



# Tips for Tots



Tip #3:

## Maintain Clear Business Expectations

### Strategies

Did you know?

While family daycares provide an atmosphere that is more personal or family-like, it can be challenging for providers to balance this with the business side of their childcare. Providers often struggle with maintaining strong relationships with parents while at the same time setting the limits important to managing their business effectively. To help highlight the business side of the day care, providers may consider giving parents clear written guidelines regarding expectations & consequences. If a parent struggles to follow through with the guidelines, having a standard response will help the provider address it consistently. Items to be addressed could include: drop off and pick up; payment; discipline; illnesses; and other areas that may need firm guidance. Parents will be less likely to overstep boundaries if they also view the provider as a professional running a business service.

When the guidelines are specified in advance, it will help define requirements for the parent, decreasing miscommunication and conflict. Frequent, clear, and open communication will help build the parent/caregiver relationship and can support the child's success in the day care. Additionally, when working with close friends or your own family members, these clearly stated expectations and consequences will help to increase your sense of professionalism and respect.

- A **Contract for Services** is a helpful tool that outlines the role and responsibilities of the family daycare provider and of the parent. Contracts can include such things as, hours of operation, days of operation (holiday, vacation or sick closures), payment fees/schedules, what the parent is expected to bring with the child (diapers, lunch, etc.), and what the provider will provide (breakfast, activities, etc.). The provider and each parent would sign the contract when the child is enrolled.
- A **Parent Handbook** could be developed to include policies and procedures that address more fully, the items outlined in the contract and consequences for items that are not followed through with, such as missed payments or late 'pick ups'. A hand book that is written in simple, clear language and includes your policies will help parents know what to expect and will support you in setting appropriate boundaries. Have parents read and sign that they understand prior to the child's enrollment.
- Provide parents with a service receipt that clearly indicates the amount due, the amount received and any outstanding balance. Keeping good track of your billing and 'payments made' will help you to be organized and manage any potential issues with ease.
- It is useful for family daycare providers to have weekly or monthly newsletters for parents. This can be an email or paper hung where the families can see it at drop off or pick up. This offers an opportunity to remind parents of upcoming events, closures and policies.
- Treat all children and their parents with respect. Keep any conversations about personal issues of parents and or their children private.
- When your own family and friends are also your customers, maintaining appropriate boundaries around conversations and behaving professionally, both inside and outside the family daycare environment will help to ensure comfort of everyone.

Resources:

<http://www.childcarelounge.com>  
<http://www.bananasinc.org/>  
<http://www.ct.gov/dph/site/default.asp>

Contact your area ECCP Consultant for free Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services.

To learn of the consultant in your area please visit [www.eccpct.com](http://www.eccpct.com) or call ECCP at (860) 704-6378

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