



Overview

When embarking on a child care facility project, it is important to begin with a suitable site for development or adaptive reuse. Without proper site evaluation, providers and developers could end up proceeding with a facility project that can never be developed, because it may be impossible to meet the necessary zoning and licensing approvals. Community needs – location, convenience, accessibility – are also key to take into account when evaluating a potential site. Technical supports to providers and facility projects should make it easy for project leads to conduct this site evaluation, and provide ready access to expertise in architecture, licensing, engineering, etc.

The following, excerpted from LISC's [Development and Financing](#) guide, walks through the key questions that should be asked when evaluating a potential site for a facility project. Please see the full guide for additional information on site evaluation.

LOCATIONS

1. Is the site convenient for your target families?

Walking distance or easy car ride from target family residences or places of work?

On public transportation route(s)?

Easy to get to and from (near highway access, not near congested intersection, etc.)?

Located near other key neighborhood destinations such as schools, workplaces, shopping, etc.?

Y	N	NOTES: _____
Y	N	_____
Y	N	_____
Y	N	_____
Y	N	_____

2. Is the site suitable for use as a child care center?

Sheltered from unappealing or potentially dangerous features (such as major highways)?

Neighboring properties offer complementary uses? (For example, schools, libraries, small retail, parks etc. might be complementary whereas major industrial or strictly residential uses might not.)

Neighborhood perceived as safe?

Neighbors would be supportive of child care on the site?

Y	N	NOTES: _____
Y	N	_____
Y	N	_____
Y	N	_____
Y	N	_____

3. Does the zoning permit a child care use?

Y	N	NOTES: _____
Y	N	_____

NOTE: Your real estate lawyer or architect can make this determination.

4. Will the increased traffic or parking pose any potential problems?

Y	N	NOTES: _____
Y	N	_____

5. Is there any reason to believe that there are potential hazards, such as fuel storage tanks, near the site?

Y	N	NOTES: _____
Y	N	_____

SITE CONDITIONS (when evaluating land only)

6. Is the site large enough to house:

- A building large enough to meet programmatic needs?
- Sufficient playground space?
- Sufficient parking and circulation space?
- Required setbacks?

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

NOTES: _____

NOTE: Use these guidelines for evaluating whether there is sufficient square footage: the overall site should have about 400 square feet per child; the building should have about 100 square feet per child; and the outdoor playground should have about 75 square feet per child for 50% of the total center population. However, these guidelines might not apply in highly congested urban settings where land costs are prohibitively high and on-street parking may be allowed.

7. Are there likely to be any hazardous materials on the site such as:

- Lead
- Asbestos
- Arsenic
- Oil tanks

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

NOTES: _____

NOTE: Your architect will help you hire an engineering firm to do a "Phase I" environmental assessment to research what activities have previously occurred on the property (and adjoining properties). More extensive site review may be needed based on the results.

8. Is major site work required to be able to build, such as:

- Clearing of forests?
- Blasting of ledge?
- Significant grading of land?

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

NOTES: _____

9. Does the site have access to needed utilities, including:

- Electrical?
- Phone?
- Gas or Oil?
- Water?
- Sewer?

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

NOTES: _____

10. If there is no municipal water source, is it reasonable to assume that a well adequate for the high level of use by a child care center can be drilled?

Y	N
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NOTES: _____

11. If there is no municipal sewer source, is it reasonable to assume that a septic system which can accommodate the high level of use by a child care center can be built?

Y	N
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NOTES: _____

SITE CONDITIONS (continued)

12. Are there any environmental laws affecting construction on the site (such as setbacks due to wetlands?)

Y	N
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NOTES: _____

EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS

NOTE: For existing buildings you will need to review all site considerations as well as the items contained in this section.

13. Is the building large enough?

Y	N
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NOTES: _____

14. Is the overall site large enough and configured in a way that will allow for:

Y	N
---	---

NOTES: _____

Sufficient and convenient parking?

Y	N
---	---

A natural location for required playgrounds with sufficient square footage?

Y	N
---	---

15. Is the existing building suitable for use as a child care facility?

Y	N
---	---

NOTES: _____

Can you access all floors of the building without using stairs?

Y	N
---	---

Can you create multiple classroom spaces? (It is easiest to work with buildings that have an open interior or are subdivided with non-load-bearing walls that can be moved.)

Y	N
---	---

Does the building have a lot of windows or the ability to create additional windows, especially windows that are low to the ground?

Y	N
---	---

Does the character and look of the building lend itself to use as a child care center?

Y	N
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Does the entry to the building (both exterior and interior) lend itself to designing a welcoming character for the space?

Y	N
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Is the material used on the exterior child-friendly (durable, pleasing color, etc.)?

Y	N
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16. Can bathrooms be incorporated into each classroom?

Y	N
---	---

NOTES: _____

Are there a lot of existing bathrooms in the building?

Y	N
---	---

Can plumbing be moved easily through the building (such as through a basement?)

Y	N
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EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS (continued)

17. Is the building in good structural condition?

Are there any long cracks in load-bearing walls?

Do any exterior walls “bow” in or out?

Is the roof in good repair?

Are there any signs of water or fire damage?

Are there any signs of exterior damage?

Is the structure free of any signs of rot, rodent or insect infestation?

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

NOTES: _____

18. Are the existing building systems (plumbing, electrical, HVAC, etc.) in good condition and able to support high volume use in a child care center?

Is the plumbing system in good working condition? Does it meet current building codes?

If the site has a well or septic system, can it accommodate intensive use?

Is the electrical system in good working condition? Does it meet current building codes?

Will electrical outlets need to be upgraded?

Is the HVAC system in good working condition?

Can the heating be configured to allow for different zones within the space?

Is there a central air conditioning system? If not, can one be installed?

If there is a need to make major changes to building systems, can this be done easily, such as through a basement or attic?

Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N
Y	N

NOTES: _____

19. Is the building exterior in good repair and relatively easy to maintain? (Materials such as brick, vinyl siding and masonry will require less ongoing maintenance than painted wood that will need regular upkeep.)

Y	N
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NOTES: _____

20. Will the layout of the building allow each classroom to have access to windows and natural light?

Y	N
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NOTES: _____

21. Will the layout of the building allow each classroom to have direct (or easy) access to the outdoors?

Y	N
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NOTES: _____

EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS (continued)

22. If you will be renting the building, will the landlord allow child care to be provided in the site?	Y	N	NOTES: _____ _____
23. Is the building likely to be free of environmental hazards such as:	Y	N	NOTES: _____ _____
Lead?	Y	N	_____
Radon?	Y	N	_____
Asbestos?	Y	N	_____
Mold?	Y	N	_____
24. Is it likely that the building can be brought into compliance with all relevant licensing, building and fire codes?	Y	N	NOTES: _____ _____
Has a state child care licenser toured the site and provided their opinion?	Y	N	_____
Has an architect toured the site to determine the likelihood of compliance?	Y	N	_____
Does the site have updated fire protection systems installed, such as sprinklers and alarms?	Y	N	_____
Are there any current building code violations at the site?	Y	N	_____
<i>NOTE: If you are seriously considering a site, it is advisable to request that fire and building inspectors tour the site to outline what changes will be required.</i>			
25. Can the building be purchased (or leased) and renovated at a cost that you can reasonably cover by raising or borrowing funds?	Y	N	NOTES: _____ _____
26. Can your program support the on-going costs of operating the building, including:	Y	N	NOTES: _____ _____
Rent/Mortgage	Y	N	_____
Taxes	Y	N	_____
Utilities	Y	N	_____
Maintenance	Y	N	_____