



Shared Spaces: Planning a shared space with a child care program

What are some things to consider when sharing a space?

Some contracting entities may house more than one program in their facility at one time, therefore it is important to be aware of the responsibilities of having shared spaces and what each other's expectations will be. Know that when building a new partnership there are always some growing pains, and both entities need time to adjust to the changes. It is important to construct a solid foundation on trust and understanding between programs.

How can you build a good working relationship with your host building?

It is essential to have a good working relationship between the child care program and the host building. The following are some ways that programs can use to ensure that this relationship is strong and successful.

Define building expectations beforehand (preferably in a contract)

- Which areas can you freely use? Which need permission to use?
- What are the procedures for use of video/DVD equipment, copy machines, FAX, etc.?
- Can you freely post on the walls and personalize your space?
- What are the rules about children in halls and other rooms?

Other ways to help build a positive working relationship;

- Inform newly hired staff of building policies in their orientation.
- Show respect and care for the areas you use.
- Create an attractive and well thought-out environment.
- Keep area neat and organized.
- Return furniture and belongings to former spaces.
- Sweep and pick up work areas.
- Report any mishaps regarding building property

Look at things from the perspective of the host facility.

They may worry about things like;

- If children will be safe and healthy
- If children will be disruptive while others are in the building.
- If program rules will be consistent with building rules.
- If program staff are capable of handling problems and emergencies.
- If program has access to own supplies.

Recognize that the host facility members may have individualized ideas on how *they* feel the operation of your program should be.

It is best to address any potential barriers up front:

- Expectations of host building.
- Expectations for program needs.
- Expectations of program staff.
- Share as much information about the program's operations as possible.
 - Written Program Philosophy and Mission Statement.
 - Curriculum
 - Licensing requirements.

A good relationship begins with communication, this can be achieved by simply inquiring as to how building staff likes to maintain contact.

- Do they prefer E-mail, notes, or a scheduled appointment? Is it alright to casually drop in?
- Watch verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Greet all; be courteous and respectful; be friendly, warm, and sincere.
- Demonstrate appreciation; show signs and tokens of appreciation often.
- Verbally - simple courtesy goes a long way.

Resources

<http://www.kidactivities.net/>

<https://www.sharedbusinessspace.com/>

<http://www.polis.iupui.edu/RUC/Newsletters/Responsive/vol1no8.htm>

Updated 7.12.16