

PARENT CONTRACTS FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES

CONTRATOS PRINCIPALES PARA ESTABLECIMIENTOS DE CUIDADO PARA NIÑOS

CRC BULLETIN #409

Communication is so important in any relationship. Having policies and agreements in writing helps to prevent misunderstandings between providers and parents. It's so easy to forget the details of an oral agreement after time has elapsed.

A contract is simply an agreement between a parent and provider where each is required to do certain things. It is a serious agreement, however, because once both parties sign a contract, it is legally binding. Contracts ensure that each parent receives the same information and has been told the same thing about a provider's policies and guidelines. This way, policies are consistent for all parents in the facility and expectations are clear.

The parent receives a copy of the contract and the provider keeps the original in the child's file folder. If a question arises, the parent and provider can always check the contract again together.

Some contracts are quite elaborate and lengthy. Others are short, concise and to the point. The main thing to remember is that a contract should be easy to read and understand. It should also be neat, clean and preferably typed. The contract should cover issues such as:

- Is there a two-week or thirty-day trial period?
- Is a deposit or registration fee required?
- What documentation is required regarding child's immunizations?
- How much does child care cost and when is payment due?
- Does the parent pay for holidays, provider's vacation, child's vacation and other absences?
- Will provider charge extra if parent picks child up late?
- What happens if the provider is sick or has a personal emergency?
- What happens if child is sick?
- What are the policies about giving medication?
- Who has the authority to pick up the child?
- What does parent need to bring for the child? Food, clothing, blankets for nap etc.?
- What are the grounds, notice and payment requirements for ending the child care arrangement?*

**This last issue is one that causes much disagreement and hard feelings between providers and parents, and can even be the subject of complaint calls to Community Care Licensing. Therefore, policies regarding this particular issue should be thought out carefully and spelled out clearly in a contract.*

Contracts make policies and agreements clear to both parties from the beginning, even before child care starts. They serve as a way to give and receive information and open channels of communication and keep them open. Remember – communication is prevention and can often solve problems before they come up.

NOTE: CRC has sample copies of Child Care Facility business contracts. Please feel free to come in or call for help with your contract.

“The mission of Community Resources for Children is to provide resources for the early care and education of children in Napa County”