

Home Safety Checklist

_____ Post an emergency phone number list beside every phone in your home, including numbers for:

- Fire Department
- Poison
- Control Center
- Hospital
- Doctor/pediatrician
- Police Department
- Day care parents
- Neighbor Day Care Agency (if applicable)
- 911 EMERGENCY SERVICE (if applicable)

_____ Install smoke detectors on every floor of your home and test regularly.

_____ Ensure that fireplaces, wood burning stoves, and space heaters are properly screened.

_____ Cover electrical outlets with safety plugs.

_____ Keep flashlights and batteries on hand in case of an emergency.

_____ Put stereos, televisions, etc. against walls to prevent children from reaching the wiring.

_____ Avoid overloading power circuits (plugging too many items into the same outlet).

_____ Store all cleaning products, insecticides, cosmetics, perfumes, medications, etc. out of children's reach.

_____ Turn pot handles toward the center of the stove and use back burners as much as possible.

_____ Keep scissors, knives, etc. out of children's reach.

_____ Hot water temperature should not exceed 120 degrees.

_____ Keep freezers locked.

_____ Put away any glass or breakable ornaments.

_____ Keep cigarettes, matches and lighters out of children's reach.

_____ Store safety pins, beads and any small toys out of small children's reach. Keep stairways uncluttered and well lit.

_____ Remove any peeling paint or splinters from furnishings and woodwork.

_____ Ensure that paint used on children's furnishings is lead-free.

_____ Ensure toys are in good repair; no sharp edges, loose parts, or parts small enough for children to swallow.

_____ Use decorative decals on glass doors so children don't bump into or attempt to walk through them.

_____ Install latches high on any doors that children shouldn't use.

_____ Never use plastic bags underneath sheets to waterproof beds. Use garbage cans and diaper pails with secure lids.

_____ Install safety straps on changing tables and high chairs.

_____ Ensure that pets are inoculated against rabies and distemper.

_____ Get rid of poisonous plants or put them out of reach.

_____ Balconies pose particular dangers for children. Never allow a child to play unattended on a balcony and make sure balcony doors are fastened securely at all times.

_____ If guns are kept in your home, keep them in locked cabinets and lock ammunition away in a separate location.

Coping in an Emergency

Even with the most scrupulous safety proofing and constant vigilance, accidents can and do occur and you should be prepared to cope. The following ideas should help:

HAVE A FIRST AID KIT WELL STOCKED WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

First Aid Manual

(The Red Cross has excellent first aid manual available)

Band aids (assorted sizes)

Tensor bandage

Disinfectant soap

Adhesive Tape

Cotton Swabs

Calamine Lotion

Sun Screen

1 Inch Rolled Gauze

Scissors

Tweezers

Thermometer

Gauze Pads (assorted sizes)

Triangular bandages and safety pins

Ice Pack

Baking Soda (to make a paste with water for bee stings)

Tongue Depressors (good for finger splints)



If you have taken the above steps you should feel more confident about your ability to cope in an emergency situation. If an emergency occurs you should:

1. Assess the situation calmly while reassuring the injured child as well as any other children present.
2. If necessary take a few seconds and some deep breaths to relax.
3. Decide what has to be done and what is needed to do it (first aid kit, emergency medical assistance, etc.)
4. Take the necessary action.

If you are providing care to any child with a known medical condition-epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, etc.- you should discuss with the parent and the child's physician what procedures to follow in the event of an incident related to that condition.

Take a First Aid Course

The most important step in being better prepared to handle emergency situations is to take a basic first aid and an Infant CPR course. Courses are available through your local hospital or American Red Cross.

Teach Older Children to Cope in an Emergency

Older children may be able to help in an emergency if the situation warrants it. They may be able to get you the first aid kit, a blanket, or pillow. Take the time to teach the older children in your care how to call emergency numbers. Remember, it may be you who becomes ill or is injured and the children may *have* to help.

Medical/Emergency Information You Should Have

Any time you agree to care for a child you should have the child's parent provide you with the following:

1. Information on the child's medical history;
2. Phone numbers where parents can be reached as well as an emergency contact if parents are not available;
3. A signed consent form giving you authority to secure emergency medical care for their child if necessary.

Medical/Emergency Information (Sample)

Family Last Name: _____
Child's Name: _____ Birth Date: _____
Mother's Name: _____ Work Phone #: _____
Father's Name: _____ Work Phone #: _____
Home Address: _____ Home Phone #: _____
Emergency Contact: _____ Relationship: _____
Phone # of Emergency Contact: _____
Child's Physician Name: _____ Phone#: _____
Health Insurance #: _____

Emergency Medical Treatment

In the event of an emergency when I am not available, I authorize the administration of any medical procedures deemed necessary by my doctor, or, if unavailable, by any other physician selected by my child's caregiver.

Date: _____ Parent's Name: _____
Parent's Signature: _____ Caregiver's Name: _____

Child's Health Record:

General State Of Health: _____
Immunization Record: _____

Blood Type: _____

Known Allergies: _____

Other Relevant Information/ Known Existing Conditions, Etc.

