The Ultimate Guide to Writing a Policy Handbook for your Child Care Program

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Welcome

We are thrilled to present this comprehensive resource that will assist you in developing a policy handbook tailored to your child care program's unique needs. Whether you are starting a new program or seeking to update your existing policies, this guide, created in collaboration with Ceslee Frost, owner and director of Little Friends Preschool, will serve as your trusted companion.

This guide will walk you through the step-by-step process of crafting a comprehensive policy handbook. From program hours to discipline to termination, we have covered a wide range of essential policies that are crucial to the smooth operation of your child care program. In addition, we have included examples of policies from the exemplary handbook created by Ceslee Frost, providing you with practical insights and inspiration.

By following this guide, you will have the tools and knowledge necessary to create a policy handbook that reflects your program's values, aligns with industry best practices, and meets local regulations. We understand that each child care program is unique, and therefore, we encourage you to adapt and customize the policies to suit the specific needs and requirements of your program.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ceslee Frost for her contribution to this guide. Her expertise and dedication to providing exceptional child care have made her an industry leader, and we are privileged to collaborate with her in bringing you this resource.

We hope this guide will empower you to develop a comprehensive and effective policy handbook, setting the stage for a nurturing and thriving child care environment.

Best regards,

The Team at Playground

What is Playground?

Playground is a software company building the *future* of child care management software.

Founded as a direct solution to the frustrations of a child care director, Playground's software automates the administrative tasks involved in child care, such as enrollment management, paperwork, attendance, billing, communication, and more.

Founded in 2020, Playground continues to disrupt the child care industry with its innovative software solutions.

Want to learn more?

Get in touch

Let's get started!

A Letter from Ceslee

Hello!

My name is Ceslee Frost, and I am the owner of Little Friends Preschool. My program is licensed as a large family child care in Ventura, California. I began my journey in 2011 as a small family childcare with 6 children including infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school age. Over time, my program has evolved. In 2019, we bought a home specifically to create a home-based preschool. Now, we offer a preschool program from 9:00am-12:30pm daily with an early care (8am-9am) and extended care (12:30-4:30pm) option available.

It took me several years to develop a handbook of policies for my program. When I first opened, I had a two page contract that stated a few policies and monetary agreements. I didn't realize I needed a handbook. Over time, as issues arose, I created policies to address those issues. The first draft of my handbook was 4 pages. Every year I added new policies, amendments, and other edits. My current handbook is 12 pages.

As we strive to create a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for the children in our care, it is imperative to have a well-documented set of policies in place as a mutually beneficial understanding between the provider and the families of the children. A handbook of policies serves as a guide for both staff members and parents/guardians, ensuring we are all on the same page regarding expectations, procedures, and standards.

With well-established policies, you can create a truly exceptional child care experience for your little ones and foster a warm and inclusive community.

I have carefully assessed the needs and requirements of managing a licensed child care. I have analyzed similar handbooks from reputable child care centers/preschools and considered the feedback received from current parents and staff members. Drawing upon this information and my experiences, I have identified some of the key areas that should be included in a handbook. I'm happy to share this information with other child care providers.

Yours sincerely,

Ceslee Frost

Owner and Director of
Little Friends Preschool

Write an introduction to your policy handbook

The introduction to your child care program's policy handbook sets the tone for the entire document and provides an opportunity to introduce your program's values, mission, and the dedicated individuals who run it. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you create an engaging and informative introduction:

1. Begin with a Warm Welcome

Start by extending a warm welcome to the families who have chosen your child care program. Express your excitement and gratitude for their trust in your program to provide quality care for their children. Emphasize the importance of collaboration between your program, parents, and guardians in fostering a nurturing environment.

> **Example:**
> *Welcome to [Program Name]! We are delighted to welcome you and your child to our vibrant community of learners. We understand the significance of the role you play as parents and guardians, and we are honored to embark on this journey together.*

2. Introduce Your Program

Provide a brief overview of your program, highlighting its history, values, and the principles that guide your practices. Explain your program's philosophy, approach to child development, and commitment to creating a safe and inclusive space for all children.

> *Ceslee's Example:*
>
> *Our goal is to provide a safe, loving, and educational environment for all children in our care. We believe that the first five years are the most important time in a child's life. We believe that children have the right to a nurturing, safe environment where they can feel comfortable and secure. We believe that children have the right to develop to their maximum abilities and that we have the responsibility to provide opportunities for this development to occur. We recognize that each child is an individual and that each child must be allowed to develop at his or her own pace. We accept and respect differences between children including developmental and physical differences and differences in racial and ethnic heritages. Every child regardless of ability level, gender, race, religion, or ethnic origin must have the same opportunities and advantages as every other child. We believe each child has the right to develop a positive self-image – to feel good about whom they are. We passionately hope that in treating each child with love and respect that they in turn will learn to treat others with that same love and respect. We strive to thoughtfully plan activities that meet the developmental needs of differing children, and which follow sound early childhood developmental principles.*

3. Showcase your Team

Introduce your child care staff, including teachers and administrators with their roles. Highlight their qualifications, experience, and passion for early childhood education. This instills confidence in the families and emphasizes the expertise and care provided by your dedicated staff.

> **Ceslee's Example:**
> *Children and learning are my passion. I have a BA in Child Development from California State University Northridge and a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from the University of La Verne.*
> *My partner in this business is my daughter Emma. Emma was a full-time nanny for 6 years before joining my team. Emma has completed 12 early childhood education units at Ventura College, is pediatric first aid/CPR certified, fingerprinted and cleared by the Department of Justice just like me.*

4. Emphasize Collaboration

Highlight the importance of collaboration between your program and parents/guardians in fostering a positive and supportive environment for children. Emphasize that open communication and partnership are crucial for the child's well-being and development.

> **Example:**
> *We strongly believe that the key to a child's success lies in open and transparent communication between our program and your family. We value your input, insights, and feedback as we work together to provide the best possible care for your child. Your active participation is crucial in creating a strong foundation for their future.*

4. Convey your commitment

Express your program's commitment to upholding high standards of safety, learning, and professionalism. Assure the readers that your policies and procedures are designed with their child's best interests in mind.

> *Example:*
> *At [Program Name], we prioritize the safety, well-being, and holistic development of each child. Our policies and procedures are meticulously crafted to ensure the highest standard of care, in compliance with local regulations and industry best practices. You can trust that your child will be in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment.*

6. End with appreciation

Conclude the introduction by expressing gratitude for the trust placed in your program. Reiterate your commitment to providing exceptional care and support for every child.

> *Example:*
> *We are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of your child's educational journey. Thank you for entrusting us with this responsibility. We are dedicated to making your child's time at [Program Name] memorable, enriching, and filled with joy.*

By following these steps, you can create an introduction to your program's policy handbook that showcases your program's values, introduces the dedicated team behind its operation, and conveys your commitment to providing an exceptional child care experience. Remember to tailor the introduction to reflect the unique aspects and vision of your program.

Policies on Meals and Snacks

Developing clear and comprehensive policies regarding meals and snacks is crucial for providing a healthy and enjoyable dining experience for children in your care. Consider the following guidelines when creating your program's policy on meals and snacks:

1. Meal and Snack Schedule

Define the specific times at which meals and snacks are served. Consider age-appropriate schedules that align with children's nutritional needs and daily routines. For example, you may have designated times for breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, and possibly a late afternoon snack, depending on the length of your program's operating hours.

