

# A GUIDE TO OPENING AND OPERATING A DAYCARE IN MAPLE RIDGE



## Maple Ridge



## Child Care: A Critical Community Asset

As a young and family-oriented community, the City of Maple Ridge knows that ensuring access to safe, healthy and well-run child care services is critical to supporting the overall social and economic development of our community.

Daycares are found in a wide variety of locations throughout Maple Ridge including residential homes, commercial buildings, churches, municipal facilities and on school properties. Parents and caregivers rely on provincial and municipal standards and regulations to ensure the health and safety of their children while they are in care. The Province of BC, the Fraser Health Authority and the City of Maple Ridge work together to ensure that all licenced daycares are located and operated in healthy and safe locations.

This guide is designed to help you understand the rules and regulations that apply to successfully opening and operating a licenced child care centre that provides care and supervision for nine or more children and is typically located in a commercial building, place of worship, community centre or on a school property. In order to open and operate a child care facility, you will need to meet both the provincial and municipal requirements. This guide also includes information on the rules and regulations that apply to opening and operating a home-based daycare.

### Provincial Child Care Licencing requirement

In Maple Ridge, all child care facilities with three or more children need to be licenced by Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licencing and meet the requirements of the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and the *Child Care Licencing Regulation*. Contact a Licencing Officer with the Fraser Health Authority for more information on the provincial requirements for a Child Care Licence to open a child care centre.

The *Child Care Licencing Regulation* requires you to submit a written application that addresses all requirements specified in Schedule B of that regulation. The Licencing Officer will be able to assist you with your application and review the plans for your child care space.

### Municipal zoning, building and fire code requirements

In addition to the provincial regulations administered by the Fraser Health Authority, child care centres need to comply with all municipal bylaws as well as the BC Building Code and BC Fire Code regulations. The province requires all child care centres meet the BC Building Code requirements for a Group A, Division 2 major occupancy (assembly occupancy) and all related BC Fire Code regulations. These regulations are designed to help ensure the health and safety of children in care. You will require the services of a Registered Professional, such as an architect or professional engineer, to ensure your facility meets these requirements.

Please ensure you fully understand these requirements before you enter into a sales or lease agreement.

## Home Based Daycare Information

Home-based daycares include both **Family Daycares** and **Neighbourhood Daycares**.

**Family Daycares** are operated in a private residence and provide care to no more than eight children (including the licence holder's own children).

**Neighbourhood Daycares** provide for the care and supervision of up to 15 children in a home environment.



## Municipal Requirements

The City of Maple Ridge encourages all potential child care facility operators to meet with City staff to discuss their plans as early as possible. City staff can help you understand the specific regulations and requirements that apply to child care facilities.

Planning: 604-467-7341

Business Licensing: 604-467-7440

Building: 604-467-7311

Economic Development: 604-467-7320

### Meet with the Planning Department

The first step to opening a child care centre is finding the right location. Before signing a lease or sales agreement, please check with the Planning Department to make sure your preferred location is properly "zoned" for a commercial child care use. Please note that in some cases, a building may have correct zoning but not meet the current requirements of the BC Building Code for a child care facility.

### Consult with a Registered Professional for code compliance

Child care facilities are often opened in existing buildings and may only need minor modifications. However, it is critical that you ensure that the building where you plan to operate meets the BC Building Code requirements for **Group A, Division 2 major occupancy** (assembly occupancy).

**The City requires applicants to consult with a Registered Professional, such as an architect or professional engineer, who is familiar with the requirements of the BC Building Code to review your proposed location.** The registered professional will be able to provide advice on what improvements may be required, potential costs, and if the services of other registered professionals, such as a structural engineer, are also required. The City strongly recommends that you consult with a registered professional prior to signing a lease or sales agreement.

### Apply for a Business Licence

Once you have found a suitable location that meets all of the requirements for a licenced child care centre, the next step is to apply for a City of Maple Ridge business licence. Child care facilities, whether operated in a commercial building or within a private residence, are considered businesses and require an annual business licence.

The business licence application process includes providing information about the specific location of the proposed child care facility and the type and scope of any renovations that are required. The Bylaw & Licencing Services and Building departments will guide you through the process of obtaining any necessary permits and inspections for your business licence.

## Understanding the difference between "Zoning" and the BC Building Code

The City of Maple Ridge Zoning Bylaw and the BC Building Code are a set of closely related regulations that serve different functions. In order to successfully open and operate a childcare facility, you need to understand how to meet the requirements of both of these sets of regulations: your facility must have the correct "zoning" for a child care facility and the building itself must meet all of the requirements of the BC Building Code.

The **Zoning Bylaw** regulates where different types of business can locate and the types of structures that can be built on a particular property. The goal of the Zoning bylaw is to group together compatible land uses and reduce potential conflicts between neighbours. The City of Maple Ridge Zoning Bylaw considers Group Child Care Centres as an "assembly use" that is permitted in a wide variety of commercial and institutional zones.