Has your child had:

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Chicken Pox _____ | German Measles _____ | Measles _____ |
| Mumps _____ | Whooping Cough _____ | Other _____ |

Is your child subject to:

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Ear aches _____ | Sore throats _____ | Head aches _____ |
| Stomach upsets _____ | Colds _____ | Other _____ |

Home Set-Up

Many of the decisions about how you will organize your home will depend on the amount of space you have. A home large enough to allow a room or two to be used exclusively for the children's activities will make planning easier. But even a small home or apartment can, with careful organization and planning, accommodate children's needs.

You'll have to plan how and where you will accommodate the following activities:

❁ **Sleep/Rest:** Children need an area for sleep that is free from disturbances (i.e., telephone, doorbell), can be darkened for rest, and provides sufficient space for comfort. You may choose to use family bedrooms for nap time, especially if you are caring for children who have difficulty settling down when other children are in the room. If you are using an area for sleep that is also used as play space, establish a pre-nap routine that changes the room somewhat. Tidying up toys, setting up cots or mats, dimming lights, drawing curtains and putting on soothing music, helps give the room a different and quieter atmosphere.

❁ An infant, who may require naps in the morning and afternoon, should sleep in a room close enough to be heard if there are any difficulties, but away from the bustle and activities of older children.

❁ **Eating:** The easiest place to serve children's meals may be the kitchen. If using an adult-sized table, provide booster seats for children who have outgrown high chairs. You may prefer to use a child-sized table and chairs, either in the kitchen or the play area. Wherever you serve meals and snacks, make sure the floor covering is easy to wipe up or cover the area under the table with heavy plastic.

❁ **Playing:** There are different types of play to consider when planning space. Think about how you will arrange:

❁ Floor space for play with blocks, cars, etc. Any empty floor space will do. Provide low shelving or baskets nearby for toy storage.

❁ Table top space for puzzles, peg boards, coloring, etc. A child-sized table will work best with nearby shelving for storage of materials.

❁ Imaginative play space for dress-up, playing

house etc. A play house, puppet theater or toy fridge and stove will encourage imaginative play. A clothes tree or hooks on the wall can be used for dress-up clothes and props. If space is limited, put dress-up clothes and props in a laundry basket to bring out each day and use large cardboard boxes to 'create' housekeeping furniture.

❁ Active play space for climbing, jumping, running, and burning off steam. If you have space for a small indoor climber/slide it will get a lot of use from toddlers and pre-schoolers and can double as a puppet theater/post office/store for imaginative play. Use the basement for riding toys, a mattress for jumping on, or just room for running around. If space is limited you can provide gym mats (play pen mats work well) for somersaults and rolling and a well sanded 2 x 4 for a balance beam. Store the mats and 2 x 4 under a couch when not in use.

❁ Quiet time space where a child can retreat from the hustle and bustle for a while. Provide a comfortable chair or some large cushions with books close at hand to create a quiet corner.

❁ Messy place space for painting, play dough, water play, etc. A low table works best, in the kitchen or any area close to a sink for clean-up. Make sure the floor surface is easy to clean.

Establishing Routines in Family Day Care

In the same way that you should safety proof and organize your home for family day care before you begin, it is also important that you do some planning around other aspects of caring for young children. How will you establish routines that will meet children's needs? How will you provide for their nutritional needs? With a group of young children, the risk of spreading germs and infections increases; how will you ensure good sanitary and health practices in your day care home?

Your Daily Schedule

Any daily routine that you establish should be flexible, but children do respond well to routine. They like to know when things are going to happen and will feel more secure and comfortable if their days have a fairly predictable pattern and order. The following are some guidelines for planning your day:

❁ Keep your plans simple. The best schedule is the one that allows the most flexibility.

- ✿ Allow sufficient time between activities for clean-up and preparation.
- ✿ Try to schedule free play, or activities requiring a minimum of supervision for times when you will be occupied (e.g., feeding baby).
- ✿ Drop-off and pick-up times are the most hectic periods of the day. Have quiet activities (e.g., books, puzzles) available for children at these times.
- ✿ To keep little ones sitting down and quiet during story or circle time, combine it with snack time.
- ✿ Always be prepared to change your plans in case of the unexpected. A construction crew working on your street can be as interesting and exciting to children as a craft or story.
- ✿ If you notice a particular time of day when everything seems to get out of hand, look at changing your routine. For instance, if children tend to be cranky by lunch time, consider an earlier lunch and nap-time.
- ✿ Allow time for group as well as individual activities and for quiet and active play.
- ✿ Plan a quiet, wind-down activity before nap-time.
- ✿ Experiment with different activities at different times until you find what works best in your home.
- ✿ Schedule some time for yourself (even if it's only ten minutes) in the morning, and a longer period (at least half an hour) in the afternoon.

| Your Day Care Day Might Look Like This | |
|---|---|
| 7:00 - 9:00 | Arrival time-quiet individual activities such as books, puzzles, coloring and toys. When older children have left for school, younger ones help prepare snack or activity for later in morning. |
| 9:00 - 9:30 | Tidy-up, then snack and story time. |
| 9:30 - 10:00 | Art activity/play dough. |
| 10:00 - 11:00 | Outdoor play (or active indoor play if bad weather). |
| 11:00 - 11:45 | Free play or helping with lunch preparation. |
| 11:45 - 12:00 | Tidy-up for lunch. |
| 12:00 - 12:30 | Lunch time. |
| 12:30 - 1:00 | Story time or other wind-down activity. |
| 1:00 - 3:00 | Nap-time -quiet time for older children with books, story tapes, etc. Your time to relax for a while before you start preparations for the afternoon. |
| 3:00 - 3:30 | Wake up, wash up and snack time. |
| 3:30 - 4:00 | Group activity like play dough, painting, etc. |
| 4:00 - 4:30 | Snack and Talk Time with school-aged, free play for younger children. |
| 4:30 - 6:00 | Outdoor or indoor free play until pick-up time. |

Evening

Think about tomorrow: What will you serve for lunch and snack? Do you have all the necessary ingredients? Are you prepared for any special crafts, outings, activities that you have planned for tomorrow? Do your own children have clothing and school gear ready?

