

# Great Ideas!

Supporting Quality Childcare for Military Families

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## Getting Started in Family Child Care: From Dreams to Reality



*Caring for children in your home can be an exciting professional career opportunity. In the United States, family child care providers make up a significant portion of small business owners.*

You may be interested in family child care because you enjoy working with children or you want to start a business/career from home – or both! But, as Kelly, a family child care provider shares, **it doesn't happen overnight!**

*"People considering family childcare need to know they don't need to have it all starting out. I started my daycare while my home was being constructed: I lived in my basement with four people, one on the way, and was still able to serve families effectively in that limited space. Over the years my home and family has grown and because of the extra income we've been able to remodel that space (once used as our home) into a great area for my family to enjoy and for a daycare."*

Be prepared to spend time planning your program. It may take several months to learn and complete the many requirements and preparations needed and even longer for a program to develop to its full potential.

### First step: Dream

Reflect on your vision of starting a family child care program – what are your dreams? If you could offer the best family child care program, what would it include? What are your strengths? For example, maybe

you are very organized or have a background in caring for special needs children. What will be unique about your program? For instance, your program may be unique because it offers after school care or has a wonderful outdoor space. Thinking about your vision and dreams gives direction in planning your family child care.

### Avoid the nightmare: Know the challenges

Consider the challenges you may face in starting a family child care business. Caring for your own children along with other people's children may be difficult. Developing and setting policies may be challenging, such as a policy for late fees. Is there a community need for child care where you live? How will you meet the unique needs of children and families? What about keeping up with state regulations and licensing requirements? Or risks in running a business? Many challenges can be avoided with good information, proper planning, and thinking ahead.

### The Big Picture

The following is a chart of four key areas in running a family child care program. Ask yourself whether these areas interest you and if you can see yourself growing and learning in these areas.

### Why Family Child Care?

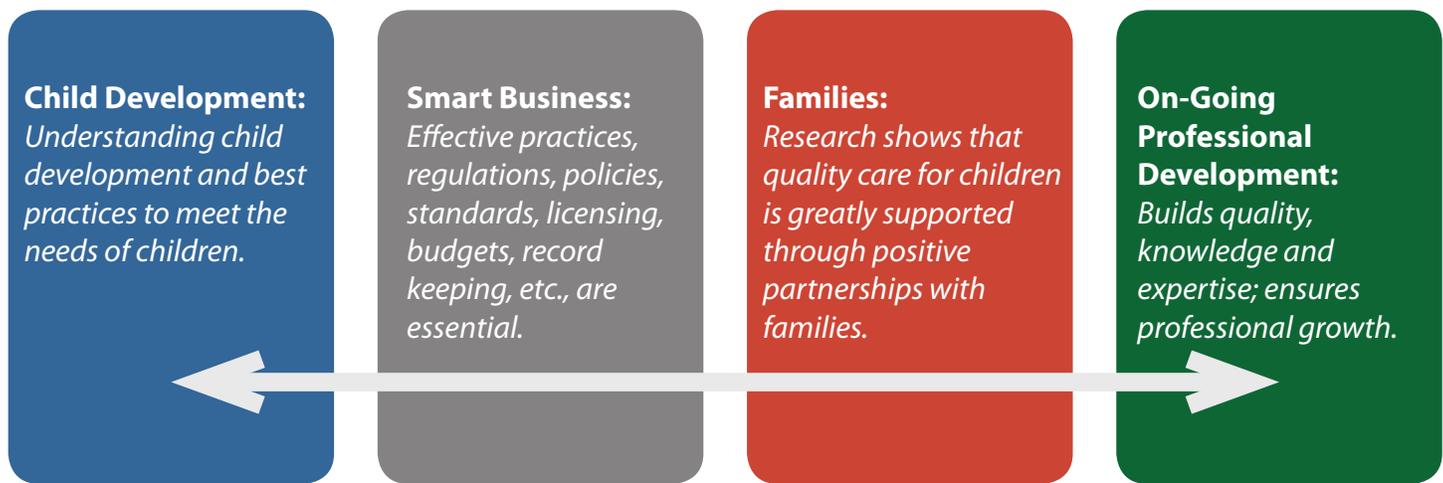
Access to quality child care remains a need for families. According to the White House report titled *Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting the Commitment*, priority is given to "...increasing child care availability and quality within the Armed Forces." The report also states "Child care programs are needed that support Reserve Component families and geographically dispersed active duty military families while the service member is deployed."

*"Working together, we believe we can find new child care options for tens of thousands of military children."*

~President Barack Obama

**cyttap**

childcare and youth training and technical assistance program



### The Big Picture - 4 key areas in running a family child care program

## 5 get-started ideas:

- **Preview** (and/or order) **Family Child Care... It's a Business** at: <http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/AngelUnits/TwoHour/FamilyBusiness/Workbook/FamilyBusinessW.html>
- **Visit** local family childcare programs in your area.
- **Connect** with your local *Child Care Resource and Referral Agency* (CCR&R) as well as the *National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agency* <http://www.naccrra.org/> \*NACCRRRA has information on Child Care for Military Families <http://www.naccrra.org/MilitaryPrograms/>
- **Know** your state's *Child Care Regulations* from your local CCR&R agency.
- **Contact** your local *Chamber of Commerce* for good business planning, contacts, and resources.

### More: Family Child Care resources from Penn State Better Kid Care

Tip Pages: Research to Practice

<http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/page02j.html#area8>

### References:

*Family Child Care in the United States*, Child Care & Early Education Research Connections, Morissey, Taryn W., Banghart, Department of Human Development, Cornell University, Patti, National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, <http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/11683/pdf>

*Strengthening Our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment*, January 2011,

[http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0111\\_initiative/strengthening\\_our\\_military\\_january\\_2011.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2011/0111_initiative/strengthening_our_military_january_2011.pdf)



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