



CHILD DEVELOPMENT HOMES










POLICY GUIDE

This policy guidebook offers suggestions of items to think about when creating policies for your family child care business. All you have to do is delete the guidance and add your policies. This is just a guide to help you get started!

All topic contents bookmarked for easy reference to document. Find the latest version of this guidebook on our website: www.iowaccrr.org



Policies required for ChildNet Certification are indicated with 
Policies required for Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®) are indicated with 

| Topics | Page |
|--|-------------|
| <u>Introduction</u> | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover Sheet  • Table of Contents | |
| <u>Qualifications</u> | 4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write an Introduction/Qualifications • Mandatory Reporter | |
| <u>Business Practices</u> | 5 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Statement  • Registration Information • Hours/Days of Operation • Fees • Rules of the Home | |
| <u>Family</u> | 7 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation  • Confidentiality  • Parent Communication  • Children's Arrival and Parent's Departure • Sign In/Sign Out   • Attendance • Authorization to Pick-up Child • Photo/Media Release | |

Health and Safety 10

- Health Related Emergencies
- Immunization Policy
- Illness
- Medication 
- Handwashing Policy
- Oral Health  
- Reporting and Documenting Injuries, Accidents and Emergencies 
- Emergency Procedures
- Missing Child  
- Strangulation Prevention  










Routine Care 14

- Meals and Snacks
- Nap and Rest Time
- Safe Sleep  


Guidance and Discipline 16

- Discipline/Behavior  
- Eliminates or Severely Limits Suspension and/or Expulsion  
- Development Monitoring Tool  

Environments 18

- Supervision  
- Inclusive Practices  
- Playground Equipment Stability and Fall Surfacing & Inspection  
- Water Hazards
- Tobacco-Free and Nicotine-Free  
- Pets 

Activities 21

- Daily Schedule 
- Curriculum Overview
- Screen Time/Digital Media Use 
- Outdoor Play
- Field Trips 
- Transportation

Cover Sheet

A cover sheet is more than just a pretty “face” for your program. It is an effective marketing tool, too. As families leave the enrollment visit with your document, they will be carrying with them your information, almost like a mini-bulletin board. This in turn gets your business information out into the streets and maybe into the hands of a long-term client!

Things you may want to include:

- Your business name/Your name
- Contact information (i.e. name, address, phone number, email address, website, etc.)
- Logo (if applicable)

Table of Contents

To eliminate extra time in flipping through pages to find a specific policy, including a table of contents with page numbers will not only save families time and energy, it can also make referencing and updating a snap for you!

Write an Introduction/Qualifications

Writing an introduction to your policy book is a great way to inform parents of your qualifications and help them stay connected with your program. This will help you create a partnership with families from the start.

Things you may want to include:

- A welcome statement.
- A statement on why it is important to read the information.
- Information about your education, previous child care experience, professional associations you belong to, credentials, certifications or accreditations you may hold.
- How you can help in accessing translation services or assistance in reading the document upon request.

Mandatory Reporter

Above all else, it is your obligation to make sure all children in your care are safe. By sharing this with families right away they will understand your legal obligation and your commitment to children's wellbeing.

Things you may want to include:

- A statement that you are a mandatory reporter
- The Child Abuse Hotline number
- The process for reporting a suspected case of child abuse

Mission Statement

A well-defined and brief mission statement will inform the families and community how you will enhance the lives of the children in your care. It will also serve as a reminder and focus to why you were drawn to child care in the future.

Things you may want to include:

- The purpose of your program
- Unique qualities your program offers
- The direction your program will grow

Registration Information

Keeping families informed of your regulatory requirements shows your willingness to be in compliance with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulation requirements and your commitment to keeping all children safe. It also shows that you will be open and transparent about what happens in your program.

Things you may want to include:

- HHS ratio requirements. (see certificate)
- Number and ages of children you will personally care for at one time. (If different from HHS ratio)
- A note that you do not deny enrollment on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age or disability.
- What forms are required by HHS and when they need to be updated.
 - A statement that paperwork is required on the child's first date of attendance unless the family falls under the definition of "Homelessness".
 - Also include that all required paperwork will need to be updated annually.