Healthy Habits in Your Home

An important part of your role as a caregiver will be to provide a healthy environment and healthful routines for the children you care for. A healthy lifestyle involves more than a balanced diet, exercise, fresh air and proper rest. To prevent the development and spread of germs and infections, it is also necessary to establish good sanitary practices in your family day care home and to teach children at the earliest possible age to practice good personal hygiene. By helping children to develop good habits early, you'll be giving them a head start on a lifetime of good health.

Healthy children are energetic, interested in the world around them and eager to try new things. Even when normal childhood illnesses do strike, the healthy child will recover more quickly and with less likelihood of side effects. So your efforts to provide a healthy environment will pay off in dividends for everyone—you, your family, the child's parents, the community, and most importantly, the child. Keep the following health basics in mind when providing child care:

❁ **Immunization:** Make sure every child in your care, and all the members of your own household, have received all necessary immunizations.

❁ **Personal Hygiene:** Children will develop good personal habits by following the example of the adults and the older children around them and by reinforcement and reminders of the basics:

- Wash your hands before and after food preparation.
- Wash your hands and face before and after eating.
- Wipe yourself, flush the toilet and wash your hands after using the toilet.
- Brush your teeth after eating.
- Wash your hands after handling pets, messy play, etc.

- Each child should have her own face-cloth, towel, tooth brush, comb or brush, linens and blankets.

Remember, hand washing is one of our most effective tools in preventing the spread of illness; set a good example yourself and remind children as often as is necessary about this important healthy habit.

❁ **Exercise:** Exercise is an important part of each day's routine, especially for children. Provide opportunities for active play and exercise each day, outdoors when possible, but indoors if the weather is bad.

❁ **Fresh Air:** Fresh air is extremely important to children's healthy development. Being out of doors promotes active play, increases children's appetites, and even helps them sleep better. When the weather is good, spend as much time as possible out of doors. Even when the weather is wet or cold, try to get out for at least a half hour in the morning and afternoon.

❁ **Rest:** It is important to ensure children have proper rest. Infants will likely nap both mornings and afternoons, while toddlers and pre-schooler usually nap after lunch. Even five- and six-year-olds may still need a quiet rest period in the afternoon.

❁ **How Ill Is Too Ill to Come to Care:** Decide about your rules regarding illness and make parents aware of them before there is an illness. Unless you are willing to provide care to children when they are ill, a child is likely too ill to come to care if they have:

- a temperature of 101* F or 38.5* C or over;
- vomited that morning or the night before;
- diarrhea (green or yellow watery stool);
- a rash that has not been diagnosed as not being contagious;
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) or any other eye condition where the eye is itchy, red, swollen and oozing pus;
- Impetigo, Ringworm or Pinworm;
- any contagious disease (chicken pox, roseolla);

- a severe cold with fever, runny nose, sneezing or bad cough.

❁ **Food Storage and Preparation:** Contaminated foods are a major cause of infection and illness in the home so take extra care in the storage and preparation of food including wash your hands and clean counter space before and after food preparation.

If you have infants in your care, make sure their bottles and nipples are properly washed and sterilized.

❁ **The kitchen garbage** is a breeding ground for germs. Empty the garbage every day and disinfect the container with , and water at least once a week. Any foods stored in the fridge, freezer or cupboards should be tightly sealed. Never thaw food at room temperature. Thaw foods inside the refrigerator. Leftovers should be covered immediately after the meal and stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

Good Nutrition

Planning menus that meet children’s nutritional needs is not difficult. The real challenge lies in getting children to eat those tasty, nutritious, well-balanced, meals and snacks. The children in your care may all have different appetites and food preferences. They will be greatly influenced by the way they eat in their own home. The way food is prepared, the types of foods eaten, even the time children are accustomed to eating, may be quite different from the habits in your home. In addition, children’s appetites often fluctuate as they go through rapid then slower growth periods.

Given all these circumstances, it is worthwhile to think about and plan the foods you will serve. Keep the following basics in mind:

❁ Talk to parents during the pre placement interview about the child’s food habits. You might ask the following questions:

- What are the child’s food likes and dislikes?
- What kinds of foods does the family usually eat?
- Is the child accustomed to midmorning and afternoon snacks or are they accustomed to eating whenever hungry?
- Does the child have any food allergies?
- Does he/she have a small or large appetite?

- Will the child be eating breakfast before coming to care?

❁ Plan simple meals and snacks. Generally children prefer foods that are separate, rather than casserole-type meals.

❁ Keep serving sizes small. Children can be intimidated by a large plate filled with food. Provide small servings and offer seconds.

❁ Make foods look appealing. It’s worth the extra minute or two that it takes to shred some carrot curls on top of the salad or to cut the sandwiches into long finger-like shapes instead of squares if it means they’ll get eaten.

