JP MARKETING

GUIDE + CHECKLIST

How to Set Up & Optimize Your Google Business Profile

A step-by-step guide + checklist for daycares & childcare centers

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Why your Google profile matters so much

When someone near Naperville, IL searches for daycares, Google shows a map with 3 businesses on top. That's called the **Map Pack**. Most calls go to those 3.

Your **Google Business Profile** (people still call it "GMB") is what shows up there. It's free. And it's often the very first thing a new parent sees.

This guide shows you how to set it up the right way, step by step, for childcare centers. No tech skills needed.

What you'll get:

- A profile that shows up for more searches
- More calls, website clicks, and more tours and full classrooms
- Fewer mistakes that can get your profile suspended
- A simple weekly routine to keep it strong

> **Heads up:** Google changes this stuff a lot. In late 2025 Google started removing the old **Questions & Answers** section from profiles and replacing it with an AI "Ask" feature in Maps. The AI reads your profile, your reviews, and your website to answer questions. So keeping everything complete and correct matters more than ever.

Words to know

Word	What it means
Google Business Profile	Your free listing on Google Maps and search. Also called GMB.
Map Pack	The top 3 businesses on the map.
Category	The label that says what kind of business you are.
Attribute	Little tags like 'wheelchair accessible.'
Service area business	A business that goes to its customers.

Word	What it means
Verification	Proving to Google your business is real.
UTM tag	Extra words at the end of a link that help you track where visits came from.

Before you start: gather this stuff

- [ ] Your exact business name (the one on your sign, your license, and your paperwork)
- [ ] Your real address (and whether customers come to you)
- [ ] Your main phone number (a local number is best)
- [ ] Your website link
- [ ] Your hours (and holiday hours)
- [ ] A list of every service you offer
- [ ] 10 to 20 good photos (more on this below)
- [ ] Your logo and a cover photo
- [ ] A Google account that the business owns (not a staff member's personal email)

> **Tip:** Use a Google account the business owns, like admin@yourbusiness.com. If an employee sets it up with their own Gmail and then leaves, you can lose control of your profile.

Step 1: Find or create your profile

1. Go to **google.com/business** and sign in.
2. Search for your business name. It might already exist (Google sometimes makes profiles on its own).
3. If it exists, click **Claim** or **Request access**.
4. If it doesn't exist, click **Add your business**.

If someone else (like an old marketing company) owns it, use the request access button. Google will email them. If they don't answer in about 7 days, you can often claim it yourself.

Step 2: Use your real business name

Use your name **exactly** as it looks on your sign and paperwork. Example: **Sunny Steps Early Learning**.

Do **not** add extra words like your city or services. Like this:

Bad (can get you suspended)	Good
Sunny Steps Early Learning - Best Daycare Naperville	Sunny Steps Early Learning
Sunny Steps Early Learning / Infant Care / Toddler Program	Sunny Steps Early Learning

Yes, adding keywords can help for a little while. But competitors report it, and Google can suspend you. It's not worth it.

Step 3: Pick the right categories (this is HUGE)

Your **primary category** is one of the biggest things Google uses to decide when to show you.

Best primary category for most childcare centers: Child Care Agency or Day Care Center (pick the one Google shows for centers like yours), or Preschool if that's your main program.

Good secondary categories to think about (only pick ones that are true for you):

- Preschool
- Kindergarten (if you offer it)
- After School Program
- Summer Camp
- Nursery School

How to double-check: Search Google Maps for "daycare naperville". Look at the top 3. Click each one and see what category shows under their name. If they all use the same one, that's a strong clue.

> **Tip:** You can have 1 primary and up to 9 secondary categories. Don't add categories just to add them. Every one should match something you really do.

Step 4: Address or service area

There are two kinds of businesses on Google:

Type	What it means	What you do
Storefront	Parents come to your place	Show your address
Service area business	You go to them	Hide your address and list the cities you serve
Both	You have an office AND go out	Show your address AND add service areas

Big rules:

- You need a real address to verify. No P.O. boxes. No UPS Store boxes. No virtual offices.
- Only make a profile for a place where you really work, with real staff during your hours.
- If you have more than one real location, each one gets its own profile.