> *Example:*
> - *Breakfast: Served between [time range].*
> - *Morning Snack: Served between [time range].*
> - *Lunch: Served between [time range].*
> - *Afternoon Snack: Served between [time range].*
> - *Late Afternoon Snack: Served between [time range].*

2. Nutritional Guidelines

Establish guidelines for the types of food and beverages that will be provided during meals and snacks. Emphasize the importance of offering a balanced and nutritious diet. Address specific dietary restrictions, allergies, or cultural considerations. You can easily track each student's dietary restrictions and allergies using Playground's food program.

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> *Example:*
> - *Our program follows nutritional guidelines based on [mention relevant guidelines or programs, such as USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or the guidelines provided by a registered dietitian].*
> - *Meals and snacks will include a variety of food groups, offering balanced nutrition.*
> - *We accommodate special dietary needs and allergies as communicated by parents/guardians.*

3. Food Programs

Specify if your program participates in any food programs, such as CACFP or other local initiatives. Provide information on the benefits of these programs and how they contribute to the quality and variety of meals and snacks offered. Playground will make it easy for you to track subsidies via the food program feature.

> *Example:*
> - *We proudly participate in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), ensuring that our meals and snacks meet the nutritional standards set by our program.*
> - *Our participation in CACFP allows us to provide high-quality meals and snacks that support children's growth and development.*

4. Bringing Food from Home

Clarify whether children are allowed to bring food from home. If permitted, outline any guidelines or restrictions, such as avoiding allergens or promoting healthy food choices. Address the need for appropriate packaging, labeling, and refrigeration if required.

Example:

Children are encouraged to enjoy the nutritious meals and snacks provided by our program. However, we understand that some families may prefer to pack meals and snacks from home. If children bring food from home, it should align with our nutritional guidelines and avoid allergens as specified by parents/guardians. All food brought from home should be properly labeled with the child's name and stored safely to maintain food quality and prevent spoilage.

3. Birthday Celebrations

Specify your program's policy regarding birthday celebrations and food brought in for such occasions. Determine if parents/guardians are allowed to provide special treats or if alternative celebration practices, such as non-food items, are encouraged.
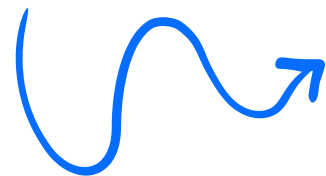
> *Example:*
> - *We believe in celebrating special occasions, including birthdays, in a meaningful and inclusive way. Parents/guardians are welcome to coordinate with us for birthday celebrations.*
> - *To promote healthy choices and accommodate dietary restrictions, we encourage non-food alternatives for birthday celebrations, such as small gifts or special activities. However, if parents/guardians choose to bring treats, they should adhere to our nutritional guidelines and avoid allergens.*

REMEMBER

Tailor your program's policies to the specific needs and culture of your child care program.

Clearly communicate these policies to parents/guardians during enrollment and orientation, and ensure that staff members are well-informed to implement them consistently. Regularly review and update your meal and snack policies to reflect any changes in nutritional guidelines or dietary requirements.

By establishing well-defined policies on meals and snacks, you create an environment that promotes healthy eating habits and contributes to the overall well-being of the children in your care.

Policies on Supplies, Clothing, and Shoes

Depending on your program, you may or may not require children to bring certain supplies. Your supplies policy should outline the types of materials and resources required for daily activities. Are children permitted to bring a backpack with them? Do children have cubbies in which they can store their supplies/ belongings? Would you like children to bring an extra pair of underwear or clothes in case of spills or accidents?

> **Ceslee's Example:**
> *Please do not bring in a bag/backpack. Your child's supplies will be kept here. Please make sure your child's cubby has a complete change of clothes (two sets of clothes for toddlers) and extra undies in a ziplock bag. Please bring a light sweatshirt/jacket on chilly days. Big, thick jackets are hard to play in and if it is cold enough to need one, we will not be going outside. Layers are best. Please check your child's cubby daily. Also, check their clothing bag seasonally to make sure it is complete with items mentioned above in their current size. Kids grow quickly!*

Establishing a dress code policy for children attending your child care program is essential to ensure their safety, comfort, and engagement in various activities.

Follow these steps to write an complete dress code policy:

1. Weather-Appropriate Attire

Clearly outline the type of clothing suitable for different weather conditions. Specify guidelines for warm and cold weather, as well as rainy or windy days, to ensure children are dressed appropriately for outdoor play and indoor activities.

Example:
- *On hot days, children are encouraged to wear lightweight, breathable fabrics, such as cotton, to stay cool and comfortable.*
- *During colder weather, children should wear layered clothing to keep warm. Coats, gloves, and hats are recommended for outdoor play.*

2. Comfortable and Safe Clothing

Emphasize the importance of comfortable clothing that allows for ease of movement and does not pose safety hazards. Discourage children from wearing clothing with cords, drawstrings, or other potential entanglement risks.

Example:
- *Children should wear comfortable clothing that allows them to move freely during play and activities.*
- *Shoes should be well-fitted and appropriate for running and climbing to reduce the risk of trips and falls.*

3. Closed-Toe Shoes

Specify the requirement for closed-toe shoes for children to ensure foot protection and safety during physical activities.

Example:
Closed-toe shoes with rubber soles are required to be worn at all times to prevent injuries during play and exploration.

Ceslee's Example:
Children should wear athletic type shoes (or other shoe that covers foot well) for their safety. Flip flops, crocks, sandals, high heels, etc. are dangerous when running and climbing. Shoes with ties/laces are not allowed. Velcro is great, so that they can learn to put their shoes on by themselves. Tie shoes come untied constantly and cause problems.

4. Dress for Messy Activities

Address the need for clothing that can withstand messy activities, such as arts and crafts or outdoor play. Encourage parents to dress their children in clothes that they won't mind getting dirty.

Example:
Please dress your child in clothing suitable for messy activities. While we take precautions during arts and crafts, children may still encounter paint, glue, or other materials.

Policies on Injury and Illness

Developing a comprehensive policy on injury and illness is crucial for safeguarding the health and well-being of the children in your child care program. This policy should cover a range of topics, including immunizations, guidelines for handling illnesses, measures to prevent the spread of contagious conditions, procedures for managing injuries, protocols for dealing with lice, and guidelines for administering medication. Follow these steps to approach writing an effective injury and illness policy:

1. Clear Objectives

Begin by defining the objectives of the policy. Highlight your program's commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff. Emphasize the importance of prevention, early detection, and prompt action to address any health-related concerns.

> **Example:**
> At [Program Name], the health and safety of our children and staff are of utmost importance to us. Our Injury and Illness Policy is designed to create a secure and caring environment that promotes the well-being of everyone at our program. By adhering to these guidelines, we strive to minimize risks, promptly address health-related concerns, and ensure that each child receives the necessary care and attention.

2. Immunizations

State your program's policy regarding immunizations, reflecting compliance with local health regulations and recommendations from relevant health authorities. Specify the required immunizations for enrollment, deadlines for providing immunization records, and procedures for verifying and updating immunization information. You can easily track each child's immunization records within Playground.