❁ Make meal time pleasant. Show by your own example what kind of behavior you expect. Encourage children to help each other, take turns, be cooperative and use phrases like “Please” and “Thank you.” Eat with the children if possible.

❁ Get children involved in helping you plan and prepare meals and snacks. Children love to help out in the kitchen and in addition to providing an opportunity for them to develop new skills, it is an ideal way to encourage their interest in food and nutrition.

❁ Don’t use food as a reward or withhold it as a punishment. Food should be used to satisfy hunger and to help build and maintain strong healthy bodies.

❁ Never force a child to eat. If a child is being finicky, refusing to try new foods, or going through a period of low appetite do not over-react. Remember your appetite varies from day to day and that some new foods don’t appeal to you either.

It is important that the meals and snacks you serve are well-balanced to ensure that the children are receiving the nutrients they need to develop healthy bodies. The foods are divided into four groups. Your menus should have variety and contain foods from each of the four food groups. The following list contains the four food groups; samples of the foods in each of the groups; the number of servings a child needs each day; and the main nutrients found in the foods.

Milk and Milk Products: (e.g., milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, puddings or soups made with milk.)

- These products are high in calcium, protein and vitamin A. Children require four to six servings of Milk or Milk products per day.
- Examples of a child-sized servings: 125 ml (1/2 cup milk), 30 g (one ounce) of cheese.

Meat and Alternatives: (e.g., meat, fish, poultry, eggs, peanut butter, dried beans and peas.)

- These products are high in protein, B-vitamins and iron. Children require three to four servings of Meat or Alternatives per day.
- Examples of child-sized servings: one egg, 30 ml (2 tablespoons) of peanut butter.

Breads and Cereals: (e.g., whole grain or enriched bread, muffins, cereal, rice, pasta, noodles, crackers.)

- These products are high in carbohydrates, B-vitamins, and Iron. Children require three to six servings per day.
- Examples of child-sized servings: 1/2 to one slice of bread, one muffin.

Fruits and Vegetables: Vitamin A enriched (e.g., carrots, bananas, apples, apricots, peaches, spinach, broccoli.); Vitamin C enriched (e.g., oranges, grapefruits, tomatoes, cabbage, strawberries, potatoes, broccoli.)

- These products are high in vitamin A and vitamin C. Children require four or more servings per day.
- Examples of child-sized servings: 125 ml (1/2 cup) of unsweetened juice, 100 ml (1/4 cup) of raw or cooked fruits or vegetables.

There are also many foods that fall into the category of *Extras*. These foods are high in salt, sugar and fats and have little nutritional value. Extras include: soft drinks, chips, cheese spreads, cookies, chocolate, etc. Keep Extras to a minimum in menu planning.



Once you have your business and home organized and have thought through your daily routines and health and nutritional considerations, you are likely ready to begin advertising for clients. To make sure you'll be prepared complete the following:

Readiness Checklist

- Have you investigated local and laws respecting family day care?
- Have you secured adequate liability insurance?
- Have you contacted child care agencies, registries, etc., and explored all your options?
- Have you decided:
 - How many children you will care for?
 - What ages of children you will care for?
 - What hours and days you will work?
 - What rates you will charge?
- Have you thought through your record keeping system and prepared files, etc., to maintain receipts for tax purposes?
- Has your home been thoroughly safety-checked?
- Do you have medical history/consent forms prepared for parents to fill in?
- Have you considered what you would do in an emergency, for example, a serious injury to a child in your care?
- Have you provided appropriate space and equipment for the children's sleeping, eating and playing during the day care day?
- Have you considered how you will organize your daily routines?

- ❁ Have you planned how you will accommodate children's nutritional needs? Do you have sample menus or meal plans you could provide to prospective parents if they ask for them?
- ❁ Do you have the names and contact information of at least two personal references available for prospective clients?
- ❁ If you have decided to use written agreements, do you have copies available for prospective clients?

Finding Client Families

After all your pre-planning and organizing is done, the real work begins. In the best possible situation, you may already have clients interested in having you care for their children. It is far more likely though that you will have to find client families yourself. There are several methods you can use, depending on the services available in your community:

Register with:

Child care registries
 Private home day care agencies
 Local welcome wagon
 Family day home agencies
 Resource and Referral Services

Advise:

Neighborhood schools (speak to the secretary)
 Neighborhood churches (speak to the secretary)
 major employers in your area (speak to the personnel department)
 Area day care centers and nursery schools (speak to the Director)

Post notices on bulletin boards in:

Local libraries
 major employers
 Supermarkets
 Family resource centers
 Community centers
 Apartment lobbies
 Laundromats
 Drop-ins, play groups

Place ads in:

Community newspapers
Penny Saver or *Bargain Hunter* publications
 Local newspapers

Talk to:

Family
 Neighbors
 Parents of children in care (present and past)
 Friends
 Spouse's co-workers
 Other providers in your area

Check for parents' advertisements for care in:

Notices posted on bulletin boards
Penny Saver or *Bargain Hunter* publications
 Community newspapers
 Local newspapers

Distribute notices/flyers to homes in your area.

