



Childcare Expansion Grant program: Construction/Renovation Guidebook

The Childcare Expansion Grant Program is funded by the County of Santa Clara through the Federal Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act.



As a recipient of the Childcare Expansion facility construction / renovation grant, Valley Health Foundation (VHF) and the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) offer this Guidebook to assist you in the design and development of your construction project. Please send any questions you have about the Childcare Expansion Grant Program to VHF at childcare@vhfca.org.

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on nearly every aspect of life in Santa Clara County and has specifically highlighted the essential role that childcare plays in supporting children, families, businesses, and a thriving economy. The number of licensed family and center based childcare providers decreased during the pandemic.

In response, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved a \$15 million investment in the Childcare Expansion Grant Program, administered by Valley Health Foundation, to support local licensed childcare providers serving communities negatively impacted by the pandemic to open, reopen, or increase the total number of quality childcare spaces.

PURPOSE AND USE OF THIS GUIDEBOOK

The purpose of this Guidebook is to assist childcare providers - Family Child Care Home (FCCH) and Centers - in the design of renovations that lead to developmentally appropriate and safe childcare facilities. As an early care and education (ECE) professional, you know that young children are

constantly exploring and learning about the world around them. Providing a high quality ECE program includes having physical spaces that keep them safe, healthy, and engaged. It also requires some thought and planning, especially when you have an opportunity to renovate or change the spaces you use for childcare.

This Guidebook gives an introduction on:

- How to create safe and healthy learning environments for all children,
- How to plan and complete renovation and construction projects to improve your learning spaces, and
- What to watch out for.

This Guidebook also includes links to where to find additional information.

As a recipient of a Childcare Expansion Grant, you may have the opportunity to make renovation or construction changes to your childcare spaces. While you may have already developed a plan, you should use this guidebook to revisit your ideas and consider whether you could make changes that will improve your renovation process or outcomes.





It is much easier and less expensive to make changes at the beginning of a project than in the middle of the work.

Experts from SCCOE will be available throughout your project to provide technical assistance with:

- The development of the project design;
- The development of the scope of work and project planning;
- Successful contracting with licensed building contractors;
- Construction oversight and coordination of progress payments;
- Ensuring that work has been performed in accordance with State and local building requirements for childcare facilities;
- Ensuring that work is in adherence to the California Department of Social Services childcare licensing requirements; and
- Ensuring that required lead-based paint testing is completed and assistance with referrals to certified professionals for lead testing and remediation, if required.

NOTE: It is important to remember that you are the grantee, the license holder, and the provider, and that you are responsible to VHF, Child Care Licensing Division, and the families you serve, for making sure that the project is completed successfully while keeping children safe.

Thank you for helping to build the best possible future for our children.

With Appreciation,
Valley Health Foundation

And In Partnership With,
Santa Clara County Office of Education
County of Santa Clara Office of Children and Families Policy

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1. PLANNING THE PROJECT

a. DESIGNING FOR QUALITY

A thoughtfully designed, well maintained, learning space makes it easier to focus on the children in your care, providing them with the supportive interactions they need to thrive. Below are suggestions for areas to focus on when considering construction or renovation projects for your ECE facility. Additional information on these and other topics is available in a resource from the San Mateo County Office of Education: the [“Early Learning Facility Design Criteria Classroom Best Practices - Guide.”](#)

i) Supporting quality programs

1. Learning environments

The space should be well organized with defined areas for specific activities like reading or crafting. The different areas should be small to encourage interactions between the child and ECE providers. Avoid having too much open space that allows running and unfocused play. There should also be a specific transition space to allow parents and children to separate and reconnect.

2. Natural light

The childcare space should be well-lit with natural light that can be regulated with window coverings. Ideally, the windows should be low enough that toddlers can look out of them unaided, but if that is not possible, a stable platform or ramp can be used so that children can see outside safely and independently. Well-lit spaces are safer and also help with regulating attention and sleep.