Hours/Days of Operation

One way to promote your program is to create business hours and days you will be closed that might stand out from other programs. This practice will also make your expectations known before the family brings their child to your care.

Things you may want to include:

- Hours of operation (include days and times)
- Days your program will be closed for holidays and vacations
- Special annual events
- Ability and how to contact the child care business outside of operation hours
- Emergency/substitute care

Fees

Since you already sign a contract with families and give them a copy, they should have all the necessary payment information in one place. By including fees in your policy book, you are showing the importance of your fee schedule and providing a second reference point.

Things you may want to include:

- List rates, fees and payment schedule
 - A blank line to write in each families' unique payment amount
 - Late pick up and how families will be charged
 - Late payment fees and how families will be charged

 - Service fee for late payment or bounced check
- Payment Policy
 - When tuition fees are due
 - Types of payments that are accepted (i.e. electronic funds transfer, credit card, check, etc.)
- Probationary Period/Termination Policy
 - Explain your probationary period
 - Explain your termination policy

Rules of the Home

If you have special rules you have created with your family or have certain family traditions that you hold in high regard, you need to share these expectations to create a better understanding for the parents and children coming into your home.

Things you may want to include:

- Visitors
 - An explanation that parents are welcome at any time (open door policy) and due to safety reasons, you need to know who is coming and may keep the door locked during the day.
 - If program has a security system, explain the security door protocol and questioning unknown visitors.
- When shoes should be removed
- Which door to use
- Religious activities or traditions
- Celebrating milestones
- Toilet learning
 - What are your practices are for toilet learning? Do you start at a certain age or when the child shows interest? Do the families need to bring extra clothing? What should the families do at home?
- Extra clothing
 - Explain that families are responsible for providing extra clothing (appropriate size and for season) for each child in case they become soiled.
- Toys from home

Orientation

Starting off in building a strong relationship with families begins from the first time you meet. Good communication with parents is one the easiest ways to do that and it begins at the first meeting. By having a standard plan for sharing information and important facts about your program before children start care, will establish effective communication practices for both parties from the beginning. It also helps to have a general agenda for families to be able to follow as you discuss these items. Why not have it all in one document?

Things you may want to include:

- Definition of orientation and what families can expect
- Expectations for interactions between you and the family
- Important business information (i.e. fees, hours of operation, etc.)
- Important policies
- Important events

Confidentiality

Practicing this policy assures families that you value their privacy and follow ethical business practices increasing their trust in your parent/provider relationship.

Things you may want to include:

- Agencies/people allowed to see child files.
- Method of informing parents of incidents.
- Let families know you won't share information about their child/family without permission.

Parent Communication

Keeping parents involved in your daily program helps partnerships grow and helps children feel secure. Regular communication is the key to your success and will make those harder conversations easier for all. There are several methods you can try to encourage parental involvement. Some examples are below.

Things you may want to include:

- Daily Communication
 - Identify types of parent communication that will be used in the child care home. (i.e. bulletin board, text, face-to-face, etc.)
 - Share how you will communicate with parents about individual needs of children.
- Newsletters and Other Forms of Communication
 - Explain how and when information will be communicated.
- Parent/Provider Conferences

- If your child care offers parent/provider conferences please list approximate times of the year you conduct them.
- Parent Input
 - Include information regarding becoming more involved with the child care business.
- Grievance Procedure
 - Explain your process for handling complaints/concerns.

Children’s Arrival and Parent’s Departure

Arrival and departure from child care can be an uncomfortable feeling for some children. To assist with these times, offering families tips through your policy book can benefit everyone involved. You’re also showing your willingness to partner with families to make everyone feel successful.

Things you might want to include:

- Suggestions on successfully dropping children off and successfully picking children up.
- Procedure for arrival and departure. (i.e. walking child into child care, helping them with their coats, helping them wash their children’s hands, no cell phone rule, verbal exchange with provider required, sign in sheet, etc.)
- Explain what happens if the child does not arrive when scheduled.
- Guidance for parents on arrival for children in infant car seats as well as any outerwear upon arrival.
- Share expectation for parent’s use of car seats including securing the car seat safety straps unless program is transporting the child.

