

Documentation of Employee Educational Requirements

Employees responsible for children in day care centers are required to have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent (usually a GED) in order to meet educational qualifications. A childcare provider's responsibility is to protect and nurture children. Their actions and behaviors reflect their ability to meet this responsibility. Age 18 is the minimal age recognized by society to make independent decisions, and a high school diploma or equivalency is a recognized indicator of basic literacy.

Staff records at day care centers are to contain documentation of how staff meets the minimum education qualifications. Until now, CCL has accepted minimal documentation to verify this requirement - usually a checkmark next to a comment of "high school diploma or GED," or possibly a documented graduation date was accepted. In order to assure new staff coming to work in child care centers (those responsible for the care of children) meet this basic requirement, CCL will begin evaluating for educational qualifications by viewing a copy of the employee's high school diploma or GED certificate that is retained in the employee's file.

Beginning November 1, 2000, all new hires to your day care facility will be required to provide you this documentation. In order to assure that current employees are meeting the same requirement, all staff hired prior to November 1, 2000 will have until November 1, 2001 to provide their employer a high school diploma or GED certificate for their employee file. This is one manner that we can begin recognizing that childcare providers are professionals and have an obligation to meet professional requirements, as with many trades in our society.

Positive Guidance Techniques

In general, focusing on helping children learn what they should do, rather than emphasizing what they did wrong, will help children learn self-control and will make the classroom run more smoothly.

A few tips:

1. Let children know clearly, specifically, and briefly what is acceptable behavior.

Use positive statements that offer information or provide brief reminders.

- "Puzzles stay on the table."
- "Keep hands away from other people's work, please."
- "Walking!"
- "Chairs are for sitting on."
- "When the blocks are on the shelf, we will go outside."

2. Positive attention is a powerful reinforcer. Teachers discover that time is well spent when children are "caught being good," and notice is given for that desired behavior. This promotes the child's self-esteem. Children learn that it is "good behavior" that gets the attention, rather than misbehavior.

- "Good walking, James. Thanks for remembering."

- “I’m happy to see that Kaitlyn is all ready to listen. She’s sitting quietly and her eyes are looking at me.” (Several children now copy Kaitlyn’s behavior.)
 - “I liked hearing you tell Maria she could have a turn on the swing, Regina. Those are friendly words.”
3. When teachers step in with **suggestions for more acceptable activities**, children are able to change direction before their behavior gets out of bounds. Redirection requires teachers be alert to situations that could become a problem and be ready to provide another alternative.
- “Let’s see how deep a hole you can dig with that shovel,” to a child who looked dangerously as if he were about to throw the sand. Or, “maybe that truck could use a hill to drive over.”
 - “Blocks are for building with, Nathan. How about using the Nerf ball for throwing? See if you can get it in the box.”
4. When children understand that **certain behaviors are not permitted**, it helps relieve them of a great deal of testing. Effective caregivers stop behaviors that are unsafe, infringe on others, or are destructive. When setting limits, reasons should be part of the limit and stated in words that children can understand. Remember to remind them of the desired behavior after sharing why the undesirable behavior is not permitted.
- “When you talk at story time, your friends who want to hear the story get interrupted. Please wait until later.”
 - “Hitting hurts, and people are sad when they get hurt. Please use words instead.”
5. When **helping children follow through on expected behavior**, caregivers have the power of deciding and defining the limits. Then, when children are given appropriate choices to choose from, they feel powerful, and are in control of their own behavior.
- “It’s time to clean up now, you may pick up the blocks by yourself, or ask a friend to help you.”
 - “It’s clean-up time now, you can pick up the large blocks or the small blocks first, which would you prefer?”
6. There are times in every child’s life when the **demands of group life can get overwhelming**. There are times when the child needs to withdraw from the situation, calm down, and get prepared to re-enter the usual routine. When considered this way, renewal time is a positive technique to help children control their feelings and behavior. Helping children learn they can return with a new frame of mind teaches self-control.
- “I think you need to do something quiet over here for a while. When you’re feeling better, you can go back to your playing.”
 - “It seems like things are bothering you a lot today. I’d like you to play by yourself until you feel more relaxed.”