3. Visual supervision

The ability to see all areas of the childcare space is an essential safety feature and licensing requirement. Furniture, hanging lights, and window coverings must not create blind spots. Walls and partitions between activity areas must be low enough to allow the provider/s to see children at all times. Mirrors - affixed to the walls and made of safety or tempered glass - can be used to improve staff’s ability to watch children.

4. Outdoor access

The childcare space should connect to a thoughtfully designed outdoor space that allows children to run and play, explore nature, and engage in individual and group activities. Outdoor areas must be fenced in and there

are [special licensing requirements if there is a permanent water feature, like a pool or hot tub in the outdoor space](#) (see Section 5 at the link).

ii) Including children with disabilities

There are tools and technical assistance available to help you ensure that your childcare space addresses the needs of children with disabilities. The eXtension Alliance for Better Child Care (EABCC) has [a collection of online resources on accessibility](#), as does the Federal government's [Child Care Technical Assistance Network](#). The Santa Clara County Office of Education [Inclusion Collaborative](#) also provides training, support, and advice for ECE providers who want to make their programs more accessible for children with disabilities.

1. Modifying spaces

The most important thing to remember about children with disabilities is that they are children first and have more similarities than differences from children without disabilities. The modifications you make to enable children with disabilities to engage in learning activities will benefit non-disabled children as well. Each child is unique, so it is very important to speak with the child's family and any support professionals about their needs and preferences.

Many of the modifications required may be small. These could include removing rugs or placing furniture farther apart for children with movement disabilities, adding additional lighting or placing sound-making objects like a clock or radio in a specific part of the learning space for children with visual disabilities, and posting a visual schedule for children with social-emotional or behavioral disabilities. All children benefit from a well-organized and uncluttered space where the toys and learning materials are put away in the same place every time and where they can be taken out and put back independently.

Some modifications may be more difficult. Ideally, all the childcare spaces should be on a single level without steps. If it is not, you should try to make every space that children use

(bathrooms, activity areas, sleeping space) as easy to move between and use independently as possible. Controlling lighting may require installing new light fixtures or dimmers, changing window coverings, or even replacing windows. Controlling sound levels might mean adding carpet tile to some areas of the learning environment, adding insulation, or even replacing noisy appliances. It is also important to consider the outside space. Ensuring it is easy for children with disabilities to enter and exit your childcare facility and that your outside play area is accessible requires thought and resources.

2. Sensory friendly spaces

Many children, with and without disabilities, can become "overstimulated" and need a quiet, comfortable space where they can be calm and practice self-regulation. Ideally, this would be an intimate, dedicated space in a less busy and less brightly lit area that still provides easy visual supervision. Additionally, the entire childcare environment should be "sensory friendly" with neutral colors, little background noise or visual clutter, and adequate ventilation to reduce smells from food or diapering. All of these features will reduce distractions and help children to focus on learning activities and interacting with each other and the ECE providers. They will also support a less stressful working environment for staff.

iii) Climate resilience

1. Electricity

Brownouts due to increased demand for electricity from hotter weather and power outages due to storms are likely consequences of climate change. Consider installing a battery system to provide a source of back-up power that will keep your appliances operating during a blackout. Systems can be either stand-alone or included when you install solar panels to reduce your electricity bill. In some cases, you may be eligible for rebates on the cost of these systems from the [electric power company](#), [City of San José](#), or [other](#) green energy programs.



2. Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Young children are especially sensitive to higher temperatures and poor air quality. An effective and efficient HVAC system will help to keep children and staff healthy and comfortable, as well as reducing your electricity bill. Systems should have high efficiency filters that are changed regularly and do not create noise in the learning spaces. [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) recommends at least five air changes per hour \(ACH\)](#) of clean air to reduce exposure to germs and contaminated air. Ventilation fans over the toileting, diapering, and food preparation areas that vent to the outdoors are also recommended. Rebates may be available for high efficiency HVAC systems from the [electric power company](#), [City of San José](#), or [other](#) green energy programs.