> ***Ceslee's Example:***
>
> *Please make sure your child is up to date on immunizations. Please bring in current immunization record so I can update your child's file each time you take him/her to the doctor for immunizations. Just ask for a printout while you are there. Please schedule immunizations on Fridays. Children are usually extra needy and uncomfortable following shots. They may be feverish, have diarrhea or other reactions. It hard to play at school when you are not feeling well due to shots. The extra 2 days at home will help.*

3. Illness Guidelines

Outline the procedures for handling illnesses at your child care program. Include a list of common symptoms that require keeping a child at home and the minimum waiting period before returning to your program after illness. Define how parents should notify your program about a child's absence due to illness and any requirements for providing medical clearance before rejoining.

> **Ceslee's Example:**
> *I am not to take sick or contagious children. A child is considered contagious if they have a fever over 100, diarrhea, vomiting, eye infection, body rash or generally not feeling well. My Philosophy on illness is "If they can't play, they shouldn't stay!" Please keep your child home until they are well for 24 hours. For example: if they are sent home with a fever, they cannot come back the next morning. They need to be fever free (symptom free) without fever reducing medicine for 24 hours. If a doctor prescribes antibiotic medication for your child, they need to be on the medication for a full 24 hours before returning to school. If you have two children in our class and one is staying home sick the other child needs to stay home too. We must do everything we can to keep illness at bay.*

4. Contagious Conditions

Address measures to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses among children and staff. Outline protocols for handling cases of contagious conditions, such as notifying parents, isolating the affected child if necessary, and disinfecting surfaces and toys to minimize transmission.

5. Lice Policy

Clearly state your program's policy on dealing with lice infestations. Include guidelines on identifying and notifying parents about lice cases, procedures for exclusion and re-admittance to your program after treatment, and your program's role in supporting affected families while maintaining confidentiality.

> **Ceslee's Example:**
> If an older sibling or anyone in the home has lice, please keep your child home until everything is clear. If a child who attends here has lice everyone will be sent home to decontaminate the home. No refunds for the day will be given.

6. Injury Management

Describe the procedures for managing injuries that occur on the premises. Provide guidelines on administering first aid and when to seek emergency medical attention. Specify how parents will be informed about any incidents and the steps taken to prevent future accidents.

7. Medication Administration

Outline your program's policy for administering medication to children, including prescription and over-the-counter medications. Address the need for written authorization from parents/guardians and the importance of accurate record-keeping for each administration.

Easily distribute and store medical release paperwork directly in your Playground account.

8. Allergy Management

If your program serves children with known allergies, establish guidelines for allergy management, including communication with parents/guardians, staff training on recognizing allergic reactions, and emergency response procedures.

Collect allergy information during enrollment and store it within the students profile, making it easily accessible for parents and staff.

9. Staff Training

Emphasize the importance of staff training in recognizing signs of illness and injury, following proper hygiene practices, and implementing the policies effectively. Include information on regular health and safety training sessions to keep staff updated on best practices.

7. Communication with Parents/Guardians

Explain your program's communication procedures for notifying parents/guardians about injuries, illnesses, or potential health risks. Encourage open dialogue and collaboration with parents to ensure the well-being of the children. You can easily send parents a direct message using **Playground's communication features**.

Policies on Naps

A well-crafted nap policy should address nap schedules, sleep environment, bedding guidelines, and procedures for children who do not nap. Follow these steps to approach writing an effective nap policy:

1. **Age-Appropriate Nap Schedules**

   Specify the nap schedules based on the age groups of the children in your care. Different age groups have varying sleep needs, and nap times should be adjusted accordingly.

   > **Example:**
   > - *Infants: Nap times will be scheduled based on the individual needs of each infant, as communicated by their parents/guardians.*
   > - *Toddlers and Preschoolers: Scheduled nap times will be provided for toddlers and preschoolers, promoting a consistent rest routine that aligns with their age and developmental needs.*

2. **Quiet and Calm Sleep Environment**

   Describe the sleep environment that will be provided to ensure a quiet and calm atmosphere conducive to napping. Consider factors such as lighting, noise levels, and temperature control.

   > **Example:**
   > - *Our program will provide a quiet and dimly lit sleep area to create a soothing environment for napping.*
   > - *Gentle background music or white noise may be used to help children relax during nap time.*

3. Bedding Guidelines

Outline the bedding requirements for each child during nap time. Specify the type of bedding provided by your program and guidelines for parents/guardians regarding personal bedding items.

> **Example:**
> - *We will provide age-appropriate and sanitized nap mats/cribs for each child.*
> - *Parents are welcome to bring a comfort item (e.g., a small blanket or soft toy) from home to help their child feel secure during nap time.*

4. Comfort and Safety during Naps

Address measures to ensure the comfort and safety of children during nap time. Include procedures for monitoring sleeping children and responding to individual needs.

> **Example:**
> - *Our staff will conduct regular checks on napping children to ensure their well-being and comfort.*
> - *Children will be positioned on their backs or as preferred by parents, in accordance with safe sleep guidelines.*

5. Procedures for Children Who Do Not Nap

Describe the procedures for children who do not nap or have difficulty falling asleep during nap time. Offer alternative, non-disruptive, activities for non-napping children to ensure they have a restful and quiet time.

> *Example:*
> - *Children who do not nap will be provided with quiet activities, such as reading or quiet play, to ensure a restful period.*
> - *Non-napping children will be encouraged to rest quietly to allow others to sleep.*

On the following page, see the handout that Ceslee gives parents regarding nap time.

Ceslee's Note Regarding Nap Time Policy
Why nap time is non-negotiable

KIDS GET TIRED
Many of the kids wake up at 6:00 or 7:00am. They are here for 8-10 hours per day and still want to enjoy some evening time with their parents without being grumpy and tired! They play, run, learn and explore all day! They need a chance to rest. Children ages 0-4 need daily naps. It's good for their brain development and their emotional wellbeing.

KIDS GET CRANKY
Children who are tired or need a nap are more likely to have meltdowns, be irritable, be aggressive with others, and have trouble controlling their behavior. As a parent, you are more likely to have a difficult time at pick up time, at dinner time, and bedtime without a nap during the day.

KIDS NEED A BREAK FROM EACH OTHER
Children spent 8 to 10 hours together all day. In most families, siblings don't even spend that much time together. They need time to recharge their social batteries for a second round in the afternoon.

IT'S THE LAW
I am required by law to have a two hour quiet rest period. I cannot make a child sleep but they must lay down and rest. Most kids enjoy nap time and deserve a quiet time to sleep. If I let some kids stay up, they would not be able to stay quiet allowing the other kids to sleep. This would be going against their personal rights for a rest period. All daycares and preschools have a nap time. Kindergarten used to have a nap time before they lowered the hours!

I NEED A BREAK
Would you work a 10 hour day without a break? Kids are loud, talk constantly, and always need something. My job is very hands-on and constant. I need a little silence and time to recharge my batteries. I need time to simply decompress. I need to clean up from lunch, use the restroom, and eat lunch without everyone wanting some.

This is why nap time is NON-NEGOTIABLE. If your child has outgrown naps or you do not wish for them to take naps, this is not the right setting for them. Thank you for understanding.

Policies on Infants

Caring for infants requires special attention and practices to ensure their safety, development, and well-being. Implementing comprehensive policies on safe sleep practices, licensing regulations, and feeding is essential for providing high-quality care for the youngest members of your child care profram. Follow these steps to approach writing policies on infants:

1. Safe Sleep Practices

Clearly outline safe sleep practices that align with recommendations from reputable organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Emphasize the importance of providing a safe sleep environment to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

> **Example:**
> *Infants will be placed on their backs in a crib with a firm and flat sleep surface, free from any soft bedding, blankets, or toys. The sleep area will be closely monitored to ensure a safe sleep environment at all times.*

2. Licensing Regulations

Ensure that your child care program complies with all relevant licensing regulations related to infant care. These may include staff-to-infant ratios, qualifications of caregivers, and health and safety standards.

