



## PARENT HANDBOOK GUIDANCE

A Parent Handbook sets out the policies and procedures for the operation of a licensed child care facility. The Parent Handbook assists parents to understand the child care service, and serves to guide expectations for both the parent and the child care provider. The policies and procedures in the Parent Handbook establish how the child care service may be used. Some policies and procedures are developed as requirements of child care regulations. Other policies and procedures may be developed that are unique to the operation of the child care facility. A Parent Handbook is written to describe your program, philosophy, policies, and all the practical details that go into making each day as happy and successful as possible. The Parent Handbook ensures that providers have policies and procedures that are clear and consistent, and also ensures that families are aware of all expectations.

### Things you may want to include in your parent handbook:

- Philosophy
- Communication
- Child's Records
- Mandated Reporter
- Discipline Policy
- Policy on inclusion of children with special needs and nondiscrimination
- Hours, Vacation, Professional Development Days
- Emergency and Unusual Occurrences Procedures; Substitutions Policy
- Holiday, Birthday and Celebrations
- Authorized Pick-up and Drop-off
- Transportation
- Fees & Payment
- Termination
- Changes to Policies
- Supplies and Personal Belongings
- Illness and Medication Administration
- Activity/Curriculum
- Schedule
- Meals
- Nap/Rest Time
- Dress Code



# PARENT HANDBOOK

## Philosophy

- How would you incorporate Developmentally Appropriate Practices into your program?
- What are your thoughts on the inclusion of diversity/disabilities/conflict management?
- What is your role as a child care provider?
- What is the child's role as a learner?
- What partnership roles do parents and provider play?
- What (if any) type of curriculum do you plan to use? (goals/objectives/assessment and application of learning/etc.)

## Communication

- How do you teach/maintain/nurture relationships with parents?
- What is your preferred method of communication during the day or at night?
- Will you have an open door policy, where parents can stop by at any time?

## Child Records

- Take information right from the Kansas regulation book (list of documents that are required).
- Majority of the required forms must be updated yearly.
- Will you accept a doctor's appointment slip telling you they will get their shots/physical to accept into care?

## Mandated Reporter

- Explain to parents that you are a mandated reporter, what that means, what you are required to do, and who you report to.
- Parents have the same right to report as you do.

## Discipline Policy

- Review DCF Policy Statement on Discipline  
<http://content.dcf.ks.gov/ees/KEESM/Appendix/ES1655Final.pdf>
- How will you incorporate positive guidance strategies (what they are, why you use them)?



- Emphasize that no harsh, humiliating, or frightening verbal discipline or physical punishment in any form will be used with any child, even at the request of parents (how would you communicate this with parents?).
- Explain options for working with parents and outside agencies to help children with identified challenging behaviors (e.g., screening, meeting with parents, addressing identified needs with individual strategies, monitoring progress, collaborating with parents to determine when referral for additional assistance is indicated, supporting access to appropriate child and family services).
- Explain to parents what happens at child care should be handled at child care, children should not be punished at home for something that happened at child care.
- Include your supervision policy to explain how you plan to watch children at all times.

## Hours & Vacation time

- Do you provide part time/full time/nights & weekends/extended care?
- What are your thoughts on holidays/federal/3-day weekends?
- Do you build in your vacation time to the contract each year?
- Do you find back up care or are parents responsible?
- Do they get a reduction in fees during this time?
- How do you notify parents of this time? Built into contract?
- Vacation for kids/families.
- Do parents have to provide notice?
- Do parents get a reduction in fees?

## Emergency/Unusual Occurrences Procedures

- What do Kansas regulations state as requirements – flood plan, fire, tornado, supervision, bomb threat, hazardous materials?
- Where will your emergency meet-up place be?
- How will you inform parents of emergencies?
- How will you inform parents of an unusual occurrence involving their child?
- What if you need to take a child to the ER? Will you ride in the ambulance? Take them?

## Holidays & Birthdays & Celebrations

- What holidays do you observe as a provider/program?
- How will you deal with families that don't observe those holidays or don't want their child to be part of that celebration?



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- Will holidays be observed in an educational way, or just with decoration, etc.?
- How will you handle outside-of-child care party invitations?
- What can parents bring in for celebrations – outside food, candy, high allergy foods?

## Authorized Pick-up and Drop-off

- Children will only be released to persons on approved pick up list.
- You must show ID to pick up.
- How will you handle legal/custodial issues?
- Who will you call/what will you do if an unauthorized person tries to pick a child up?
- Will you require authorized picked up person to have a car seat?
- Will you release to adult that appears to be intoxicated or disoriented?
- How will you handle late pickup?

