

Building & Maintaining a Positive Relationship With Your Child Care Provider

Your work isn't over just because you've found the appropriate childcare setting for your child. Once you have enrolled your child in a childcare program, you will want to make sure that it will be a positive and rewarding experience for everyone involved. An effective childcare partnership benefits the parent, the childcare provider, and the child. Your child's providers are counting on you to keep up your end of the bargain; they keep your child smiling, safe, healthy, and happy while you're at work, and you agree not to take advantage of them. Through good communication and by working together, you and your child's provider can help to ensure that your child receives the best start to his or her life. There are several steps you can take, as a parent, to build a successful partnership with your child's provider. You can show appreciation for your childcare provider, their home, and their business by being thoughtful and considerate in the following ways.

- **Be sure you read and understand the childcare programs policies/procedures and requirements before you enroll your child.** These rules are put in place to help all involved succeed. Do your best to abide by the policies and procedures to which you have agreed.
- **Turn in all necessary paperwork.** Even before your child attends his first day of child care you'll need to submit a number of documents, such as immunization records and medical health release forms. State law mandates that all child care programs comply with this law, so help your childcare provider out and hand in forms on time. During the duration of the program, you'll need to sign permission slips authorizing providers to give your child medications, such as antibiotics for an ear infection, etc. Sign these right away and turn them in.
- **Let your provider know as much as possible about your child.** They need to know what words your child uses to ask for things, their nap, eating, and toilet habits, their likes and dislikes, and any information about their general development. A quality provider will take your child's unique characteristics into consideration as they care for him or her.
- **Develop a rapport.** This starts with a very simple but genuine, "Good morning. How was your weekend? Your new haircut is adorable." Yes, technically you're a client paying for a service, but childcare is much more than a business relationship. You want all the pleasantries that should come along with someone watching your child; the stuff money can't buy. Frequent, informal communication between you and your child's provider are an important part of building a good relationship. Taking a few moments to talk briefly with your child's provider when you drop-off and pick-up your child, can keep the lines of communication open and can make sharing information about your child a matter of routine. Should concerns arise; a good relationship can make it easier to arrive at a solution.
- **Bring up any problems or concerns immediately with the childcare provider.** Handling problems with a childcare provider; whether in daycare, your home or elsewhere, requires diplomacy, maturity, and directness. After all, this person is watching your child, so you want your relationship to be the best it can be. Talk to your child's provider. Take a non-confrontational approach, looking to come up with a solution to a problem together. Your relationship with your childcare provider is important, so communicate clearly from the start. Discuss everything that comes to mind. You won't want to deal with any...

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