From Idea to Open Doors: Supporting Family Child Care Businesses at Every Step



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Cyreathea is working toward opening her first family child care business. Davian recently received her family child care license. Casey is celebrating a successful inspection at the program she has built. And Lilly is getting ready to open a second location.

Each is at a different point in the journey of owning and operating a child care business. Along the way, Early Childhood Resource Center specialists have helped them navigate challenges, prepare for what comes next, and keep moving forward.

That support can begin with the first steps toward opening and continue long after a program welcomes its first children.

Cyreathea, who lives in Canton, has remained committed to her goal of opening a family child care business despite encountering setbacks along the way. Through regular check-ins and ongoing support from Early Childhood Specialist Danielle Kern, she has continued to make progress.

Today, Cyreathea feels confident and optimistic about what comes next and believes she will open her business within the year.

For Davian, the road to becoming a licensed family child care provider came with several setbacks. At times, she felt discouraged about continuing, but consistent support, guidance and encouragement from Danielle helped her stay focused on her goal.

As Davian prepared for her licensing inspection, Danielle conducted a mock licensing visit with her. Together, they identified and made several improvements to Davian's home environment to help prepare for the inspection.

Davian successfully completed her licensing visit, and shortly after she received her family child care license. Afterward, Davian shared that without the assistance she received along the way, she might have given up on the process.

Her experience shows how support can make a difference when challenges begin to feel overwhelming and a goal that once seemed distant is finally within reach.

Our support continues well beyond opening day.

Early Childhood Specialist Kori Dippel has worked with Casey, owner of Casey's Play Care in Massillon, for years. Together, they have worked on systems to maintain licensing compliance, build staff competency, and establish practices that help staff consistently meet program expectations.

Recently, Casey had exciting news to share: her latest licensing visit resulted in no out-of-compliance issues. The accomplishment reflects the time and effort she has invested in strengthening her program and supporting her staff.

And sometimes, the journey leads to an opportunity to grow.

Kori helped Lilly, owner of Lilly's Pad Child Care Center in Stark County, through the process of getting her original program licensed and open. Now Lilly is expanding her business by opening a second location in Summit County, allowing her to provide care for more children and families.

Stories like these demonstrate why access to knowledgeable, local support matters. They are also at the heart of a coordinated effort underway across Ohio.

In October, the Early Childhood Resource Center joined the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA) and six other Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in a statewide awareness campaign to connect more people with resources for starting a family child care business.

The campaign launched with a video highlighting the increased need for reliable child care in our communities, along with a new webpage detailing the services and support that the Early Childhood Resource Center makes available to prospective providers.

A central message of the campaign is the value of having local support throughout the process. Our specialists can help prospective providers understand licensing, work through challenges, and access resources as they prepare to open. That relationship can continue after licensing, helping providers strengthen their programs, support their staff, and grow their businesses.

For Cyreathea, the journey is still moving toward opening day. Davian persevered through setbacks and earned her family child care license. Casey is seeing years of work reflected in the strength of her program. Lilly is building on her success and expanding into another community.

Each is at a different point in the journey, but together their stories show what can happen when determination is matched with knowledgeable support and someone ready to help with the next step.

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The Early Childhood Resource Center serves families, educators and communities across Ohio as one of the state's designated Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, serving Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit and Trumbull counties.