



START AND RUN A HOME DAYCARE

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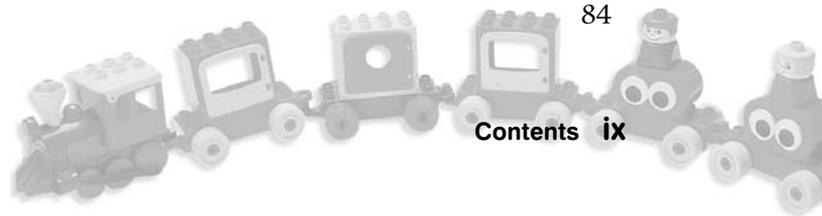
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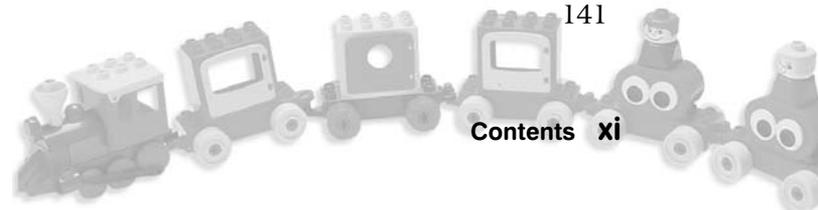
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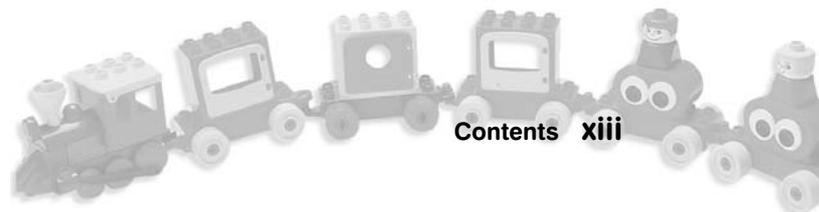


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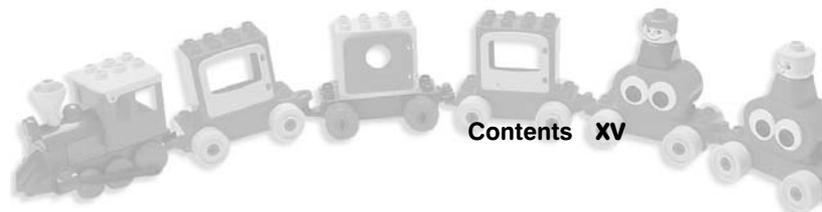
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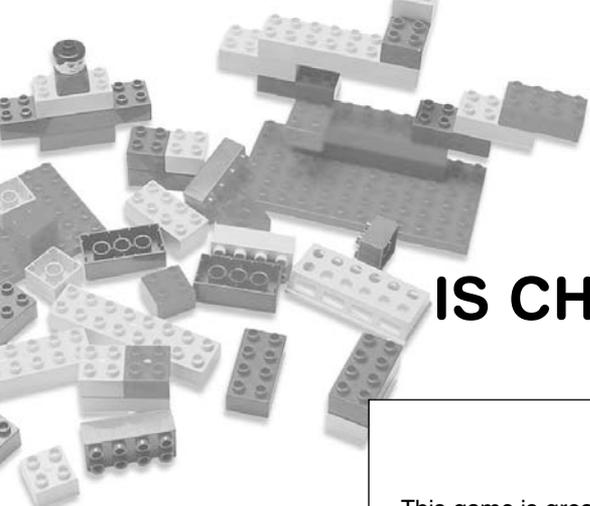
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CHAPTER 1

IS CHILD CARE FOR YOU?

Duck, Duck, Goose

This game is great for a group of six to eight children, but it works with larger groups as well.

Object of the game: to stop the fox from getting back to the hole.

How to play: one child is the “Fox.” He or she goes around the outside of a circle of seated children and taps each one on the head and says “Duck.” If the Fox says “Goose,” then that child chases the Fox around the circle and tries to catch him before the Fox sits in the vacant spot. If the Fox is caught, the Goose goes back to his or her spot and the Fox continues around the circle until he or she is caught. If the Goose does not catch the Fox, that child becomes the new Fox and the game starts over.



