

# Caring for Our Children in Every Neighborhood: A Zoning Text Amendment for Citywide Child Care in the Boston Zoning Code

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The BPDA (Boston Planning and Development Agency) is proposing a **zoning text amendment** to the Boston Zoning Code to make it easier to create child care facilities for our youngest residents in all neighborhoods of Boston! Find out about the **FOUR key changes** that the BPDA is proposing and how they'll affect child care in our city:

## FOUR KEY CHANGES

**(1) Changing "Day Care" to "CHILD Care"** — Right now, the Zoning Code uses the words "day care centers" and "accessory family day care homes," but these words don't match how the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (MA EEC) refers to child care facilities. Instead, they use "**child care centers**" and "**accessory family child care homes**" and have definitions associated with them that should be updated in the Zoning Code. This text amendment will **update these words and update their definitions** in Article 2 of the Zoning Code to better align with MA EEC's definitions and identify MA EEC as the appropriate state agency for child care.

**(2) Child Care in EVERY Neighborhood** — In many parts of Boston, child care centers and accessory family child care homes are forbidden or have to meet certain conditions to be approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals. This text amendment will **make child care centers and accessory family child care homes an allowed use in all Boston neighborhoods**. This will remove the extra costs and barriers associated with the zoning appeal process when creating new centers and home-based programs in areas that need them the most.

**(3) Child Care Beyond the Ground Floor** — In certain parts of Boston, child care centers are only allowed on the ground floor or basement of buildings. This doesn't match regulations from MA EEC, which say child care centers can provide services above the ground floor. This amendment will **remove local requirements that prevent child care centers above the ground floor** and other barriers related to the amount of space they can take on a property.

**(4) Removing Parking Minimums** — Many Boston neighborhoods require child care centers to have parking spaces based on their size. The requirement is an expensive barrier for developing child care centers and doesn't align with the City's goals of reducing reliance on private vehicles. This amendment **will remove parking minimum requirements for child care centers**, which will help child care centers in building only the parking that they need for their staff and families they serve.

## **IMPORTANT — Child care will STILL be regulated!**

Even though the BPDA is changing *where* child care facilities are allowed, child care providers still have to follow the state's regulations around safety and the services they provide. The BPDA's changes to the Zoning Code won't replace the state's regulations. Instead, these changes will help people find these regulations more easily while also encouraging the creation of much needed child care all over Boston.

## **Some Important Terms to Understand these Changes!**

**Child Care Center** — Any facility licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care where children under seven (7) years old (or under sixteen [16] if they have special needs) are taken care of during the day outside of their homes.

**Accessory Family Child Care Home** — A child care facility licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to operate out of an existing home or on a residential property.

**Inclusion of Day Care Facilities (IDF)** — A regulation that was first passed in 1989 and is now active in fourteen (14) zoning districts of Downtown Boston. It requires that development projects above a certain square footage must create child care facilities on- or off-site, or contribute to a citywide fund to support child care program development.

**Zoning Text Amendment** — A change or set of changes to parts of the Zoning Code that become a new set of rules for land use and development in the City once they are approved.

If you have questions or feedback about these changes, please reach out to Abdul-Razak Zachariah at [abdul-razak.zachariah@boston.gov](mailto:abdul-razak.zachariah@boston.gov) or share your thoughts in our [feedback survey](#) during the public comment period from August 28th thru September 6th!