Step 5: Hours

Put your real hours. Then:

- Add **special hours** for every holiday (Google will remind you)
- Use 'More hours' for things like phone hours, kids' hours, or online hours if they're different
- Never say 24 hours unless a real person answers 24 hours

Wrong hours = angry parents = bad reviews.

Step 6: Phone number and website

Phone: Use a local number that a real person answers. If you use call tracking, put the tracking number as the **primary** number and your real number as an **additional** number. That keeps things matching.

Website: Link to your homepage (or the location page if you have more than one location). Add a tracking tag to the end of the link so you can see these visits in Google Analytics:

`https://yourwebsite.com/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=gbp`

Booking link: If you have one, add it in the **Appointments** field. Your main goal is to get people to book a tour, so make it one click.

Step 7: Add every service

Go to **Edit services**. Add each service with a short description (2 to 3 sentences). Here are good ones for childcare centers:

- Infant care (6 weeks+)
- Toddler program
- Twos program
- Preschool (3s)
- Pre-K (4s)
- Before and after school care
- School-age summer camp
- Part-time options
- Meals and snacks included
- Drop-in care (if offered)

Write each description like you're talking to a neighbor. Use the words people search for. Example:

> **Infant Care** - We help parents in Naperville with infant care. [Add one sentence on what makes yours different, like speed, experience, or price.] Book a tour today.

Step 8: Write your business description

You get 750 characters. Use them. Say who you help, what you do, where you do it, and what to do next. No links, no ALL CAPS, no sales spam.

Example:

> Sunny Steps Early Learning is a licensed childcare center in Naperville, IL for children 6 weeks to 12 years. We offer infant care, toddler and preschool programs, pre-K, and before/after school care. Caring teachers, healthy meals, secure entry, and daily photo updates through our parent app. Open 6:30am to 6:30pm. Schedule a tour today.

Step 9: Turn on attributes

Attributes are little tags like "wheelchair accessible" or "online appointments." Turn on every one that's true. Good ones for childcare centers:

- Wheelchair accessible
- Appointment required (tours)
- Online appointments
- Women-led / minority-owned (if true)

Step 10: Add great photos

Profiles with lots of real photos get more clicks. Start with **at least 10**, then add a few every week.

Photos to take:

- Front entrance and secure door
- Each classroom (infant, toddler, preschool)
- Playground
- Cribs and nap area
- Kitchen or meal setup
- Teachers (headshots)
- Kids playing (ONLY with signed parent consent)
- Parent pickup area

Photo tips:

- Use real photos. No stock pictures.
- Bright light, phone held sideways (landscape).

- Logo: square. Cover photo: wide.
- Short videos (under 30 seconds) work great too.
- Add new photos every week. It tells Google you're active.

Step 11: Get verified

Google needs to know you're real. It might ask for:

- **A video:** You film your sign, your office or your work gear, and proof you run the business (like opening the office door with your key). Keep it one take, no cuts.
- **A phone call or text code**
- **An email code**
- **A postcard** (less common now)

> **Tip:** For video verification, film the outside (street sign or building number), then walk in and show your workspace, tools, and something with your business name on it. Plan your video before you hit record.

Step 12: Build a review system

Reviews help you rank AND help people pick you. More reviews, newer reviews, and reviews that mention your services and city all help.

The simple system:

1. Get your review link. In your profile, click **Ask for reviews** and copy the link.
2. Ask at the happiest moment (right after a great visit or job).
3. Send the link by text. Texts get way more reviews than emails.
4. Follow up once, 2 days later, if they didn't leave one.
5. Reply to **every** review within 2 days.

Sample review request text:

> Hi [Parent Name]! We love caring for [Child]. If you're happy with Sunny Steps, would you leave us a quick Google review? Other parents really trust what you have to say. [Review Link] Thank you!

Rules: Never pay for reviews. Never offer gifts for reviews. Never write fake ones. Never ask only happy people while blocking unhappy ones (this is called "review gating" and Google doesn't allow it).