3. Feeding

Detail the procedures for feeding infants, including the preparation and handling of formula and breast milk. Address the introduction of solid foods based on the child's age and development.

4. Health and Hygiene:

Address your program's procedures for maintaining infant health and hygiene, including diaper changing, handwashing, and preventing the spread of illness.

Ceslee's Note on Preparing Infants for Daycare

In a daycare setting we encourage self-soothing and building independence to better manage the needs of all children. We work with infants to put themselves to sleep in a crib. We follow safe sleep practices such as back to sleep and nothing in crib except the baby (no blankets, pillows or stuffed toys). Due to the ratio of children we cannot hold children while sleeping or rock them to sleep. We ask that you follow these practices at home so the child can have a consistent routine and positively acclimate to the daycare environment.

To make the transition easier please try to:

- Put the baby down when they are asleep! I know how wonderful it is to hold a sleeping baby but we have too many other things to do in a daycare setting!
- Put the baby to sleep tired but partially awake
- Do not hold the baby constantly. They will get used to this and scream every time we need to put them down to tend to another child. It is in the best interest of your child's wellbeing to not expect to be held constantly. We love to hold babies but cannot hold them all day.
- Give your child a bottle every day starting before 6 weeks of age. I know breast feeding advocates say not to but believe me they would much rather have the breast over the bottle. If we cannot feed your child we cannot care for them.

Newborns sleep and wake at different times with little consistency and their needs will be respected. We work to get infants on a two nap a day schedule by 4-6 months. Our usual infant schedule is an AM nap around 9:30 am to 11:00 am and a PM nap around 2:00 pm to 3:30 or 4:00 pm. If you can do this and be consistent at home your child will be happy and thrive at daycare. If not, you will need to hire a nanny to care for your baby one on one. It is not fair to the other children to hear a baby cry all day every minute they aren't being held or they are cranky because they won't nap. It makes everyone miserable along with the baby. Thank you for understanding.

Policies on Potty Training

Potty training is a significant milestone for young children, and creating a supportive and consistent environment is crucial for their success. Developing a comprehensive potty training policy helps guide caregivers and parents through the process, ensuring that children receive positive reinforcement and understanding during this important stage. Follow these steps to approach writing a potty training policy:

1. Introduction to Potty Training

Begin by introducing the purpose and importance of potty training within your child care program. Highlight your program's commitment to creating a positive and supportive environment for children during this developmental milestone.

> ***Example:***
> *At [Program Name], we recognize potty training as an essential developmental milestone for our young learners. We are dedicated to providing a nurturing and encouraging atmosphere during this process, supporting children as they transition to using the toilet independently.*

2. Readiness Assessment:

Outline the criteria used to determine a child's readiness for potty training. Specify the signs that caregivers and staff will look for to identify when a child is physically and emotionally ready to begin potty training.

> *Example:*
> *Potty training will be initiated when a child displays signs of readiness, such as showing an interest in using the potty, demonstrating bladder and bowel control, and expressing discomfort with soiled diapers.*

3. Communication and Collaboration

Explain the importance of open communication and collaboration between caregivers, staff, and parents/guardians during potty training. Emphasize the need for consistency in the approach both at your program and at home.

> *Example:*
> *We value open communication with parents/guardians and encourage them to share their child's potty training progress and experiences with our staff. We will work collaboratively to ensure a consistent approach between our program and your home.*

> *Ceslee's Example:*
> *Potty training is one of those parenting tasks that takes time, patience, and cooperation. Most children potty train between the ages of 2 and 3, with girls training an average of six months earlier than boys. When you feel your child is ready for potty training, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. We will follow through and encourage your child while in our care.*

4. Individualized Approach

Highlight your program's commitment to providing an individualized approach to potty training, recognizing that each child progresses at their own pace. Describe how caregivers will tailor their approach based on the child's readiness and comfort level.

Example:
Potty training will be approached on an individual basis, respecting each child's unique pace and comfort level. Our caregivers will observe and respond to each child's cues and provide personalized support during this process.

5. Potty Training Schedule

Describe your program's approach to establishing a regular potty training schedule for children. Outline the procedures for taking children to the bathroom and encouraging regular potty breaks.

Example:
Children will be offered regular opportunities to use the potty throughout the day, including upon arrival, after meals, and before and after nap time. Caregivers will encourage and support children during these scheduled potty breaks.

6. Positive Reinforcement

Explain your program's commitment to using positive reinforcement and praise during potty training. Emphasize the importance of celebrating children's successes and providing encouragement during setbacks.

> *Example:*
> *Our caregivers will use positive reinforcement and praise to celebrate children's successes in using the potty. We will provide encouragement and understanding during any setbacks, supporting children through this learning process.*

7. Diaper/ Pull-up Policy

Address the use of diapers or pull-ups during potty training. Specify when and how caregivers will transition children from diapers to underwear as they progress in their potty training journey.

> *Example:*
> *Children will be transitioned from diapers to pull-ups and eventually to underwear as they show readiness and progress in potty training. The transition will be based on each child's developmental milestones.*

> *Ceslee's Example:*
> *When your child is potty training, please bring in several pairs of underwear, pants/shorts, socks and an extra pair of shoes.*

Policies on Holding Spots and Rates

Holding Spots Policy:

A holding spots policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for reserving or holding a spot for a child at your child care program. Clearly communicate the requirements and expectations to ensure fairness and transparency in the reservation process.

1. Reservation Duration

Specify the maximum duration for which a spot can be held without enrollment. Determine the timeframe that works best for your program, considering the demand for enrollment and maintaining an appropriate waiting list.

> **Example:**
> *Holding spots will be available for a maximum of [number of days/weeks]. If enrollment is not confirmed within this period, the spot will be released to the next child on the waiting list.*

2. Holding Fee (if applicable)

If your program charges a holding fee, clearly state the amount and conditions for its refundability or application to the first month's tuition upon enrollment.

Example:
A holding fee of [amount] will be required to reserve a spot. This fee is non-refundable but will be applied to the first month's tuition upon enrollment.

3. Confirmation Requirements

Outline the process for confirming enrollment after reserving a spot. Specify the documents and information needed, as well as the deadline for submission.

Example:
To confirm enrollment, parents/guardians must submit all required enrollment forms and provide any additional information by [deadline]. Failure to do so will result in the release of the held spot.

4. Waiting List Policy

Explain the procedure for placing children on the waiting list once all spots are filled. Clarify how parents/guardians will be notified if a spot becomes available. If you are using Playground's enrollment feature, you can easily move children from the waiting list to the admitted students list and instantly send notification to the parents.

Example:
When all spots are filled, interested parents/guardians will be placed on a waiting list in the order of their inquiry. They will be notified promptly if a spot becomes available.

Holding Spots Policy:

A rate policy outlines the tuition fees and payment terms for your child care services. Clearly communicate the rates and payment options to parents/guardians, and include any additional fees for specific services.

1. Tuition Fees

Clearly state the tuition fees for each age group or program offered by your child care program. Specify if the rates vary based on age, program hours, or other factors.

