



DAYCARE LICENSE.CA

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FREE GUIDE

# The *5 Biggest Mistakes*

*How to Get Your California Home Daycare License Without Getting Stuck*

A free guide from Daycare License California

[DaycareLicenseCalifornia.com](https://DaycareLicenseCalifornia.com)

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**90**

Days to your  
license

**11**

Forms to  
file

**5**

Mistakes we  
help you avoid

## WELCOME

# This guide is for you.

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You want to start a home daycare in California. You have not filed your papers yet — or you started and got stuck. You want to know the most common mistakes so you can avoid them.

We made this guide because we saw too many good people give up. Not because they were not ready. Because the paperwork is hard.

This is not an ad. We share the 5 mistakes that we see most often — the ones that send applications back, cost weeks of time, or make families lose money.

Read this in 10 minutes. Then you will know what to do next.

## WORDS YOU NEED TO KNOW

# Five words that come up a lot.

<b>License</b>	The paper from California that says you can care for kids in your home for pay.
<b>The state</b>	The California Department of Social Services. They give out the license. You fill out their forms.
<b>Your office</b>	Your local state office. There are 21 in California. Your home address tells you which one is yours.
<b>Fingerprints</b>	A background check. You and every adult in your home need this. The state calls it LiveScan.

**Home check**

A state worker visits your home to make sure it is safe for kids. This happens near the end.

# 01

## MISTAKE ONE

# Filling Out the Forms Wrong

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## What goes wrong

California asks for 11 forms. They look short. But each one has tricky parts.

The most common errors:

- Writing your home address on a form that wants a different address
- Skipping a signature on the back of a page
- Marking "no" when "yes" is the right answer (or the other way)
- Forgetting to list every adult in your home
- Forgetting to write a date

Even small mistakes get your packet sent back. That can cost you **4 to 8 weeks**.

## Why it happens

The forms are dry. They use legal words. After 30 minutes of reading, your eyes get tired and you start guessing. Some of the forms are from the 1980s. The state added new questions over the years. The forms did not catch up.

## How to avoid it

1. Read every question two times before you mark it. Use a finger to slow down.
2. If a question does not make sense, do not guess. Mark it and come back.

3. Have a friend read your packet before you send it. Two pairs of eyes see more.
4. Take a phone photo of every page before you mail anything.

**DO THIS TODAY**

Print out form LIC 279 (the main one). Look at section 4. That is where most people get stuck. If section 4 confuses you, you are not alone. Do not send your packet until you are sure.

# 02

## MISTAKE TWO

# Not Getting Your Home Ready Before the Check

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## What goes wrong

After the state gets your papers, they send a worker to your home. This is called the home check. It takes about 90 minutes.

The most common reasons people fail:

- Smoke alarms that do not work in every room
- No carbon monoxide alarm on every floor
- Water heater not strapped to the wall (yes, they check)
- Outlets without safety covers
- Cleaning bottles not locked up
- The yard fence too low or with gaps

If you fail, you fix the problem and ask for another check. That adds **2 to 4 weeks**.

## Why it happens

You read the rules. You think your home is ready. But the state worker is careful. They open cabinets. They check every room. They measure the fence. Most homes need 3 to 8 small fixes before they pass.

## How to avoid it

The week before your check, walk through your home with this list:

- Test every smoke alarm. Put new batteries in all of them.

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- Make sure you have a carbon monoxide alarm on every floor.

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- Look at your water heater. Is it strapped to the wall with two metal straps? If not, that is about a \$30 fix at a hardware store.

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- Walk your home like you are a 2-year-old. Anything you can reach should be safe.

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- Check every outlet near kids. Add a safety cover if it is empty.

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- Put all cleaning bottles and medicine in a locked cabinet or up high.

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- Walk your yard. Is the fence 4 feet tall? Are there any gaps?

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### **DO THIS TODAY**

Walk through your home today with this list. Write down every fix you need. Most homes need 5 to 10 small things. Better to know now than after the state worker leaves.

# 03

## MISTAKE THREE

# Forgetting Your City's Papers

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## What goes wrong

You get your California license. You think you are done. Then a letter from your city says you owe a fine.

Almost every California city wants its own business license. Even for a home business. Some cities also want a "home occupation permit." That paper says you are allowed to run a business out of your home.

In Los Angeles, you need a BTRC (Business Tax Registration Certificate). It costs less than \$100. But if you do not get it, the city can fine you.

## Why it happens

The state license is from California. The city license is from your city. They are different. The state will not tell you about your city's rules. Your city will not know about your state license. Each one thinks you know about the other.

## How to avoid it

After you get your state license, take two steps:

1. Search "**[your city name] business license.**" Most cities have a website. Find the part about home businesses.
2. Search "**[your city name] home occupation permit.**" Some cities want this on top of the business license.