Make Your Advertisements Appealing to Parents

For example, a newspaper advertisement that reads, "Friendly, experienced provider in Queen's University area will care for your pre-school and/or school-aged child. Please call 222-2222" reads better than: "Babysitter, Queen's University area, \$100.00 per week. No infants. Call 222-2222." and would cost very little more.

Notices or flyers that you post on bulletin boards or distribute in your neighborhood should also be appealing. Draw a picture of a house with a sun shining over it, or balloons, or a teddy bear, etc. Having children color in the pictures on the notices for you is particularly effective. Make sure that you have tear-off sections at the bottom of notices with your phone number on them.

Don't attempt to use all the methods that we have described here at once. Pick the least costly and most practical for you to start with. If you are not getting sufficient response, then try some of the other methods. Be persistent and patient. Your hard work will pay off in the end.

Once parents respond to your advertisement, a very important step in the child care relationship takes place. In Unit Three: "Parents and Provider: Partners in Child Care," we will discuss establishing and maintaining a good working relationship with your parent-clients from that first contact and throughout your time providing care.

Unit Three: Partners in Child Care



Everyone benefits from a good caregiver/parent relationship. Caregivers feel that their work is appreciated and respected, parents feel confident that their child is being well cared for, and, most important, children feel secure and comfortable knowing that the people who take care of them also like each other.

Perhaps the first step in establishing a good relationship with your clients is to try to understand why they chose family day care. For parents who need child care, family day care can offer some attractive advantages. Often the most important of these is the individual attention that their child can receive. Family day care is provided by one adult working with a small group of children. It can offer children the individual attention they need, while providing them with an opportunity to develop social skills through spending their day with other children. Parents can choose a caregiver who shares their own philosophies and attitudes about children and child care and will have the opportunity to get to know their caregiver well.

Parents also appreciate the fact that children can receive care in their own neighborhood. This means parents won't have to add a lot of time onto an already busy day traveling to and from child care and that their older children can stay in the same school, see their usual friends and participate in after-school activities. The fact that siblings of different ages, from infants to school-aged, can be cared

for together is also a big plus for many families.

Family day care is usually less expensive than other forms of child care, and may be more flexible about the hours of care. Parents seeking part-time care find it especially difficult to find a space in a day care center or to find a nanny to come into their home. A good caregiver can also be a support and resource to the working parent. She can be someone with whom they can share their concerns about their child, an experienced person who can give them advice and reassurance.

And many parents prefer family day care because it comes closest to the type of care, experiences, and environment that they would provide if they were at home with their children.

But there is more involved in developing a good working relationship with clients than understanding what parents are looking for in family day care. Like anything else worthwhile, a good relationship with your clients is something you must work at. And that work begins with your first contact with prospective clients.

Starting Off Right

Your first contacts with parents will probably take place over the phone and in the pre-placement interview. The impression you make in these early contacts is very important. After all, parents are choosing someone to care for their child and that is one of the most important decisions they will make as parents. They need to feel that you are a caring, capable person who they can trust and that you take what you do seriously. Keep the following basics in mind during those early contacts:

✿ **Be prepared for both telephone inquiries and the pre-placement interview.** Think through the questions you should ask parents, and what information you should give them, before you begin advertising. If you are nervous about either the phone or pre-placement process, ask your spouse or a friend to help you practice by pretending to interview them.

☘ **Be business-like about the business aspects of your child care.** State your rates and other information related to money, hours of operation, illness policies, etc. in a confident way.

☘ **Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses.** Most of us have some things that we do very well, many more things that we do adequately, and some things that we don't do very well at all. So if you really enjoy baking and cooking with children, or if you spend a lot of time outdoors or on outings with the children, say so. On the other hand, if house-keeping is not your strong point, don't be afraid to tell parents that too. The more you can tell parents about yourself and your style of care giving, the more certain you are of finding parents who will be happy with the care you provide.

☘ **Be clear about your expectations of parents.** Talk to parents frankly about your 'house rules.' Discuss everything, from business matters, to items you expect parents to provide for their children, to the amount of notice you require if a child will be picked up late. Encourage parents to clarify their expectations of you.

☘ **Be responsive about parents' concerns** and really listen to what they are saying. Encourage parents to talk about their previous experiences with child care if they have had any. Ask them what they did and didn't like about it, what kinds of problems they experienced or concerns they had. If a parent has never had their child in care before, ask them what they think good family day care should be. Showing a real interest in their views and concerns will go a long way in establishing a friendly and open communication between you.

The Telephone Contact

Your first contact with most potential clients will be on the phone and the impression you make then will be an important one. The telephone contact should provide you and the parents with an opportunity to exchange basic information and to decide whether you should meet with each other.

Provide parents with the following information:

- your name and address;
- directions to your home;
- name and location of nearby schools;
- your child care rates;
- the number of vacancies you have;

- the number and ages of other children in your home (both day care and your own);
- the names and phone numbers of at least two references.

Note: It is a good idea to keep this information available in writing close to the phone. It may all seem very familiar now, but you wouldn't be the first person to become nervous and not remember the nearest major cross-street to your home or the ages of your own children!

Ask parents to provide the following:

- parent's name and phone number;
- child's name and age;
- hours and days for which care is needed;
- starting date for care to begin;
- any special concerns the parent may have, e.g., pets, whether caregiver is non-smoker, special needs of child;
- other relevant information.

