

POLICIES- Ideas to develop your business

Policies are simply the way you do business. The professional child care provider has policies written in sufficient detail that parents, substitute providers and even children old enough can clearly understand your business philosophy and practices. Your business will operate more smoothly if you and the parents have a mutual understanding of your services and expectations. Policies can be presented in a document similar to a contract or in a booklet form.

Remember to consider not only the needs of your business and the children in care, but also those of your family. Encourage questions on issues parents seem unclear on. Policies can be changed, added or deleted as necessary. Common business etiquette is to give your clients as much notice as possible before any change in the policies or the contract (3-4 weeks).

The following items can be considered when developing policies.

- Hours of operation
- Rates, regular care, drop in care...
- Fees and deposits
- Substitute or backup provider coverage ~ Will you provide a backup or will the parents be responsible for this?
- Immunization requirements ~ Will you or the parents provide the forms?
- Activities ~Do you have a daily schedule and what is it? Are parents asked to bring materials? May the children bring personal items from home?
- Nap & rest times ~ When and how long are the rest times? What are the alternate activities for non-nappers?
- Food ~ Will you or the parents be responsible for meals? Are you on the USDA food program?
- Administering medications ~ For registered providers to administer medications, prescription and over the counter (or even sunscreen application), must have written authority from a parent or doctor, with instructions, dated and signed.
- Appropriate dress ~ What spare clothes will be needed? What is needed for weather conditions and outdoor play?
- Arrivals/Departures ~ Is parking an issue? Will a parent be required to sign the child in and out? Who else is authorized to pick up the child and under what circumstances?
- Field trips ~ What are your typical outings? Will there be a vehicle involved? Who will drive? What type of notice will parents receive?
- Emergency policy ~ You need permission to seek emergency medical care for a child. What forms do you have available for the parents to fill out? Does your local hospital require a special form? Who will be your backup in case you are required to stay with a child needing emergency care?
- Illness policy ~ When are children too sick to come to care? How will children be handled if they become ill during care hours?
- Discipline ~ How will problematic behavior be handled? What rules do you have? What training have you had to help address it?
- Special needs ~ What are the accommodations? Is a doctor's statement needed?
- Admission forms ~ What forms must be filled out and returned before you will allow a child in care? How often will forms be renewed? How are parents to notify you of changes to the enrollment form (address, employer, doctor)?

Use the example policy on the next page to help you develop your own ideas. Use only those portions that apply to your business, and add to as needed. You may choose to have a place for the parent(s) to sign and date a copy to indicate they have received it. If you need more ideas, contact your local resource and referral agency.

Child Care Policy Statement

As a professional child care provider, my goal is to provide your child with a safe, happy “home-away-from-home”, and you with peace of mind. To meet this goal and run my business and home efficiently, I have developed the following policies. Please read them carefully as they apply to every family with a child enrolled with my child care business. If you have any questions or concerns, please bring them to my attention as soon as possible.

Admission: All forms must be completely filled out before a child enters care. Forms are subject to annual renewal but must also be updated should parent information change (such as employer, doctor, address).

Substitute care arrangement: The provider will inform the parents as early as possible if care cannot be provided that day. The provider will inform the parents at least 4 weeks in advance of vacation time. Parents will be responsible for locating back up care.

Drop-offs/departures: Parents must escort children to and from the provider’s home unless arriving from or departing to school. Parents will sign each child in and out. Only persons with prior authorization from the parents will be allowed to pick up any child. There will be a \$5 dollar late fee for every 10 minutes each child is picked up late unless there have been prior arrangements agreed to.

Activities: Parents are asked to send children dressed appropriately for the weather, with the expectation children will have outside playtime almost every day. The regular program includes neighborhood walks. Parents will be asked to fill out a permission form. No vehicle transportation will be involved. Spare clothes will be provided for the younger, all day children in case of accidents.

Emergencies: In the event of a medical emergency, fire, or natural disaster, the provider will take immediate steps to ensure the safety of all children in care. A copy of the disaster preparedness plan will be made available and in the event the home must be evacuated a designated shelter site will be posted on the door. Parents will make every effort to keep the provider informed of their whereabouts.

Meals/snacks: The provider participates with the USDA food program and will not charge for meals/snacks. Children are asked, but not forced to try a variety of foods. Parents are asked to not send candy with their child.

Naps/quiet time: Children will be offered nap time after lunch. Children who do not nap will be offered quiet time with books. Infants nap as needed.

Guidance & discipline: Physical punishment is never used. When children are behaving inappropriately, the provider will redirect them to a more suitable activity. When children are out of control the provider may insist on a “time out”, or cooling off period, but will also do his/her best to get at the root of the problem. The provider may access child development specialists about severe or un-improving situations.

Illness: Per State law providers may not accept a child into care who is vomiting, has diarrhea, a fever of 100 degrees or more, heavy drainage from the eyes, nose or ears, or a contagious disease. If your child develops any of these symptoms while in care, he/she will be separated from the group and a parent will be called to arrange pick up within an hour.

Medications: The provider will not administer any medication or topical substance without signed authorization from the parent. Prescription medications must also include the parent’s and child’s name, name of medication, dosage, times to be administered and doctor’s name & number. All substances must be in an original container.

Communication: Please let me know as soon as you know about changes in your schedule. Please drop off and pick up your child on time. Please let me know if something traumatic has occurred so we can discuss the best plan for your child. Please pay your bill promptly as I have bills as well. If policies need to be changed, parents will be given at least four weeks notice unless there is an issue of immediate health or safety, or is necessary to comply with federal, state or local laws.