more than 40 hours in a month to children who are at least 18 months old.

## Group Child Care

Licence Type	Maximum Number of Children & Other Specifications
Group Child Care – Under 36 Months	Maximum of 12 children per group.
Group Child Care – 30 Months to School Age	Maximum of 25 children per group, with no more than two children younger than 36 months.
Group Child Care – School Age	Care provided before and after school hours. Maximum group of 30 children if all children are in grade 2 or higher. If there are children that are in kindergarten or grade 1, the maximum group is 24 children.
Preschool – 30 Months to School Age	Care provided for a maximum of four hours per day. A maximum of 20 children per group. Children must be 30 months old upon their entrance into the program and 36 months old by December 31 of the year of their entrance.





## Considerations and Resources

### Provincial Child Care Licensing Regulation

You will need to submit a Community Care Facilities: Child Care Licence Application form (available through VCH) and attend an orientation session prior to having plans reviewed (review by a prior applicant may need to be re-done). For detailed information on what needs to be provided to the Licensing Officer, review the **Community Care and Assisted Living Act: Child Care Licensing Regulation**.

For more information, contact Vancouver Coastal Health at 604-233-3147.

### Designing a Child Care Space

To create a healthy space for children, you will need to work with a VCH Licensing Officer. For child care provided in your home, this may only take one meeting and an assessment visit. If you are planning to open a child care space in a facility other than a residence (which includes large renovations, adaptations, or

new construction) this may take many meetings with a Licensing Officer. To minimize delays, complete as much of the application as possible prior to meeting with a VCH Licensing Officer.

Existing resources to help design a healthy child care environment include:

- **Vancouver Coastal Health Design Resource for Child Care Facilities**
- **City of Richmond Child Care Design Guidelines**

### Zoning for Child Care

Family Child Care and In-Home Multi-age Child Care are permitted in a range of residential dwellings including most single-family and townhouse zones. Larger child care facilities, including Group Child Care programs, are generally permitted in commercial, institutional (including schools and community centres), mixed use, and some industrial zones. These zones may be subject to certain bylaw requirements.

To check if your property is zoned for child care, contact the City's Zoning Department at [zoning@richmond.ca](mailto:zoning@richmond.ca).

## BC Building Code Requirements

BC Building Code (BCBC) has special classification requirements for child care facilities to help ensure the safety of children in these spaces. The BCBC requires child care facilities to be classified as Group A, Division 2 occupancy regardless of the age of the children. The [Bulletin on Child Care Facilities-Permits 47](#) has further information on the BCBC requirements.

Should you have any questions on the BCBC requirements, email [building@richmond.ca](mailto:building@richmond.ca) or call the Building Approvals at 604-276-4118.



## Converting a Building for Child Care Use

If the existing building requires renovations or a new building is being constructed, it is important to understand the building permit process that will be required. It is recommended that you engage skilled professionals who are experienced with this process to ensure you have a plan for:

- Preparing and submitting plans;
- Determining the permits you require;
- Hiring professionals (architects, engineers, renovation contractors);
- Creating timelines and budgeting for fees associated with the building permits, inspections and renovations; and
- Receiving landlord or strata permission to operate child care (if applicable).

### Some additional things to consider:

- Contact the City of Richmond at [building@richmond.ca](mailto:building@richmond.ca) early in the development process to reduce delays and expensive construction impacts that may result from utilizing a space or building that is not well suited for child care;
- Applicants should be aware that assembly occupancies including child care facilities require increased fire protection, life safety and accessibility features which may not be present in an existing building;
- Some properties are located in zones that have use restrictions; confirm with the City's Zoning Department to ensure the proposed use adheres to its zone prior to securing a lease;
- Change of use may affect the application processing times and require additional code compliance;



- Unpermitted work done by a prior tenant will need to be legalized or removed with the new permit application submittal;
- Zoning designation will dictate additional conditions related to the permit such as height, parking, etc.; and
- Contact the Records department at [buildingrecordsrequest@richmond.ca](mailto:buildingrecordsrequest@richmond.ca) to verify the last permitted condition of the space under consideration to confirm if any changes have been made without proper permitting.

See [Information Bulletin-49](#) on converting industrial spaces for assembly occupancy, including child care.

See the [VCH Child Care Physical Plant Application Guide](#) for information on retrofitting or renovating an existing facility.

Any questions on converting space for child care should be directed to the Building Approvals at 604-276-4118 or email [building@richmond.ca](mailto:building@richmond.ca).