Sign In/Sign Out

IQ4K® Level 1 Environment

A sign in/sign out system helps to maintain a secure environment for children and staff. It also provides a means to contact visitors if needed or to ensure all individuals in the building are evacuated in case of an emergency.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- A daily attendance record listing the times of arrival/departure of the child as well as the person dropping off and picking up.
- A sign in/sign out process for visitors that includes time in/out, name, reason for visit and contact information.
- Notification to parent/guardian in a timely manner (within one hour) if there is no communication from the parent/guardian about the child’s absence.

Attendance

You can help families understand the importance of ratio and keeping you informed of their work/school schedules to help you be successful. Not only will you know when they will be expected, but if a parent doesn’t call-in or show-up in a reasonable amount of time, you can reach out to make sure that everyone is safe.

Things you may want to include

- Attendance

- Consider if you will require families to still pay for any days children do not attend a scheduled child care day.
- Share what day of the week schedules are due.
- Explain how to notify provider if child will not be in care on a particular day.
- Part-time Schedules
 - When schedules due, if at all possible try to match part-time schedules from separate families to create a full time slot, as this will eliminate revenue loss.
 - If applicable, how many days can be used a week before a full-time rate is charged?
- Changing Schedule
 - Explain advance notice expectations for any change in schedule ahead of time. This allows you to decide the timeline and if the change will interfere with ratio or programing.
 - What to do when there is inclement weather or emergency school closings.
 - Consult your HHS required Emergency Preparedness plan to ensure you are giving the families the same information.
 - Procedures for when the schools are closed for inclement weather or emergencies.
- Back Up Care
 - Share when families need to have alternate care or if you provide it for others.
 - When is this utilized? (i.e. inclement weather, emergencies, vacations, etc.)

Authorization to Pick Up Child

In order to ensure safety of children you need a current list of who is authorized to pick up children. By having this authorization information in your policies and explaining why it's needed, families are more likely to keep this information up-to-date.

Things you may want to include:

- A statement that children will only be released to persons the parents have listed on the appropriate documents.
- Explain process to release children to adults not on "the list".
- Share when it may be necessary to have a legal custodial agreement on file.
- Explain procedure taken if person picking up is impaired due to alcohol/drug use.

Photo/Media Release

Before you share your daily activities on your favorite social media platform or through text messages, you should have a written permission form on file for all children to have their picture taken. This is to ensure children stay safe while in your care and respecting the family's right to confidentiality.

Things you may want to include:

- Describe times that pictures may be taken and how they will be used.
- Statement indicating children's pictures will not be used without signed permission from parents.
- How pictures are used regarding all social media.

Health Related Emergencies

This policy is one of two required policies per the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations. You must have a written policy outlining the procedures and actions you will take in the event of a health-related emergency.

Things you may want to include:

- First aid measures
- Contacting emergency medical services
- Transporting of an ill or injured child
- Contacting parents of and ill or injured child
- Care for the other children in your program during the emergency (i.e. Do you have a HHS approved substitute or do you close your business in the event of an emergency?)

Immunization Policy

It is required to have current immunizations for every child in your care, unless you have a completed waiver for medical or religious reasons.

Things you may want to include:

- Explain that children are required to be up-to-date with their immunizations and parents are expected to provide their child's immunization record.
- If child is unimmunized, the program is advised to consult an attorney.
- Share when exemption forms can be used and where the forms are located.

Illness

This is the second required policy per the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations. This policy outlines the steps you take if a child becomes ill while in your care or if you care for ill children. The policy may also address the event of a parent bringing an ill child to care. Your policy should be based on your skills, knowledge and comfort level of caring for an ill child. You have the authority to determine when a child is too ill to be in your home. When considering caring for an ill child, you must consider the well-being of all children in your care.

Things you may want to include:

- Signs and symptoms of illness to help determine if a child should stay in care or be excluded. (Refer to the Healthy Child Care Iowa website.)
- Methods for keeping parents informed about the health of their child.
- Record keeping practices that document the ill child's status during the day. (i.e. a notebook to record temperature, instances of vomiting or loose stools, etc.)

