

Tips For Providers

The first year of being a child care provider can be difficult. There are so many different things to learn about owning your own business, child development, and dealing with parents, it can be overwhelming at times. I developed this page to give new providers some tips and suggestions from the seasoned veterans that may make that first year a little easier.

~Start with a clear, solid contract and policy handbook~

Do some research and look at other provider's contracts

The internet is great resource for you

The main thing I learned early on is, make a contract and never, ever break it yourself.

That gives the parents the attitude that if you do not follow it they do not have to.

~Wendy~

~Get involved with your local child care association~

Many experienced providers belong to their local association. Listen and learn from them. They have been through it all!

~Join a support group for providers~

It can be local providers in your town or on the internet.

www.yahoogle.com has some great support groups

ProviderInfoStation and Playground4Providers are great ones :)

~Take classes~

Stay current on your CPR, first aid, child development.

~Communicate openly with your parents. Be honest~

Establish a trusting working relationship with your parents.

~Start out small and increase when you feel more confident~

~Word of mouth is your best advertising~

~Save your receipts~

Organize them into categories or by month. Do this weekly otherwise it will take a week to sort through all of them! ~Angie A~

~Keep track of your mileage~

This can really add up. Angie A said she lost a lot of refund by not keeping her mileage.

~Trust your instincts~

When interviewing a client please trust your own instincts about being comfortable with this new person in your house, day after day.

If you are uncomfortable with them and feel "strange" it rarely gets better. If you feel you need the money badly enough to take on a stranger in your house, who you feel does not "fit well", eventually you will feel like paying them to leave. ~Punky~

~Business Cards~

One tip that I have learned is never put your home address on business cards and flyers. Make them call for an appointment before just showing up on your doorstep. ~Linda~

Have business cards on hand when going for a walk with the children, at the park, or grocery shopping. You never know when someone will ask about your child care business.

My first year I learned so much but most of all contract, contract, contract. You're lost without it. Make sure you send it home to have them read and then I sit down and read through it just like a lawyer and have them initial things that apply to them.

I also learned never tell parents something put it in writing they forget.

And most important take time for yourself or else burn out is right around the corner.

Take time off it good for you and the kids. So, in your contract make sure you stress have a back up provider or family member. ~Ann~

~Be flexible and excited~

When working with young children, you need to adjust your activities to fit the children's moods, behavior, and age level. When you are excited to be around the children, they will be excited to come to your child care.

~Personal Problems~

Try not to let your personal problems cloud your mood or behavior. The parents and children will pick up on this.

~Keep a clean, safe environment~

It is hard to keep your home free on toys when you have 10 children playing and having a good time. Parents look for a clean, safe place for their children.

If your licensor walked in, would your home pass his/her inspection?

~WHEN YOU HAVE CONCERNS: TALKING WITH FAMILIES~

PREPARING FOR THE CONVERSATION:

Make some objective notes about the problems that you believe the child is having.

Include specific examples you have observed. Role-play the manner in which you intend to present your concerns.

Request time to talk with the family.

Consider any cultural or language issues that may enhance or interfere with communications.

Learn about some of the assessment resources in the community.
Gather your thoughts and calm your nerves.

EXPRESSING YOUR CONCERNS

Make the setting as private and as comfortable as possible.

Assure the family that the discussion will remain confidential.

Provide specific, non-judgmental examples of your concerns.

Be HUMAN.

Allow time for questions.

Have suggestions ready for parents who say they are willing to consider an assessment.

Help the family take the next steps.