If it appears obvious that this is not an appropriate match, thank the parent for calling and if possible refer them to a child care registry, family day care agency, or other caregivers in your area who might be suitable. If there seems to be general agreement and matching of the parent's needs and your own, arrange for a meeting.

The Pre-placement Interview

The interview is an opportunity for you and the clients to get to know each other and to decide if you will be a good match. It is important that you both provide as much information as possible in the pre-placement interview. If it can be arranged you should meet more than once before a decision is made and care begins. You and the parents might meet first, and then have the parents visit with the child. But whether you are meeting once or several times before arrangements for care are finalized, make sure all the matters listed below have been discussed.

What You Should Tell Parents About You and Your Care:

- your child care experience (including your experience as a parent);
- your child care training (i.e., workshops, first aid training, courses);
- the number and ages of children in your home (your own and day care);

- the kind of care you provide (what kinds of activities the children will be doing during the day, what are your normal routines, how much television is permitted and what programs, etc.);
- how long you intend to continue providing care;
- what other adults are present in the household during the day care day;
- what are your plans for coping with an emergency situation (e.g., what would you do if a child were injured while in your care);
- what types of meals and snacks you serve;
- what forms of child guidance you use (time out, withdrawal of privileges, etc.).

What Parents Should Tell You About the Child and Family:

- information about the child's family structure (does the child live with both parents, number of siblings, etc.);
- the child's previous experience in child care;
- the child's medical history, record of immunization, and any medical or health concerns (i.e., allergies, known conditions);
- the child's personality (i.e., is child outgoing, shy, nervous) the child's eating, sleeping, toileting habits;
- the child's favorite activities, books, foods, etc.
- any recent changes, upsets or problems that might affect the child (e.g., marriage breakdown, birth of sibling)
- if child is school-aged: What arrangements can be made regarding transportation to and from school, as well as to and from any extra-curricular activities in which the child might participate? How much supervision is required (i.e., is the child allowed to go to the park or to visit friends, which friends and where?);
- parents' employers, hours of work, phone numbers and addresses at work and home;
- parents' medical insurance number, name and phone number of child's physician;
- name and phone number of emergency contacts if parents are not available.

What You and the Parents Should Agree on About Business Matters:

- money matters: basic fee, method and frequency of payment, overtime rates, payment for absences from care and statutory holidays, receipts for child care payments, etc.;
- hours and days for which care will be provided;
- items which parent and caregiver will be providing (e.g., who will provide lunch, snacks, formula, diapers, car seats);
- alternate care: Who is responsible for finding alternate care if caregiver is not available because of illness, holidays, etc.?
- your policies concerning the child's illness (e.g., how ill is too ill to be brought to care);
- the amount of notice required if you or the parents' wish to terminate care.

Written Agreements with Parent-Clients

While it is not necessary to use a written agreement with your parent-clients, many experienced caregivers have found that using them saves both the caregivers and the parents many misunderstandings. A written agreement simply puts on paper the arrangements that you and the parents have agreed to when care begins. Your agreement could simply state the hours of care, the rate of payment, and when payment is to be made, or you could have a more detailed agreement covering all of the caregiver's and the client's responsibilities in respect to the care arrangements.

You may be uncomfortable at first about using a written agreement, but if you think about the agreement as simply confirming what you and the parents have said to each other at your first meeting, it makes sense for both of you to have that information in writing. Often, both the caregiver and the parents are a little nervous at the initial interview and it may be difficult to remember six months later whether you said you expect to be paid for Christmas Day, etc.

If you do decide to use a written agreement, the following information should be included:

- ❁ The name, address and phone number of the caregiver;
- ❁ The name, address, home and work phone numbers of the parent-clients;
- ❁ The name(s) of the children for whom care is to be provided;
- ❁ The hours and days of the week for which care is to be provided;
- ❁ The amount and frequency of payment (i.e., the rate of payment for care will be \$90.00 per week, including statutory holidays and absences due to holidays, illness, etc. to be paid on Friday of each week) and overtime rates and terms;
- ❁ Conditions for termination of care (i.e., the caregiver and parent-clients agree to provide three weeks notice if care is to be terminated).

A more detailed agreement *could* include:

- ❁ List of conditions when parents should notify caregiver including late arrival, sickness, planned absences due to holidays, changes in address,

phone numbers at home or work, changes of emergency contact, any changes of circumstances that would affect the child's well-being;

- ❁ List of conditions when caregiver should notify parents including illness of caregiver or member of household, change of phone numbers, holiday plans, etc;
- ❁ A list of other caregiver responsibilities which may apply;
- ❁ A list of other parental responsibilities which may apply;
- ❁ Agreement about how sick is too sick for the child to come to care (e.g., children will not be brought to care if they have diarrhea, a temperature of over 101°F, are vomiting, have severe colds, conjunctivitis [pink eye], or any contagious or potentially contagious illness).

Include anything else that you or the parent-clients would like to have in your agreement.

Child Care Agreement (Sample)

The following agreement is made between:

Parent's Name(s) _____ Address _____

Phone # Home _____ Work _____

Caregiver's Name _____ Address _____

Phone # _____

For the care of *(child/children's name/s)* Child Care will be provided at *(caregiver's address)*

It is agreed that child care will be provided from *(e.g., 8:00 a.m.)* to *(e.g., 5:30 pm)* for the following days of the week *(e.g., Monday to Friday)*. The *(e.g., weekly, daily)* fee for child care is \$____, due and payable on the *(e.g., Friday of each week of care)*. The full fee is due and payable whether the child attends care on the agreed days or not. Overtime fees will be charged at a rate of *(\$3.00)* per *(e.g., 112 HR)* or part thereof and are due and payable on arrival on day of overtime.