- Special comfort measures you are willing to take for an ill child (i.e. offering soft or bland foods, a quiet supervised rest area, giving medications, etc.)

Medication

At times you may need to give medications to children in your care. Having a policy will help families understand you have guidelines to follow when handling medication and distributing medication to children.

Things you may want to include:

- Explain your medication policy thoroughly. Registration through the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requires written parental permission to give prescription or over-the-counter medication. Written permission and instructions from a health care provider and the child's parent are recommended to be obtained to administer prescription and over-the-counter medications.
- Explain to parents that medication should be given to the child care provider and should not be left in diaper bags/backpacks or placed in cubbies. Registration requires that medication be properly stored or inaccessible to children.
- Written parental permission is required to apply any over-the-counter products. (i.e. sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream/ointment, etc.)
- Proper documentation is kept whenever you administer any kind of medication.

Handwashing Policy

Handwashing stops the spread of germs and illnesses in your child care home. Parents can be reassured that you are doing your best to help children stay healthy so children are able to stay in care while their parents are not available.

Things you may want to include:

- List all times children and adults are required to wash hands.

Oral Health

IQ4K® Level 3 Environment

Good oral hygiene is important for all children. Oral health activities at home may not suffice to develop the skill of proper tooth brushing or accomplish the necessary plaque removal, especially when children eat most of their meals and snacks during a full day in child care.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- Contact information for each child's dentist - resource list for children without a dentist.
- Implementation of daily tooth brushing (i.e. toothbrushes are not worn, frayed, etc.) or rinsing the mouth with water after eating.
- Use of sippy cups and bottles only at mealtimes and not at nap times.
- Promotion of healthy foods per the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- Age appropriate oral health educational activities.

- Plan of handling dental emergencies.

Reporting and Documenting Injuries, Accidents and Emergencies

Reporting injuries to parents and the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) when required is a HHS regulation, too. Informing parents how you will keep them informed any time there is an injury, accident or emergency will help them know what to expect when this occurs.

Things you may want to include:

- A statement that you will document all injuries that require first aid or medical assistance using an [Injury Report](#) form.
- Share when the form will be completed (should be the same day).
- How it will be shared with parents, and where it will be stored.
- The Iowa definition of “serious injury” and the procedure for reporting to HHS.
- What the signed [Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization](#) form is and where it will be stored for each child in care.

Emergency Procedures

Knowing what you are going to do in the event of an emergency comforts parents while they are away from their children. By including an emergency procedure in your policies, parents can be reassured that they will be fully informed in the event of an emergency.

Things you may want to include:

- List how often fire and tornado drills occur and where the records of the drills are kept.
- Share procedures for fire, tornado and all emergency events that could potentially occur at your home.
- List procedures for lock-down and lock-outs.
- Explain where your point of evacuation will be in the event of an emergency and how parents can contact you if this situation should occur.
- Share that an emergency preparedness plan is available on site or include your emergency preparedness plan in your policy book.

Missing Child

IQ4K® Level 1 Environment

Children are inquisitive and like to test their skills and abilities. Providers/teachers/staff use their knowledge of each child’s development and abilities to anticipate what they will do and when to redirect them when necessary. The program should have a written plan for a missing child event.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- Notification to parent/guardian, local authorities/law enforcement, HHS, location of where child was last seen.
- Completion of incident report.

- Prevention measures the program has in place such as matching shirts for field trips, staff count children frequently with name to face count, completing drills for lost child, talk to older children about what to do if they become separated from the group.
- Procedure for identified staff to perform search of facility (i.e. building, home, vehicle, playground, field trip location, etc.) in which children are leaving, to be sure no child is overlooked.

Strangulation Prevention

IQ4K® Level 1 Environment

Infants and young children have been injured and died from unintentional strangulation. Eliminating strangulation hazards helps keep infants and children safe

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- String and cords long enough to encircle a child's neck will not be accessible.
- Window blinds and draperies will not have looped cords. Tension or tie-down devices will be installed as appropriate to hold cords tight.
- Dramatic play items with handles or straps will be removed or shortened. Ties, scarves, necklaces and boas for dramatic play will only be used by children under the age of three when directly supervised.
- Pacifiers attached to strings/ribbon will not be used.
- Parents will be asked to remove hood and neck strings from all children's clothing.
- If lanyards are used by older children and staff, they will be the break-away type.

