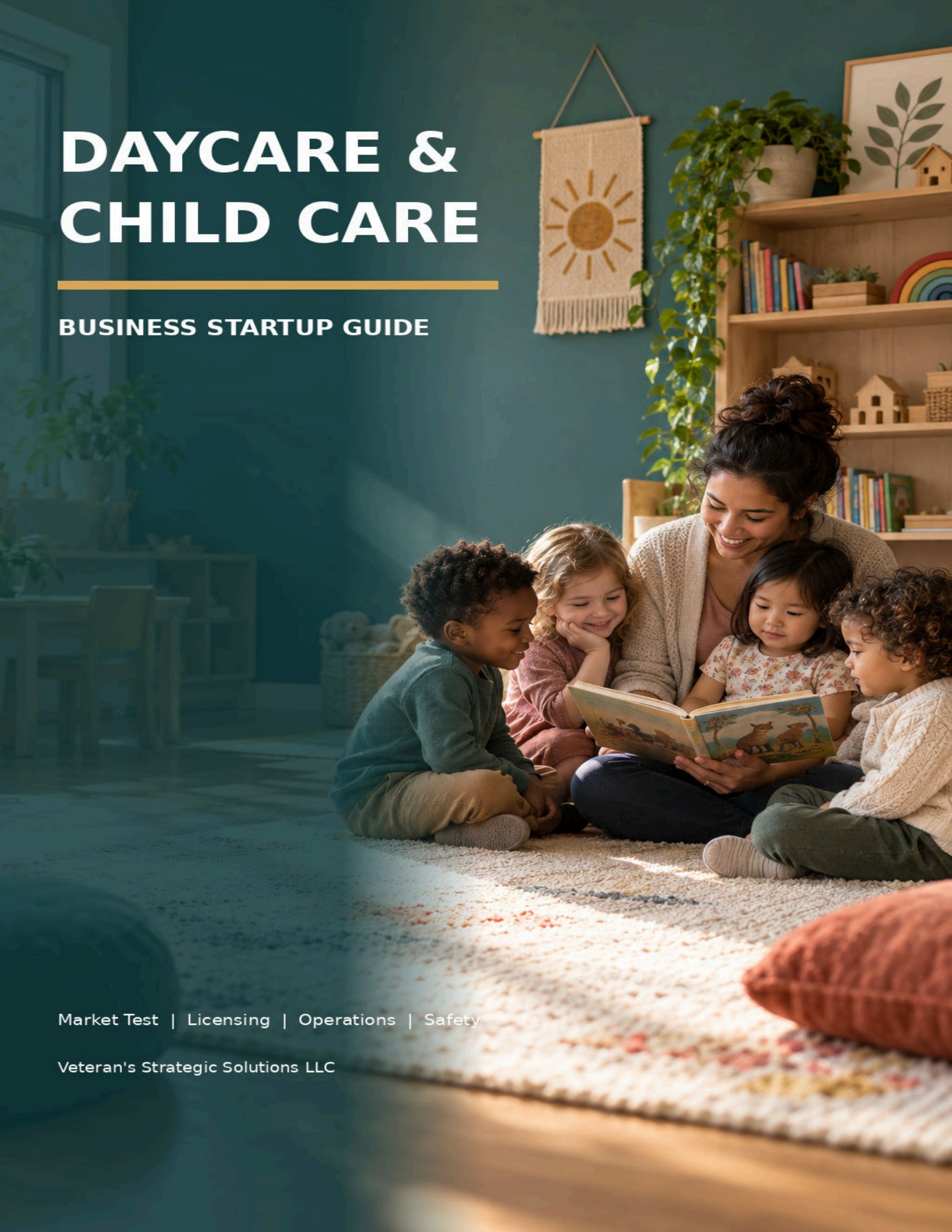
DAYCARE & CHILD CARE

BUSINESS STARTUP GUIDE



Market Test | Licensing | Operations | Safety

Veteran's Strategic Solutions LLC

DAYCARE & CHILD CARE

BUSINESS STARTUP GUIDE

A market-test, licensing, operations, pricing, and safety kit

Veteran's Strategic Solutions LLC

RESTORED CORE GUIDE

Daycare & Child Care Business Startup Guide

DAYCARE / CHILD CARE BUSINESS A Veteran’s Strategic Solutions LLC Business Line — Feasibility Assessment

The Bet



Core assumption that must be true: That your community has room for another provider despite an already-active, well-reviewed child care scene — and that assumption needs a phone-call test, not a guess, because child care can have long waitlists even where several providers exist.