> **Example:**
> *Tuition fees for each age group are as follows:*
> - *Infants: [Tuition Fee]*
> - *Toddlers: [Tuition Fee]*
> - *Preschoolers: [Tuition Fee]*

2. Payment Schedules

Define the payment schedule, including the frequency of payments (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly, monthly) and the due dates. If you are using Playground's billing feature, parents will be enrolled in autopay and will automatically be charged when their payment is due.

> **Example:**
> *Tuition payments are due [weekly/bi-weekly/monthly] on [day of the week]. Payment for the upcoming period should be made in advance.*

3. Late Payment Policy

Address the consequences of late payments and any applicable late fees. You can automatically charge (and waive) late fees using **Playground's billing feature**.

> **Example:**
> *Payments made after the due date will be subject to a late fee of [amount] per day until the balance is settled.*

3. Accepted Payment Methods

Specify the accepted forms of payment, such as cash, check, credit card, or electronic bank transfer.

> **Example:**
> *We accept payments in the form of cash, check, credit card, or electronic bank transfer. Checks should be made payable to [Program Name].*

4. Fee Structure for Additional Services

If your program offers additional services or enrichment programs with separate fees, clearly outline the costs and payment terms for these services.

> **Example:**
> *Additional services, such as extended care, extracurricular activities, or special events, may have separate fees. These fees will be communicated in advance, and payment will be due before the service is provided.*

5. Tuition Obligation for Absences

Clarify your stance on tuition payments when a child is absent. Explain that tuition remains due and payable even during periods of absence, including planned vacations, holidays, or sick days.

Example:
Regardless of the reason for a child's absence, including vacations, holidays, or illness, tuition payments will continue to be due and payable during these periods. The child's reserved spot in our program is held, regardless of attendance.

Ceslee's Example:
Tuition is like rent for your child's spot. You are charged even if your child is not here. This includes legal holidays that we are closed and up to two weeks' paid vacation per year. You will be notified well in advance with an annual calendar of closure dates. Your vacations are paid in full. Payment is due before your vacation to hold your spot. We may also take up to 5 sick/personal days per year. Sick/personal days are also paid in full.

Policies on Days, Hours, Arrivals, and Departures

Creating clear and well-defined policies regarding program operating days, hours, arrival procedures, and departure protocols is essential for the smooth functioning of your child care program. These policies ensure consistency, safety, and effective communication with parents/guardians. Follow these steps to approach writing policies on days, hours, arrival, and departure:

1. Operating Days and Hours

Clearly outline the days and hours of operation for your child care program. Specify any holidays or closures, as well as the hours during which parents can drop off and pick up their children.

> **Example:**
> Our child care program operates from Monday to Friday, excluding major holidays. Our program opens at [opening time] and closes at [closing time].

> **Ceslee's Example:**
> We are closed most legal holidays: You will be given a calendar of closure dates due to holidays and vacation. The calendar is based on the school year and given out in July or August.

2. Arrival Procedures

Establish guidelines for parents/guardians regarding the arrival of children at your program. Specify any check-in procedures, requirements for signing in children, and any necessary communication with staff upon arrival.

> **Example:**
> Upon arrival, parents/guardians are required to sign their child in at the front desk. We encourage parents to communicate any relevant information about their child's morning, such as special instructions or concerns, to the staff at drop-off.

3. Departure Protocols

Define the departure procedures for children leaving your program. Address any requirements for authorized pick-ups and communication with parents/guardians during departure.

> **Example:**
> Only authorized individuals listed on the child's enrollment forms will be allowed to pick up the child from the program. Parents must provide written permission for alternate pick-ups, and identification will be required for unfamiliar individuals.

4. Late Arrival and Early Departure

Address policies regarding late arrival and early departure of children. Explain the importance of punctuality and any potential consequences for repeated tardiness.

> ***Ceslee's Example:***
> *If you are late to pick up, you will be charged an overtime fee of $3 per minute. You may plan for your child to occasionally stay late (after 4:30 pm) ahead of time (12hr advanced notice) and only pay the additional $20 for up to one hour if we are available to do so, $25 for each additional hour. Same goes for early drop off before 8:00. Early drop off fee is $10 per 15 min.*

5. Communication with Parents/Guardians

Emphasize the importance of effective communication between your program and parents/guardians regarding changes in arrival or departure plans, as well as any absences or schedule adjustments. Parents can easily communicate about late drop-offs, pick-ups, or absences with your program using Playground's communication feature.

> ***Example:***
> *In the event of a change in the child's arrival or departure schedule, parents/guardians are requested to notify us as soon as possible. Regular communication ensures that we can accommodate your child's needs effectively.*

6. Authorized Persons for Pick-Up

Outline the process for designating authorized individuals who are allowed to pick up the child from your program. Specify the procedure for updating this list and ensuring the safety of the children. Playground's attendance feature allows you to easily track approved guardians and take e-signatures.

Automate late fee charges

Playground's software allows you to set up automated late fees, which can be waived or charged to family accounts with the click of a button.

Setting up clear policies surrounding late fees allows you to collect more revenue while setting boundaries on your time and hours.

Fee Approvals
Approve or forgive pending fees

⬇ Download CSV

Overages | Program check-in fees | Program time fees | Program enrollments | Daily attendance fees

🔍 Search | Week of: Jul 30 – Aug 5 ⌄ | ▼ Filters 1

	Date	First Name	Last Name	Status ↑	Billable time	Overage fee			
☐	8/1/2023	Asher	Simmons	Pending	26m	$26.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	8/2/2023	Asher	Simmons	Pending	11m	$11.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	7/31/2023	Jack	Owens	Pending	56m	$56.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	8/1/2023	Jack	Owens	Pending	47m	$47.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	8/2/2023	Jack	Owens	Pending	37m	$37.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	7/31/2023	Johnny	Roddon	Pending	2h 27m	$147.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	8/1/2023	Johnny	Roddon	Pending	2h 47m	$167.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	8/2/2023	Johnny	Roddon	Pending	2h 53m	$173.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	7/31/2023	Jordan	Smith	Pending	43m	$43.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	8/1/2023	Jordan	Smith	Pending	38m	$38.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive
☐	8/2/2023	Jordan	Smith	Pending	1h 42m	$102.00	Charge	Edit	Forgive

Learn more about late fees

Policies on Discipline

Developing clear and thoughtful policies on discipline is crucial for creating a safe and nurturing environment at your child care program. These policies should focus on promoting positive behavior, fostering social-emotional development, and providing guidance to staff and parents/guardians on discipline practices. Follow these steps to approach writing policies on discipline:

1. Positive Discipline Approach

Emphasize a positive discipline approach that focuses on teaching appropriate behavior, fostering empathy, and guiding children to make positive choices. Avoid punitive measures and instead, focus on building strong relationships with children.

> **Ceslee's Example:**
> We maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency, and firmness. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The children are explained the rules frequently, so they are all familiar with the guidelines.

2. Age-Appropriate Strategies

Recognize that discipline strategies vary based on children's developmental stages and individual needs. Specify age-appropriate methods for addressing challenging behaviors.