Meals and Snacks

Part of making parents comfortable is making sure their children are properly fed with nutritious and healthy meals and snacks throughout the day.

Things you may want to include:

- Give explanation of how meals are prepared (onsite or catered).
- How you ensure food supplied meets Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements.
- How you offer nutritious varied diets according to the children enrolled.
- Children are encouraged to eat, no coercion or force feeding.
- List times of meals. Consider adding when children need to be dropped off by in order to receive meals.
- Discuss how food allergies will be handled including birthdays and special occasions.
- Discuss hand washing rules.
- Discuss procedures for sanitizing food contact surfaces. (i.e. tables, counters, highchair trays, etc.)
- Discuss how food will be served for mixed/various age groups.
- Discuss rules for food brought from home.
- Explain water will be available at all times.

Nap and Rest Time Policy

It is important that children are given the rest they need throughout the day. Parents need to be aware of health and safety procedures during rest times.

Things you may want to include:

- List rest time requirements for nap.
- Monitoring/checking on sleeping children.
- What will children use for naps? (i.e. mat, blanket, items from home, etc.)
- Discuss options for non-nappers.
- Whose responsibility will it be to wash nap items weekly.
- Infants are allowed to sleep on demand and will follow safe sleep practices.

Safe Sleep

IQ4K® Level 1 Environment

Safe Sleep practices aim to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) that could occur during all sleep. All child care programs who care for infants should follow these required safe sleep practices.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- Explanation that infants 12 months and under are placed on their back (supine position) for all sleep and that infants under 4 months of age that roll will be gently rolled back to their backs during sleep.
- Describe sleep environment for infants in program. At a minimum address the following: firm mattress, one infant per crib, no blankets, no swaddling, tight fitting sheet, nothing else in the crib and temperature of room.
- Explanation of procedure for immediately moving an infant that arrives at program asleep or falls asleep outside of safe sleep environment while in care.
- Explanation that program cannot sleep a child in another position without waiver from child's primary physician requiring as such for medical need. The waiver must have an expiration date.
- Explain how supervision at all times, of sight and sound, is maintained for sleeping infants.
- Explain programs procedures for sanitary and safe cribs (i.e. change bedding, label cribs with infant's name and ability, manufacturer certificate on file, etc.)
- Procedures for removing hazards that the child may be wearing (i.e. bibs, hoodies, pacifier clips, etc.).
- Explanation of how programs' procedures/policy are shared with staff and parents.

Discipline/Behavior

IQ4K® Level 1 Environment

Providers/teachers/staff should help guide children to develop self-control and appropriate behaviors to promote positive relationships with peers and adults. Guidance should be an ongoing process to help children develop self-management skills and appropriate social-emotional behavior.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- What developmentally appropriate guidance is used by your program?
- How does your discipline/behavior policy support positive child-child and child-adult relationships? (i.e. teaches the child self-regulation, coping skills, etc.)
- Explanation of how this policy is communicated with parents and staff.
- Explanation how your staff will implement the policy.

Eliminates or Severely Limits Suspension and/or Expulsion

IQ4K® Level 1 Environment

Suspension and expulsions refer to:

- In-program suspensions that involve removing a child from a classroom or from activities that include the other children.
- Out-of-program suspensions that remove a child from the program in the short-term or place restrictions on the time a child may attend the program.
- Any dismissal of a child from a program permanently at the request of the program's staff.
- "Soft expulsions" in which program practices encourage parents or other family members to voluntarily terminate services.

The rate of expulsion in child care programs has been estimated to be as high as one in every thirty-six children enrolled. Expulsions prevent children from receiving potentially beneficial mental health services and deny the child the benefit of continuity of quality early education and child care services.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- Explain how your program determines children's needs. (i.e. parent report, review of child's physical, behavior reports, etc.)
- How the program will document and communicate concerns with the family.
- How the program will support staff when a concern is shared with leadership. (i.e. director, lead teacher, internal PBIS coach, etc.)

