

PARENT INFORMATION

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of child care centers (including nursery schools), and school age child care programs.

These regulations, 102 CMR 7.00, establish minimum standards for operation of group child care and school age child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (child care program owner) in regard to their work with parents. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities follows.

Parental Input. The licensee must appropriately involve parents of children in care in visiting the program, meeting with the staff and receiving reports of their children's progress. The program must have a procedure for allowing you to give input and make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not they will be implemented.

Meeting with parents. In group child care programs, the licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee meets with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the program. The parents shall have an opportunity to visit the program's classrooms at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child. In school age programs, the licensee shall provide an opportunity for the parent(s) and child to visit the program and meet the staff before the child's enrollment.

Parent Information. The licensee must provide to the parents upon admission of their child the program's written statement of purpose, including the program philosophy, goals and objectives, and the characteristics of children served; information on the administrative organization of the program, including lines of authority and supervision; the program's behavior management policy; the program's plan for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, education and medical services for children; the termination and suspension policy; a list of nutritious foods to be sent for snacks or meals; the program's policy and procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect; the procedures for emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy; the program's transportation plan; the procedure for administration of medication, and, upon request, a copy of the complete health care policy; a copy of the fee schedule, and in school age child care, the procedures for on-going parent communication. All of this information may be contained in a "Parent Handbook".

Parent Conferences. The licensee must make staff available for individual conferences with parents at your request.

Progress Reports. At least every six (6) months the licensee should meet with you to discuss your child's activities and participation in the program. The licensee will prepare a written progress report for your child, will provide a copy to you, and will maintain a copy of the report in your child's file. If your child is an infant or a child with disabilities, you should receive a written progress report at least every three (3) months. Program staff must bring special problems or significant developments, particularly if they regard infants, to your attention as soon as they arise.

Parent Visits. You have the right to visit the center and your child's room at any time while your child is present.

Children's Records. Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. Program staff may not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

Access to your child's record. You are entitled to have access to your child's record at reasonable times on request. You must have access to the record within two (2) business days of your request unless you consent to a