

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING AN INITIAL LICENSE TO OPERATE A DAY CAMP FOR CHILDREN

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, please contact the Bureau of Early Care Regulation at (608) 266-9314 (general) or (888) 692-1382(TTY).

1. Thank you for your inquiry regarding the licensing of day camps for children. Under s. 48.65, Wis. Stats., seasonal day camp programs that care for 4 or more children under the age of 7 are required to be State Licensed. Day camps that care for 3 or fewer children under age 7 are not required to be licensed.
Child care subsidy payments: Programs that want to be eligible for child care subsidy payments must be regulated. There are two types of regulation: State Licensing and County Certification. Programs that are not required to be licensed, but are required to be regulated in order to be eligible for child care subsidy payments, have several options. They may choose to license the entire camp or they may request school-age certification from the county in which the camp is located. Programs may also choose a combination of the two types of regulation and license the portion of the program that provides care for children under age 7 or children in mixed-age groups and certify the portion of the camp that cares for children over age 7. Please contact your regional licensing office if you have any questions.
2. Determine the need for the program you are considering. Involve other agencies and members of your community. Use the information you gather to decide what kind of program you will offer. Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for detailed information for your area. The Community-Based Child Care Resource and Referral Agency listing is enclosed.
3. Read and study the enclosed PFS-202 "DCF 252 Licensing Rules for Day Camps for Children" and all other enclosed information.
4. Decide on a legal structure for the business – sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation. Is it "for-profit" or "not-for-profit"? Determine who is financially and legally responsible.
5. Prepare a business plan including start-up and operating budgets. Add any costs to apply for necessary permits including those related to meeting applicable regulations (see No. 6, 7 and No, 8). Select a site and determine the related costs.
6. Check with your municipality regarding any zoning requirements that may affect where the day camp will be located. The local zoning authority can help explain the procedure for obtaining a conditional use permit if necessary. Obtain any other necessary permits.
7. Contact the Internal Revenue Service to obtain a Federal Tax Identification number (FEIN) which must be included on the application for licensure.
8. Request a well inspection and water test by the Department of Natural Resources if the facility is not served by a public water system.
9. Arrange necessary liability insurance for the premises (and appropriate auto insurance—owned or non-owned—if you plan to transport children). A certificate of insurance or insurance binder will need to be submitted with the application.
10. Check with a lawyer, accountant and/or governmental agency to determine any obligations regarding income tax withholding, social security contributions, worker's compensation and unemployment compensation.
11. Obtain any forms needed for the children's or the staff's files. The department has developed forms that meet the requirements of the rules. Copies are available on the Internet at: <https://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/ccformspubs>. If you don't have access to the Internet, contact the regional office for information on how to get one copy of each form by mail.

12. Develop policies and procedures for your program in the following areas:

- ◆ Admission.
- ◆ Child guidance including ways to manage crying, fussing or distraught children.
- ◆ Discharge of enrolled children.
- ◆ Fee payments and refunds.
- ◆ Health care including procedures to be followed when there is contact with animals.
- ◆ Nutrition.
- ◆ Personnel including job descriptions, hours of work, lunch and break times, holidays, vacations, sick leave, leaves of absence, probationary periods, performance evaluations, grievance procedures and the disciplinary process. The policy shall also contain a procedure requiring staff to notify the licensee and the licensee to notify the department as soon as possible but no later than the next working day when the employee has been convicted of a crime; has been or is being investigated by any governmental agency; has a substantiated governmental finding of abuse or neglect of a child or adult or of misappropriation of a client's property; or when a professional license has been denied, revoked, restricted or otherwise limited.
- ◆ Program objectives including a description of activities designed to carry out the program objectives.
- ◆ Plans to be followed in the event of a fire, tornado, missing child or other emergency. If an open-sided shelter is used as a base camp, the plan shall identify the location of a designated tornado shelter and the procedure to ensure the camp receives information about tornado watches or warnings. The plan shall include a procedure to ensure that children reach the tornado shelter in a timely fashion.
- ◆ The plan for providing pre-camp training to staff.
- ◆ The plan for supervising children during water activities and waterfront activities including emergency procedures to be carried out if a child participating in water activities cannot be found.
- ◆ Transportation if children may be transported to and from the camp or for field trips. The policy shall include a procedure to ensure that no child has been left unattended in a vehicle.

A written contract between the camp and the parent is recommended. Policies and procedures should be detailed and written so staff will know what your expectations are. Some policies and procedures such as admission requirements, tuition and fee payments, nutrition, health care, child guidance and program objectives may be incorporated into a parent handbook that is shared with parents upon enrollment.

13. Prior to initial licensure, the department must run Caregiver Background Checks (CBC) on the licensee; all persons age 18 and older residing in the camp including relatives; and persons age 12 – 17 who are compensated to provide care to children enrolled in the camp. Consult the regional office for more information about the CBC process.

Background Information Disclosure (BID) forms: You are required to submit completed BID forms to DCF for the following: Note: A "Yes" answer to any question in Section A of the BID form may preclude you from obtaining a license.

- The licensee (the licensee is the owner of a sole proprietorship; all partners in a partnership; or the president/board chairperson of a corporation).
- All persons age 12 and older residing in the camp including relatives.
- All persons age 12 – 17 who are compensated to provide care to children enrolled in the camp.

CBC Fees: There is a \$10.00 charge for each CBC. You are required to submit to DCF \$10.00 for each of the following: Note: Household residents under age 18 will not need to have a complete CBC unless the department determines a complete check is required.