Cities in Los Angeles County with their own rules include Los Angeles (BTRC required), Long Beach, Pasadena, Glendale, Burbank, Santa Monica, and many others. If you live in an unincorporated part of LA County, the county has its own rules.

**DO THIS TODAY**

Go to your city's website. Search "home daycare" or "home business."  
Read the first page that comes up. Even 5 minutes of reading saves you weeks later.

# 04

## MISTAKE FOUR

# Missing the 16-Hour Class Signup

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## What goes wrong

California makes every new home daycare provider take a 16-hour class. Your local state office runs it.

The class is free. But spots are limited. Some offices have a wait list of **2 to 4 months**.

You cannot get your license until you finish this class. So if you wait to sign up, you wait to get your license.

## Why it happens

People think they will sign up "later" — when their application is ready. But the class must be done before you send the application. So "later" becomes "too late."

## How to avoid it

Sign up for the class the same week you decide to do this. Even if you are not ready yet. The class spot is yours when it is yours.

To sign up:

1. Find your local state office. Your home address tells you which one. (Our Kit has the full list with phone numbers.)

2. Call the office or check their website for the next class date.
3. Get on the schedule.

If your office has a long wait, you can sometimes take the class at a different office. Ask.

**DO THIS TODAY**

Find your local state office. Look up the next class date. If it is more than 4 weeks away, sign up today. Even if your papers are not ready.

# 05

## MISTAKE FIVE

# Not Setting Up Workers' Comp Early

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## What goes wrong

If you have any helper in your daycare — even a family member who is not paid — you may need workers' comp insurance.

The state checks for this. Without workers' comp, you can be:

- Denied your license
- Fined for working without it
- Made to pay for any injury your helper has at work

## Why it happens

Workers' comp sounds like something only big businesses need. The words "insurance" scare people. So they ignore it. Then it comes up at the worst time.

## How to avoid it

If you will work alone with the kids, you do not need workers' comp.

If you will have anyone helping you (paid or not, family or not) when kids are there, you need workers' comp. Cost: about \$50 to \$150 per month for a small home daycare with one helper.

How to get it:

1. Call a local business insurance broker. Tell them you need workers' comp for a home daycare with [number] helpers.
2. Or use the **State Compensation Insurance Fund** — state-run, often the cheapest for small businesses.
3. Get the policy in place before your home check.

**DO THIS TODAY**

Ask yourself: will anyone be helping me when kids are at the daycare? If yes — even sometimes, even for free — you need workers' comp. Start looking into it now.

YOUR NEXT 7 DAYS

# What to Do *This Week*

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You read the guide. Now what? Here is what to do in the next 7 days.

<b>Day 1</b>	Walk through your home with the safety list from Mistake 2. Write down every fix you need.
<b>Day 2</b>	Find your local state office. Look up the next 16-hour class. Sign up if you can.
<b>Day 3</b>	Search your city's website for "home daycare." Read the first page that comes up.
<b>Day 4</b>	Will you have any helpers? If yes, start asking about workers' comp insurance.
<b>Day 5</b>	Print form LIC 279 from the state website. Read it once just to see what is on it.
<b>Day 6</b>	Tell your family. Every adult in your home will need fingerprints. Make sure they are okay with that.
<b>Day 7</b>	Take a break. You did a lot this week.

READY FOR THE NEXT STEP?

# We can help you *the whole way.*

This guide shows you the 5 mistakes. The Kit and Full Service give you everything else — the 11 forms ready to fill, the home check list, and a CPA by your side.

	WE DO IT	
<p>DO IT YOURSELF</p> <h3>License Kit</h3> <h2>\$399</h2> <p>· one time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ 80-page guide, written simply</li><li>✓ All 11 forms, ready to fill</li><li>✓ Fingerprint instructions</li><li>✓ Home check list</li><li>✓ Safety plan templates</li><li>✓ English and Spanish</li><li>✓ Yours forever</li></ul>	<p>DONE FOR YOU</p> <h3>Full Service</h3> <h2>\$1,299</h2> <p>· one time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ We fill all 11 forms</li><li>✓ We send them to the state</li><li>✓ We set up fingerprint visit</li><li>✓ 1 hour call before home check</li><li>✓ 6 months of help included</li><li>✓ Money back if we err</li></ul>	<p>STAY READY</p> <h3>Monthly Plan</h3> <h2>\$29</h2> <p>· per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Renewal reminders</li><li>✓ 16-hour class tracker</li><li>✓ Free food money help (CACFP)</li><li>✓ Live group help monthly</li><li>✓ Parent contract templates</li><li>✓ Free Kit updates</li></ul>

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off the Kit**

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