The **BC Building Code** regulates the construction details of buildings and other structures to ensure public safety. Group Child Care Centres are considered **Group A, Division 2 major occupancy** (assembly occupancy).

This occupancy classification has more rigorous life safety standards than some of the other occupancy classifications to ensure the health and safety of infants and children in care. A registered professional who is familiar with the BC Building Code is required to ensure that your location meets these requirements.

## BC Building Code Requirements

An existing building may have to be upgraded to full compliance with all of the appropriate requirements of the BC Building Code in order to accommodate a child care centre. These upgrades may include, but are not limited to:

- Reclassification of the building to a Group A, Division 2 major occupancy (assembly occupancy)
- Fire separations between the child care and other occupancies/tenants, exit stairs and service rooms
- Fire-rated floors, loadbearing structural members and walls
- Fire dampers on all heating ducts and return air grills
- Fire stops to all penetrations of fire separations
- Exterior building construction may need to be upgraded to comply with the Spatial Separation and Fire Exposure Protection requirements of the BC Building Code
- Exiting brought into compliance
- Sprinkler system installed or upgraded
- A fire alarm system

## Building Permit Application

Please ensure that all required information is submitted at the time of application, including the following list of drawings and documents:

- Business License Application
- Three copies of a site plan
- Three sets of sealed, signed and dated architectural drawings
- Three sets of sealed, signed and dated structural drawings if any structural changes or additions are proposed or required
- A sealed engineering report confirming that the existing building will meet the requirements of the current BC Building Code
- Three sets of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing drawings if any modifications to these disciplines are necessary or required
- Three sets of landscaping drawings if required by a rezoning application
- Sealed, signed and dated Schedule B from each Registered Professional involved with the project
- Sealed and dated Schedule A from the Coordinating Registered Professional (if more than one Registered Professional is involved) signed by the registered professional and the owner
- "Letter of Authorization – General" form (if the applicant is not the property owner)
- "Owners Acknowledgement of Responsibility" form
- Fraser Health Authority approval of the architectural drawings
- Completed Building Permit Application form.

## Key Terms

The **Maple Ridge Zoning Bylaw** regulates where different types of business can locate and the types of structures that can be built on a particular property.

The **BC Building Code** regulates how a building must be constructed for different types of uses. It establishes minimum standards for safety, health, accessibility, fire, electrical and structural protection of buildings. The BC Plumbing Code is part of the BC Building Code.

The **BC Fire Code** is a companion document to the BC Building Code and both deal with the safety of people in buildings in the event of a fire. Buildings are expected to comply with both the BC Building Code and the BC Fire Code. The BC Building Code generally applies at the time of construction or renovation. The Fire Code generally applies to the fire safety measures when a building is occupied.

**Registered Professional** refers to Architects (certified by the *Architects Act*) and Professional Engineers (certified by the *Engineers and Geoscientists Act*) who are familiar with the requirements of the BC Building Code.

**Building Permits** allow you to alter your building or property, or build a new structure. Inspections are required after the Building Permit is issued (during construction).

**Occupancy Permits** are granted after you have passed all the required building inspections (building, electrical, plumbing, sign etc.) that apply.

**Assembly use** is a type of occupancy that allows for the assembly of persons. Child care facilities are considered an "assembly use".

The **Maple Ridge Off Street Parking and Loading Bylaw** regulates the number of required spaces for each building class and the design of spaces. Contact the Planning Department at 604-467-7341 for more information on how off street parking requirements apply to your location.

## Contact Information

Fraser Health Authority: 604-476-7000

### City of Maple Ridge

Planning: 604-467-7341

Business Licensing: 604-467-7440

Building: 604-467-7311

Economic Development: 604-467-7320

## Home-based Daycares ("In Home Child Care")

The following information relates to opening a home-based child care facility for up to eight children, including the operator's own children, under the age of 12 years old.

Home-based daycares include both *Family Daycares* and *Neighbourhood Daycares*. Both of these types of daycares are operated in private residences; please remember that home-based daycares are an "accessory use" to the primary use of the home as a residential dwelling unit and must be operated by a resident of the property. Fraser Health approval is required if you are providing care to three or more children who are not related to you. If you live in a building governed by a Strata Corporation, please ensure your strata permits you to have a home-based daycare.

### Family Daycares

*Family Daycares* provide care to no more than eight children (including the licence holder's own children). A business licence and inspections are required to ensure the daycare meets the life safety requirements of the BC Building Code. Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors must be installed and a proper swing-type exit is required on the floor level serving the daycare (a sliding door is not permitted to be used as an exit door). A building permit will be required if any renovations are necessary to meet the requirements of the BC Building Code. Electrical permits will be required for any alterations to the electrical installation. Tamper-resistant receptacles are required.

The Fraser Health Authority must be informed of the number of children, their ages, and the ratio of caregivers to children in care.

### Neighbourhood Daycares

*Neighbourhood Daycares* provide for the care and supervision of up to 15 children in a home environment. The BC Building Code considers this type of daycare as a Group A, Division 2 major occupancy (assembly occupancy.) In this case, a commercial building permit is required to convert a portion of a dwelling unit in to a Neighbourhood Daycare. A City of Maple Ridge business license is required to operate a Neighbourhood Daycare.