> *Ceslee's Example:*
> *We will use developmentally appropriate methods to address behavior issues and ensure understanding.*
>
> *Please keep in mind that there WILL be disagreements between children. Refereeing is a big part of our job! Young children have a hard time expressing their feelings. Sometimes they hit, throw toys, bite, etc. We will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends when offense involves another person, and sometimes withdraw privileges. The use of time outs will be used as a brief cooling off period for one minute per year of age of the child. Sometimes when children are fighting or throwing toys, we will put the toy in a short time out, and then bring it back into circulation a little later.*

3. Non-violent approaches

Explicitly state that physical punishment, verbal abuse, or any form of corporal punishment is strictly prohibited. Promote communication and understanding as the primary means of addressing challenging behavior.

> *Example:*
> *Our program strictly prohibits any form of physical punishment, verbal abuse, or corporal discipline. We believe in fostering open communication and understanding to address challenging behavior.*

Ceslee's Example:
Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, or name calling.

4. Behavior Support Plans

Outline the process for developing individualized behavior support plans for children who may need additional assistance with their behavior.

Example:
For children who require extra support with their behavior, our staff will work with parents/guardians to develop individualized behavior support plans. These plans will be tailored to meet each child's unique needs and strengths.

Ceslee's Example:
If a discipline problem arises that does not respond to the above-mentioned techniques, we will hold a conference with the parents. Together, we will try to find a solution. Extreme or repeat offences will be noted on a duplicate form. One sheet will be sent home and the other will be kept in your child's file. You may be called to remove your child if his/her behavior prevents us from being able to properly care for the other children. If the problem continues, other arrangements for the care of the child will have to be made, for the safety and wellbeing of all.

Policies on Biting

Dealing with biting incidents is a common challenge in child care programs. Implementing effective policies on biting is essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of all children involved. These policies should focus on prevention, response, communication, and support for both the children who bite and those who are bitten. Follow these steps to approach writing policies on biting:

1. Prevention Strategies

Outline proactive measures to prevent biting incidents. These may include staff supervision, identifying triggers, and providing alternative ways for children to express their emotions.

> **Example:**
> - *We will maintain close supervision of all children during play and social interactions to prevent biting incidents.*
> - *We will observe patterns and triggers for biting behavior and work with staff, parents, and children to address underlying causes.*

2. Responding to Biting Incidents

Establish clear procedures for responding to biting incidents. This may involve immediate intervention, offering comfort to the child who was bitten, and providing support to the child who bit.

3. Communication with Parents/Guardians

Stress the importance of open and transparent communication with parents/guardians when a biting incident occurs. Inform them of the incident, the actions taken, and any follow-up steps.

> **Example:**
> - *Parents/guardians of both children involved in a biting incident will be promptly notified by staff. We will provide a written report detailing the incident and the steps taken to address it.*
> - *Staff will work collaboratively with parents/guardians to develop strategies to prevent future biting incidents.*

4. Privacy and Confidentiality

Emphasize the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality when discussing biting incidents with parents/guardians. Ensure that any discussions related to the incident are conducted discreetly.

> **Example:**
> - *All discussions related to biting incidents will be conducted in a private and confidential manner, respecting the privacy of the children and their families.*

5. Biting Incident Documentation

Explain the importance of accurate and thorough documentation of biting incidents. Maintain records to track patterns, triggers, and response strategies.

All incidents can be reported and shared with families directly through Playground.

Example:
- *Staff will maintain detailed records of biting incidents, including the date, time, children involved, description of the incident, and actions taken.*
- *These records will be used to track patterns and inform strategies for prevention and response.*

Policies on Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is a vital aspect of a successful child care program. Implementing clear policies on parent involvement fosters collaboration, communication, and a sense of community. These policies should encourage parents to actively participate in their child's early learning journey and engage with your program. Follow these steps to approach writing policies on parent involvement:

1. **Open Communication**

   Emphasize the value of open communication between parents/guardians and your program. Outline the various channels of communication available to keep parents informed about their child's progress, upcoming events, and program updates. Encourage parents to use the **Playground app to stay up to date with announcements and updates.**

   > **Example:**
   > *We maintain open lines of communication through regular emails, newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and virtual meetings to keep parents informed about their child's development and program activities.*

2. **Parent-Teacher Conferences:**

   Establish policies for conducting parent-teacher conferences to discuss a child's progress, strengths, and areas for growth. Specify the frequency of these conferences and how they can be scheduled.

playground

> *Example:*
> *Parent-teacher conferences will be held [twice a year/quarterly], providing an opportunity for parents to discuss their child's development with teachers. Additional conferences can be scheduled upon request.*

3. Parent Volunteers

Encourage and outline the process for parent volunteers to engage in classroom activities, special events, and field trips, fostering a sense of community and support.

> *Example:*
> *Parents are encouraged to volunteer in classrooms and participate in special events and field trips. Interested parents should coordinate with the teachers to find suitable opportunities.*

Policies on Transportation and Field Trips

Transporting children and organizing field trips require careful planning and safety measures. Developing a comprehensive transportation and field trips policy helps ensure the well-being of children during off-site activities. The policy should cover permission forms, car seats, cost considerations, opt-out options, and the involvement of parent volunteers. Follow these steps to approach writing the transportation and field trips policy:

1. **Introduction to Transportation and Field Trips:**

   Begin by introducing the purpose and importance of transportation and field trips within your child care program. Emphasize your program's commitment to providing enriching experiences while prioritizing the safety of the children.

   Example:
   At [Program Name], we believe in providing educational and fun-filled experiences for our children through transportation and field trips. Safety is our top priority, and we have established guidelines to ensure that each outing is conducted with the utmost care and consideration.

2. Permission Forms

Explain the process for obtaining written permission from parents/guardians for each field trip. Include details about the required information on the permission forms and the deadline for submission. You can upload these forms onto **Playground's paperwork feature, which will allow parents to fill them out quickly and easily on the Playground app**.

> **Example:**
> *Parents/guardians will be required to provide written permission for their child to participate in each field trip. The permission forms will include important contact information, emergency medical information, and any specific considerations for the child's participation.*

3. Car Seats

Address the policy regarding the use of car seats during transportation. Specify that car seats will be provided for children when necessary, and outline how staff will ensure proper installation and usage.

> **Example:**
> *Car seats will be provided for children during transportation when needed, in accordance with state laws and regulations. Our staff will be trained in proper car seat installation and usage to ensure the safety of each child.*

4. Cost Considerations

Explain your program's approach to handling costs associated with transportation and field trips. Outline how you will communicate the cost to parents/guardians and any available financial assistance options.

Example:
The cost of each field trip will be communicated to parents/guardians in advance. We will provide information about any available financial assistance options and the deadline for payment.

Ceslee's Example:
Some field trips will cost $2-$8 per child. You will be notified about field trips requiring a fee ahead of time in the Playground app and/or in the newsletter.

5. Opt-out Options

Address the policy regarding parents/guardians who choose to opt their child out of specific field trips. Explain the process for informing your program about their decision and any alternative arrangements provided for the child during the trip.

Example:
Parents/guardians have the option to opt their child out of a specific field trip. They are required to inform the program in advance, and alternative arrangements will be made for the child's care during the trip.

6. Parent Volunteers

Outline your policy regarding parent volunteers during transportation and field trips. Specify any requirements for parent volunteers, such as background checks or training.

Example:
We welcome parent volunteers to accompany us on field trips. Parent volunteers may be required to undergo a background check and receive specific instructions on their role during the trip.

Ceslee's Example:
You are welcome to join us on field trips if you wish. Please note that if you do come you will be responsible for your child while you are there. Children act differently when their parents are around, and it makes it harder for us to care for them.