Herbert Hoover once said, “Children are our most valuable natural resource.” They are, in fact, our next world leaders. The love, the spirit, the zest for life, the quest for knowledge, and the respect for every living thing they learn from us today will govern all their tomorrows and shape the future for generations to come. With the ever-increasing pressure on women to work outside the home, much of what our children are learning about themselves and the world at large is coming from the nurturing and understanding of loving child-care providers.

It takes a certain kind of person to undertake such a task. This chapter will help you decide if you are that kind of person.

1. The Entrepreneurial Spirit

Setting up your home to provide care for children can be the road to independence.

While people may have many reasons for opening their own business, the quest to be their own boss usually tops that list. Self-employment and the personal freedom it allows is a cherished dream for many people. But that dream, that longing to succeed, that urge to strike out on your own, can become a reality. No matter where you live in North America, there are parents who need someone to provide care for their children.

It is estimated that close to 1.4 million children use paid child-care services in Canada but there are only about 500,000 regulated spaces. In the United States, it is estimated that 10,300,000 children under 13 are currently in need of some form of child care. When you also consider that, according to David Wanetick, author of the book “Hot Sector Investing,” the child-care industry is booming and has been targeted as one of the hot growth sectors of the new



millennium, with revenues of \$30 billion based on industry estimates, you can see the potential for this type of business. In fact, about 5,000 new centres are cropping up each year, as indicated by the National Child Care Association.

Getting your dream out of the shadows and into the “open for business” spotlight is going to take a lot of planning, training, and sheer determination. In this book, I’ll show you how to get there. Before we get started, however, you’ll want to be absolutely certain that the business of caring for children is really for you.

2. The Business of Child Care

Make no mistake about it. Opening a daycare will require an investment, but it will be an investment in you and in your dreams. If you plan to open a home daycare, your investment may be more in time than money, although you’ll still need to purchase equipment, advertise, and perhaps take training courses or renovate areas of your home.

If you are interested in an out-of-home daycare center, your expenses will be much greater: rent, renovations, large equipment purchases, staff, and extensive advertising.

Unlike parents who work a standard eight-hour shift, your days are likely to include many twelve-hour shifts. If a desperate parent calls to say he or she is stranded with a flat tire on the freeway and will be late picking Janey up, you can’t simply say, “Sorry, I shut up shop at 5 p.m. You’ll find Janey waiting for you somewhere out on the street.” You have the responsibility to look after the child, no matter how late the parent or how urgent your own appointment.

As an entrepreneur, you’ll find yourself resembling Bartholomew Cubbins in the Dr. Seuss tale *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins*; you’ll be wearing a new hat every time you turn around. From the moment you open your doors, you’ll be owner, cook, bottle washer, diaper changer, storyteller, maintenance person, bookkeeper, advertising consultant, inventory clerk, parent counselor, administrator, and much, much more.

You can rest assured that at some point it will seem overwhelming. The hours are long, stress is ever-present, recognition for this type of work may seem nonexistent, and quite often finding the stamina and ingenuity to entertain children all day requires real dedication. But to anyone who values the innocence, wonder, and unconditional love of children, this line of work can be a source of pride and pleasure as well as income.

3. Why Daycare?

There are as many reasons for opening one’s door to daycare as there are providers. The most common reason is that a parent wants to be home with his or her own children while still contributing to the family budget. Other daycare providers want playmates for their children or want to enhance their children’s social development.

You can feel good about offering a community service desperately needed by many parents in your neighborhood who are searching for long-lasting, quality care for their children. Running your own business and providing a necessary service can give you a feeling of accomplishment and build your self-esteem.

Whatever your reasons, you must realize that the service you provide will have a



profound impact on the lives of young children at a time when they are most vulnerable. It is during the first three years of life that a child develops most emotionally. Young children need to be held, cuddled, played with, and talked to. By fulfilling these emotional needs as well as taking care of the basic physical needs to be fed, dry, and comfortable, you will build a foundation for “your” children that will enhance their later skills and relationships.

There will be many rewards for you as a child-care provider. Each will make your work treasurable, memorable. In the words of Helene Sallans, a former daycare director, “My greatest success is when we had the children from infancy right up to school age, and they went away and came back just to visit. You know you’ve been successful when a child wants to return.”

