

Suggested Operational Forms

DATE:

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Parent Handbook Information

A parent handbook is an important resource for any childcare program to communicate policies and procedures and act as an ongoing reference.

If you own or operate a childcare facility, developing a daycare parent handbook is a must. A clear, useful parent handbook can act as a contract between your business and the families you provide care for.

Your handbook can also serve as a reference guide for parents, ensuring that they are aware of certain policies for payment, holidays, your hours of operation, sick days and much more.

Before a child begins their time at your daycare, you may want to require that parents read through the handbook, sign and date a page for your records, acknowledging that they understand the policies and procedures of your childcare center and agree to follow any rules you have set out.

Not sure what to include in your daycare parent handbook? The following are some of the basics to consider.

Remember your handbook is specific to your program so these are only suggestions and are not required.

Basic Information

A good handbook should start off by listing the essentials about your daycare. The full name, address and your contact information should be easily accessible for parents.

Your Approach to Child Care

The handbook is a great opportunity to express your personal philosophy on early childhood education. Parents will want to understand more about your daycare to determine whether it is a good fit for their child and family. Explain your center's approach to discipline, parent involvement, and define your goals.

Communication

Suggested paragraph below: So, we can provide the best possible care, please feel free to communicate any needs, wants and/or concerns regarding your child. It is only through good parent/provider interaction that good quality nurturing care can be achieved.

Fees and Payment Policies

Clearly outline your rates of pay, and how parents are to pay for their childcare. Set out deadlines as to when payments must be received by, and whether payment is to be made on a weekly, monthly or another basis. Include which forms of payment you are willing to accept, as well as any fees for late payment.

Termination Policy

You may want to add a termination policy that outlines what you will expect if the parent no longer will be bringing their child(ren) to your program or if you will terminate a family from your care.

Hours of Operation

State your hours of operation and any holidays that your facility will be closed for. Be sure to explain your drop off and pick up procedures and if there will be a cut off for drop-offs in the morning. Outline any fees for late pick-ups as well. You may also decide to have a specific time the child will arrive and be picked up and how schedule changes should be handled.

Curriculum & Activities

You may wish to include a sample daily schedule in your daycare parent handbook to give parents an idea of what their child's day to day activities will look like. Include details such as meal and snack times, free play times, scheduled activities and lessons and outdoor play time.

Arrival and Departure

Let parents know the expectations during arrival and departure. What can they bring (security blankets, family pictures, etc.) and what do you want them to leave at home (toys, food, etc.)? You may want to have a separation plan ready for when the child arrives. This is also a place you can document departures, who is able to pick up the child (documented on paperwork). You may want to add to your policy the process of what happens when someone other than the custodial parent(s) picks up the child.

Sign In/Sign Out

Let parents know your policy on signing children in and out upon arrival and departure. This will help you in case of an emergency and when it comes to payments. You may also include this is true for anyone who drops off or picks up the children

Open Door Policy

It is mandatory that you have an open-door policy when children are in care. You may want to come up with a policy that outlines your expectations when parents come to your home un-announced. Examples: child must be in care and times in your program when it is challenging for children to have disruptions such as nap and mealtimes. You may also want to remind the parents that children behave differently when the parents are present so not to expect to see their child engaged like they would if the parent was not there.

Supplies Needed at Daycare

This is where you would list what you will supply for the children and what you expect the parent will provide. This may include diapers, wipes, extra change of clothes, pacifiers, non-prescription ointments and medications like diaper cream, blankets, and sheets to name a few.

Meals/Snacks and Special Diets

Will you provide the meals or will the parents? If you provide the meals which meals, will you provide and at, what time will you provide them. Will you have a cut off time for when you will provide breakfast? If you provide the meals, will you allow the parents to send in food with their child? Will you provide baby food or formula?

If the child requires a special diet due to medical/allergy reasons, will you supply the food or will you expect the parent to provide the food. You will also need to indicate what you will do if the family is vegetarian or vegan or they may not eat a specific item due to religious reasons such as ham.

Sick Policy

What will be your policy if a child becomes sick while in your care or comes in the door and is showing signs of an illness. What are some symptoms a child may exhibit that will warrant they cannot not attend your program (ex: red eye with discharge, fever of 101 and higher, rash, vomiting or Diarrhea)? How long will you give a parent to pick up their child after notification that they are sick and when will they be able to return to care.

Medication

Will you give medications, or will you ask the parents to give the medications at home? If you give medications what will be the procedures, and let parents know that rules and regulations around giving medications. If you do not want to give medications, you may need to consider children who need medication regularly in order to stay healthy such as albuterol for asthma.

Medical and Dental Emergency Procedures

You may want to include the importance of keeping contact information current, and what will you do if a child gets hurt in your care and the importance of having a signed emergency treatment form in the file.

What will your procedures be if you need to call an ambulance for a child? Some suggestions include:

- A phone call to 911 is made.
- Child's parents (or emergency contacts) are called.
- Child is separated from the other children and appropriately cared for.
- Parent, provider, or ambulance takes the child and health records to the doctor or hospital.

