

Many Providers Think They Don't Need a Child Care Contract or Parent Handbook.

They are wrong. If you want parents to see you as a professional and follow your policies and procedures, you must conduct yourself professionally, and YOU must follow the policies and procedures you set. Write them down in a Parent Handbook, explain them to parents upon enrollment and have them sign a contract stating they understand and agree to follow your program's policies. It may also be necessary to remind parents from time to time.

Below are some examples of policies or procedures you may consider for your program:

Hours of operation: Be clear about what your hours are and put them in writing. Do you have a cut-off time for drop off? If so, be sure to state it. If you decide to extend your hours, or offer non-traditional hours for individual families, indicate this in a separate agreement in their individual contract.



Enrollment procedures: What are your enrollment procedures? Do you require parents to visit and or stay with their children in the beginning? What paperwork/documentation do you require before the child starts? Do you have a trial period?

Holidays: What holidays are you closed for? Do you expect to be paid for holidays?

Vacations: Will you close for a vacation? When and for how long? Do you expect to be paid for your vacation time? What about parents vacations? Do you expect to be paid for part/all of the time when the child is not there due to a family's vacation?

Absences: What are your policies around absences? Do you expect to be notified if a child will not be in child care for the day? If so, at what point do you expect to be notified? Do you expect to be paid for absences?

Substitute care arrangements: Be clear with parents that they must have arrangements for substitute care in the event that you are unable to care for their child. The parents, not the provider is responsible for arranging substitute care!

Meals: Will you serve meals or will the parents be responsible for providing them? Do you participate in the child care food program? Serve only organic foods? What if a child has specific dietary needs or has allergies?



Supplies: Are parents responsible for supplying diapers and wipes? Snacks, cleaning or paper supplies? Or do you provide some of things items for a fee?

Rates and payments: Be clear on how much your rates are, and what type of care and hours your rates cover. Be sure to include when and how you expect to be paid.

Illness: When should the parent keep the child home? Do you require a doctor's note in order for a child to return to child care after certain illnesses? What are your policies for administering medication?

Parent Involvement: Do you expect parent participation in the program? Do you want parents to volunteer in the day care? Do you hold individual parent conferences or group meetings? Do you have a newsletter or parent bulletin board?

Discipline: It is very important that you discuss discipline policies with parents, and are in agreement on this issue.

[Policies and Procedures Handout](#)
[Policies and Procedures Handout- Spanish](#)

[Parent Handbook Worksheet](#)
[Parent Handbook Worksheet - Spanish](#)

Child Care Contract and Parent Handbook, What to Include

Sample Handbook Important Note: Please remember that, while it is fine to use the formatting and information in this example, you want to make sure you are inserting your own policies and procedures that are based on your program's philosophies, mission and needs.

Below are some elements you will want to be sure to include in your contract:

Parties Included in the child care contract: Who is the contract between – parent(s)/legal guardians) and provider.

What does the child care contract Cover: Care for whom? Child(ren).



Hours of Care: Usual hours and any additional or different hours for this parent.

Payment for care: How much, when and how. What are the consequences of late payments?

Any Additional Fees: Late fees, early drop off fees, supplies or materials, insurance, field trips, classes...

Holidays: Parents should sign a statement that they understand and agree to your holiday policies and any payment expected for holidays.

Vacations: Parents should sign a statement that they understand and agree to your vacation policy and any payment(s) expected for vacation time(s).

Absences: Parents should sign a statement that they understand and agree to your absence policies and any payments expected for absences.

Additional Requirements: Do you expect parents to provide diapers and wipes, blanket, change of clothes, tissues...?

Illness Policies: Parents should sign a statement in your child care contract indicating that they understand and agree to your illness and health policies and procedures.

Termination of the child care contract: What are causes for termination? What procedures are to be followed, and notices given for termination? What, if any, payment do you expect if notice is not given?

[What to include in your child care contract](#)
[What To Include In Your Contract - Spanish](#)

Sample Child Care Contract

Sample Contract - Spanish Important Note: Please remember that, while it is fine to use the formatting and information in this child care contract example, you want to make sure you are inserting your own policies and procedures that are based on your program's philosophies, mission and needs.

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