4. Evaluating Yourself and Your Situation

Before you begin your journey through this book to learn the practical skills of child care, you must evaluate honestly your personality, your character, and your ability to handle this program. To do this, use the three-step plan outlined below.

Step one is a self-evaluation to help you learn if you have what it takes to work with children on a daily basis.

Step two is a family evaluation to help you determine how your decision to provide daycare will effect the lives of your family.

Step three will be to address the other concerns that will affect your decision, such as licensing, training, zoning regulations, and even your neighbors.

4.1 Step one: self-evaluation

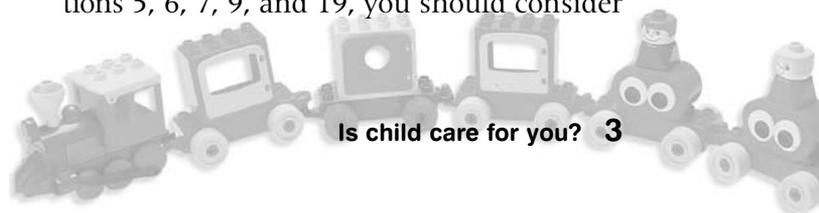
Take the Self-Evaluation Quiz in Worksheet 1 to see just how well you are suited to a career in child care. Remember, it is more important to answer the questions honestly than to try to deceive yourself into believing you possess every one of these qualities.

To answer yes to every question on the quiz, you would have to be superhuman, the type of person we all wish we were. What you will gain from this evaluation is the realization that there is no perfect caregiver, just as there are no perfect children and no perfect parents. This realization will help you deal with children and their shortcomings in a very positive way, for we are, none of us, angels.

If you answered no or sometimes to questions 2, 10, 11, or 18, this should be a good indicator of your honest feelings about children. If you are not genuinely fond of children and have little patience for their foibles, you should consider carefully whether caring for children on a daily basis is something you are emotionally equipped to do.

If you answered no or sometimes to questions 3, 4, 13, 14, or 17, you may need to upgrade your skills in these areas. Books on child development, health, nutrition, safety, and games and activities for children, as well as accounting and recordkeeping, are available at your local library. See the bibliography at the back of the book for a list of titles. Courses on all these subjects may also be offered at your local community college.

If you answered no or sometimes to questions 5, 6, 7, 9, and 19, you should consider





WORKSHEET 1 CHILD-CARE PROVIDER'S SELF-EVALUATION QUIZ

| Question | Yes | No | Sometimes |
|---|-----|----|-----------|
| 1. I am in good health and have lots of energy. | | | |
| 2. I have a genuine love for children and enjoy being around them. | | | |
| 3. I enjoy thinking of new games and things to do with children. | | | |
| 4. I am organized enough to keep financial records. | | | |
| 5. I am good with people and can get along with most everyone. | | | |
| 6. I have the ability to work cooperatively with parents and to listen to their ideas on how they raise their children. | | | |
| 7. I am not afraid to discuss problems and to state my point of view. | | | |
| 8. I am willing to give my daycare program three years of complete dedication. | | | |
| 9. I can handle a child's tantrums and spilled milk diplomatically. | | | |
| 10. I enjoy physical contact and am not afraid to hug, touch, or cuddle a child. | | | |
| 11. I can handle the stress of children tugging at me ceaselessly all day. | | | |
| 12. I am easygoing, pleasant, warm, and affectionate. | | | |
| 13. I am willing to learn about child development, health, and nutrition. | | | |
| 14. I am organized enough to handle a number of staff and related problems. | | | |
| 15. I am quick and sensible when emergencies arise. | | | |
| 16. I am willing to comply with licensing standards and regulations and will aim to provide the best possible care. | | | |

WORKSHEET 1 — Continued

| Question | Yes | No | Sometimes |
|--|-----|----|-----------|
| 17. I am safety conscious. | | | |
| 18. I am not unnerved by messes and welcome a child's active play. | | | |
| 19. I am flexible enough to allow deviations from the structures of a program. | | | |
| 20. I have a positive attitude toward life. | | | |
| 21. I have a good sense of humor. | | | |
| 22. I am motivated and consider myself to be a high achiever. | | | |
| 23. I am receptive to different methods of discipline. | | | |
| 24. I am willing to invite parents to stay for coffee or welcome their after-hour calls when they have concerns. | | | |

getting some extra help developing your people skills. To run a successful daycare, you'll have to be able to assert yourself, resolve conflicts, and negotiate compromises in as businesslike a way as possible. You can't let your personal feelings about your clients or the way they raise their children affect your ability to offer good service. In the child-care business, communication and a positive attitude toward your work are essential to providing quality care. If you simply can't get along with parents or respect their choices for their children, perhaps you should consider another line of work.