When communicating with children, get on their eye level and maintain eye contact. This helps hold their attention. When giving a child instructions or redirecting, use their name as this will help gain their attention. Use a calm, direct, matter-of-fact tone. Do not shout or speak harshly. Use positive statements, rather than, “no,” “stop,” “you shouldn’t,” “don’t,” constantly. Children become discouraged if everything they are told is delivered in this manner.

Toddler Rooms



The way a room is arranged will affect children's behavior. Since children learn through play, it is important that room arrangement provide different areas to promote certain types of play.

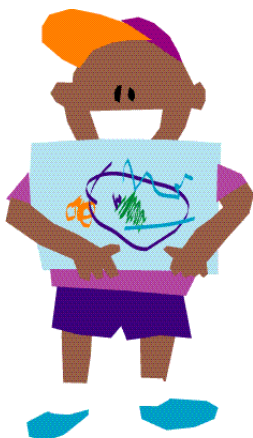
- **Pretend:** "Playing house" area that has things that represent real life experiences
- **Large motor:** Large blocks, push/pull toys, low climbing equipment
- **Quiet area:** Books, smaller blocks, stringing, sorting, and other manipulative items
- **Messy area:** Art and other sensory materials such as play dough, sand and/or water table with props

Materials should be stored at the child's level so they can make their own play choices and they don't have to depend on you to give them equipment they want. They should be able to locate, reach and return things to shelves, and can learn to do so. It helps if toys and equipment are orderly, with a place for everything. Small storage bins with the same type objects are helpful, rather than a large "toy box" for everything.

Toddlers cannot be expected to participate with group activities for long. It is best to interact with small groups in an "invited activity" so others who are not interested are able to choose another activity that interests them, and is already available because of a good room set-up.

Toddlers are active and curious. They are driven to make sense of their world. They are very interested in "physical knowledge" which means the movement of objects, and the effect of one object on another. Toddlers need to be able to see what happens and the action needs to be immediate. Experimentation with their own hands keeps toddlers engaged. They are often considered "stuffer inners" or "pouder outers," so keep a variety of containers and objects available for this use.

Adding "Reading and Writing" Opportunities to Preschool and Toddler Classrooms



- A small paper pad to "write" grocery lists and "take food orders" in the pretend/home center
- A used telephone book in the home center
- Cover a tabletop with butcher paper and have markers available for children to "write" and draw
- When a child has drawn a picture, ask them to tell you about it, and label the picture with a few of the words they used, and ask the child for permission before writing on his creation
- A small child-sized swimming pool with a few pillows and a basket of books set-up

Supervision of Children in Child-Care

Licensing cannot stress enough the importance of child-care providers supervising the children in their care. This goes beyond simply “watching the children” according to the definition located in the day care center and group day care center standards, supervision means:

- Care for a group of children;
- Includes awareness of and responsibility for the ongoing activity of each child;
- It requires physical presence, knowledge of activity requirements and children’s needs, and accountability for their care;
- This includes staff intervention when needed.
- The registered family home standards state children should be supervised by an adult who is able to take care of them and in a way that ensures the caregiver is aware of what the children are doing at all times and can assist or redirect activities when necessary.

Child-care providers are held to a higher level of responsibility since they are caring for other people’s children. Some changes coming with additions to the Texas Family Code (abuse and neglect) may greatly impact the child-care community.

The definitions for facilities are expanding with “neglect” as an act or omission that causes or may cause emotional harm or substantial physical injury. You can see where many circumstances of not properly supervising children could lead to endangering situations for children, which could be defined as “neglect.” A finding of abuse or neglect could have an impact on the person’s ability to work in child-care settings.

Take this opportunity to review the importance of supervision of children in your care, not only for your own protection, but also for the safety and well-being of children.