

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Early Education and Care

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT 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 family child care, small group and school age and large group and school age child care.

These regulations, 606 CMR 7.00, establish standards for operation of family child care, small group and school age and large group and school age child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (program owner) in regard to their work with families. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities are identified below.

Family Involvement. The following 606 CMR 7.08 requirements apply to all programs, including family child care, small group and school age and large group and school age child care. Additional requirements for family child care are found at 606 CMR 7.08(9). Additional requirements for small group and school age and large group and school age child care are found at 606 CMR 7.08(10).

The licensee must support and encourage a partnership with and the involvement of parents in the early education and care of their children.

Parent Communication. The licensee must develop a mechanism for and encourage ongoing communication with parents, and must be able to communicate effectively with families whose primary language is not English or who require alternative communication methods.

Parent Input. The licensee must have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of program policies, which may include, but need not be limited to a suggestion box and individual or group parent meetings.

Parent Visits. The licensee must permit and encourage unannounced visits by parents to the program and/or to their child's room at any time while their child is present.

Enrollment Meeting. The licensee must provide an opportunity for and encourage parents to meet with the program administrator or his/her designee prior to admitting a child to the program.

- The licensee must offer children and parents an orientation to the program.
- The licensee must provide an opportunity for parent(s) and children to visit the program and meet educators before the child is enrolled.

- The licensee must seek information about each child's and family's interests and needs.
- To support transitions and coordinate with services offered by other providers, the educators must request that parents share with them information about other therapeutic, educational, social and support services received by the child.
- For children younger than school age, educators must discuss each child's developmental history with his or her parents at the time of enrollment. The developmental history must be updated annually and maintained in the child's record.

Written Information for Parents. The licensee must provide the following information to families in writing prior to enrollment of their child:

- notification that parents are welcome to visit the program unannounced at any time while their child is present; and that input from and communication with parents is encouraged;
- the frequency of children's progress reports;
- the program's policy regarding administration of medication;
- the procedures for meeting potential emergencies;
- the transportation plan;
- a program calendar noting closed days and hours of operation;
- the program's fee schedule, including any fees for late payment, late pick-up, field trips, special materials, etc;
- the program's plan to provide positive and consistent guidance to children based on their individual needs and development;
- the program's criteria for excluding children from care due to serious illnesses, contagious diseases and reportable diseases in conformance with regulations and recommendations set by the Division of Communicable Disease Control, Department of Public Health;
- information regarding SIDS risk reduction practices, including the practice of sleeping infants on their backs;
- the procedures relating to children's records;
- notice that child educators are mandated reporters and must, by law, report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families;
- notice that the program is licensed by EEC, including the telephone number and address of the EEC regional office responsible for the program;
- a statement that parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's regulatory compliance history.

Parent Conferences. The licensee must make educators available for individual conferences with parents at parental request.

Notifications to Parents. The licensee must inform parents:

- immediately of any injury which requires any medical care beyond minor first aid or of any emergency administration of non-prescription medication;
 - immediately of any allegation of abuse or neglect involving their children while in the care and custody of the licensee;
 - prior to or as soon as possible following any change in educators;
- at the end of the day regarding any minor first aid administered;
- in writing within 48 hours of any incident;
- whenever special problems and significant developments arise;
 - whenever a communicable disease or condition has been identified in the program;
 - in writing seven days prior to the implementation of any change in program policy or procedures;
 - prior to the introduction of any pets into the program;
- of the use of any herbicides or pesticides, prior to their use whenever possible;
- and
- whenever the program deviates from the planned menu.

Additional Requirements for Family Child Care. The provider must notify parents:

- in writing of the existence of a firearm in the family child care home. This notification must be given upon enrollment and/or when the firearm is brought into the family child care home;
- of any changes in the regular composition of the household. The provider must notify the parents of anyone regularly on the premises.

Additional Requirements for Small Group and School Age and Large Group and School Age Child Care. The licensee must provide the following information to parents in writing prior to enrollment:

- the program's written statement of purpose including and, where applicable, information on the administrative organization of the program;
- The suspension and termination policy.