## BC Fire Code Requirements

If you are in the process of applying for a child care licence, you will need to have the proposed child care facility inspected by Richmond Fire-Rescue to ensure fire and life safety requirements are fulfilled.

Once you have received municipal approval for the child care space, you can schedule an inspection with Richmond Fire-Rescue by submitting a completed [Request an Inspection Form](#). There may be an associated fee.

To speak with Richmond Fire Rescue and receive additional information, contact 604-278-5131.

## Parking Requirements

Child care facilities must adhere to the parking requirements outlined within Zoning Bylaw 8500 in order to meet staff parking and parent drop-off requirements. Child care programs providing in-home for less than 8 children may have different requirements.

To check the parking requirements, contact the City's Zoning Department at [zoning@richmond.ca](mailto:zoning@richmond.ca).

## Environmental Concerns

There may be additional environmental concerns or questions related to the building's former use, such as potential site contamination or environmental hazards. An Environmental Assessment may be available from the real estate agent selling the property.

In addition, outdoor child care spaces must have minimal exposure to environmental concerns, such as air pollution and aircraft noise. Requirements for meeting outdoor space standards are outlined within the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#).

For more information, contact Vancouver Coastal Health at 604-233-3147.

## Development Cost Charges

Any new residential or commercial developments, including additions of floor space to an existing building will be subject to Development Cost Charges (DCCs). DCCs are collected to help pay for the costs associated with off-site infrastructure (e.g. road and water works) that are needed to accommodate urban growth. City staff will calculate the DCCs associated with your project and notify you of the amount you will need to pay. This amount needs to be paid prior to a Building Permit being issued. For further information on DCCs, please refer to the [City of Richmond Bulletin Assessment of Development Cost Charges \(DCC\) – Calculation of Building Area](#).

## Food Service Permit

If you are planning to serve meals to children, you will be required obtain a food permit for your kitchen from VCH. In the application, you will be required to

include details about the proposed food prep areas as well as the equipment you plan to use. Please speak with your VCH Licensing Officer about requirements.

## Business Licence

If you are running a private child care business and providing care for **more than 10 children** you will need to apply for a Business Licence. Applications are available at City Hall or online. You will need to submit your application to a Business Licensing Officer at City Hall.

For more information, contact the Licence Division at 604-276-4328.

## Signage

Prior to installing any signs, check to make sure your signage meets the [City's Sign Regulation Bylaw](#) requirements. There are limitations to the size and types of signs you can install. You may be required to obtain a City sign permit.

For more information on sign permit application requirements, contact 604-276-4016.



# Helpful Contacts

## BC Building Code

 [www.bccodes.ca](http://www.bccodes.ca)

 [bccodes@gov.bc.ca](mailto:bccodes@gov.bc.ca)

 250-387-6409

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## BC Ministry of Education and Child Care

 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children>

 [Mcf.info@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Mcf.info@gov.bc.ca)

 1-888-338-6622

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## Child Care Resource and Referral Centre (CCRR)

 [www.richmondkids.ca](http://www.richmondkids.ca)

 [childcare@rcrg.org](mailto:childcare@rcrg.org)

 604-279-7143

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## City of Richmond – Building Approvals

 <https://www.richmond.ca/plandev/building.htm?PageMode=HTML>

 [building@richmond.ca](mailto:building@richmond.ca)

 604-276-4118

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## City of Richmond – Business Licenses

 <https://www.richmond.ca/busdev/licences.htm>

 [BusLic@richmond.ca](mailto:BusLic@richmond.ca)

 604-276-4328

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## City of Richmond – Child Care Section

 <https://www.richmond.ca/services/communitysocialdev/childcare.htm>

 [childcare@richmond.ca](mailto:childcare@richmond.ca)

 604-204-8621

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## City of Richmond – Permit Records

 <https://www.richmond.ca/services/permits.htm>

 [buildingrecordsrequest@richmond.ca](mailto:buildingrecordsrequest@richmond.ca)

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## City of Richmond – Planning & Development (zoning information)

 <https://www.richmond.ca/plandev.htm>

 [zoning@richmond.ca](mailto:zoning@richmond.ca)

 604-276-4017

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## Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond Office (general number)

 [www.vch.ca](http://www.vch.ca)

 [healthprotectionrh@vch.ca](mailto:healthprotectionrh@vch.ca)

 604-233-3147

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## Richmond Fire-Rescue Administration

 <https://firerescue.richmond.ca/>

 [fire@richmond.ca](mailto:fire@richmond.ca)

 604-278-5131

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## City of Richmond

6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Telephone: 604-276-4000

[www.richmond.ca](http://www.richmond.ca)