

Property Search Criteria for Child Care/Preschool Centers For Realtors

Child care/preschool operators differ as to the size (and other aspects) of a facility they are seeking, based on their business model, philosophy, and operational factors. So the following guidelines are provided for general use in identifying potentially suitable properties.

	Explanation and Assumptions:
Interior space: A range of 5,000/6,000 sf to 10,000 sf ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most operators require licensed capacity of at least 50-60 children to have an economically viable program. Some will consider a smaller capacity and others prefer at least 100-child capacity. • While state Community Care Licensing regulations require 35 sf per child of unencumbered play space, quality standards assume 50. Depending on the building, 80-100 sf per child must be available to account for: other child uses (cubbies, bathrooms), adult spaces (office, food prep area, bathrooms), storage, hallways, etc.
Outdoor space: Approximately the same amount of outdoor space is needed that is suitable to be developed for a fenced playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCL requires 75 sf of playground space per child (including for infants). It is possible for the operator to obtain a waiver to reduce playground space based on scheduling different time periods for classes. However, the need for age-appropriate equipment precludes sharing of playgrounds by infant/toddlers, preschool-age (3-5 yrs) and school-age (5-12 yrs.). • Playground space may be shared with the public outside of child care hours only. • Ideally, playgrounds are directly accessible from classrooms.
Parking	<p>Cities vary in parking requirements for child care/preschool centers. Generally, one space is required for each child care employee based on the maximum that will be on-site at one time.² Short-term drop off/pick up parking for parents may be required at anywhere from 1 space per 5 to 1 per 10 children. Sometimes a curbside green zone can meet this requirement. Staff and parents' access to public transit may permit a reduction in parking.</p>

¹ Ground floor space is highly preferred due to the extensive, additional Building and Fire Code requirements for child care above (or below) ground level.

² The 10-12 hours of operation of a child care center are staffed with overlapping work shifts based on lower enrollment at beginning and end of the day.

<p>Bathrooms/Plumbing: 4 toilets and 4 sinks for children plus an adult facility (can be unisex)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCL regulations require one toilet and sink per 15 children in addition to adult facilities. Ideally these are located in or adjacent to classrooms to avoid teachers leaving to escort children to bathrooms. So the amount and location of existing plumbing (that can be tapped into) is an important consideration if additional toilets/sinks will be required.
<p>Other Site Considerations (not regulated by CCL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City or county zoning must allow this use. • Convenient location for parents • Safety/health issues • ADA accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care centers should be available in residential neighborhoods, office parks, commercial areas, in/near public facilities and parks. Some cities allow child care in light industrial areas but potential impacts of toxics, noise, etc must be assessed. • Convenience to commute routes and public transit is ideal. • Air quality is a concern due to respiratory illnesses in children. Avoid sites within 500 ft., at least, of freeways and other sources of emissions. • Noise impacts of high vehicle traffic areas, airports, industrial activities or other sources can be detrimental to children’s development and learning. • Soil contamination from previous uses of a property must be assessed. Testing and mitigation costs may make a project unfeasible. • Child care centers are required to be accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act. In relation to physical facilities, this impacts bathrooms, access to the building and playground, and path of travel within.

Developed by Kristen Anderson for the Daly City Child Care Facilities Assessment Project, an activity of the Child Care Partnership Council of San Mateo County (Aug. 2010)