3. Outdoor spaces

Almost 30 percent of the average household water use is in the garden. Intentionally planning your outdoor space to include drought-tolerant native plants, minimizing the amount of grass, and preserving established trees and bushes will reduce your water bill and encourage birds and insects in your garden.

This can also help you turn your garden into an outdoor classroom. Shade, either from plants or shade structures, can protect windows and walls from sunlight, cooling your building as well as your outdoor areas. [Valley Water has rebate programs](#) to help with the cost of transitioning to low water use landscaping.

iv) Health and safety

1. Hand washing

Frequent, thorough hand washing reduces the transmission of colds and other illnesses in childcare settings. Adults and children should have access to appropriate height sinks, soap dispensers, paper towels, and trash cans close to toileting, eating, and art activities. Consider installing adult and child height sinks in the outdoor space to support hand washing and water play. Children should be able to wash their hands independently, so gooseneck faucets and lever style taps are recommended. Hot water temperature should be between 105- and 120-degrees Fahrenheit (40 to 49 degrees Celsius).

2. Cleaning and maintenance

Cleaning products and other household items that are dangerous to children should be kept out of the childcare spaces or kept inaccessible

to children in upper cabinets or behind locked doors. When possible, use less toxic cleaning supplies and non-toxic fertilizer and avoid bleach. Walk-off mats leading into and out of childcare spaces can reduce the amount of dirt and other substances that are tracked in, and floors should be cleaned/vacuumed daily. Use a high efficiency vacuum cleaner, high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, and microfiber cleaning cloths to reduce dust. Water leaks allow for mildew and mold and should be looked for regularly and fixed immediately.

2. FACILITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Having considered all the elements that go into creating spaces that support quality childcare, the next step in planning a renovation or construction project should be to understand the current state of your childcare space. While some needs are obvious, there may be others that you have not thought about. To be thorough, it is best to look at and consider everything.

a. Creating a Project List

Using a checklist and going through the childcare space in an organized way, taking notes as you go, can help you create a list of projects that could be included in your renovation or construction project. Two examples of checklists that may be useful are the [Best Practices Checklist for Family Child Care Homes](#) and the [Childcare Facility Maintenance Checklist](#).

b. Prioritizing

Having created a list of projects through a comprehensive self-assessment, the next step is to prioritize the list. Projects that address safety and/or licensing issues should always be at the top of the list as the safety of children and staff in your program is the most important priority. There are a number of different approaches to prioritizing the remaining projects: which ones will increase the quality of your program, what will improve the financial sustainability of your program, or what can you reasonably expect to accomplish with your current budget, are all questions to

answer as you prioritize your list. At the end of this process, you should have a prioritized list of projects with the most important at the top, the least important at the bottom, and a good idea of which projects you will be able to complete given the time and money you have to spend.

c. Sequencing

Construction and renovation work usually follow the same sequence, with demolition and utilities work at the beginning of the project, while finishes and other detail work happen at the end. Depending on your exact list of tasks, the different phases will take different amounts of time, but the most disruption to the activities of your childcare will usually occur at the beginning of the project. It is important to sequence the work in a way that minimizes health and safety risks to children and staff. You may need to temporarily close if your projects or the presence of workers on site mean that your childcare spaces don't meet licensing requirements during the process. For example, if you are renovating the bathroom, there will be nowhere for the children to go to the toilet or wash their hands. Your contractor/s might not have had experience working in a childcare setting before, so it is important to work with them as they plan the work to minimize risks and any down time.