Fastest zero-budget way to test it: Call three local providers and ask a single honest question: “Do you have a waitlist, and how long is it?” Short-notice moves and non-standard work hours can create child care gaps even in towns with multiple daycares — but that has to be confirmed locally, not assumed.

Three biggest reasons this fails before you spend a dollar: 1. This is a heavily regulated business. Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting. Staff-to-child ratios, mandatory background checks, fire safety approval, and inspections may be required and are not optional add-ons — they’re the floor. 2. The local market may already have multiple well-reviewed providers. This isn’t necessarily an empty field. 3. Licensing costs money before you have a single paying family. Background check fees, licensing fees, local fees, and any facility modifications needed to meet fire and safety code can add up fast. Confirm every current amount locally and mark unconfirmed figures [VERIFY].

Who Pays, In Their Own Words

“We moved three weeks ago and every daycare in town has a waitlist.” “I need someone who can take odd hours, not just 8-to-5.” “I don’t want a big center — I want somewhere small where they actually know my kid’s name.”

That’s the buyer worth chasing: families landing with short notice or managing non-standard work hours, not competing broadly against established centers with years of trust already built.

The Smallest Version You Can Charge For

Family Child Care Home, not a commercial center. A properly licensed single-provider home may be a dramatically smaller regulatory and capital lift than a commercial center requiring additional staff and substantial build-out. This is also a version that may be operated by a qualified family member rather than requiring the business owner to be the on-site caregiver.

Path to your first paying family: licensing has to come first here — there's no minimum-viable-product version of unlicensed child care. The realistic first step is completing any required orientation and getting the licensing conversation started, not signing up a family early. Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.

What It Actually Takes

Pricing

First 90 Days and the One Metric

Days 1–14: Make the calls. Confirm whether a real waitlist exists locally and specifically whether non-standard-hours care is unmet.

Days 15–45: If the gap is real, complete any required orientation and begin the appropriate child care application, including required background checks.

Days 46–90: Do not enroll children before licensing is final. Use this window to finish safety modifications and insurance.



The one metric that matters: confirmed unmet demand from the phone calls, not the flyer's revenue projections. Nothing else in this plan matters if that first metric comes back negative.

Honest Assessment

This is not an automatic "do not enter" verdict — but it is a highly conditional "maybe." The regulatory floor is real and non-negotiable, the local market may have established, well-loved competitors, and the capital and insurance requirements are substantial. The one thing that could make this worth pursuing is a specific confirmed gap — non-standard hours and short-notice demand — and that gap has to be confirmed by actually calling around, not assumed. If the calls come back showing no real waitlist or unmet need, place this idea in the parking lot rather than the active catalog.

Item

Est. Cost

Notes

Mandatory orientation, if required

[VERIFY]

Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.

Licensing fee

[VERIFY]

Background checks

[VERIFY]

Confirm who must be screened under your local rules.

Fire safety approval

Varies



Inspection required, may need physical modifications

Cribs, tables/chairs, toys, educational materials, first-aid kit, outdoor play equipment

$1,000–$5,000 for a small home-based operation

Facebook Marketplace and estate sales for furniture; new for cribs and safety items only

CPR/First Aid certification

$50–$100

[VERIFY] Confirm approved certification requirements locally.

General liability insurance

[VERIFY] Child-care-specific coverage may be required.

Get quotes specific to licensed child care — this is not a standard small-business policy

Tier

Service

Price

Positioning

Low



Part-time care (school-age, before/after school)

Market rate, confirm against local providers

Lower liability, shorter hours

Mid

Full-time infant/toddler care

Match local market rates

The core revenue driver; confirm the applicable ratio locally.

Premium

Non-standard hours (early morning, evening, weekend) for families with irregular work schedules

Premium over standard daytime rate

This may be a gap local centers do not cover — confirm with the waitlist call above.

