
Child Care Facilities

In December 2025, Kitsap County adopted a Child Care Code Update to expand access to childcare, remove regulatory barriers, and align local development regulations with evolving state policy. In response to a state law requiring childcare facilities to be permitted by right in cities, the County applied this approach to unincorporated areas to ensure consistency and better support families countywide. The update removes identified barriers by allowing childcare uses in more zones, including rural areas, and permitting such uses by right where appropriate. It also establishes consistency with state definitions and standards for childcare, improving clarity for providers and streamlining the permitting process.

[Visit the Washington Department of Children, Youth, and Families website](#) to learn more about state licensure requirements.

What codes apply to these facilities?

Kitsap County Code (KCC) child care provider definitions

- Per [KCC 17.110.157](#), “**Child care center**” is an agency that regularly provides early childhood education and early learning services for a group of children for periods of less than twenty-four hours. If there is a conflict between this definition and the definition of child care in [Chapter 43.216 RCW](#), state law shall govern.
- Per [KCC 17.110.271](#), “**Family day care provider**” is a child care provider who regularly provides early childhood education and early learning services for not more than twelve children at any given time in the provider’s home in the family living quarters, except as provided in [RCW 43.216.692](#). If there is a conflict between this definition and the definition of family day care provider in [Chapter 43.216 RCW](#), state law shall govern.

Building code standards

- Per [2021 Washington State Building Code 308.5.5](#), Family home child care licensed by Washington state for the care of 12 or few children shall be classified as Group R-3 or shall comply with the *International Residential Code*.
- [2021 Washington State Residential Code Appendix AM](#) – Home Day Care – R-3 Occupancy

Are child care and home day care facilities allowed everywhere?

Allowed uses and permitting requirements depend on the zoning for your property.

[Review KCC 17.410 for allowed use table.](#)

What standards apply to these facilities?

Child care center standards per [KCC 17.415.106](#) include:

- Size limit
- Access and circulation
- Noise limits
- Neighbor notice
- State licensing
- Location restriction

Family day care provider standards per [KCC 17.415.197](#) include:

- Permitting compliance
- Zoning standards
- Safe loading
- Noise limits
- Neighbor notice
- State licensing
- Location restriction
- Residential limitation

All child care providers must also meet Kitsap Public Health District requirements, including standards for drinking water, wells, and septic. [Visit the Kitsap Public Health District webpage](#) or contact them to learn more about health requirements.

What is a neighbor notice?

A neighbor notice includes information to let adjoining property owners know about the proposed facility before a permit is issued. Attached to this publication is an example template for a neighbor notification.

What are the fees for a child care facility?

Impact fees for child care are under assessment but have not been changed as of this publication date. Current day care facility impact fees can be found on the most recent [Impact Fee Table](#).

More information about permit fees can be found on the [Community Development Payments webpage](#).

How do I apply for a child care or family day care facility permit?

For any child care provider project, it is best practice to schedule a paid virtual Staff Consultation or Hourly Meeting to understand code requirements for your project. For more information and to request a meeting, visit the [Department Review Team Meetings webpage](#).

Fifteen-minute free virtual appointments are available on an as needed basis. [Go to the Contact Us page to schedule an appointment](#).

Once you're ready, apply for a permit through the [Permit Application Portal](#). This portal will provide you a checklist of submittal requirements for your unique project.

More Questions?

Visit: [Contact Us](#)

Call: 360.337.5777

Email: help@kitsap1.com

This handout is provided for general information only and is not a substitute for, nor modifies or supersedes, any applicable federal, state, or local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, or codes. In any apparent conflict between this handout and any applicable legal requirement, the applicable legal requirement will control. The applicant/property owner is solely responsible for determining and complying with all applicable legal requirements and should consult its own qualified professional(s) as appropriate. Kitsap County Code is available online and DCD makes no warranties and assumes no liability arising from use of or reliance on this handout.

Example: Neighbor Notification

Date: _____

Dear Property Owner/Resident,

This letter is to notify you that a child care center is proposed to operate at the following location:

Proposed Child Care Center Address: _____

Applicant/Operator Name: _____

Proposed Use: Licensed Child Care Center

Kitsap County zoning regulations require evidence of written neighbor notification to immediately adjoining property owners prior to state licensing. This notice is being provided to meet that requirement.

The child care center must comply with all applicable Kitsap County development standards, zoning requirements, and building and safety codes, as well as Washington State licensing requirements.

If you have questions about the County's land use or permitting requirements, please contact:

Kitsap County Department of Community Development

Phone: (360) 337-5777

Website: <https://www.kitsap.gov/dcd>

For questions about the proposed child care center operation, please contact:

Applicant/Operator:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Applicant/Operator Name

Signature