Please note that substantial renovations may be required for a Neighbourhood Daycare, and the involvement of multiple registered professionals, including an architect, is required. Upgrades to the entire structure can be expected in the following areas: seismic, structural, exterior cladding, interior finishes and sprinkler systems. Any required outdoor recreation space must be provided within a rear yard and enclosed by a fence.

If the daycare accommodates 10 or more persons at any one time, including all children and caregivers, the facility must comply with the BC Building Code's standards and requirements for Assembly use.

The City of Maple Ridge Off Street Parking Bylaw requires one off-street parking space per two non-resident employees, plus one off-street parking space for each 10 children enrolled.

## Neighbourhood Daycares

Please note there are additional regulations that apply to opening and operating a Neighbourhood Daycare. Please contact the Planning Department to discuss how these regulations apply to your specific enquiry. In general, Neighbourhood daycares:

- Must be owned and operated by the registered property owner and the registered owner must live in the dwelling unit on the property
- Must be in the same building as the One Family Residential Use
- Not permitted in a Two-Family Residential unit
- Not permitted where there is a Boarding Use, Temporary Residential Use, Secondary Suite or Home Occupation Use on the property
- Require proof of notification to the applicable Health Authority (or to the appropriate authority) if the home is located on a property not serviced by municipal sewer
- Cannot be located less than 200 meters from another Licensed Neighborhood Daycare, measured from the nearest property line, along the same street.

Please contact the Planning Department at 604-467-7341 for more information.

## Fire Safety Measures for Commercial Childcare Centres

Ensuring the safety of infants and children in care is a top priority of the City of Maple Ridge. The Maple Ridge Fire Department inspects **ALL** child care facilities to ensure they are in compliance with all fire safety regulations. The following items are required to ensure fire safety and will be reviewed during the fire inspection:

- The address must be clearly visible from the street and numbers must be of high contrast to the background, per the City's Building Numbering Bylaw.
- Fire extinguisher – minimum one five pound ABC type should be readily accessible. The placement should allow for the choice to use the extinguisher or to exit.
- All heating, electrical, storage and laundry areas are inaccessible to children.
- Two means to exit on each floor that is used by children.
- Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are provided on each floor of the premises. In addition:
  - Smoke alarms that are over 10 years old must be replaced.
  - Smoke alarms must be at least 18 inches from the wall.
  - Smoke alarms must be installed in the hallway outside of the bedrooms.
  - Smoke alarms must be installed in rooms where children nap or sleep.
  - Smoke alarms are to be hard-wired (110 volt), ULC or CSA listed, and interconnected with battery back-up.
- Heating appliances such as wood, electrical or gas fired stoves are protected with a permanently mounted metal screen which will prevent accidental contact by the children or residents.
- A fire drill procedure is developed and escape plans are prominently posted.
- A fire drill involving the children is held once every month and recorded in a logbook.
- Combustible materials such as artwork, which are attached to walls, will not exceed 20% of the area of the walls.
- Garbage cans are made of non-combustible materials.
- Flammable and combustible liquids are stored in areas inaccessible to children.
- Safety plugs for electrical outlets are required.
- Emergency lighting is required.
- Illuminated exit signs are required.
- Annual inspection is required.



## Getting Started: The Essentials

Opening a Licenced Child Care Centre requires careful planning and a thorough understanding of the provincial and municipal requirements. We strongly advise that you connect with Fraser Health and the City of Maple Ridge for the most current information on all of the regulations and requirements that apply to your proposed child care centre.

The following list summarizes the major steps to open a child care centre. Please note there may be additional requirements based on your specific proposal.

- Apply to Fraser Health for a licence to operate a child care facility.
- The City of Maple Ridge requires all child care centres with three or more children in care to be licensed by Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing and meet the requirements of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the Child Care Licensing Regulation.
  - Request a pre-application meeting with the City of Maple Ridge.
  - Does your proposed location have the correct zoning for a child care facility?
  - What are the off street parking requirements?
  - What are the requirements for an outdoor play area?
  - Engage a Registered Professional (architect or professional engineer) to assess your proposed location's compliance with the BC Building Code and BC Fire Code.
  - Obtain approved floor plans of the proposed child care centre from Fraser Health.
  - Apply to the City of Maple Ridge for a Business Licence.
  - Apply to the City of Maple Ridge for all required permits (Building, Plumbing, Electrical, Sign, etc.)
  - Book a Fire Department Inspection after receiving all municipal approvals.
- A Municipal Business License is issued once a Provincial Child Care License has been issued.

## We're Here To Help

Opening a child care facility can be a time-consuming and complex process, especially for a new operator. The BC Building Code and BC Fire Code mandate a higher level of life safety standards for child care facilities to ensure the health and safety of infants and children while they are in care. Please call the Economic Development Department at 604-467-7491 to arrange a meeting with City staff who can help you understand the processes and regulations to successfully open and operate a child care facility.



