



on your own. but not alone.

Town Square Tip Sheet: Top Five Things to Include in Your Contract

Providers sent Town Square the top five things that should be included in your contract:

#1. Paid days off such as holidays, sick days, professional development days, vacation days...

Ideally, included in your contract would be a calendar that includes the schedule for the year with designated days that the program will be closed, and including days that are reserved for professional development activities and provider vacation days. In addition, a statement that the program may be closed if the provider is sick and a substitute is not available.

#2. An airtight illness policy...

Ideally a statement that if children are sick they cannot attend the program, with "sick" being defined as "no incidence of vomiting, fever, or diarrhea in the last 24 hours". The policy might include 3-5 examples and how the illness policy applies. For example: "My child was vomiting all evening, but woke up perfectly normal and is ready to be there this morning" or "I gave them some Tylenol this morning, so they are fever-free and feeling much better" with indications that under the illness policy for the program the child cannot attend. An explanation that the policy is for the health and safety of ALL of the children in the program and the adults who care for them, so just as you would like to protect your child and family from illness, so do other parents.

#3. How dirty diapers and soiled clothing will be handled...

Ideally, if a child has a soiled diaper either at drop off or after a parent arrives to pick up, the parent would change their child's diaper. If a child has soiled clothing because of an accident or messy play during the day, the clothes will be put into a plastic bag for the parent to launder or dispose of at home as they decide. These policies allow the adults in the program to focus more time and energy interacting with and caring for the children during program hours.

#4. Late pick up policy...

Ideally, if a parent is late, a fee will be charged. Some policies state \$1 per minute past the program end time up to 10 minutes, and then at 10 minutes past it is a \$20 late fee with additional \$10 for every 5 minutes beyond that. Your policy needs to be something that you are comfortable with enforcing, but if it is very clearly stated and followed through upon, late pick ups will occur less frequently. This is a policy that is about respecting the provider's personal time and family time.

#5. Use your state licensing standards to back you up...

Ideally, when you have a policy that is important in your contract, add the state licensing standard next to it in parentheses... "I feel like it makes me look more professional, it gives backbone to what I'm trying to say, and it's easier to enforce" says family child care professional Diann Gano from Rock Island, Illinois.

Thank you to the family child care professionals who shared their ideas with us!

Erikson Institute