

## Protecting Your Business Name

Many family child care providers operate under a business name (“Dee’s Day Care,” “Tender Care for Kids,” and so on) and use it on parent contracts, checks, and to advertise their program. A business name is a sign of professionalism and helps create an identity for your program. If another child care provider begins using the same business name, your program could suffer in the resulting confusion. To prevent this from happening you can register your business name, usually with the secretary of state’s office in your state.

In many states if you use a business name you will be required to register it. (If you are incorporated it is very likely that this is a requirement.) Usually there is no need to register your business name if you are using your full name (“Cassandra Bowie’s Day Care”), but often there is a requirement to register it if you use only part of your name (“Cassandra’s Day Care”). If you live near the border of two states you may want to register your business name in both states. Many states also have a requirement that you post your newly registered business name in a local newspaper.

Your secretary of state’s office will often have on its Web site the form you need to register your business. The form may be called a “Fictitious Business Name Statement” (California), or a “Certificate of Assumed Name” (Minnesota), or some other name. You can also later change

your business name. Failure to register your name when you are required to do so could result in fines or other penalties. Check with your secretary of state’s office for details.

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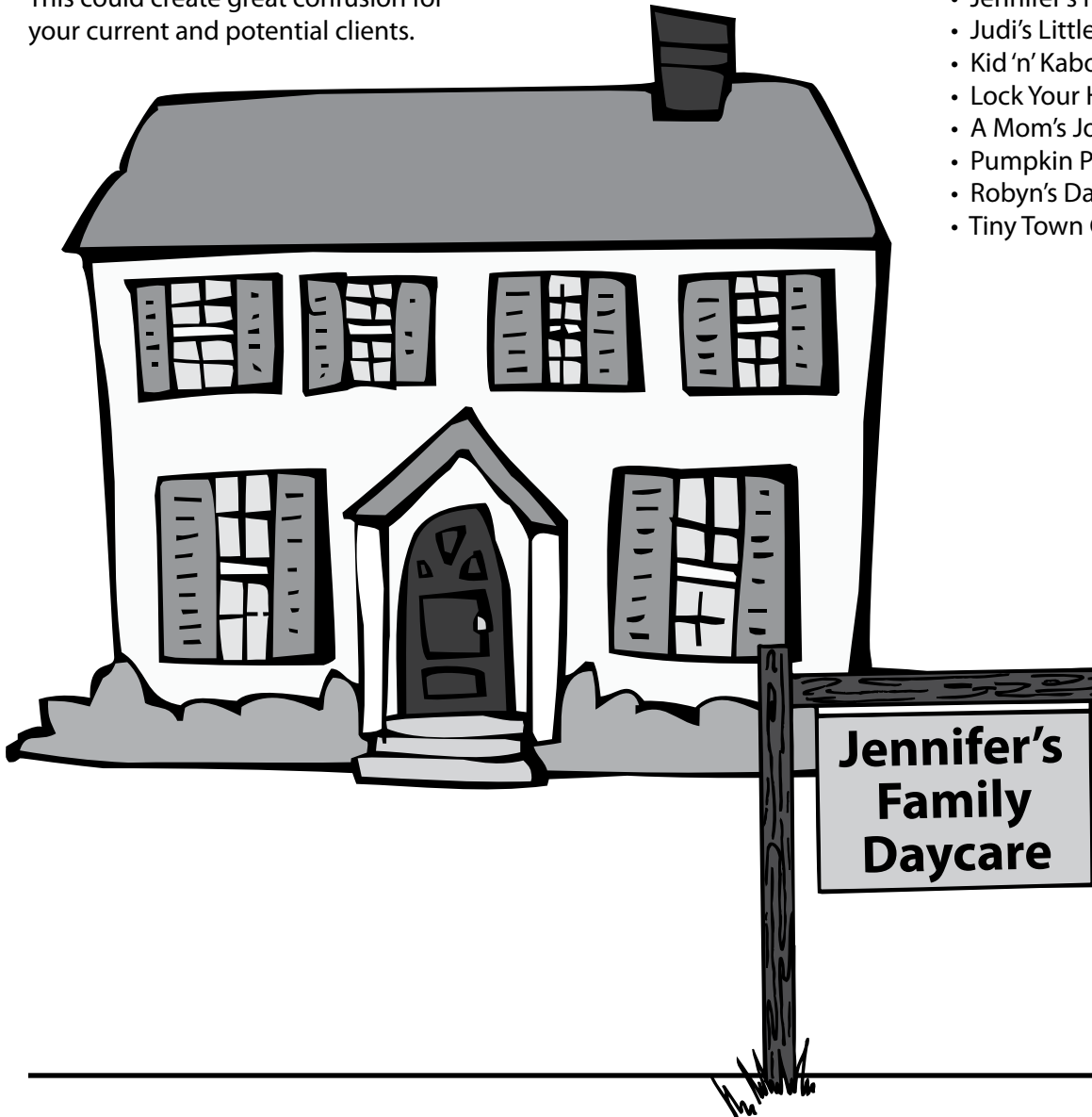


Before registering your business name your state will check to see that no one else is using the name you have chosen. Once your registration is complete, no other child care business can use this name, and if they do, the state will order them to stop. If you don't register your business name, another child care program can come along, register the same name and force you to stop using it. This could create great confusion for your current and potential clients.

Even if registering your business name with your state is not a legal requirement, we recommend doing so to help you set a professional tone with parents. The one-time fee to register your business name is usually less than \$50 and is 100% tax deductible. Registering your business name has no impact on how you file your federal or state taxes.

Here are a few samples of family child care business names we've come across:

- Adventures in Learning Childcare
- Busy Bees Home Childcare Program
- Cindy's Jolly Tots
- Daycareland
- Family to Family Childcare
- Greenleaf Nursery
- A Home Away From Home
- Jennifer's Family Daycare
- Judi's Little Rascals
- Kid 'n' Kaboodle
- Lock Your Hart on Kids
- A Mom's Joy
- Pumpkin Patch Nursery
- Robyn's Daycare
- Tiny Town Childcare



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Supported by funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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1999-2006 651-641-6675