The caregiver and parent(s) agree to provide *(eg., four weeks)* notice if this agreement is to be terminated.

Caregiver's Signature _____

Parent's Signature _____ Parent's Signature _____

Date _____

A more detailed agreement would contain all of the information contained in the basic sample agreement and in addition, after the paragraph dealing with fees and before the termination clause, you could add some or all of the following:

The day care home will be closed on the following days, for which payment will/will not be required:

| | |
|----------------|--------------|
| New Year's Day | Victoria Day |
| Civic Holiday | Thanksgiving |
| Boxing Day | Good Friday |
| Canada Day | Labor Day |
| Christmas Day | |

With the exception of the above-noted statutory holidays, if the caregiver is not available to provide care, payment is not required.

In the event of the caregiver's absence or illness, (eg., the parent) is responsible for making arrangements for alternate care.

Caregiver Responsibilities:

- Will provide a safe, healthy environment
- Will provide all necessary equipment (e.g., car seat high chair)
- Will provide nutritious morning and afternoon snacks, and lunches
- Will provide outdoor play time each day, weather permitting
- Will notify parents as soon as possible regarding: illness of self or other household member; changes of emergency contact numbers; contagious illness of other day care child; holiday plans involving absence of caregiver

Parental Responsibilities:

- Will provide adequate quantities of diapers
- Will provide seasonally appropriate changes of clothing
- Will provide any necessary equipment (e.g., car seat, high chair)
- Will provide appropriate snacks, lunches
- Will notify caregiver as soon as possible regarding: late arrival of child; late arrival of parent; changes in employment hours; illness of child in care; contagious illness of members of child's household; holiday plans involving absence of child; any family

change which may affect the child's health or well-being (i.e., serious illness of family member, marital breakdown)

Maintaining a Good Relationship with Parents

A good beginning is just that -the beginning. Building on that good beginning will require some work and thought.

One of the most important things that you can do to build your clients' confidence and trust in you is to find

ways to make the parents feel involved in their child's day. Many parents are anxious about what goes on during the day care day. Is their child happy in the day care home? Is he fitting in well with the other children? The more you can tell parents about what goes on and the more ways you can find to make them feel a part of the child's care, the more confident and reassured the parents will feel. Try some of the following ways to encourage parental involvement:

- ❁ Talk to parents and encourage children to tell them about their day. What did they do, where did they go, what did they play and with whom? It's often little details that give parents a real sense of 'being there.' Share something about the child's day with the parents every day.
- ❁ Provide parents of infants and toddlers with a brief note at the end of the day, to let them know about how long baby slept, how much he ate, how many bowel movements he had and whether they were soft or hard, and anything else newsworthy. It doesn't take much time to jot down a simple note and it will mean a lot to parents.
- ❁ Make yourself and your day care home available to parents during the day. If a parent (especially at the beginning of care) really feels better calling every day, suggest a time of the day when it is convenient for you to take calls.
- ❁ If a parent is able to visit during the day, encourage them to do so. If a parent visits so often that it is disruptive to your daily routine, they may have concerns that the two of you should discuss. If they really just need that constant reassurance, you may want to suggest that they restrict visits to a more reasonable frequency and settle for a phone call at other times.

- ❁ Let parents know about special plans that you have for activities in the home or special outings you are planning with the children.
- ❁ Ask for parents' suggestions for outings and activities, stories or games their children enjoy, etc. This is especially important if your client families are of another culture or religion. Ask them about their special celebrations, practices, foods, etc. and include them in your day care home.
- ❁ Arrange a time, at least every three or four months, for you and each child's parents to sit down and talk about the child's development and any concerns that either of you may have. Try to arrange a time in the evening when the children won't be offering any distractions.
- ❁ Invite parents to join you and the children for an outing or for lunch occasionally. Even if the child's behavior is a little unruly when Mom or Dad is around, you'll all benefit from the experience. This has the added advantage of letting parents see just how much work it is to look after a small group of children each day.
- ❁ Encourage parents to contribute 'junk' from their home and office for arts and crafts materials. Egg cartons, empty toilet paper rolls, ends of computer paper, etc. will all be useful for activities and parents and children will feel they are contributing something to the day's activities.
- ❁ Remember that parents, especially those who have not had their child in care before, may need extra reassurance that it is normal for a child to take some time to adjust to a new situation. It's also normal, as a child goes through different stages to resist going to or going home from day care. Of course if a child seems really unhappy through the day care day, some action should be taken. But let parents know if their child fusses for only five minutes after they leave and then settles happily into the day care home. For the parent who has left for work with their child in tears, a phone call when they arrive at the office to reassure them that all is well can mean a lot.

Problem Solving

Problems between caregivers and parents can arise for several reasons: misunderstandings, differences of opinion on child rearing practices, or a failure of

the parents or caregiver to live up to their responsibilities and obligations. You can minimize the number of problems that you may have by taking the steps to establish and maintain a good working relationship with parents, as outlined earlier in this Unit.

