

Child Care Facilities

The purpose of this information guide is to provide general guidelines for building code requirements for child care facilities.

“The information contained within this guide is for convenience only and does not serve to substitute or supersede applicable City Bylaws, governing Provincial / Federal Codes, and laws. Any references to Bylaws, Codes and laws pertain to those effective at the time of this guide’s creation or revision. If the date on this guide exceeds three (3) years, the information contained may be outdated- in such circumstance, refer to the current Bylaws, Codes and laws. Building Owners are responsible for ensuring that any existing or proposed construction, and other works, comply with all applicable Bylaws, Codes and laws.”

Other Information Guides related to this topic

- [New Businesses](#)
- [Children and Child Care](#)

Background

Article 3.1.2.8. of the Building Code (hereinafter “**the Code**”) classifies daycare facilities for children as assembly occupancy (Group A, Division 2), except as discussed below.

Home-Based Child Care up to 8 Children

Please refer to the “type of child care programs” at the end of this document. “Home-based” child care includes both family child care and in-home child care.

Daycare facilities for children are regulated by the Community Care and Assisted Living Act. The Act states that licensed child care facilities that accommodate no more than 8 children are not required to conform to any BC Building Code requirements beyond those that apply to a single family dwelling.

Unless physical modifications to an existing building are contemplated, no building permit is required for a resident incorporating home-based child care. An inspection will be undertaken by the Fire Department and may require additional smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms, and fire extinguishers. Code and Bylaw infractions identified in the course of this inspection may require correction under appropriate permits.

Home-based child care facility with over 8 children operated within a dwelling unit is not considered as part of the residential use and is subjected to all the requirements stated below.

Child Care over 8 children or operated in buildings other than dwelling units

A daycare facility for children, other than those stated above, is considered as an assembly occupancy (Group A, Division 2) as described by Sentence 3.1.2.8.(1) of the Code. It should be noted that the exemption from Article 3.1.2.7. of the Code to reclassify an assembly occupancy not more than 30 persons to a business personal services occupancy (Group D) is not applicable to a child or infant daycare facility.

Daycare facilities for children under 30 months (infant daycare facilities) are associated with additional requirements outlined in Article 3.3.2.18. of the Code, pertaining:

- Sprinkler or exiting provisions,
- Fire alarm system and additional smoke detectors or smoke alarms.

Please refer to Article 3.3.2.18. and other relevant sections of the Code for requirements on infant daycare facilities.

New Child Care Building

New Child Care buildings, including prefabricated modular buildings, are required to comply with all of the applicable requirements in the Code. Drawings submitted for building permit application must be signed and sealed by professionals of all disciplines with appropriate Letters of Assurance. Underground electrical service is also required.

Please refer to our [Children & Child Care page](#) for more guidance.

Upgrading of existing building

The BC Building Code applies to existing building when an owner wishes to rehabilitate a building, change its use, or build an addition.

An existing building must be reviewed to determine the necessary upgrades to demonstrate Building Code compliance in order to accommodate a Child Care facility. Potential upgrades may include (but not limited to) the following:

- adjoining fire separations (i.e., at floor/ceiling and walls between other occupancies) and loadbearing assemblies
- installation of fire dampers and/or smoke dampers where applicable
- firestopping of through-penetrations and construction joints of fire-rated assemblies
- spatial separation (including number of windows facing the property line and type of cladding)
- exiting and egress provisions
- modification or installation of fire alarm system
- review of emergency lighting
- modification or installation sprinkler system
- size of water service
- interconnected hard wired smoke and or CO detector
- structural floor loading and seismic upgrades
- access and washroom for persons with disabilities
- electrical, plumbing, and mechanical services

It is recommended to engage a professional, such as architect or professional engineer, to review the existing building for Building Code compliance prior to signing a lease or purchasing a property.

Permits are required to carry out all upgrades. Drawings submitted for permit application must be signed and sealed by Registered Professionals, such as architects and professional engineers with appropriate Letters of Assurance.

Further Information

Types of Child Care Programs – Please refer to “care programs” from the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) authorized by the [Community Care and Assisted Living Act](#) defining different types of child care programs. Programs relevant to this information guide are duplicated below:

“Group Child Care (Under 36 Months)” – being a program that provides care to children who are younger than 36 months old.

“Group Child Care (30 Months to School Age)” – being a program that provides care to preschool children.

“Group Child Care (School Age)” – being a program that provides, before or after school hours or on a day of school closure, care to children who attend school, including kindergarten.

“Family Child Care” – being a program in which the licensee is a responsible adult, and personally provides care, within the licensee's personal residence, to no more than 7 children.

“Multi-Age Child Care” being a program that provides, within each group, care to children of various ages.

“In-Home Multi-Age Child Care” – being a program in which the licensee personally provides care, within the licensee's personal residence, to no more than 8 children of various ages.

See also “types of child care programs” from [Fraser Heath’s webpage](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the Building Division at 604-294-7130, or building@burnaby.ca.