

The Child Care Provider Licensing & Registration Portal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How much are the licensing or registration fees?

Effective November 1, 2025, application fees for child care providers have been eliminated. Providers no longer need to pay for an initial or amended license or registration.

I'm not sure which home-based provider type to select. What is the difference between a licensed family home, licensed group home, and a registered home?

A Registered home provides care, services and supervision for no more than 4 children. A Licensed Family home provides care, services and supervision for no more than six children. A Licensed Family Group home provides care, services, and supervision for at least seven but not more than 12 children.

What first steps do I need to take in order to become a licensed child care center?

The first step is finding a location. Once a location is secured, you can reach out to ECECD to schedule a courtesy visit of the building. You will need to obtain a zoning approval from your local municipality which includes a certificate of occupancy to indicate that the city has inspected the building and determined it is a safe environment for children to be in. A fire marshal or your local fire department will conduct an inspection to ensure the building is safe for children and that they can exit the building safely in the event of a fire. The NM Environment Department will review food service and food processing when food is served by the provider whether provided by a third-party vendor, or if applicable, prepared on-site in a commercial kitchen. The inspection will also include review of a private water supply, private waste or sewage disposal, and a swimming pool, if applicable.

What documents do I need for licensing or registration?

For a Center or Out of School Time Program you will need to provide a zoning approval, building approval/certificate of occupancy, fire inspection, environmental department approval, directors resume, directors proof of degree, directors and all other applicable staff members background clearances and a W-9 to receive child care assistance payment.

For a Licensed Home you will need a zoning approval, fire inspection, environmental department approval, CPR/First Aid certification, activity schedule, background check clearance for the provider, secondary caregivers, and household members over the age of 18, and a W-9 to receive child care assistance payment.

For a Registered home you will need a background check clearance, copy of driver's license or picture ID, copy of Social Security Card or Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) documentation, proof of physical address, and a W-9 to receive child care assistance payments.

The application is asking for an EPICS number. What is an EPICS Number?

EPICS is the department's database where provider licensing/registration, contracts, payments and related data are managed. An EPICS number will be issued to you and it serves as your license or registration number. Your background check, and your staff or secondary caregiver's background checks, will be tied to your EPICS Number. For a Center, we must have your application and W-9 to establish an EPICS number. For a home provider, an EPICS number is assigned when you complete your background check.

What is a substitute W-9 and why is it needed?

The substitute W-9 form is used by the State of New Mexico to create your vendor ID and enable ECECD to pay you for the children enrolled through the Child Care Assistance program. Required documents include social security card, Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN), or an Employee Identification Number (EIN) letter. A copy of your government-issued photo identification (e.g., driver's license, passport). should be included with all documentation. If the provider wishes to add direct deposit, a voided check or bank letter must be attached to the request along with a secondary phone number for DFA to verify bank information.

What happens after the application is received by ECECD?

Once the application is submitted, it is reviewed to ensure it is complete. If all required documents are received, the application will be assigned to an ECECD staff member. If any documents are missing, you will be contacted by an ECECD supervisor who will explain what is needed to complete the application.

How long does the licensing or registration application process take?

The online application can be completed in about 15 minutes if you have all of your required documents accessible. The processing time varies based on the provider type and approvals from other departments such as the fire marshal, zoning, and environmental inspections. Once you start the application, you have 6 months to complete all the steps. When the application is complete, ECECD will schedule an initial visit within 14 calendar days. If you are unable to submit all the required documents within six months, you will be required to start the application process again.

Can I operate before receiving my license or registration?

No. All child care centers, out of school time programs, family child care homes, and other early care and education programs within the State of New Mexico must obtain a license or registration before operating a child care program and receiving payment from ECECD. ECECD will not reimburse providers retroactively for care provided before the license or registration is issued.

What are the current reimbursement rates as a provider?

The department pays child care providers monthly based upon the child's enrollment with the provider as reflected in the child care placement agreement issued, rather than daily attendance. The amount of the payment is based upon the child care facility type, age of the child, average number of hours of care per week, and the provider's star rating. You may access the reimbursement rates here: [Universal Child Care | Early Childhood Education & Care Department](#).

How can I amend my existing license or registration?

An application amendment must be submitted. You can submit an application amendment online on this website or download a copy of the application to be typed or printed and handwritten. You can:

- Email your application to ECECD-CCPApplication@ececd.nm.gov
- Mail your application to ECECD Child Care Services Bureau - Licensing Unit, PO Drawer 5619 Santa Fe, NM 87502-5619
- Hand deliver your application to ECECD at 1120 Paseo De Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87501.

Have more questions? Reach out to the Wonderschool Technical Support team:

Email: hello@wonderschool.com | Phone: (888) 899-2550