- The licensee;
- All persons age 18 and older residing in the camp including relatives;
- All persons age 12 – 17 who are compensated to provide care to children enrolled in the camp.

Government Agencies: The CBC requirement may be waived for the licensee if the licensee is a government agency and the licensee does not have contact with children in care and a statement of this fact is submitted in writing to DCF.

14. You are required to run CBCs through the Department of Justice (DOJ) on your camp director, camp counselors, persons working at the camp who have contact with the children, persons having contact with children who are compensated from other sources, student interns and volunteers used to meet staff-to-child ratios. Give each prospective employee a BID and ask him or her to complete it.

Review the BID to see whether it contains a conviction that may bar that person from working with children unless a rehabilitation approval has been obtained through the Department of Health Services. (Note: You will not be able to complete CBCs on employees until after a license has been issued and you have a valid facility ID number.) You will have 60 days after initial licensure to complete the CBC process on employees provided the employee has completed a BID that doesn't indicate a crime, act or offense that bars the person from working in a day camp. Information regarding CBCs and the necessary forms is available on the Internet at: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/caregiver/index.htm.

15. Submit the following items to the regional office serving your area (see enclosed listing) in order to become licensed:

- ◆ Completed DCF-F-CFS782 License Application – Day Camps for Children.
- ◆ Completed DCF-F-CFS70 Licensing Checklist – Day Camps.
- ◆ Completed DCF-F-2409 Policy Checklist – Day Camps.
- ◆ Camp policies.
- ◆ Completed BID forms for the licensee (the licensee is the owner of a sole proprietorship, all partners in a partnership or the president/board chairman of a corporation); for persons aged 12 years and over living in the center; and for persons aged 12 – 17 who are compensated to provide care to children enrolled in the camp.
- ◆ Certificate of insurance for general liability insurance coverage and vehicle liability insurance if transportation is provided by the center. The certificate of insurance must include non-owned vehicle liability insurance if children will be transported in vehicles not owned by the licensee.
- ◆ Articles of Incorporation and by-laws if the camp is organized as a corporation, association or cooperative.
- ◆ A written delegation of administrative authority signed by licensee. It shall describe the organizational structure of the camp and identify by position or name those persons on the premises in charge of the camp for all hours of operation.
- ◆ A water test which indicates that the water has been found to be safe for drinking and, if applicable, swimming.
- ◆ The name, address and telephone number of the person to be contacted by the licensing representative for the camp licensing review.
- ◆ Building inspection report if applicable.
- ◆ Directions for locating camp area.
- ◆ General description of camp area, geographic location and size of the base camp or the proposed itinerary of field trips if a program will consist primarily of field trips.

16. **Allow at least 60 working days after the submission of all application materials (including fees) as a projected opening date** to allow for a complete review by your licensing specialist, including results from required CBCs.

To avoid unnecessary delays in the licensing process, it is important that you have met all applicable items in DCF 252 Licensing Rules for Day Camps for Children before the application is submitted and the initial site visit is scheduled with the department. **If the licensing specialist makes a visit and you are not in compliance with all applicable requirements of DCF 252, you will not receive a license.**

Items not in compliance with the licensing rules will be identified and you will be instructed to request another initial licensing study when all the items have been met. When you notify the department to schedule another visit, the department will attempt to make a visit within the next 20 working days. It may take longer depending on regional licensing workloads. If you are not in compliance after 2 visits, your application for a license may be denied because you do not meet the requirements for a license.

17. Licensed Capacity. Use the formula below to determine how many children are included in the licensed capacity. We understand that the process of determining licensed capacity can be confusing. Please contact the regional licensing office if you have any questions.

- _____ Total number of children under the age of 7 who are cared for in groups that are separate from the groups containing children age 7 and older.
- + _____ Total number of children in all the mixed age groups that have children under the age of 7 grouped with children age 7 and older. **Note:** All children in the mixed age group are counted in the licensed capacity.
- + _____ Total number of children age 7 and older (to be included in the licensed capacity in order to be eligible to receive child care subsidy payments) who are cared for in groups that are separate from the groups containing children under the age of 7. **Note:** See Item No. 1 above for information regarding subsidy payments.
- = _____ This is the total licensed capacity of the camp. The \$16.94 per-child fee will be assessed on this total.

18. Licensing Fee. To determine your license fee due, use the following formula:

- \$ 30.25 Base fee
- +\$ _____ Per-child fee (\$16.94 x _____ total licensed capacity as determined by No. 17 above.)
- =\$ _____ Total two-year licensing fee (Divide this total by 4 to determine your six-month probationary license fee.)

19. Along with your application materials, send a check or money order in the appropriate amount (use the formula below) made payable to the "Department of Children and Families". Mail completed materials to the regional office in your area (see enclosed regional office information sheet).

- \$ _____ Six-month probationary license fee as determined by No. 18 above.
- +\$ _____ \$10.00 x _____ number of required CBCs as determined by No. 13 above.
- =\$ _____ Total amount of check.

20. When we receive your application, we will review it, and a licensing specialist will contact you to complete the licensing process.

21. Under the authority of s. 48.73, Wis. Stats., the department must be granted unrestricted access to your premises for the purpose of monitoring your compliance with the licensing rules. If you fail to allow access to a department representative, the department shall take enforcement action against your license under s. 47.715, Wis. Stats., including issuance of orders, forfeitures or revocation of your license. In addition, if the department is unable to monitor for compliance or verify correction of license violations, it may affect your eligibility to receive child care subsidy payments pursuant to DWD 56.94(7)(c).