

# How to open an ECI

## What is an ECI?

An early childhood institution ( ECI) is defined as any place that cares for four (4) or more children under the age of six years, for up to six (6) hours per day. This includes nurseries, centres or homes which offer day care, basic schools, kindergartens, preschools, and infant schools and infant departments.

Almost all Jamaican children spend many hours of their early years with caregivers and teachers in one of the above mentioned ECIs, and one way in which our children can be provided with a good start in life is to ensure that all ECIs are efficiently run and provide services that promote children's development.

Your ECI will therefore ensure that children have access to quality early childhood development programmes so that they can become healthy, well-balanced adults and self-sufficient citizens.

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### Where do I begin?

The first and most important thing is making sure that this is really the line of work you want. Working with children is very rewarding but can be frustrating and exhausting at times.



## **Next, you need to be sure you have a location that will be appropriate for use as an ECI. You need to:**

- **Seek parish council approval for the location you have selected.**  
Contact your local parish council board for further details on building and zoning requirements as stated in The Parish Councils Building Act
- **Have the premises inspected by the following agencies:**
  - Jamaica Fire Brigade
  - Public Health Department

Inspections from the above agencies will highlight areas that need improvement so that changes can be made to create a safe and healthy environment for children, staff and visitors.



## **Finally, register your ECI with the Early Childhood Commission.**

Under the law, all ECIs must register with the ECC to operate legally in Jamaica. The Early Childhood Act and Regulations (2005) describe the requirements that an ECI must meet in order to provide the services that children need to grow and develop well. Anyone wishing to operate an ECI must now find out what is required under the law.

*Visit or call the ECC Registration Department for further information on the registration process. Our office is open Monday to Thursday 8:30a.m. – 5:00, and Fridays 8:30a.m. – 4:00p.m.*

**The Early Childhood Commission  
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