## Transportation

- Do you provide transportation?
- Do you transport before/after school or to activities?
- Do you provide the car seat, or do parents?

## Fees and Payment

- Explain how vacation time works?
- Will you have different rates for part-time/full-time/nights and weekends/extended care? Children of different ages? Multiple children in one family?
- What will be your preferred method of payment?
- When do you expect payment from parents?
- How will you handle late payments?
- Will you charge for extended leaves? Example: over the summer while a teacher is off work, or while a family is on maternity leave, or vacation?

## Termination

- Are parents required to give a two-week notice?
- Will refund of payment be given if they don't give two weeks because of extenuating circumstances?
- Review DCF Provider Handbook (2014) sample contract language regarding termination at <http://content.dcf.ks.gov/ees/KEESM/Appendix/ES1655Final.pdf>



- What circumstances could lead you to suspend or terminate a child (e.g., nonpayment, concern for child safety)? How much notice would you provide and how would you assist families in finding more appropriate child care if necessary? As you develop your policy on termination, refer to guidance in *Caring for our children* published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, Nation Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. CFOC Standards Online Database. Aurora, CO; National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education; 2019. <https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/2.2.0.8> Accessed January 2019.
- Review NAEYC's (2016) statement: "Standing together against suspension and expulsion in early childhood" and find helpful resources available from <https://www.nhsa.org/files/resources/standing-together-resources.pdf>

## Changes to Policies

- How often will you update/change/review your policies?
- How will you let parents know?
- Will you have them sign off on changes?

## Supplies & Personal Belongings

- What does each child need for the day (clothes, diapers, etc.)?
- Will you make bottles for parents if they bring their own supplies?
- Will you clean and reuse bottles?
- How will you handle soiled clothing?
- Things need to be clearly marked with the child's name.
- Will each child have a defined and/or, separate space for their personal items?
- Will you allow toys from home? If so, are there any toys not allowed (e.g., weapons, breakables, choking hazards)
- Within parameters of safe sleep practices for infants, are parents allowed/required to bring items like nap time blanket, pillow and/or special stuffed animal or will you provide the items?

## Illness & Medication Administration

- Defined criteria for exclusion and readmission for at least the following: fever, vomiting & diarrhea, rash of unknown origin, failure to participate, contagious illness, lice.
- If you have a sick child, how long does the parent have to come pick them up?
- Will you give parents a handout with the state regulations for illnesses?
- Will you administer meds prescribed by a doctor?
- Will you administer OTC meds given to you by parents?



- Does the child have to be on meds for a certain time period before they are allowed back into care?
- Do parents have to stay with child for certain period of time after they administer a med in your care?
- Do you have an isolation area?

## Activity/Curriculum

- What is your philosophy of how infants and young children learn? How will you describe the importance of play in developing skills of investigation, friendship, and self-regulation?
- How will you make parents aware of your daily schedule of routines and activities?
- Describe the materials and other sources you will use to plan and develop your environment/activities/curriculum?
- How and when will parents have access to the observations, assessments, and plans?
- How and when will you observe assess and plan for the participation/progress of individual children?

## Schedule

- How will you communicate to parents that infants are on-demand eaters/sleepers and should not be put on a schedule?
- How will you educate parents that a daily schedule should be predictable, yet flexible?
- How will you teach children the schedule and make them a part of it each day? Move from one activity to another? Will you provide transition cues, such as a timer or verbal warning?
- Are you providing baby food/formula? If parents bring their own will they receive a reduction in fees?
  
- Will you use CACFP, how will you educate parents about the program?
- How will you honor special diet restrictions? Will you require doctor's note?
- How will you handle allergies, and where will you display the list so all staff are aware of allergies? Do you require a doctor's note?

## Meals

- How will children know when it's time to move
- Are you providing baby food/formula? If parents bring their own will they receive a reduction in fees?



- Will you use CACFP, how will you educate parents about that program?
- Special diet restrictions how will you honor them? Will you require doctor's note?
- How will you handle allergies, and where will you display the list so all staff are aware of the allergies? Do you require a doctor's note?
- How will you educate parents about children not being required to come to the table, being served but not being required to eat?

## **Nap/Rest Time**

- Can children bring their own items to use at nap time?
- Children have to be within your sight and sound at all times during nap?
- Explain that infants sleep when they want.
- Explain that flexible schedule will be used for kids over 12-18 months.
- How will you educate parents that children are not required to sleep but encouraged to rest their bodies?

## **Dress Code**

- Will you have a dress code?
- Will open-toed shoes or closed-toed shoes?
- Do infants have to wear shoes?