- What services, modifications and resources will program access to support child, family and staff? (i.e. AEA, CCNC, room arrangement, etc.)
- Reasons why a child may be considered for suspension or expelled from program.
- If a child should need to leave the program, what procedures are in place for a transition plan?

Development Monitoring Tool

Utilizing a developmental monitoring tool ensures parents that you are assisting children with meeting their appropriate milestones. By sharing your implementation of the tool, you are allowing parents to see that their child's development is important to you. It will also provide data in case additional evaluation and intervention strategies are needed early on.

Things you may want to include:

- Which approved developmental screening tool do you use?
- The tool will be utilized for all children in care within 60 days of enrollment.
- The tool will be utilized for all children in care annually or your set frequency amount.
- The tool will be used to identify children's milestone achievements and help identify if additional evaluation and/or intervention strategies are needed.

Supervision

IQ4K® Level 1 Environment

Supervision is basic to safety and the prevention of injury and maintaining quality child care.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- Explain how staff are trained on procedures program has in place to promote active supervision. (i.e. no cell phones, where staff space themselves, etc.)
- How is active supervision maintained during play, outdoors, basic care routines and transitions. (i.e. toileting/diapering, meals, rest time, etc.)
- Provider/teacher/staff account for all children with name-to-face recognition by visually identifying each child.
- If applicable, active supervision procedures for leaving the program. (i.e. transportation, field trips, etc.)
- “Touch-supervision” around bodies of water.

Inclusive Practices

IQ4K® Level 3 Teaching and Learning

All children should be included in all activities. By being included, children with special needs develop increased social skills and self-esteem; families of children with special needs gain social support; children and families without special needs become more understanding and accepting of differences and disabilities; providers/teachers/staff learn from working with children, families and service providers and develop skills in individualizing care for all children. Your programs’ policies and procedures should address inclusive practices for children with diverse needs, including those with identified disabilities, dual language learners, identified behavioral needs and/or specialized health needs. Consider how your policies align with the Americans with Disabilities Act. www.ada.gov/childqanda.htm

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- Describe how your program will meet individual needs of children.
- How will your program obtain specialized training to meet the needs of children?
- How will your program partner with parents and specialists to support children?
- Where your program keeps a copy of the child’s care plan (i.e. IFSP, IEP, health needs plan, etc.) to implement as required to support meaningful participation.

Playground Equipment Stability and Fall Surfacing & Inspection

IQ4K® Level 1 Environment

Active play areas are associated with the most frequent and the most severe injuries in child care. Nearly 60 percent of all injuries that result in litigation list lack of maintenance as the primary cause of injury. Properly installed, inspected and maintained equipment, adequate fall surfacing, along with active supervision helps to ensure the safety of the playground

environment.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- Explanation of how staff are trained in playground safety measures.
 - Playground equipment is installed according to manufacturer's instructions including anchoring.
 - Explanation of how adequate fall surfacing is maintained (see [Caring For Our Children, Appendix Z](#))
 - Procedure for completing routine (daily-weekly) inspection of the playground environment.
 - Missing or broken parts.
 - Protrusion of nuts and bolts.
-
- Rust and chipping or peeling paint.
 - Sharp edges, splinters, and rough surfaces.
 - Stability of handholds.
 - Visible cracks.
 - Stability of non-anchored large play equipment. (i.e. playhouses, etc.)
 - Wear and deterioration.
 - Safety hazards such as broken bottles and toys, discarded cigarettes, stinging insect nests and packed surfacing under frequently used equipment like swings and slides.
 - Fall surfacing is at the required depth in all use zones.
 - Explain the process of how identified hazards are handled and corrected.

Water Hazards

There are many types of water hazards and parents should be aware of your policies regarding such things as pools, ponds, etc. Having parents follow your guidelines will help the safety of children by modeling proper behavior around water features.

Things you may want to include:

- Statement that shares requirements to get parent permission.
- Encouragement to share a description of your child's swimming ability in writing before I will allow your child to use the swimming area.
- List all types of water play provided at the child care program. (i.e. swimming, wading, sprinklers, field trips to pools, etc.)
- Your role during pool time and where children will be in relation to your location.