Policies on Emergencies

Preparing for emergencies and having clear policies in place is crucial to ensuring the safety and well-being of children, staff, and visitors at your child care program. These policies should cover various types of emergencies, including natural disasters, medical emergencies, and other unforeseen events. Follow these steps to approach writing policies on emergencies:

1. **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

   Develop a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan that addresses various types of emergencies. Clearly outline the procedures for handling each type of emergency, including evacuation routes and assembly points.

   > **Example:**
   > *Our child care program has an Emergency Preparedness Plan that outlines procedures for responding to different emergencies, such as fires, earthquakes, severe weather, and medical incidents. The plan includes evacuation routes and designated assembly points for each classroom.*

2. **Staff Training and Drills**

   Explain the importance of regular staff training on emergency procedures and conducting emergency drills with the children. Highlight the significance of practicing responses to ensure a swift and efficient reaction during actual emergencies.

3. Communication Protocols

Establish clear communication protocols for alerting staff, parents/guardians, and emergency services in case of an emergency. Include procedures for notifying parents/guardians about the situation and the safety of their children.

4. Medical Emergencies

Address procedures for handling medical emergencies, including administering first aid, contacting emergency medical services, and obtaining necessary medical information from parents/guardians.

> *Example:*
> *In case of a medical emergency, staff trained in first aid will provide immediate assistance. Emergency medical services will be contacted, and parents/ guardians will be notified immediately.*

5. Evacuation Plans

Provide a detailed evacuation plan that includes primary and alternate evacuation routes, as well as procedures for evacuating children with special needs.

> *Example:*
> *Our evacuation plan includes primary and alternate routes to evacuate children safely in case of an emergency. Children with special needs will be given individualized assistance as outlined in their emergency care plans.*

4. Reunification Procedure

Explain the procedure for reuniting children with their parents/guardians after an emergency has been resolved. Emphasize the need for identification verification and clear communication during reunification.

> *Example:*
> *After an emergency has been resolved, parents/ guardians will be directed to the designated reunification area. Identification verification will be required before releasing children to ensure their safety.*

Policies on TVs, iPads, Social Media, and Photography

Incorporating technology in a child care program requires thoughtful policies to ensure the appropriate use of devices and protect children's safety and privacy. These policies should address the use of television, iPads or other electronic devices, social media, and photography within your program's premises. Follow these steps to approach writing policies on TV, iPads, social media, and photography:

1. **TV and Electronic Devices Policy**

   Specify the guidelines for the use of TV and electronic devices within your child care program. Emphasize the importance of age-appropriate content and the limited use of screen time.

   Example:
   - *TV will be used sparingly and for educational purposes only. Content shown will be age-appropriate and align with our program's curriculum.*
   - *iPads and other electronic devices will be used for educational purposes only, and age-appropriate apps or software will be pre-approved by the program's educational team.*

> **Ceslee's Example:**
> - *We do watch some televisions on occasion. I do believe in limiting a child's screen time so it will not be overused. We sometimes watch child appropriate/educational programs early in the morning before everyone is here (when only one teacher is here) or more on rainy days. The full day kids may watch a short 20-30 min show to settle them down before nap time on their cots at 1:00pm.*
> - *iPads with educational games will only be used on rainy days or with OSMO as a tech program in rotations.*

2. Social Media Policy

Address the use of social media by staff and parents/guardians within the child care program. Emphasize the importance of maintaining the privacy and safety of children.

> **Example:**
> - *Staff members are prohibited from sharing images or information about children on personal social media accounts. We maintain a separate program account for sharing educational content and updates.*

3. Photography Policy

Clarify the guidelines for photography within your program, including who is authorized to take photos, where photos may be used, and how consent from parents/guardians is obtained.

playground

Example:

- *Photography of children within the program is limited to authorized staff for educational or promotional purposes. Prior written consent from parents/guardians is required before using children's photos.*

Ceslee's Example:

- *You will be asked to sign a photograph/video release form. I post pictures daily at nap time on our groups' private Facebook page and occasionally on our other social media pages. You may add grandparents or other close relatives to the private page where I post daily if you wish. Parents love to see what we do every day and what we had for lunch.*

Policies on Termination

Termination policies are essential to ensure a safe and conducive environment for all children and staff at your child care program. These policies should clearly outline the reasons for termination, the procedures to be followed, and the communication with the affected parties. Follow these steps to approach writing policies on termination:

1. **Grounds for Termination**

   Specify the reasons that may lead to termination of enrollment for a child or employment for a staff member. Ensure that these reasons align with your program's values and maintain the safety and well-being of all individuals involved.

   > *Example:*
   > *Termination of enrollment or employment may occur due to repeated violations of program policies, behavior that compromises the safety of others, or any action inconsistent with the program's mission and values.*

2. Grace Period and Notice

Specify any grace period or notice period that may be provided before the termination takes effect, allowing parents/guardians or staff members time to make alternative arrangements.

Example:
Parents/guardians will be provided with a [number of days/weeks] grace period before the termination takes effect, giving them time to find alternative child care arrangements.

Ceslee's Example:
We will give two weeks' notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether the child is in attendance or not. The provider reserves the right to give notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of the provider or other children in attendance.

Additional Policies to Consider

While we aimed to be as comprehensive as possible in compiling the policies in this handbook, we encourage you to consider your own program's unique needs as you craft your own policy handbook. Consider including additional policies that address specific scenarios relevant to your child care program's community.

The following policies, while not delved into extensively here, can offer valuable guidance and assurance in providing a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for the children in your care.

1. Custody/ Separated Families

How will you handle situations involving custody arrangements or separated families? Outline the procedures for communication and the release of the child to authorized individuals based on legal custody agreements.

> **Ceslee's Example:**
> If parents are separated and there is a shared custody agreement, please bring in a copy of the court order. Without a court order, both parties will be given access to the child, as legally required.

2. Utility Outage

What is your program's plan for managing situations when utilities such as electricity, water, or heating are temporarily unavailable? Include procedures for ensuring the safety and comfort of the children during such outages.

3. Sunscreen

What is your program's approach to sunscreen application for outdoor activities? Are parents responsible for providing sunscreen? How and when will sunscreen will be applied? Do you have any regulations regarding specific sunscreen types?

Ceslee's Example:
Please make sure to apply sunscreen to your child on hot or sunny days. I will reapply as needed throughout the day. I ask that each child bring in one bottle of spray sunscreen every summer. We share sunscreen unless your child has an allergy. Please sign sunscreen application permission form in your packet.

4. Bereavement

If you are an in-home care provider, what will you do in the event of a death in your immediate family? Should you need to take time off, how will that impact tuition payments?

Ceslee's Example:
If we have a death in our immediate family, we may take up to 3 days closed without the return of tuition. If we need more than 3 days and have used up all our sick/ personal days, you will be refunded for not charged for the extra days.

5. Mandated reporter

Clarify the responsibilities of your program's staff in reporting suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Emphasizes the importance of protecting the well-being and safety of the children in your care.

> *Ceslee's Example:*
> *Teachers and childcare providers are mandated reporters. We are required to do a mandated reporter training every year. By law, we are required to report any observed or suspected child abuse or neglect. If we fail to report, we would be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail and/or up to $1,000 fine.*

6. Open Door

If you have an open door policy, indicate that parents are welcome to visit your program at any time.

