



Guidance for Creating Policies

Prepared by the Early Childhood Consultant Team at Child Care Aware® of North Dakota

Throughout the sample policies, you will find **highlighted, bold faced italicized items. These are requirements according to the ND Child Care Rules for licensing.** Providers are urged to read and understand both the ND Century Code 50-11.1 which is the state law that applies to early childhood services, and Administrative Rules that apply to your specific type license. Each provider/program is encouraged individualize the language contained in their policies.

Child Care Aware® of ND offers several trainings to help you create your policies.

- Contracts and Policies for Family Child Care
- Mandated Reporting
- Legal and Insurance Issues for Family Child Care
- Emergency Preparedness
- Understanding Rules for Family Child Care
- Understanding Rules for Group Child Care

These online, EasyReach courses (available 24/7) can be found at www.ndchildcare.org.

Common Elements in Child Care Provider Policies

Child Care Philosophy / Mission Statement

Define your philosophy and mission statement. Describe your mission for your child care program, what your program has to offer and list your desired outcomes.

Qualifications

List any work experience, skills, educational background or accomplishments you have relative to your work with children.

References

Supply references for future clients by getting written approval from past or current clients. Ask for references from clients that are interviewing for slots in your program.

Licensing

State the type of license you hold and confirm you are in compliance with the laws of the state of North Dakota. Provide clients with contact information for your licenser. A copy of your license must be on display.

Liability Insurance

Inform clients whether or not you carry business liability insurance for your child care business.

Mandated Reporter

Include information informing clients you are mandated by North Dakota Century Code to report any suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect. Provide contact information on how to report suspected child abuse or neglect. **(Suspected Abuse/Neglect Policy and Procedures)**

Employees/Substitute Caregivers

Create a hiring policy that conforms to guidelines in ND Administrative Code. **(Hiring Policy)** Inform clients when you will use substitutes, whom your substitutes are, what their responsibilities will be, and confirm they have met all background requirements. **(Hiring Policy)**

Privacy Policy

State how you will protect families' privacy and will abide by the state privacy law. Keep all records and information confidential, unless you have written permission to reveal specific information. Request clients respect the privacy your family.

Discrimination

Provide a discrimination statement.

Children with Special Needs

Inform clients of any experience/skills/training you have for caring for children with special needs. Let them know that you would like to work in partnership with them in order to give optimal care to their child. Children with diagnosed special health needs should have a current care plan signed by a health care provider and parent/guardian, as well as a release of information form signed by the parent. A care plan should be updated at least yearly.

Emergency medication and/or equipment specified in the care plan is recommended to be available at the child care program at all times and when the child is taken off-site during child care hours.

Rules for your Facility

Inform clients they are welcome to enter the program at any time. Also include any other important information that you would like children/families to follow (no shoe policy, where to park etc.)

Records for Each Child

Make clients aware of all forms and records required to be on file for each child. Verify the identification of each child through official documentation.

Backup Child Care

Make clients aware it is their responsibility to have a back-up caregiver for times you are not available such as

- Your vacation
- Sick days for you or a family member
- Family emergencies
- Bad weather when you need to close your business

Provide clients with the referral number at Child Care Aware® of ND for alternative care options.

Supplies for Your Child

Inform clients which items they need to provide. You may prefer they label items with the child's name.

Flexible Spending Accounts

Inform clients if you will participate in FLEX plans offered by their employer. Ask them to provide any required forms, instructions, and deadlines required by the plan.

Bad Weather Closings

Create a policy for when your program will close due to inclement weather. Ask clients to inform you when their place of employment is either closed or closing early.

Grievance Procedure

Develop a grievance policy that encourages clients to discuss concerns with you as soon as possible. Provide contact information for your licenser should they desire to contact that person regarding any suspected licensing violations. If clients find it necessary to address issues with other clients, permission must be granted by the parent, guardian or custodian of the children.

Correction Orders

Within three business days of the receipt of a correction order, the licensee of the early childhood facility shall notify the parent, guardian, or custodian of each child receiving care at the facility that a correction order has been issued. In addition to providing notice to the parent, guardian or custodian of each child, the licensee shall post the correction order in a conspicuous location within the facility until the violation has been corrected.

Accountability Procedure

Create a policy for accountability when a child does not arrive as expected. The policy will be for any age child that attends the program. It should state a procedure that you will follow if a child does not arrive by the designated time.

Activities/Curriculum

Provide clients with a copy of your daily schedule and the educational experiences you offer.