3. LICENSING

a. CURRENT LICENSING STANDARDS

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD) licenses center- and home-based childcare facilities that meet specific operational criteria and requirements. CCLD outlines nearly all the most important facilities, operations, and administration requirements in self-assessment checklists called the [Family Child Care Key Indicator Tool](#) and the [Child Care Center Preschool Program Key Indicator Tool](#). Facilities requirements are in the first section, "Physical Plant". These checklists will help you to comply with the most important facilities regulations before, during, and after your renovation. CCLD has also developed

tools for its licensing inspectors to help them ensure that your facility complies with regulations. Those [Compliance and Regulatory Enforcement \(CARE\) Tools for Child Care Facilities](#) are available in English and Spanish and are another helpful reference.

b. INFORMING CCLD OF RENOVATIONS

CCLD regulations require that childcare facilities inform them, through their licensing analyst, of any proposed changes before beginning any work. This requirement is explained in [Provider Information Notice \(PIN\) 23-20](#), on as possible after you have confirmed plans to minimize the chance of expensive delays. [For centers](#), CCLD can require the license holder to have a building inspector inspect the facility if they have any health or safety concerns. [For home-based providers](#), you are required to inform CCLD of any changes, including but not limited to:

- Converting a garage into additional childcare space,
- Adding rooms to the house,
- Installing any permanent water feature like a pool, hot tub, or pond,
- Adding decks or porches,
- Building any permanent outdoor play structures, and
- Expanding the childcare space to include any areas that were previously not included.

Additionally, you are required to provide CDSS with copies of any inspection reports required by local building inspectors.

4. PERMITTING

Permitting is a complex topic that requires considerable time and effort in most cases. You are strongly encouraged to research any permitting requirements associated with your project/s with your city's Building Department and with your contractor/s as early in the process as possible. Contact information for each city's Building Department is provided in Section c below.

a. DO I NEED A PERMIT?

Depending on where you live and what you propose to do, your project may require no permits, one or more building permits, or planning and building permits. Most projects that involve moving walls, pipes, wiring, roofs, or major appliances will require some kind of building permit. Many projects that involve expanding the footprint of the home, adding space on a second story, or significantly changing the outside of the home will also require a planning permit. However, there are some projects that are exempt from requiring permits. These include:

- replacing finishes like countertops, decorative tilework, floor coverings, and repainting;
- appliance repairs and replacing electrical outlets, faucets, and toilets;
- roof repairs (not complete replacement) and window replacements that don't require changes to the window frames; and,
- adding awnings, fences under 7 feet tall, and retaining walls under 4 feet tall.

You can find a summary of the Building Code describing the exemptions [here](#).

b. GETTING PERMITS

The first step is to determine which permits your project will require and from whom. The type of permits will depend on the kind of construction and/or renovation you are planning to do. If you are planning to request the permits yourself, you will need to contact your city's Building Department. Many of these departments have a Preliminary Review or other type service to help residents determine which permits they require. Alternatively, your contractor/s or your general contractor may gather all the necessary permits. If this is your plan, you should ensure that this task and the costs associated are included in your contract. You should expect the permitting process to take time and cost money. It should be included in your project plan, timeline, and budget.

c. PERMITTING CONTACT INFORMATION BY CITY

CITY	WEBSITE	PHONE
Campbell	Building Inspection Division	408-866-2130
Cupertino	Building Division	408-777-3228
Gilroy	Building Safety Division	408-846-0451
Los Altos	Building Services	650-947-2752
Los Altos Hills	Building Department	650-947-2501
Milpitas	Building Safety	408-586-3240
Monte Sereno	Building and Planning Departments	408-354-7635, ext. 112
Morgan Hill	Permit Information	408-778-6480
Mountain View	Building and Fire Inspection	650-903-6313
Palo Alto	Development Services	650-329-2496
San Jose	Development Services Permit Center	408-535-3555
Santa Clara	Community Development Permit Center	408-615-2420
Saratoga	Building Division	408-868-1240
Sunnyvale	Planning and Building Permit Center	408-730-7444
Unincorporated	Department of Planning and Development	408-299-5700

5. DEVELOPING A BUDGET

After you have determined the tasks you want to include in your project and have a good idea of how much you want to spend, you can begin to develop a budget. It is important to know that your budget is a spending plan, and like all plans, it will likely change during the project. Updating your budget throughout the project will help you keep track of what your money is being spent on and how much you have left.

