



Put it in Writing

Child Care Policies & Handbooks

Handout #8

Healthy Children, Strong Families, Caring Communities

When starting your child care business it's important to decide what type of care you wish to provide and what resources you'll need to support it. Creating a handbook which thoroughly outlines your child care policies and procedures is a valuable tool for you and your clients.

Policies

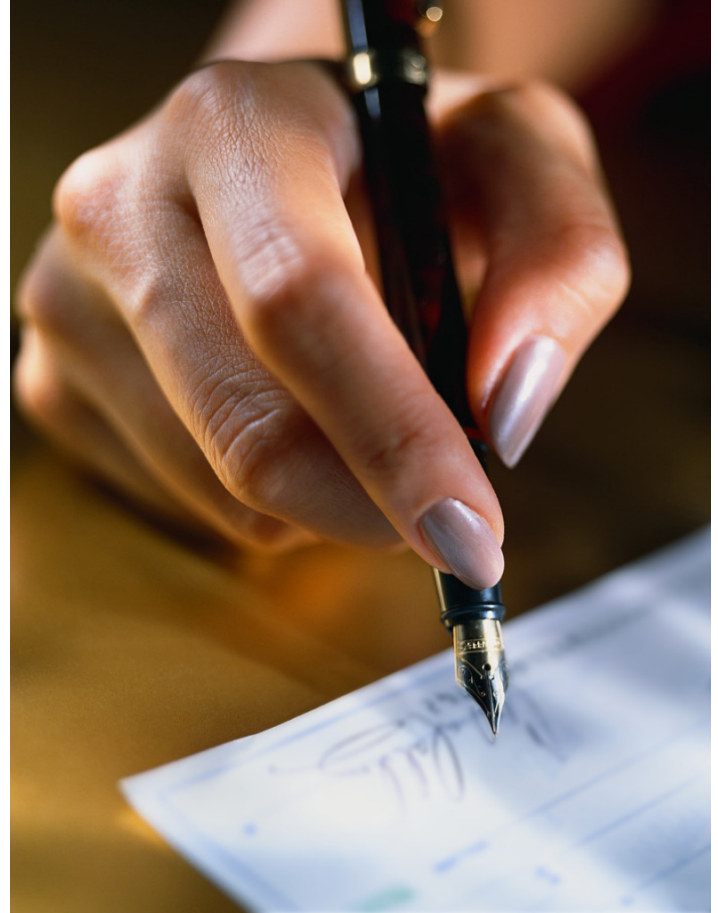
Your child care policies are tools you can use to communicate your needs and expectations to the parents. Here are some policy questions you may want to consider in developing your handbook:

- What is your personal philosophy on caring for children?
- What is your discipline policy?
- How will you handle late payments?
- Will you charge a late fee?
- What are your emergency procedures?
- What are reasons for termination?
- When is a child too sick to attend child care?

Handbooks

Your policy handbook (or parent handbook) is used to help introduce your program and serve as a handy reference tool for both you and the families enrolling into your program. A benefit of a handbook is having all your information in one place at your fingertips. It can be presented in a binder, printed as a booklet or as a packet in a folder.

As with any business, it's important to put everything in writing. After establishing your policies, creating the forms and information your clients need and compiling a handbook, you'll want to find a way to make your policy handbook work for you.



Here are some suggestions on using it with your current and prospective clients:

- Use your handbook as a reference when problems arise. It can be a powerful parent education tool. You can point out issues easily and with minimal confrontation.
- After reviewing your policy handbook with prospective clients, you may want to have them sign a separate statement stating they have read and understand your policy guidelines and provide them with a signed copy. Parents appreciate receiving a copy of any forms, contracts or other agreements you have asked them to sign.

Sample Outline for a Parent Handbook

Program Philosophy

It's a good idea to start your handbook with an outline or statement of the type of care, services and program you provide.

Let parents know why their children will benefit from being in your care and why your program is special or different. Be sure to include your qualifications and why you chose child care as a profession. This is a great place to talk about your personal philosophy about caring for children.

Financial Arrangements

- Monthly/Weekly/Hourly Rates
- Rates for Different Age Groups
- Absences
- Registration Fees
- Vacation and Holiday Policies
- Withdrawal or Termination from Care
- Overtime Charges
- Late Fees
- Types of Payment Accepted (cash, check or money order)
- Returned Check Policy

Health and Safety

- Immunization Requirements
- Illness and/or Injury Policy
- Emergency Procedures
- Emergency Care Information
- Mandated Reporting/
Child Abuse Policy
- Notification of Parents' Rights
- Medication Policy

Authorizations

- Field Trip Authorization
- Authorization to Provide Transportation
- People Authorized to Pick-up Child(ren)
- Authorization to Give Medication