How to reply to a 5-star review:

> Thank you so much, [First Name]! We're so glad you had a great experience. See you next time! - [Your Name], Sunny Steps Early Learning

How to reply to a bad review:

> Thank you for telling us. We're sorry this happened. That's not the experience we want for anyone. Please call [owner name] at [phone] so we can make it right.

> **Kids' privacy:** Never name a child in a reply, and never share anything about a child's behavior or progress. Keep replies about the school and the experience.

Step 13: Post every week

Posts show up on your profile and keep it fresh. Post once a week (twice is even better). Ideas: offers, events, tips, team spotlights, and new photos. (See our **30 Google Business Profile Post Examples** guide for Daycares & Childcare Centers.)

Step 14: Answer questions (the new way)

The old Q&A section is going away. Now Google's AI answers questions using your profile, reviews, and website. So:

- Make a strong FAQ section on your website with real answers
- Keep your services, hours, and attributes complete
- Ask for reviews that mention the details people care about
- Use posts to share important info (like new hours or new services)

Step 15: Keep your profile safe

- Add a backup owner (you + a trusted partner)
- Give staff 'Manager' access, not 'Owner'
- Never share your Google password
- Check your profile weekly for 'suggested edits' from Google or strangers
- Don't change your name, address, or category a lot. Big changes can trigger a new verification.

Special tips for Daycares & Childcare Centers

Category

Search Google for centers like yours and see which category they use. 'Child Care Agency' and 'Day Care Center' both show up. Pick the one that best matches. Add 'Preschool' as secondary if you run one.

Hours must be exact

Parents need to know open and close times. Put your full hours (like 6:30am to 6:30pm). Add holiday closures every time.

Show your license

Put your state license info on your website and mention 'licensed' in your description. Parents look for this.

Openings

Post when you have openings by age group. 'Infant spots open' posts get a lot of calls.

Safety first in photos

Never show kids' faces without written consent. Never show security codes or door details in photos.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Wrong hours (parents will be mad)
- Showing kids with no photo consent
- Not replying to reviews (parents read the replies)
- No tour button
- Calling yourself a 'school' or 'academy' in a way that isn't your real legal name
- Ignoring questions about openings

Your weekly 15-minute routine

Day	Task	Time
Monday	Add 2 to 3 new photos	3 min
Tuesday	Publish this week's post	5 min
Every day	Send review links to happy parents	2 min
Friday	Reply to all new reviews	3 min
Friday	Check for edits and wrong info	2 min

One-page setup checklist

Setup

- [ ] Profile claimed with a business-owned Google account
- [ ] Backup owner added
- [ ] Real business name (no extra keywords)
- [ ] Best primary category picked
- [ ] Secondary categories added (only true ones)
- [ ] Address or service area set the right way
- [ ] Hours + holiday hours correct
- [ ] Local phone number that a real person answers
- [ ] Website link with tracking tag
- [ ] Booking / appointment link added
- [ ] Every service added with a short description
- [ ] 750-character description written
- [ ] All true attributes turned on
- [ ] Logo and cover photo uploaded
- [ ] 10+ real photos uploaded
- [ ] Verified

Ongoing

- [ ] Post every week
- [ ] Add photos every week
- [ ] Ask every happy parent for a review
- [ ] Reply to every review
- [ ] Update holiday hours
- [ ] Check for wrong edits every week
- [ ] Keep website FAQs up to date

Common questions

How long until I see results?

Fixes like the right category and more services can help within a few weeks. Reviews and posts build over months.

My profile got suspended. What now?

Don't make a new one. Fix whatever broke the rules (name, address, category), then ask Google to reinstate it with proof like a business license and photos.

Can I have more than one profile?

Only one per real location with staff during business hours.

Want us to do this for you?

JP Marketing helps local businesses show up on Google, Google Maps, and AI search tools like ChatGPT. We build the websites, write the pages, run the ads, and set up the follow-up.

Book a free strategy call at jpmarketing.co. We'll look at your site and your Google profile, and show you the 3 fastest wins for your business.

Rules on Google, Meta, and AI tools change a lot. This guide was last updated November 2026. It is general marketing info, not legal advice.