a. TASK COSTS

For each of your tasks, you should try to create an estimate of how much they will cost. Contractors may provide free estimates, websites like [HomeAdvisor](#) can help you estimate labor costs, and websites for large home improvement stores, such as [Lowes](#) and [Home Depot](#), have online calculators that you can use to get estimates of fixtures, finishes, and appliances. As a rough estimate, labor

costs are usually 20 to 35 percent of a project's budget. Determining exactly what fixtures and finishes you would like will help you create a better estimate and - if you give this information to possible contractors - will help the contractors create more accurate bids and ensure that their bids are comparable. Consider using more durable finishes, higher capacity appliances, and more child-safe features than you would for a typical home renovation. Make sure to include taxes, shipping, and installation in your estimate. Once you have an estimate for each task, you can combine your estimates in your budget.

Be sure to include the following costs in your estimate. These are items that are often overlooked but can be significant:

- The cost of disposing of any trash created by the renovation and of cleaning childcare spaces after the renovation work. Demolition waste such as broken drywall needs to be put in a dumpster rather than the regular trash, and anything including dangerous substances like lead paint or asbestos will need special disposal. See section 6c. Lead-Safe Renovation below.
- Any costs of permits and inspections. These are usually proportional to the scope of your project and may run into thousands of dollars.
- Any new window coverings or furniture that you will need to make your childcare space functional, comfortable, and safe. While this may not be part of your project budget, you will need to have funds to buy them afterwards.

b. CONTINGENCY

It is very important to reserve 10-20 percent of your available funds for a construction contingency. This is a reserve fund that you can use to pay for any unexpected additional costs. Despite the best planning efforts, it is not uncommon for projects to become more complicated - and expensive - as they progress. This can be due to issues with the building that were uncovered during the process, delays due to materials not being available, or changes

that are requested after the project begins. Without a contingency, these additional costs have to be balanced by cuts to the project or, in the worst case, the work has to stop until additional funds are found. Having a contingency provides you with a backup fund just in case. You can reduce the amount of the contingency as you work through the project and the risk of unhappy surprises goes down.

6. HIRING CONTRACTORS

a. BEST PRACTICES

Hiring a qualified and trustworthy contractor is the most important thing you can do to ensure the success of your project. Any project that costs more than \$500 must use a licensed contractor. The California Contractors State License Board has a [Consumer Guide to Home Improvement Contracts](#) that provides advice and checklist for how to choose a good contractor. Their recommendations include:

1. Ask for the contractor's license number and then check it at the [California Contractors State License Board](#) website to make sure it is current and in good standing.
2. Ask to see the contractor's pocket license and a current photo ID. The pocket license will have the contractor's license number and will also describe what they are licensed to do.
3. Ask whether your contractor carries general liability insurance in case accidental damage occurs during the project, and workers' compensation insurance if they have employees. They must have this insurance prior to you signing a contract with them.
4. Ask for a list of current contact information (telephone number and business address) for the contractor, subcontractors, and suppliers. You should check whether all the subcontractors are also licensed.
5. Ask your contractor if they understand your project expectations.
6. Try researching your contractor's name online for additional reviews.

7. Find out from your local building department whether your project needs a building permit and confirm that your contractor will obtain all necessary permits. This task and the cost of the permit fees should be included in your contract.
8. Get at least three contractor bids and references, and check out, in person, each prospective contractor's recent similar projects.
9. Make sure all project materials and expectations are spelled out and signed in a written contract, including clean-up, debris removal, and site security.
10. Schedule and document each phase of your project and the corresponding payment schedule. Do not let payments get ahead of the work.
11. A down payment cannot be more than 10 percent down or \$1,000, whichever is less. A contractor cannot demand or accept payment for work or materials until the work is actually done or the materials are delivered.
12. Avoid paying in cash.
13. Keep all of your project documents, including payments and photographs, in a job file.