Tobacco-Free and Nicotine-Free

IQ4K® Level 2 Environment

Children should not be exposed to tobacco, nicotine, electronic cigarettes and vaping in child care. No children, especially those with respiratory problems, should be exposed to additional risk from the air they breathe. Infants and young children exposed to secondhand smoke are at risk of severe asthma, respiratory infections and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

At a minimum, address the following in your written policy:

- At all times, tobacco, nicotine, electronic cigarettes and vaping are prohibited inside of the program, on the grounds (to include employee's vehicles while at work) and in any vehicles used to transport children.
- Providers/teachers/staff are prohibited from wearing clothing that smells of smoke when working.

Pets

It is common that many home child care programs have family pets. Since pets are family members too, parents and their children need to be introduced to your pets. To help families identify the proper way to approach your pet and the health status of your animals, it will make the introduction a little easier.

Things you may want to include:

- Types of pets that live in your home.
- When and how pets are properly immunized.
- Efforts you put forth to make sure the kitchen/eating area is free of pets.
- A statement to reassure families that children will not be required to feed or clean-up after the pets.

Daily Schedule ■

Schedules involve the timing of your daily activities. This reassures parents that there are predictable schedules that help children feel secure in their learning environment.

Things you may want to include:

- Copy of your daily schedule.
- It is recommended you explain that infants and toddlers' schedules are very individual-based and are used as more of a guideline.
- The daily routine fosters development of good health habits, self-discipline, adequate indoor/outdoor play, rest/sleep with time and opportunity for various experiences.

Curriculum Overview

Curriculum are activities a child care program implements throughout the day. This reassures families that there will be plenty of learning in your care.

Things you may want to include:

- If you use a particular curriculum, please explain it here.
- It is a good idea to share your philosophy of how children learn.
- The program provides written daily routine of individual or small group activities appropriate to age and needs of children.
- The program should include activities that foster social, intellectual, emotional and physical growth.
- List any additional activities your child care program offers.

Screen Time/Digital Media Use ■

Both screen time and digital media can be great learning tools when used appropriately and with set limitations that are both developmentally and age appropriate for the children in your care. Utilizing the guidance from *Caring for Our Children* 2.2.0.3, we find that neither of these items should be used with children under age 2 and should be limited to 1 hour for children 2 to 5 years of age. Including this policy, you can communicate with parents that children need to have experiences beyond screen time and your program will help make that happen.

Things you may want to include:

- Types of media available to children.
- The amount of time children have access.
- Age of children who are encouraged to participate.
- How content is selected.

- When media/screen time is offered during your child care program schedule.
- Communication with family.
- Staff responsibility of use of personal media during child care hours.

Outdoor Policy

Growing children need outdoor time to practice their large muscle movements and explore nature. Having policies around outdoor play/learning helps ensure children will come prepared with appropriate outdoor clothing.

Things you may want to include:

- List your outdoor policy according to the day's outdoor temperature. National Standards should be included and followed.
- It is extremely important to explain to families the importance of children having outdoor play time on a daily basis.
- Explain that parents are responsible for providing weather appropriate clothing and shoes for active outdoor play.

Field Trips

When you are taking a child away from your home, it can be intimidating or scary to families. You can reassure them that you have a solid plan in place to keep children safe when you will be away from your program.

Things you may want to include:

- Policy and procedures for walks.
- Share policy for periodic field trips including the permission slip policy, safety procedures and explain how fees for the field trip will be handled.
- Explain how children will be transported to/from field trips.
- Parent involvement can be mentioned to help keep parents active in their child's program.

Transportation

Parents want to know their children are safe at all times in your care. It is especially intimidating to know someone is transporting their child for any reason. In order to comfort the parents, it is very important to explain your policy regarding transportation. Even if you do not regularly transport, you may have to in an emergency.

Things you may want to include:

- Detailed steps you will take to ensure ratio and that all children are accounted before, during and after each trip.
- Ensure that all traffic laws will be followed.
- Share that the driver will have a valid driver's license, car insurance and is at least 18 years old.
- All child restraints will be used appropriately and will be age appropriate.