

Communicating with Your Child Care Provider

Child care has become a necessary part of life in our society. More and more working parents depend on child care programs to provide a safe place for their children while they are at work or attending school.

Quality child care is more than baby sitting

Child care can make a major difference in children's development. A quality child care program can provide a warm, caring, age-appropriate, stimulating and safe environment, and help children to learn social skills and get the early childhood education they need to be ready for kindergarten and school.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) suggests that a "high quality early childhood program provides a safe, nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families."

Good communication is a key component

A positive relationship between you and your child care provider and the provider and your child is essential to providing quality care.

Just as child care providers have an obligation to report when children in their care are exposed to a contagious disease, you as a parent have the same obligation to report diseases to the child care program, even if you keep your child at home. That way, the child care provider can alert other parents in care to watch for signs of that illness in their child and seek medical advice when necessary. Several childhood diseases such as chickenpox, cytomegalovirus (CMV) and Fifth Disease can also harm an unborn child, if a pregnant woman is exposed to these diseases for the first time.

Your child care provider is your partner

Your child is continuously learning new skills both at home

and child care. And your child care provider is your partner in your child's happy and healthy development. Personal contact on a daily basis is essential to ensure the transfer of information required to meet the child's needs. Talk with your provider about your child's development and behavior, and any concerns either of you have.

Some of the areas you may discuss with your provider

- When enrolling your child, ask about the physical structure, policies and procedures of the child care facility, and discuss your expectations and what they can expect from you.
- Review your child's current health records and health history with the child care provider to ensure correct information. This will help meet your child's health and social-emotional needs and assist him or her in progressing in the child care setting. The health history ensures that all information needed to care for the child is available.
- When your child has a contagious illness, you may need to take special measures so that the sickness does not spread to others. Some diseases or conditions must be reported to the local health department, child care licensing and others. Other parents also need to be informed that their child was exposed. Ask which conditions may cause your child to be excluded from child care.
- Talk about taking care of sick children and medication administration during child care hours.
- Share any behavior changes you notice and any concerns or questions you have. Keep providers informed about unusual things in your child's life such as sleep problems or family illness.
- If you need community resources, ask your child care program if they can provide information on topics such as low-cost health insurance for children.

You and your child care provider need to be aware and respectful of each other's beliefs, values and knowledge about how to deal with children. You both want what is best for your child. If you are in disagreement about what's best, take a step back and evaluate what it's really about. Call the Child Care Healthline at (800) 333-3212 for information.

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For more information, please contact:
Healthline 1-800-333-3212

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