Startup Checklist

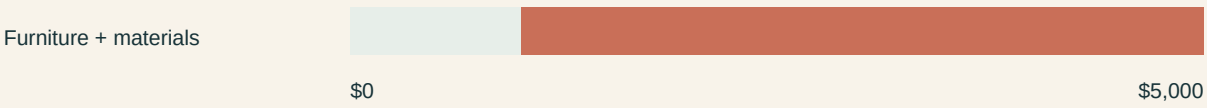
DONE	STARTUP ACTION	NOTES
[ ]	Call three providers and document waitlists	
[ ]	Test demand for non-standard hours	
[ ]	Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules	
[ ]	Complete required orientation	
[ ]	Begin application and screenings	
[ ]	Confirm insurance requirements	
[ ]	Prepare fire and emergency plans	
[ ]	Complete safety modifications	
[ ]	Set policies and parent agreement	
[ ]	Open only after approval	

01	02	03	04	05
Validate	**Apply**	**Prepare**	**Approve**	**Enroll**

Equipment & Budget Worksheet

ITEM	SOURCE RANGE	YOUR QUOTE	TIMING
Orientation / application	Confirm locally		
Background screenings	Confirm locally		
Fire / safety modifications	Quote required		
Furniture / learning materials	$1,000-$5,000		
CPR / First Aid	$50-$100		
Liability insurance	Quote required		
Outdoor safety equipment	Quote required		

SOURCE COST RANGE



01	02	03	04
Quote	**Compare**	**Budget**	**Commit after approval**

Pricing & Enrollment Estimate

FIELD	ENTER DETAILS
Family / child / schedule	
Requested start date	
Licensed care schedule	
Base weekly or monthly rate	
Non-standard-hours adjustment	
Registration / supply fee	
Meals / transportation terms	
Late pickup policy	
Deposit and payment due date	
Total estimated first payment	

01	02	03	04	05
Qualify schedule	**Confirm capacity**	**Apply rate**	**Explain policy**	**Sign agreement**

Invoice Template

INVOICE FIELD	DETAILS
Invoice # / date / due	
Bill to / child	
Care period	
Regular care	
Additional approved hours	
Approved fees	
Credits / deposit	
Subtotal / tax if applicable	
Payments received	
BALANCE DUE	

01	02	03	04
Approved care	**Record attendance**	**Issue invoice**	**Record payment**

Daily Care & Incident Log

LOG FIELD	RECORD
Date / child / caregiver	
Arrival / departure	
Meals / bottles	
Rest / nap	
Activities	
Medication authorization	
Health observations	
Incident / injury details	
Parent notification	
Signature / follow-up	

01	02	03	04
Observe	**Record**	**Notify**	**Follow up**

Lead & Waitlist Tracker

Date	Family / child	Age	Schedule needed	Start date	Status	Next action

Track the schedule requested and the reason a family does or does not enroll. This separates a true demand gap from ordinary shopping behavior.

01	02	03	04	05
Inquiry	Qualify	Tour	Waitlist	Enroll / close

Licensing, Screening & Safety



CONTROL	PLAN
Licensing	Operate only after required approvals are final.
Background screening	Complete every screening required for adults and staff.
Supervision / capacity	Follow licensed capacity, age, and staffing limits.
Emergency readiness	Maintain emergency contacts, drills, supplies, and communication.
Health / medication	Use written authorization and required records.
Transportation	Use approved vehicles, restraints, permissions, and logs.

Local rule

Check licensing, zoning, and tax rules for your own city and state before starting.

Pre-Opening Safety Check



CHECK	PRE-OPENING ITEM	NOTES
[ ]	License and approvals final	
[ ]	Emergency exits and contacts ready	
[ ]	Furniture anchored and hazards secured	
[ ]	Sleep spaces and equipment ready	
[ ]	Medications and chemicals locked	
[ ]	Outdoor area inspected	
[ ]	Attendance and release system ready	
[ ]	First-aid supplies stocked	
[ ]	Insurance active	
[ ]	Parent policies signed	

01	02	03	04
Inspect	**Correct**	**Document**	**Open**

Launch Notes

Question	Notes
What did the provider calls prove?	
Which schedule is truly underserved?	
Which rule controls capacity?	
Which cost was higher than expected?	
Which policy needs clarification?	
What is the next controlled step?	

01	02	03	04
Evidence	**Adjustment**	**Approval**	**Enrollment**

Build Trust Before Enrollment

BUILD TRUST.
OPEN LEGALLY.

01	02	03	04
VERIFY DEMAND	COMPLETE APPROVALS	PREPARE THE SPACE	ENROLL SAFELY

Use the market test, budget, pricing, invoice, daily log, waitlist tracker, and safety checks together as one operating system.

© 2026 Veteran's Strategic Solutions LLC. All rights reserved.