



EARLY CARE & EDUCATION LAW PROJECT

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RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL CHILD CARE BUSINESS: PRACTICE GOOD COMMUNITY RELATIONS

As a child care provider, you are not only a business person but you are a key member of the community in which you work and live. This means that you must have a good working relationship with parents, neighbors, landlords and licensing personnel. In fact, most problems involving the law can be avoided by simply maintaining good relationships with other members of the community.

Because you will be interacting on a daily basis with people in the community, practicing the following suggestions may help you avoid potential legal problems.

This handout provides basic information about community relations and is not intended to provide legal advice.

PARENTS

MAINTAIN AN OPEN LINE OF COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS AT ALL TIMES

- Before enrollment, explain in detail the type of child care program you operate including information about your philosophy, schedule, etc.
- Encourage parents to share their parenting views.
- Before enrollment, discuss each provision of your parent/provider contract.
- Keep the original signed copy of the contract, and give the parent(s) a copy.
- Maintain a daily log and discuss relevant incidents with parent(s).
- Inform parent(s) of your open door policy and encourage them to visit your program.
- Schedule periodic conferences to review terms of the agreement.

MAINTAIN A FILE FOR EACH CHILD/FAMILY IN YOUR PROGRAM

- Parent information including custody and restraining orders.
- Emergency contacts and authorized pick up list.
- Emergency cards for field trips.
- Medical information including immunization records.
- Parent/Provider contract and program policies.
- Attendance and payment records.
- Open door policy notice form signed by parents.

- Documentation of all unusual incidents as well as a daily log.

NEIGHBORS

BE CONSIDERATE OF YOUR NEIGHBORS AT ALL TIMES

- Urge parent(s) to keep noise levels to a minimum during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Urge parent(s) to refrain from parking in other neighbors' spaces, blocking driveways, or leaving car engines running.
- Keep common areas free of toys.
- Be considerate of neighbors when scheduling outdoor play time.
- If appropriate, notify neighbors of your licensed family child care program.

LANDLORDS

EDUCATE YOUR LANDLORD ABOUT YOUR LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAM

- Notify your landlord in writing of your family child care business (see licensing form).
- Explain to your landlord the difference between child care centers and family child care homes.
- Inform your landlord that drop-off and pick-up times are staggered.
- Explain to your landlord that it is in your best interest to be a good tenant because you want to provide a stable environment for the children and licensing regulations require you to maintain the premises in a safe and healthy condition at all times.

LICENSING

GET TO KNOW THE LICENSING PROGRAM ANALYST (LPA) ASSIGNED TO YOU

- Use your LPA as a resource if you have any licensing questions.
- Feel free to discuss the contents of your file with your LPA.
- Be courteous and honest during a home visit by your LPA.
- Contact your LPA to get a copy of the most recent regulations at least 2 times per year.
- Discuss new changes in the law that affect your program with your LPA.
- Notify your LPA of any unusual incident such as a serious injury to a child.

MAINTAIN FILES ON LICENSING RELATED MATTERS, SUCH AS:

- Title 22 licensing regulations and updates.
- Criminal record clearances for every adult (18 and older) residing in the home and any individual with frequent and continuous contact with children in your care.
- Adult/Pediatrics first aid and CPR certificates and TB test results.
- Insurance policy, bond or parent affidavits.
- Proof of landlord notification.
- Proof of landlord consent, if applicable.
- Licensing reports related to applications, visits or complaint investigations.

- Emergency disaster plans.

EMPLOYEES

MAINTAIN FILES ON YOUR EMPLOYEES

- Employment records including hire date, job description, salary, INS forms, etc.
- Criminal records clearances, Child Abuse Index and TB test results.
- Adult/Pediatrics first aid and CPR training certificates.
- Proof of Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) training for employees, if applicable.
- Performance evaluations.
- Notice of Employee Rights form signed by employee.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **California Early Childhood Mentor Program:** provides resources and support to aspiring and experienced teachers and administrators in programs serving children birth to five and before- and after-school programs. For more information visit <http://www.ecementor.org/>.
- **Center for Excellence in Child Development:** delivers university-based continuing education to licensed and license-exempt providers. Offered statewide, this series of classes helps providers improve their knowledge, skills and quality of care. For more information, visit <http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/Childdev/familychildcare.asp>.
- **The Child Care Training Project:** provides training and quality improvement services to child care providers throughout the state. The Project provides a series of workshops, which emphasize the needs of children from birth to age three. The workshop curriculum covers numerous topics, including the following: Managing Difficult Behavior (ways to work effectively with both children and parents); Partnering with Parents (ways to work in partnership with parents and 'stay on the same side'); Tools and Tips for Improving Your Business. For more information, contact Diane Harkins, Program Director, or Janna McKay, Program Representative at (530) 757-8643, or visit <http://www.cld.ca.gov/PG512.htm>.

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