

CHILD CARE START-UP & EXPANSION RESOURCE GUIDE

Start, Grow, Expand



This start-up and expansion resource guide is for funding, licensing, workforce & business support for child care providers across United Way of Virginia's Blue Ridge - Ready Region West region.

How To Use This Guide

Starting or growing a child care program means navigating a lot of information. This packet is designed to make that easier.

What's In This Packet?

Each page in this guide covers one locality in the Ready Region West service area. Resources are organized into four categories: starting and planning your business, quality and licensing support, workforce and staff training, and funding and loans. Every resource listed is available to child care providers – most at no cost.

Where To Start

Find your locality's page and look at the category that matches your most pressing need right now.

Just getting started?

Go to Start and Plan Your Business first, then Quality, Licensing & Ongoing Support.

Already operating and looking to grow?

Start with Funding & Loans, then Workforce & Staff Training.

Exploring whether to open a program?

Child Care Aware of Virginia offers free one-on-one guidance on licensing, business planning, and next steps. Call 866-KIDS-TLC or visit vachildcare.com.

Not sure where you fit?

Connect with United Way of Virginia's Blue Ridge - Ready Region West. Let's have a conversation about your options.

Want To Dig Deeper?

This guide highlights the most relevant resources for your area. A full inventory of regional and statewide funding, financing, real estate, and business support options is also available. It includes eligibility details, application costs, capital amounts, and direct contact information for each resource.

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS:

Steps to Licensure

1 Complete pre-application training

Most program directors need a graduate degree and 6 months of experience or a bachelors with a year of experience in childcare, or extensive experience without a degree.

2 Register for pre-license orientation

Contact your local Office of Child Care Health and Safety. You'll learn some basic standards, such as staff to child ratios, which depend on child age.

3 Create a functional design plan

This is your layout for the Child Care Center. You'll need 35 square feet of usable floor space per child, meaning all floor space minus furniture.

4 Complete initial application

You'll need over a dozen documents, including proof of qualifications, proof of insurance coverage, an annual operating budget, and copies of policies and procedures.

Opening or expanding a new Child Care Center means dealing with a lot of regulations. For more information, go to: www.childcare.virginia.gov/providers

HIGHLAND COUNTY:

Child Care Provider Resource Guide

Funding, training, and support to help you start, sustain, and grow your program.



Start and Plan Your Business

Highland County EDA

Annual cycle

Grant incentive program for small businesses in Highland County.

Highland County Chamber of Commerce

Year-round | Membership Fee

Maintains a curated list of small-business resources and provides networking.

Shenandoah Valley SBDC

Year-round | Free

Free one-on-one advising on business plans, projections, and startup strategy, located in Harrisonburg.



Workforce & Staff Training

InternshipsVA Matching Grant

Annual Cycle

Matching funds to provide paid internships to students in VA universities.

Child Care Provider Scholarship (VCCPSP)

March 15 | June 15 | Oct 15

Pays staff tuition toward early-childhood credentials and the CDA.

Project Pathfinders

Aligned with VCCPSP

Community-college tuition, fees, and books for early-childhood staff.



Quality, Licensing & Ongoing Support (Year-round & Free)

United Way of Virginia's Blue Ridge - Ready Region West

VQB5 coaching, Mixed Delivery slots, and enrollment help.

VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network

Coaching to strengthen infant & toddler care.

Child Care Aware Virginia

1-on-1 consultation on licensing, business management, quality improvement, and the Child Care Subsidy Program applications.

ChildCareVA (VDOE)

Licensing requirement, official guidance, and provider news.



Funding & Loans

VSBA Child Care Financing Program

Year-round

No-interest state loans for equipment, materials, and quality upgrades.

Shenandoah Community Capital Fund

Year-round | 3 cohorts a year

Technical assistance and small-business loans plus 8-week business bootcamp.

SBA 7(a) - 504 - microloans

Year-round

Federally backed loans for startup, equipment, and facilities via local lenders.

New here? Start with two contacts - Ready Region West for free quality coaching, and the SBDC for free business help. Most funders look for VQB5 participation and a simple business plan.



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READY

REGION
West