Evacuation Procedures

Include written policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies and natural disasters. If there is a need to evacuate what will be the location and the procedures for notifying the parents.

Reporting Child Abuse

Suggested statement to put in handbook: I am required by law to report any suspected incidents of possible child abuse or neglect. Your child can be questioned by child protective services at any time without your consent.

Privacy and Discrimination

You may want to make a statement about how you will keep information and records confidential unless the parent gives you written permission to reveal specific information (i.e. speech or developmental delays). You may also want to put a statement about how you expect your parents to keep your information confidential such as schedules, vacation, layout of your home, etc.

Suggested statement for Discrimination: I do not discriminate based on race, color, gender, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, or public assistance status.

Smoking

Remember that no one is allowed to smoke in your home while children are in care, but you would reveal that you do smoke when children are not in care or that no smoking is allowed on the premises. You will make this specific to your program.

Daycare Holidays/Closures

This is where you will put the holidays you will be closed for the year and any vacations/sick days you may need to take. Another thing you may want to include is any professional development days you may take to keep up your required trainings along with CPR and First Aid Renewal. You should also include if you expect payment for these days. This should be updated yearly.

Toilet Training

This may include who will introduce toilet training first to the child and when the child will be allowed to attend day care in under ware. You may also want to include the increase in communication you will need to maintain during this period.

Behavior Management & Discipline

Make sure you include your philosophy on discipline remembering the rules and regulations that are in place when it comes to discipline. Some examples are included below:

- **Positive Reinforcement:** The child will be encouraged when he or she is demonstrating acceptable behavior.
- **Redirection:** The child is redirected to another activity and given an opportunity to try again at another time.
- **Calming area:** The child is separated from the group in order to self-regulate their emotions and can join the group when ready to play. This technique is only used when a child repeatedly will not follow directions or listen to words, is exhibiting temper tantrum type behavior, or hurting oneself, others or equipment. When the child indicates they are ready to demonstrate acceptable behavior, they can join the rest of the group to try again.
- **Last Resort:** When a child's behavior is continually upsetting or dangerous to others, a conference will be called with the parents.

You may also want to include what the expectation is when you and the parent are present at the same time with the child.

Nap Time

What are the expectations of naptime and the naptime schedule? You will want to include that it is required that children under 1 year of age can only sleep on their backs with no blankets, padding or stuffed animals in the crib/pack in play. What will older children sleep on and who will be responsible for cleaning the children's sheets and blankets.

Contract Adherence

The following statement is a suggestion: This is our home as well as our business, so please be respectful of our family and home by adhering to the policies and procedures outlined in the parent handbook. We realize this is a lot of information to absorb. Because of this, please keep your parent handbook accessible so you can periodically review our policies and procedures, as necessary. We reserve the right to amend any portion of the Parent-Provider Contract/Enrollment Application, and Parent Handbook at any time. When we do make a change to the contract you will be given a copy.

You may want to have parents sign a form saying they read the handbook so when something comes up you can refer to it and remind the parents they read, understood and signed that they will adhere to the information in your handbook

Review contracts and policies with parents annually.

Parent Interview Questions

About the Family and Program

1. **Which days and hours will your child need care?** You wouldn't want to enroll a child that needs care outside your hours of operation!
2. **Will your child be enrolled in our Program during the entire year?** Many families use alternative forms of childcare or take their children on vacation during some parts of the year. Knowing all this in advance will help you plan activities at your Program.
3. **What are your expectations from our childcare home?** This answer will give you a good sense of parents' values and priorities. Are they focused on safety, education, discipline, fun or social experiences? You can use this to highlight the aspects of your Program that matter the most to them.
4. **How long will you need childcare for?** Care needs will vary between families, so don't be surprised if parents are looking for care for anywhere from a few weeks up to several years.
5. **Has your child attended a childcare Program in the past?** How well a child adjusts to daycare can depend on whether they've had social experiences before. Plus, this will give you an idea of the parents' history with other Programs and if they generally have good relationships with their childcare providers.
6. **What did you like or dislike about a previous childcare experience?** Parents' expectations may be formed by their — or their child's — experiences with daycare. Understanding where they're coming from will help you prepare to meet those expectations and stay on the same page.
7. **How would you describe your parenting style?** Every parent approaches things a little differently. Some are more permissive, others more structured. This will give you a good sense of what to expect when you send home communications.
8. **Do you have any concerns or questions for me?** Parents usually won't hesitate to ask, but actively opening the floor to discussion is an important sign that you welcome feedback and are confident you'll live up to their standards.

Understanding Family Schedules & Child Care Logistics

1. **Are the child's parents together? If not, how does the custody agreement work?** Although it may seem sensitive, this question is crucial for arranging seamless, secure pickups and drop offs. It can also help in determining account set-up (many separated/divorced parents prefer their own account for tuition payments).
2. **What do you do for a living?** This gives you an important look into parents' context and schedule.
3. **What are your work schedules like? Are they stable and predictable or variable?** A stable schedule may be easier to accommodate, but in today's world, work schedules are increasingly complex and irregular. Be prepared for parents who can't be available at the same times every day.
4. **Who else should be allowed to pick up your child from our Program?** To ensure the safety of the child, it's important that you always know in advance if someone else is expected to pick up the child, especially if they may do so regularly. You'll avoid hassle and extra phone calls by asking ahead of time.
5. **What communication channels do you prefer?** Some parents are difficult to reach by phone, but answer emails instantly. Others hate the waiting game of sending emails back and forth.
6. **What is the best way to reach you in an emergency situation?** An emergency contact channel where the parent can always be reached immediately — and a backup contact in case they can't — is an important thing to keep on file for every child.

