



# NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

## General Accommodation Program Supervision Childcare Center

### Frequently Asked Questions

General Accommodation Program Supervision Childcare Centers or “GAP Centers” were authorized pursuant to a regulatory waiver issued by the Department of Children and Families on October 7, 2020. Under this program, non-traditional childcare providers can be licensed to provide care to school aged children who are receiving remote education services from a New Jersey school district. What follows are the most frequently asked questions regarding the program and the application process.

#### **1. Do I need to be licensed to operate a facility for remote learning?**

Under New Jersey law, you need to be licensed if you’re providing compensated care for more than five children, up to age 13. Programs operated by public school districts, or by private schools serving kindergarten through sixth grade do not need to be licensed.

The law also allows exceptions to licensure for programs that are primarily for religious education, or for single activities (e.g. Scouts, 4H, martial arts or dance programs) under normal circumstances, however, this exception ceases to be applicable if these programs are providing supervision for remote education.

#### **2. What do I need to do to get licensed as a GAP Center?**

First, submit the required COVID-19 attestation [here](#), and return that to the Department of Children and Families as soon as possible.

Second, complete the application through the New Jersey Child Care Information System (NJCCIS) as soon as possible (<https://www.njccis.com/njccis/home>). Existing and continuously operating programs need to do this no later than October 23, 2020; others must do so prior to beginning operation. DCF will also need copies of several documents that you should already have, including your Certificate of Occupancy, a fire certificate, proof of liability insurance, and a floor plan which identifies exits.

Detailed instructions for navigating the application are attached [here](#) and also on this [link](#).

Once the application is submitted, instructions for obtaining required background checks for yourself and your staff and volunteers will be provided.

**3. I can apply for my own license or apply as a partner program to an existing licensed childcare program. Why should I choose one way or the other?**

GAP Centers that partner with an existing, eligible licensed center benefit from the mentorship and guidance of a program that has a track record of diligent compliance with childcare regulations, and providing care to children. Owing to that track record, some standards for sponsored programs are more lenient than those for programs pursuing independent licensure.

	Sponsored GAP License	Autonomous GAP License
Fee	None. Sponsoring Child Care Center has already paid for the license.	Up to \$250 depending on the size of the center
Required Staff to Child Ratio	1:15	1:12
Minimum Staff Required	1	2
Eligible for Federal Subsidy Program?	Yes, almost immediately	Yes, after finalization of license and required processing time, up to 12 weeks
Program Supervisor Requirements	Program Supervisor, must be at least 18 years old, and background check cleared.	Program Supervisor must meet requirements in NJAC 3A:52-4.6(d). For smaller programs (<15 children), Director must have at least a high school diploma and 6 college credit hours in a childcare related field, or two years of experience in childcare. For the largest program (31< Children)s, director must have at least one year of experience and a bachelor’s degree, 4 years of experience and a high school diploma, or an appropriate professional certification.
Training Requirements	All staff must be trained on operating procedures, as well as identification and reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect.	All staff must receive orientation training, covering topics specified in NJAC 3A:52-4.8(a), excluding Safe Sleep and Shaken Baby Syndrome topics, within two weeks of hire.

**4. Can any licensed childcare program sponsor a GAP center?**

No. Eligible centers have been licensed for at least one three-year licensing cycle, and have not had their license suspended or revoked. Centers currently facing the suspension or revocation of their license, and centers owned by individuals who have previously had a license revoked or suspended, are also ineligible. Out of state and license-exempt centers cannot sponsor GAP Centers.

**5. What does it cost to be a sponsored program?**

The terms of the contractual relationship between a sponsored program and their childcare sponsor, including any profit sharing or fees, are largely left to the discretion of the two parties.

The agreement must, however, include provisions which give the director of the sponsoring program sufficient authority to ensure that the sponsored program complies with applicable rules and regulations, including authority to control staffing, and authority to close the program if compliance with the rules becomes impossible.

Because it is critical that sponsoring programs have some stake in the safe operation of a sponsored program, agreements are not permitted to indemnify the sponsor against liability.

**6. Is there a fee for applying?**

Sponsored programs will be treated as an extension of their sponsoring program, and not subject to the licensing fee. The fee for non-sponsored programs ranges from \$110 to \$250 depending on the number of children served.

**7. Are staff and volunteers subject to background checks?**

Yes. Under New Jersey law, childcare staff and volunteers are subject to both federal and state criminal history checks, checks of state and federal sex offender registries, as well as checks of the child abuse registry maintained by the Department of Children and Families. Once your application is received, further instructions will be provided.

**8. My staff previously worked for a school. Do they need to be background checked aswell?**

Yes. Background checks for childcare and school employment are not identical or interchangeable.

**9. Will my center be subject to in-person inspection?**

Yes. This may or may not happen prior to the issuance of your license, but the center will be subject to at least one in-person inspection during the school year.

**10. I'm aware of a program that is continuing to operate without a license. What should I do?**

Please report the violation to the DCF Office of Licensing at 1-877-667-9845.

**11. I have other questions. Who can I speak to?**

The DCF Office of Licensing at 1-877-667-9845