

How to Identify a Building for Child Care Use

1. Research the property: BIG PICTURE FIRST
 - a. ZONING CODE: Call or meet with the zoning department of the local jurisdiction to ask if zoning will allow Child Care on the site (at the address in question).
 - b. BUILDING CODE: Meet with a Plans Examiner or other building code professional to determine the existing occupancy classification of the building.
 - i. If both zoning and building codes allow Child Care outright, the building is perfect:
 1. Fire sprinklers throughout for 1-4, for E if the building is larger than 12,000 square feet,
 2. Ground floor location on grade with exit (no steps up or down ramp possible) to get to sidewalk or street or safe dispersal area,
 3. Existing E or I-4 occupancy classification.
2. What are other possible locations that might easily become Child Care through a Change of Occupancy building permit?
 - a. New high rise with sprinklers throughout, in a space with required number of exits (must be 1/3 diagonal of space apart). Can't exit through storage or parking garage or other tenant space.
 - b. Ground floor of church in room with 2 exits one directly to exterior at grade – PROBABLY A CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY REQUIRING AN ARCHITECT.
 - c. Ground floor of new apartment building with NFPA 13 sprinklers throughout (has required occupancy separation and sprinklers) and required number of exits. PROBABLY A CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY REQUIRING AN ARCHITECT.
3. What are the differences between an E occupancy and 1-4 occupancies?
 - a. E (educational) is the occupancy classification the building code assigns a school or preschool for children from the ages of 2 ½ - grade 12.
 - b. I-4 (institutional) occupancy is the type of institutional occupancy assigned to child care for children under the age of 2 ½. I occupancies requires full sprinkler coverage throughout.
 - c. I-4 can become an E occupancy when there are 2 or more exits from the room or space, when one of the exits is directly to the exterior of the building on grade This is an exception and will cover up to 100 children under the age of 2 ½ years.
4. A building permit (sometimes called an occupancy permit) is required whenever a tenant intends to “construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, change the character or use of the occupancy, or change the occupancy of a building or structure which is regulated by the building code or to cause any such work to be done”.
 - a. A CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY PERMIT REQUIRES AN OREGON REGISTER ARCHITECT.
 - i. Obstacles: Time and Money ...
 1. Seismic Upgrades to entire building
 2. Fire Sprinklers throughout building.
 3. Other minor challenges: accessibility upgrades, required changes to exit system, addition of plumbing fixtures with Systems Development Charges