



In-Home Child Care Agreements

A child care agreement or contract is important for setting and agreeing on child care expectations. When families choose to use formal child care, such as a licensed family child care home or a licensed child care center, the program often has a written agreement for the family to read and sign. However, when families are using an informal child care setting such as in-home care (e.g., a nanny, babysitter, family member, friend or acquaintance providing care in the family’s home or their own), it is often the family’s responsibility to share requirements and expectations. The following information can help families learn about why a written agreement is important for in-home child care and what information they may want to include.

Why Do I Need a Written Agreement?

A written agreement for in-home child care can be important for many reasons.

First, everyone has their own caregiving and communication styles. It can be difficult to make sure that both the caregiver and the family understand and agree on child care responsibilities. Providing written guidance helps to lay out key details. This can include when and where child care will take place, payment details, safety guidance, and child care rules.

Second, when both parties review and sign a written agreement, the family and the caregiver can have a level of protection or assurance. They can reference the agreement if there are questions or concerns about child care responsibilities, payments, or other areas of care.

Additionally, a written agreement can offer caregivers important guidance in case of an emergency. For example, the agreement could include a section on who to call first if a child is injured or what decisions the caregiver can make if a parent cannot be reached in an emergency.

Overall, a written agreement between a family and a caregiver can help avoid misunderstandings and miscommunication.

What Should Be Included?

There are certain topics that families might always include in a written child care agreement. The basics may include, but are not necessarily limited to:



Start date of care



Days and hours of care



Where care will take place



Payment amount, frequency, and method



Caregiver responsibilities



Required certifications or trainings (ex. CPR, First Aid, safe sleep etc.)



Grounds and notice for termination of employment



There are other important topics that families may want to include (and which are not necessarily limited to):

- Handling of employee and employer taxes, social security, unemployment, Medicare, etc.
- Benefits provided, such as medical insurance or stipend, cell phone plan, etc.
- Time off, including sick leave, vacation days and holidays, and required notice when taking leave
- Transportation usage, needs, and safety; reimbursements for mileage, public transportation, or parking for daily activities or school pick-up and drop-off
- House rules, such as whether house guests or in-home playdates are allowed during child care hours, whether the caregiver may bring their own child(ren) every day or occasionally, screen time rules or limitations, etc.
- Emergency information and procedures and a medical release form for consent to treat the child if a parent can't be reached
- Approved activities, such as certain locations and activities that a child is permitted to visit or do, locations or activities that are off limits, and activities or destinations that require family permission ahead of time
- General safety, nutrition, and health guidance; when the caregiver or child should stay home or go home early due to illness
- Safe infant sleep practices for a child under 12 months old
- Discipline and guidance
- Confidentiality agreement
- Social media policy
- Reviews, communication of concerns, and raises

This section may also include house rules for the child(ren) that the caregiver should be aware of so that they can enforce, prompt, or assist as necessary (e.g., completing homework or chores, daily hygiene such as bathing and brushing teeth, etc.)

Additional Resources

Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) may have resources that support families and caregivers with in-home child care. [Find your local CCR&R agency.](#)

Disclaimer

The information provided herein does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; rather, all information and content discussed herein are for general informational purposes only and may not constitute the most up-to-date information. Use of the information herein does not create an attorney-client relationship between the reader and CCAoA. Readers should contact their attorney to obtain advice with respect to specific topical, contractual and/or legal issues and/or questions. Readers should neither act nor refrain from acting on the information contained herein without first seeking legal advice from licensed legal counsel. Only your individual attorney can provide assurances that the information contained herein – and your interpretation of it – is applicable or appropriate to your particular situation. Given the foregoing, all liability with respect to actions taken or not taken by the reader based on the information contained herein is hereby expressly disclaimed.