



Health and Safety Policies

Health policies are important because they provide specific guidelines to promote health and safety in child care programs. Policies should include specific guidelines required by licensing or regulations, best practices and information specific to your setting. All policies need to be discussed with parents when they enroll their child and with staff as part of their orientation.

Which Written Policies Are Recommended?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that you establish written policies about the following topics. Some of these policies will be described later in this section.

1. Health History and Immunizations for Children in Child Care
2. Health History and Immunizations for Providers of Child Care
3. Exclusion for Illness
4. Reporting Requirements
5. Emergency Illness or Injury Procedures
6. Children with Special Needs
7. Medication Administration
8. Nutrition/Foods Brought from Home
9. No Smoking or Use of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs

Other Topics to Include in Your Policies

- Injury Prevention
- Managing Injuries and First Aid
- Emergency Preparedness
- Child Abuse/Neglect
- Transportation
- Infant Sleep Position
- Dental Health

Please see Appendix B for a complete list of model policies. Some policies are not needed in a family child care home setting where fewer children are in care. An electronic copy of the text is available from the ECELS page of the Pennsylvania Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics at www.paaap.org/ecels/model.htm. You may use this version to develop your facility's specific policies.

In developing policies, you should make sure that you:

- Have the equipment, supplies and staff necessary to make the policies work.
- Organize the child care program to support the policies.
- Use proper procedures to support the policies.
- Keep lines of communication open with everyone involved: staff members, parents and children. Assure that all staff, parents and others are educated regarding the policies.
- Have a list of resources to assist families and staff in meeting your policies.

In developing your policies always ask:

- What should be done?
- Why should it be done?
- Who is responsible?
- When will it be done?
- How will it be done?
- How will it be communicated, enforced and monitored?

To prevent the spread of contagious diseases, recommended policies and procedures need to be followed at all times because:

- People can spread an infection to others before showing any symptoms of illness.
- People can carry and spread germs without ever getting sick themselves.
- In a child care setting where people from different families spend many hours together in close physical contact, germs are spread more easily.

Clearly Define the Roles of Caregivers

The qualifications and requirements for each of these roles are defined by the child care license. Centers which receive subsidies from the Department of Education may have different requirements and centers, infant programs, school age, large and small family child care programs each have different requirements for each role.

1. ***The Director or Administrator.*** In large child care facilities the administrator is responsible for overseeing all health services, policies, and procedures in the program.
2. ***Teaching Staff and Licensed Child Care Provider***
3. ***Other Staff and Family Members.*** These include food handlers, janitorial staff, maintenance workers, etc.
4. ***The Child Care Health Consultant.*** Whenever possible, each child care setting should have access to a child care health consultant. Ask your Health Consultant to assist in developing health policies, approve them, and link you with community health resources.
5. ***Parents***



Sample Illness Policy

Policy: Children who are mildly ill but do not qualify for exclusion will be accepted for care in the regular program. Children who become ill with excludable symptoms while at the child care program will be cared for away from the group until the child is picked up by an authorized adult. Specialized care plans will be followed.

Purpose: To insure every child a healthy, safe and supportive experience.
To protect the health of everyone in the group.
To assist program staff in meeting all children's needs.
To protect the rights of the family and child.

Procedure:

1. Understand the reason for excluding a child.

- a. The illness prevents the child from comfortably participating in daily activities.
- b. The illness requires more care than the child care staff are able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- c. The symptoms or illnesses are any of those specified on the Inclusion/Exclusion Guidelines.

2. Conditions for which you would not automatically exclude a child.

- a. Certain conditions, in the absence of symptoms listed on Inclusion/Exclusion Guidelines, do not require exclusion unless recommended by the child's health care provider or if symptoms appear.
- b. CMV or HIV infection or hepatitis B and C virus carrier state.
- c. Pink eye without yellow/green drainage.
- d. Rash without temperature or behavior changes.
- e. Non-contagious conditions such as chronic medical conditions or disabilities.
- f. Runny nose if the child is feeling well.

The final decision to exclude a child from care is made by the staff of the child care program.