Your temperament is another aspect of your personality that plays an important role in your ability to offer quality daycare. If you answered no or sometimes to questions

12, 15, 20, 21, or 22, then this could indicate that you are of a somewhat anxious disposition and not suited to handling children. Children are as unpredictable as the weather. You should consider whether you can handle the stress.

For you to consider a career in child care, it is essential that you scored at least 17 yes answers. Ideally, your remaining 8 responses would be sometimes. Too many no answers should sound a warning bell that perhaps you would be better suited to another profession.

As a bit of added insurance, you might want to do volunteer work in a daycare center. Most of these facilities will welcome your help and the experience will give you a

better indication as to whether you are really suited to a career in daycare.

The one thing most successful caregivers have in common is their love for children and their desire to make a difference. Mixed in with these characteristics is a certain amount of inner calm, strength of character, and an ability to work through an array of problems like frustration, loneliness, and temper tantrums.

4.2 Step two: family evaluation

As a child-care provider, you will be the role model for the children who will look to you for all their needs. Your ability to be flexible, loving, and understanding of their individuality will help them grow into well-adjusted human beings. In order to foster a child's emotional and intellectual growth, you will need the support of the other members of your family. Their support and willingness to help out can make a big difference in how you feel about the work you choose to do and how you care for the children. When your spouse gripes about the toys on the floor or your school-age daughter insists on your undivided attention, the tension will affect the type of care you provide.

To help you consider issues related to your family, complete the Family Evaluation Quiz (see Worksheet 2). You might want to consider making photocopies of this quiz for each member of your family old enough to read and answer the questions. Their answers might be quite different from what you would guess. For younger children, take the time to sit down with them and discuss the questions that concern them. This will give you a good picture of how your family feels.

Don't let all these questions kill your desire to open your home and your heart to children. There are many ways to help your family adjust. Consider carefully the answers to the quiz and you can begin to think of how to deal with any potential problems.

To gather some ideas, you might want to visit with other daycare providers in your area and discuss your concerns. Take your children with you so they can see how well other children get along and how much fun they have. Take your spouse along on one of these visits as well, so he or she can see just how your plans will affect the way things are in your home.

If scheduling is going to be a problem, you may be able to set your hours to work around your family. For example, you might accept children only after your spouse has gone to work. Offer to pay your teenager to help you play with the children when he or she comes home from school. Enlist the help of your youngsters by asking them to show the new children around your home or facility and to introduce them to the other children. Allow them to help you feed the babies and prepare the lunch or snacks.

Your children will have to adjust to a great many things, such as allowing other children to play with their toys or not being able to sit on Mommy's lap all the time like they used to. They may even find themselves having to share your lap with another baby who also requires your attention. How will you handle what could be a very upsetting situation for your child?

Helping your young children adjust to strange children playing with their toys will take some effort and understanding. Talking to other providers will give you some





WORKSHEET 2 FAMILY EVALUATION QUIZ

1. How will your decision to open your door to child care affect your family?
2. Will your spouse help out during his or her off hours?
3. How does he or she feel about your decision to welcome children into your home?
4. Will your children welcome the noise and toys and will they help you entertain the youngsters?
5. How will your decision affect your family scheduling?
6. Will your children be willing to share “Mommy” or “Daddy” with the other children?
7. How will your family feel about rearranging the house to provide for adequate play space and an assortment of toys and books?

WORKSHEET 2 — Continued

8. How about your finances? Will establishing a home daycare drain your family's cash reserve?

9. How much money is your family willing to allow you to invest? Will it be enough?

10. Can the remaining money sustain your current lifestyle until you are on your feet and making a profit?

11. If adjustments are to be made, how willing is the rest of the family to make the adjustments?

12. When your own child gets ill, will you feel comfortable having other children around when your child needs your attention?