In addition to these general best practices, Childcare Expansion Grant Program grantees may also have additional requirements or special procedures to follow that will be outlined in their grant agreements and with assistance from the construction management consultant.

b. PUBLIC WORKS

Any construction, alteration, demolition, installation, or repair projects done under contract and paid in whole or in part out of public funds - such as the Childcare Expansion Grant program administered by the VHF - are public works and are subject to special rules. Support in meeting this requirement will be provided as part of this program. The Contractors State License Board has [a summary of the public works requirements](#) which include:

- [Registering as a public works contractor](#)
- [Paying prevailing wages](#)
- [Complying with certified payroll requirements](#)
- [Following apprenticeship requirements \(if the project is \\$30,000 or more\)](#)

These requirements may increase the cost of your project and so, should be discussed with your contractor/s prior to you signing a contract. More information on the regulations that apply to public works can be found at the [Department of Industrial Relations public works website](#).

c. LEAD-SAFE RENOVATION

There is no safe level of lead exposure for babies and young children. Even small amounts of lead can cause permanent brain damage, behavior problems, and learning difficulties. The only way to tell if a child has been exposed to lead is with a blood test. You can learn more about lead exposure and how your families can access blood lead testing from the [Santa Clara County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program](#). The requirement for child care centers to test for lead in drinking water is presented in [Provider Information Notice 21-21.1](#). Information and resources, including a recorded webinar and associated slide decks (in English, Spanish, and Chinese) are available at the [CDSS CCLD Resources for Providers](#) website. A summary of California regulations related to childhood lead poisoning prevention is available [here](#).

The most common source of lead exposure in young children is from house paint. Almost two thirds of houses and apartments in Santa Clara County were built before lead was banned from house paint in 1978. Any renovation or construction that damages painted surfaces in houses and "child occupied spaces", like childcare homes, preschools and schools, built before 1978 creates the possibility of lead exposure through dust or chips. It is important to protect occupants and prevent exposure to lead during lead-paint abatement work activities. If possible, lead-paint abatement work should be conducted in a vacant unit to

avoid any unintended exposure. If this is not possible, the appropriate precautions should be taken to minimize exposure. These precautions include containment/barrier systems and/or temporary relocation while work is being completed. More information and guidance on how to protect occupants during lead-paint abatement work can be found in Chapter 8 of the [Department of Housing and Urban Development's Guidelines for the Evaluation and Control of Lead-Based Paint Hazards in Housing](#).

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires any contractor who does work that disturbs more than six square feet of paint inside a home, more than 20 square feet of paint outside a home, or removes windows in homes and child-occupied facilities built before 1978, to be lead-safe certified or face fines. The EPA website for the [Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting Program \(RRP\)](#) provides information on this regulation for providers and contractors. California law also includes specific training and certification requirements to reduce the risk of lead exposures from renovation projects and requires that presumed (pre-1978) lead-based paint chips and dust be disposed of as hazardous waste. If your project/s meet this requirement, you should ask potential contractors whether they are trained to perform lead-safe work practices, to explain what they will do to reduce the risk of lead exposure and check to make sure this work is included in any contract you sign. A list of certified lead professionals in our area is available [here](#).

You may be able to avoid these requirements if you can prove that the paint affected by your projects is lead-free by having a certified lead test performed on your childcare spaces. Some funders, such as the Childcare Expansion Grant program, require certified lead testing as part of their grant. Support in meeting this requirement will be provided as part of this program. Testing must be performed on all surfaces that will be affected by the work by a certified inspector/assessor. The California Department of Public Health maintains [a list of lead-certified professionals](#) and the County of

Santa Clara is in the process of starting a [Lead Safe Homes Program](#) that may provide free lead inspection and/or abatement services.

7. BUILDING WHILE OPEN

As previously discussed, you are required to inform CCLD of any proposed construction or renovation prior to beginning the project. CCLD also requires you to obtain all the necessary permits and be in compliance with relevant state and local laws throughout the project. Facility regulations for [centers](#) and [family childcare homes](#) are available at the links.