> *Ceslee's Example:*
> *We have an open-door policy. You may show up at any time! Please be respectful of nap time. If you do show up to visit you will be required to take your child with you at that time. It is hard for a child to readjust when parent comes and goes. It is easier if you text us when you are planning on picking up at a non-regular time, but you are always welcome here.*

7. House Rules

Include guidelines for behavior and conduct within your program's premises. Outline expectations for both children and adults to maintain a safe and respectful environment.

8. Damage.

Address how you will handle situations when children cause accidental damage to program property or personal belongings. Include guidelines for communication with parents and the steps for addressing such incidents.
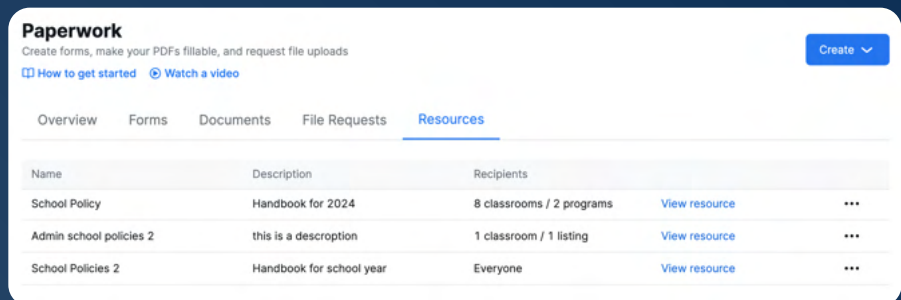
Store all your policies in Playground

With Playground, you can distribute your policy handbook, collect signatures from families, and create view-only resources that can be accessed by families at any time.

Having clearly organized and documented policies is crucial to the smooth operation of your program. Keeping them easily available for everyone to reference is important as well. Do it all with Playground.

Paperwork
Create forms, make your PDFs fillable, and request file uploads
How to get started   Watch a video

Create

Overview	Forms	Documents	File Requests	**Resources**		
Name		Description		Recipients		
School Policy		Handbook for 2024		8 classrooms / 2 programs	View resource	...
Admin school policies 2		this is a descroption		1 classroom / 1 listing	View resource	...
School Policies 2		Handbook for school year		Everyone	View resource	...

Learn more about document storage

Closing Form

At the end of your policy handbook, include a form for parents to sign that confirms their understanding of and agreement with the policies at your program.

> ***Ceslee's Form:***
> *Please return this page. Please keep the handbook somewhere safe and refer to it as needed.*
>
> I/we have read and agree to the policies in Little Friends Child Care & Preschool Handbook of Policies 2023-2024.
>
> *Childs name:* _____
>
> *Date of birth:* _____
>
> *Guardian names:* _____
>
> *Guardian 1 signature:* _____
>
> *Guardian 2 signature:* _____
>
> *Your child's contracted days/ hours are:* _____
> _____
>
> *Date:* _____

In Summary

As we reach the culmination of this policy handbook, we want to express our appreciation for the work you do as a child care provider.

While we have covered many essential policies in this guide, we also acknowledge that the child care journey is ever-evolving. We recommend editing and revising your policies each school year so that they are as up-to-date and comprehensive as possible.

As you continue to develop your program's handbook, we encourage you to tailor these policies to reflect the unique values and needs of your child care community. The more specific each policy is to your program, the better your handbook will be able to support you and and your program's success.

A special thank you to Ceslee Frost for inspiring us to create this resource, and for generously allowing us to use her policies as examples.

Sincerely,

Your friends at Playground

Playground is the all-in-one child care management software to supercharge your child care.
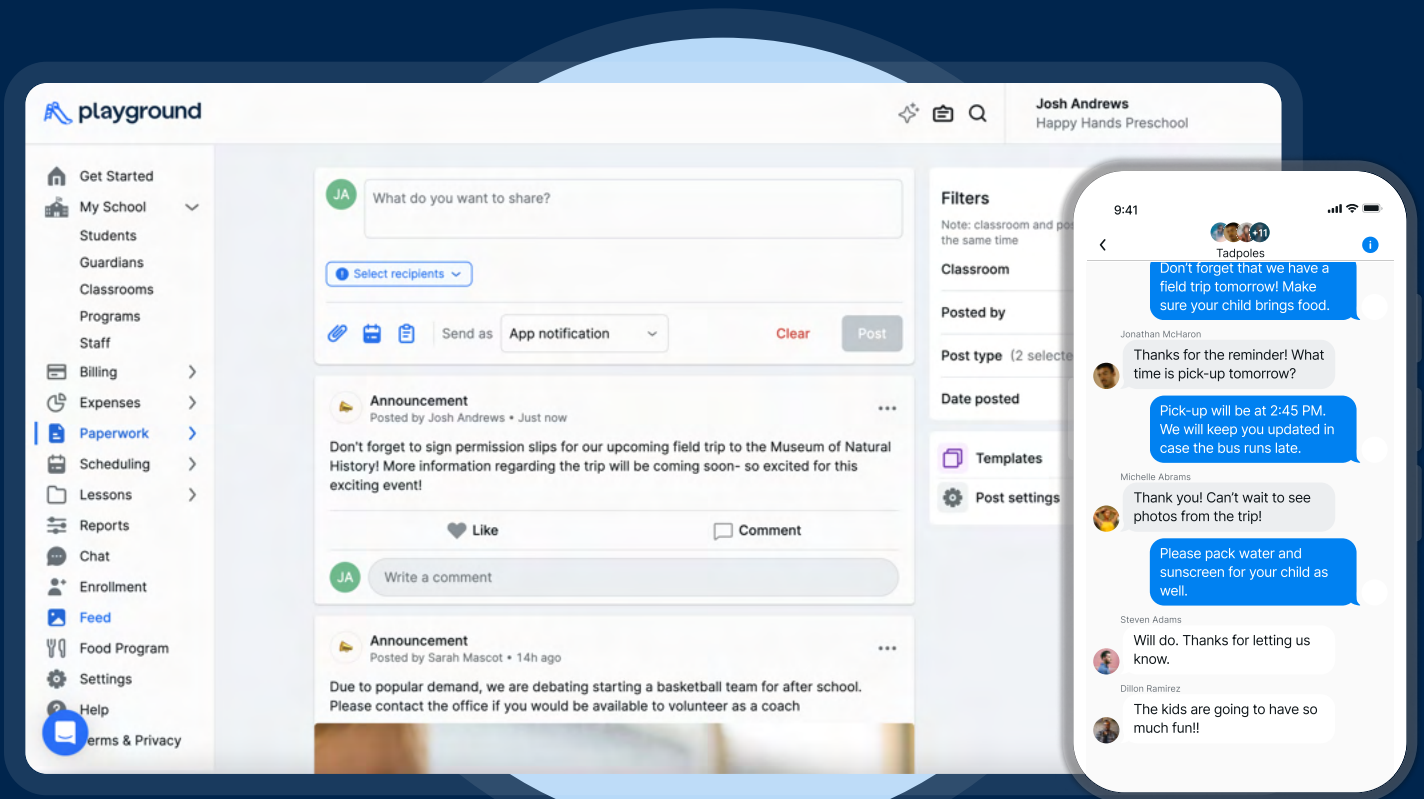
Manage billing, attendance, enrollment, communication, paperwork, reporting and more with Playground.

Request a Playground Demo

If you'd like to talk with a member of our team about using Playground, contact us at **www.tryplayground.com**

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