13. If you have family pets, how will they fit into your plans?

14. If you want to open a daycare center away from home, how will your time away from home affect your family?

ideas on handling jealousies while teaching sharing and other social issues. Consider locking your child's favorite toys away while the visiting children are present. When the company leaves, your child will be able to play with these toys without having to relinquish sole possession of them.

If your older children have concerns about "private space," you could establish a quiet or rest space for them. For example, your program could be designed so that the TV room/den is off-limits for the visiting children after 3 p.m. so that your children may study or relax there, away from the hustle and bustle.

My son had not yet been born when I took in my first child-care child. My daughter, who was just over a year old, welcomed a new playmate. By the time her brother came along, she was already used to having another child in her world and she welcomed his arrival. The biggest adjustment I faced was helping the little one I cared for to welcome not only the newest member of my family, but each new member of our extended family. She was an only child and to help her cope, I had many discussions with her while we played. We talked about sharing and how we would all have to get along if our time together was to be fun. It was that time we shared that helped her to adjust.

Even now, my eldest watches carefully the attention I give to the two-year-old I have in my care. I have to be careful to include her in the things we do. She is more than willing to fetch a stuffed toy or to help with the potty training, but she is also quick to snatch a hug from me when the little guy wanders off on his own.

4.3 Step three: situation evaluation

I call this the food-for-thought category. It is in no way intended to deter you from following your dream or to make you nervous. It's just that the more you understand about what you are getting involved in, the easier it will be for you to succeed.

To help you start thinking about the wide variety of issues you should consider, complete the Situation Evaluation Quiz (see Worksheet 3).

If zoning or other restrictions absolutely rule out the possibility of running a daycare in your home, your only options are moving or opening an out-of-home daycare. On the other hand, if the renovations your home would require to make it safe and workable as a daycare center are large and costly, you'll have to decide if your business is worth it.

For example, it will be difficult to entertain a group of children indoors when it is sunny and pleasant outside. Do you have an outdoor space for the children? If your yard is not fenced, you may be looking at a serious safety issue and one that could cost a lot to remedy; fencing is not cheap.

To accommodate your new business, your home will undergo a variety of changes, particularly if you no longer have young children scampering about. With careful planning, you can arrange your home to suit an assortment of toys, books, child-sized tables and chairs, as well as spaces for active play and rest. You'll need toilet-training supplies and diaper-changing areas. Comfort and space, especially for crawling babies and toddlers on the go will be a major



WORKSHEET 3
SITUATION EVALUATION QUIZ

1. Do zoning restrictions in your area make running a business from home difficult or impossible?
2. Is there anything in the daycare licensing requirements for your area that would make it difficult for you to obtain a license?
3. Do you have the space to entertain several active children, both indoors and out?
4. Do you have a fenced yard?
5. What will you do if you become ill with the flu or a bad cold or perhaps something worse?
6. Is there someone you can hire to help you through the holiday times and the sick times?
7. Are you willing to look after an ill child? At which point would you prefer the parent take the child home?
8. What about vacations — yours and those of the families you provide care for?
9. What about the days when school will be closed and your own children will be hanging around? How will you handle the extra workload?
10. Are you willing to study toward obtaining a certificate in early childhood education or child development?
11. How do your neighbors feel about having a daycare next door?

concern. Planning for messy activities and free play will take considerable thought.

You will need to childproof your home by installing electrical outlet covers, locking up all cleaning supplies and medicines, and by keeping lamp and appliance cords out of a child's reach. How far are you willing to go to meet the necessary safety regulations imposed by your local and state or provincial licensing boards?

Not all families will be able to or even want to schedule their holidays to correspond to yours. How will you handle this?

Many provincial and state daycare licensing boards now require successful completion of a course of studies in early childhood education. Consider whether you have the time and money to take such a course.

After researching the zoning laws, municipal bylaws, business restrictions, and possibly even your home-owner's association covenant, which may exclude home child-care programs, you may also want to discuss your plans with many of your neighbors. There may be someone in your neighborhood who opposes your plans because they do not want the extra noise, traffic, or persons using their parking spaces. When talking to the neighbors about your proposal, assure them you will honestly work toward avoiding any unnecessary problems and that you'll welcome hearing from them about any of their concerns. You might even consider having an open house for your neighbors to come in and visit with you and the children to see how you operate, and, if appropriate, to accept their suggestions.