Questions about the Needs of the Child

1. **Tell me about your child's personality. What are they like?** When kids are young, parents are the ones who know them best. Asking for the parents' perspective on their personality is an important first step in getting to know the kids in your care and will help you prepare for their joining your Program. Showing interest in the child as a person will also reassure parents that their child will be treated as an individual.
2. **Tell me about your child's interests. What gets them excited?** Introducing a child to a new environment can sometimes be tough, so you can make it easier on yourself by knowing the child's likes and dislikes. Letting the child talk to the class about a favorite subject, play a favorite game, or connect with another child who likes the same things will help with a smooth transition. Plus, targeting your learning to kids' interests will help make sure each child gets the most out of their education.
3. **Tell me about your child's dietary preferences. What is their favorite food?** Kids can be picky eaters, so being prepared for each child's preferences will avoid headaches and reduce stress at mealtimes.
4. **Does your child have any allergies?** Allergen-proofing your Program can be challenging, so make sure you understand what types of exposure can cause a reaction and what precautions you'll need to take to prevent one — as well as what steps you should take if a reaction does occur.
5. **Tell me about your child's learning needs. What areas can we help with?** The ability to tailor your childcare curriculum to different learning styles is a definite selling point for your Program. Knowing a child's strengths and weaknesses is the beginning of an education plan that helps them reach their full potential.
6. **Tell me about your child's medical needs. Are there any health issues I should know about?** Most young kids won't have any medical needs, but you'll need to be prepared just in case. Hearing all the details will help you make a careful decision about whether your Program can effectively serve the child's medical needs, and if so, what you'll need to do to keep them safe and provide equal opportunities.
7. **Tell me about your child's immunization history. Have they had their vaccines?** For everyone's safety, this is an important subject to clarify well ahead of time. It is required kids in childcare to have up-to-date vaccinations in New Jersey.
8. **Tell me about your child's sleep patterns. Do they have a regular nap time?** If so, it'll be easier to help them adjust to your Programs nap schedule.
9. **Does your child normally sleep through the night?** Kids who have sleep issues often have behavioral issues as well, so understanding the child's sleep habits will help you be prepared to deal with the crankiness that may result from an under-rested child.
10. **Tell me about your child's behavior. Are there any issues we should be aware of?** It's a delicate subject, but you don't want to be blindsided by problems later down the line. Most parents are honest about their child's behavior because they want the best for their child. Having a frank, non-judgmental discussion with parents about behavior sets you up to maintain a harmonious environment where every child can grow.
11. **How do you like to handle discipline at home?** Knowing how parents treat discipline can hint at how the child will react to rules and discipline while in daycare. A child who knows that behavior has consequences may have an easier time getting used to socializing in childcare.

Family Child Care Gram



Name: _____

Date: _____

Today I Liked....

I ate:

all most some none ... of my breakfast
all most some none ... of my a.m. snack
all most some none ... of my lunch
all most some none ... of my p.m. snack

Rest time:

Slept - I was quiet - I did not feel like resting
from _____ to _____
from _____ to _____

Diapers/Toileting:

Bottles:

Dry: _____

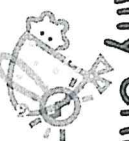
Wet: _____

BM: _____

Please send: _____

Other notes: _____

Family Child Care Gram



Name: _____

Date: _____

Today I Liked....

I ate:

all most some none ... of my breakfast
all most some none ... of my a.m. snack
all most some none ... of my lunch
all most some none ... of my p.m. snack

Rest time:

Slept - I was quiet - I did not feel like resting
from _____ to _____
from _____ to _____

Diapers/Toileting:

Bottles:

Dry: _____

Wet: _____

BM: _____

Please send: _____

Other notes: _____

How to Apply for an EIN

(Employer Identification Number)

Apply Online

The Internet EIN application [www.irs.gov] is the preferred method for customers to apply for and obtain an EIN. Once the application is completed, the information is validated during the online session, and an EIN is issued immediately. The online application process is available for all entities whose principal business, office or agency, or legal residence (in the case of an individual), is located in the United States or U.S. Territories. The principal officer, general partner, grantor, owner, trustor etc. must have a valid Taxpayer Identification Number (Social Security Number, Employer Identification Number, or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) in order to use the online application.

OR

Apply By EIN Toll-Free Telephone Service

Taxpayers can obtain an EIN immediately by calling the **Business & Specialty Tax Line at (800) 829-4933.**

The hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. local time, Monday through Friday. An assistor takes the information, assigns the EIN, and provides the number to an authorized individual over the telephone.