While the existing regulations do not specifically address the impact of construction or renovation on ongoing operations, you are required to meet all the regulatory requirements while in operation. That means that you must continue to provide facilities that are “clean, safe, sanitary and in good repair at all times” throughout the project. The regulations also state that “any construction or equipment that could pose a hazard in the outdoor activity area shall be made inaccessible to children in care.” Depending on the nature of the project/s this may not be possible. For example, providing a supply of hot water at the correct temperature or access to the required number of toilets may not be possible if your project includes plumbing work. Similarly, access to outdoor space may not be possible if you are renovating playground equipment or if construction equipment or supplies are stored outside. Under these circumstances, it is much better to temporarily close your program to avoid licensing violations, and, more importantly, putting child and staff safety at risk. Your licensing analyst will be able to discuss this with you and help you to determine if, and for how long, you may need to close.

It is also very important to discuss licensing regulations with your contractor so that you both understand the possible impacts of the project, when they will occur, and how to reduce their effect on children and your program. It may be possible to schedule the work so that it has the smallest effect by having

different pieces of the project done at the same time, or multiple subcontractors might store their supplies in the same location, locked away from the childcare spaces. Informing your contractor of the licensing requirements and then carefully planning when and what to do might increase the cost of the project but could also reduce the duration of a closure or even avoid the need for it completely. As always, the most important consideration is the health and safety of the people - children and staff - in your program.

8. CLOSING OUT THE PROJECT

The end of the project is a very important time. Closing out is your final opportunity to ensure the work is done correctly, that all of the paperwork is completed, and that you are happy with the results. There are lots of small tasks to complete during this time. Below is a list of things to keep in mind.

a. CCLD LICENSING AND INSPECTION

As you get closer to the end of your project, you should discuss with your licensing analyst whether CCLD will need to perform a licensing inspection in your renovated childcare spaces. In part, this will depend on how much your licensed space has changed and whether you have expanded the childcare space beyond the areas that were originally licensed. If an inspection is required, it would be ideal to have it happen just before the end of the project so that your contractor is still available if there are any minor changes that need to be made.

b. CHANGE ORDERS AND PUNCH LIST

You should check to make sure that all the work on the change orders has been completed. Because these changes may fall outside of the planned schedule, it is possible that they have been overlooked. The punch list is the list of small tasks that your contractor needs to complete. They often include things like small repairs or fixing blemishes (paint scuffs, missing power outlet covers), finishing incomplete work, or storing leftover supplies like extra paint or tiles. Make sure they are all completed before making the final payments.

c. COMMISSIONING AND WARRANTIES

If you have replaced or added new appliances, you should make sure that they are in working order by turning them on and off, making sure they do what they are supposed to do. Some appliances may also need to be tested for safe operation. Make sure you have the operating instructions and any registration or warranty documents.

d. PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS

All the permits and inspections required as part of your project should be finalized as part of the close out process. If your contractor was in charge of the permitting process, make sure you have the original copy of the permit in case you need it later.

e. AS BUILTS

These are the plans and drawings of the renovation project as it was finally built, which may be different from the initial plans and drawings. Having a copy of the “as builds” will be important to include in your records for future reference, renovations, and valuations.

f. LIEN WAIVERS

A lien waiver is a legal document from the subcontractors, workers, and materials suppliers who worked on your project that attests that they have been paid in full for their work. Having these waivers can help to protect you against any future claims that could create a legal problem for you. Lien waivers are discussed in more detail below (see section 9c below).

9. WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

a. CANCELING A CONTRACT

If you negotiate and sign a contract in your home for home services, like renovation, or goods, you have the right to cancel the contract at no cost for up to three days after signing (up to five days if you are 65 years old or older). This does not apply if you negotiated at the contractor’s place of business. You must cancel by written notice (e-mail, mail, fax, or hand delivery) to the contractor at the

contractor's place of business by midnight of the third business day after you received a signed and dated copy of the contract. Include your name, your address, and the date you received the signed copy of the contract. The contractor must return to you anything you paid within 10 days of receiving the notice of cancellation. You must allow the contractor to collect any goods or materials delivered to you under the contract. This does not apply to "service and repair" contracts for emergency repairs or services.

b. CHANGE ORDERS

Sometimes the project will need to be changed after it begins, despite careful planning and detailed descriptions in the contract of the work to be done. These changes will often, though not always, require additional money and time. Referring to the original contract will determine whether the changes are outside the scope of the original agreement. If they are, the new work needs to be documented in a written "change order". The order must describe the scope of the extra work or change, the cost to be added or subtracted from the contract, and the effect the order will have on the schedule of progress payments. [You can find an example change order here.](#) A change order becomes part of the contract once it is agreed upon and signed by you and the contractor. The new or changed work should not begin until the change order has been agreed upon and signed.

c. MECHANIC'S LIENS

The property owner is ultimately responsible for making sure that anyone who helps to improve your property is paid for their work. Even if you pay the contractor, if they don't pay their subcontractors, suppliers, or other workers, those workers can place what is called a "mechanic's lien" on the property. This is a property right, filed with the county, that can force you to pay twice for the same work, make it difficult to sell or take a loan against the value of the property - like a mortgage, or even force you to sell the property to raise funds to repay the workers.

There are steps you can take to reduce the chances of mechanic's liens from your project:

- Only hire licensed and reputable contractors,
- Get a list of all subcontractors, laborers, and material suppliers that will be involved in your project,
- Make sure your contract includes the subcontractors, suppliers, and workers for each part of the project and what the payment schedule will be,
- Pay with joint checks made payable to your contractor AND to the subcontractor or supplier, and
- Before payment, get a conditional lien release from anyone to be paid from the check and after payment get an unconditional release from the same people

You can find more information on [mechanic's liens at the Contractors State License Board website.](#)

d. COMPLAINTS AND BREACH OF CONTRACT

In any dispute between you and your contractor, the first thing you should do is to check your contract to determine exactly what work was supposed to be done. This is why it is very important that the contract describe the work in detail. Second, you should discuss the problem with the contractor and attempt to resolve it between yourselves. If that doesn't resolve the situation [you can make a formal complaint to the Contractors State License Board \(CSLB\).](#) The CSLB has the authority to take disciplinary action against a contractor for legal violations but is focused on public safety - not financial compensation.

The CSLB will respond to your written complaint, submitted through the form on their website, with a letter to your contractor advising them of the complaint and encouraging them to resolve the issue with you. If that is unsuccessful, the CSLB may provide dispute mediation services. Finally, if mediation is unsuccessful, the CSLB may provide you with information about obtaining restitution through either the small claims court or by

filing a bond claim with the contractor's surety company. You can find more information about [filing a construction claim in small claims court](#) and [filing a bond claim](#) at the CSLB website. You can find the name of the contractor's surety company at the same [website you used to check their license information](#).

10. CLOSING STATEMENT

Planning and completing a childcare facility renovation is a challenging and rewarding effort – much like every other aspect of working with young children and their families. The information provided in this guidebook is intended to be an introduction to these topics. Additional information on each topic is available at the links throughout the document, from your local Resource and Referral agency, and from the CCLD Regional Office. Childcare Expansion Grant Program grantees are also encouraged to contact VHF through childcare@vhfca.org with any questions they may have.



Valley Health Foundation (VHF) is a non-profit leader in community health and healthcare that fundraises to support, innovate, and advocate for better health for all in Santa Clara County. VHF helps patients, families, and dedicated healthcare professionals who serve in public healthcare facilities in Santa Clara County. VHF is the foundation for Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, O'Connor Hospital, and St. Louise Regional Hospital, 14 primary and specialty care health centers, Santa Clara County Public Health, Behavioral Health Services, and Custody Health. VHF also supports many community-based programs and services that share our mission to ensure better health for all. For more information about Valley Health Foundation please visit our website: www.valleyhealthfoundation.org