Clothing

Families must provide clothing that is appropriate for the season and the size of the child. They need to keep in mind additional items are needed when learning to use the toilet.

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

List holidays your program celebrates and any guidelines you may have for clients (such as birthday treats, etc.)

Food and Nutrition

Inform clients if you participate in a USDA Child Care Food Program. Let them know what meals and snacks you supply and the times they are served. Post copies of menus. Ask for any food allergy information in writing. Let clients know your policy on infant formula and food.

Naps and Quiet Time

Provide information on your policies for nap or quiet time. See Child Care Aware® of ND sample policy for infant sleep to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Outdoor Policy

Describe the guidelines your program uses for children being taken outdoors. Guidelines can be found on the www.ndchildcare.org website.

Learning to Use the Toilet

Create a policy stating how you will work with clients to assist their child to use the toilet.

Toys

Determine a policy on allowing children to bring items from home.

Behavior Guidance

List the forms of appropriate guidance/discipline you use. Follow guidelines listed in ND Administrative Codes.

(Guidance and Discipline Policy)

Ill Child Policy

Inform clients if failure to abide by illness policies may be reason to terminate the contract.

Provide a list of times when you will care for children (such as mild, non-contagious illnesses). Provide a list of illnesses that require children to be excluded from your program. Child Care Aware® of ND has a list of exclusion guidelines.

Injuries/Accidents

Inform families when first aid is administered to their child within twenty-four hours of the incident. It is the duty of the provider to notify the county social services director within 24 hours about the death of a child at the facility or a child involved in a serious accident or illness requiring hospitalization while in the care of the facility or attributable to the care received in the facility. **(Death, Serious Accident or Illness Requiring Hospitalization)**

Administering Medication

Provide clients with the necessary forms and keep copies in your files for:

- Authorization for Prescription Medications
- Authorization for Non-prescription Medications
- Authorization for Non-prescription Products

Immunizations

Providers should discuss with an attorney the liability risk for enrolling a child whose parents refuse to immunize their child for non-medical reasons. When a child who has a medical exemption from receiving immunizations is included in a child care, reasonable accommodation of that child requires planning to exclude such a child in the event of an outbreak. Ask clients to notify you each time the child receives an immunization so you can update their record.

Emergency Information

Explain your plan to prepare for emergencies (procedure and frequency of drills, including fire, tornado and other emergencies.) Explain where you will evacuate to, if an emergency warrants it.

Emergency Evacuation and Disaster Plan

Post an emergency disaster route from your home. Written disaster plans must be developed. Complete SFN 517

Other Safety Precautions

State how you follow state laws and safety rules for smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Highlight other procedures you have to protect their child. They could include practice drills, policy on missing or abducted children, etc.

Pets

Inform clients if you have pets and where those pets are during child care hours.

Water Hazards

Create a policy on water play. It must meet the guidelines specific to licensing and local policies if you plan to use a swimming pool. Explain how you will supervise children when they are near water.

Smoking, Drinking and Drugs

To protect children in care from second hand smoke, no one can smoke within 20 feet of your child care business. Post a no-smoking sign at the entrance. Inform parents of this state law that applies to your business.

Policies for Transporting Children

Transporting Children **(Transportation Policy)**

Require written permission to transport children. Check with your auto insurance company to determine if you have the proper amount of coverage to transport for your child care business. Make sure to follow guidelines for child passenger safety restraints.

Field Trips

If taking children on a field trip you must get written permission from clients whether transporting in a vehicle or walking. If another party's vehicle will be used to transport the children, ensure the driver has a current driver's license, will secure children in age appropriate child restraints as required by state law and carry required automobile insurance. Create a field trip emergency plan.

Persons Authorized to Pick Up and Drop Off Your Child (Pick up Authorization)

Maintain a list of people authorized to pick up children. Assure clients those listed will be asked for a photo id before you can release their child. Ask clients to keep the list current.

Create a policy for a court order (such as a divorce settlement or restraining order) that limits the rights of one of the child's biological parents and request a copy of that court order.

Pickup and Drop-off Policy

Create a policy should a client attempt to transport a child under the influence of alcohol or drugs or fail to use required child restraints when transporting to/from your program.

Transporting School-age Children

Create a policy on school-age children and if /when they can leave your program. If a child will be arriving at the program unaccompanied by a parent (walking from school) and fail to arrive at the expected time set a policy how the program will notify the client to locate the child. If the program is unable to locate either parent/guardian they will contact the emergency contact person provided by the client. If all efforts fail to find a responsible party, the program will notify the police. **(Accountability Policy and Procedure)**