But even in the best of relationships, there are likely to be times when problems occur. So it is important that you be able to approach these problems in a calm and rational manner. Remember that when you're dealing with a problem you are looking for a solution, not a victory. The following steps should help:

- **Identify the problem and make sure that it is what you think it is.** For example, you feel Parent A is always late. For a week or so keep track of everyone's pick-up times. You may be surprised to find that Parent A doesn't arrive late any more often than Parents B or C, but because Parent A picks up their child last, when they are late, it is more noticeable and more annoying. The point is that it would be unfair to single out Parent A about late pick-ups. A more effective and fair method would be a reminder to all the parents about their agreed upon hours of care and your late arrival policy. The same applies to any problem you may be having. Before you speak to parents about it, get your facts straight.
- **Think about what you want to happen or how you would like to see the problem resolved.** For example, a simple problem might be a parent who is supposed to be bringing diapers for their child each day but often forgets. More difficult might be a situation where you feel the parent shows little or no appreciation for what you do. In the first case, all you really want is to make sure that you have sufficient diapers on hand to get you through the day. But the second example is more difficult and may not be one that can be resolved through a discussion with parents. When you are considering a problem and the kind of solution you want, be realistic about how much change you can expect and how quickly you can expect it.
- **If there are several difficulties you want to discuss with a parent,** you may have to prioritize the problems rather than try to deal with them all at once. Decide on one or two of the most serious is-

sues to tackle now and put some of the minor difficulties on the back burner. By resolving some of the major issues, you may discover that the others resolve themselves.

- **Find the right time to talk to parents about the problem.** Don't try to discuss a problem when you are angry or upset. Arrange a time that is convenient to both you and the parents, even if it is on the phone in the evening, to talk about it.
- **State the problem clearly using 'I' messages.** For example "I feel very frustrated/upset when. . . " "I find it very difficult when. . . " "I'm having a lot of trouble with...."
- **Listen to the parent's viewpoint.** It could be that there is an explanation for the difficulty which hadn't occurred to you. However, it is always important to listen to what the other person has to say and to show respect for a different point of view, even if you don't agree.
- **Keep the discussion focused on the problem at hand.** Don't bring other issues into the conversation; focus on the problem that you want resolved. If the parent raises other issues, tell them that you will be happy to discuss any other matters with them after you have worked out a solution to the problem at hand.
- **Be prepared to compromise.** You may not be able to get exactly the solution you were looking for, but if you can work out a compromise that both you and the parents are happy with, then the situation will

have at least been improved.

- **Once you have reached a solution, repeat the terms of your agreement so that they are clear to both of you.** If in the diaper problem that we mentioned above, the parent has promised to bring a box of diapers each Friday for the following week's use, end the diaper discussion with: "So you will be bringing a case of diapers each Friday starting this week.'"

Open the discussion to other issues. If the discussion to this point has gone pretty well, ask the parents if there are other matters that they want to discuss. If you feel that you've both had enough for one discussion, tell the parents that you'll be happy to arrange another time to talk if there are other matters that they would like to discuss.

Think about how the conversation went afterwards. What did you do right, where did you go wrong, how would you handle the same situation if it came up again? Experience is our best teacher, but only if we make use of it to learn something.

And of course, when problems arise between the parent and caregiver, you both should remember that the child's best interest is the top priority. Keeping the needs of the child uppermost should help both parties look harder for compromises and solutions to any difficulties that do arise. In Unit Four: "Focusing on the Child-Ages and Stages," we will discuss children's needs as they go through the all important process of growing up.

Unit Four: Ages and Stages

Good child care is not provided instinctively. While we often use our instincts to guide us, good quality care requires an understanding of how children grow and develop and what our role should be in assisting them in that process.

Child Development

Children develop in four important ways:

- **Physical development** involves both the growth of children's bodies and their ability to use their bodies to do everything from jumping and running (gross motor skills) to cutting and pasting (fine motor skills).
- **Intellectual development** is the growth of a child's ability to think and problem solve, from an infant discovering that pulling the string will make the mobile turn to the school-aged child understanding New Math.
- **Emotional development** involves a child learning to experience and express their emotions, ranging from love, happiness and affection to sadness, fear and anger.
- **Social development** involves the child's learning how to interact and get along with the people around them.

While we continue to grow and develop throughout

our lifetime, it is in the early years that children experience the most rapid development in all of these areas and the stage is set for the type of adults that they will become.

We can't hope to cover the subject of child development fully in a single unit, but you will find a listing of some excellent books on the subject in the Appendix. Most of these books are available through your Public Library. You can also find courses on child development through most community colleges, universities and many school boards.

Why study child development? Understanding children's needs and the 'whys' of children's behavior at any stage will help us to find constructive, positive ways of assisting them in the all-important task of growing up. It's also reassuring to know that the various stages are just that, a normal part of a child's life, and something that they may soon grow out of the chart that follows outlines the milestones of a child's development. Keep in mind that all children will develop at their own rate. When we discuss the age at which a child is likely to be able to do a specific task, this is simply the average age.

| CHILD DEVELOPMENT CHART | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Age | Physical | Intellectual | Social And Emotional |
| One to Three Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> holds head up for a few minutes sucking reflex for eating rooting reflex (responds to touch on the mouth) begins to roll makes a fist jerks in response to loud noise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> begins to learn when he cries, something happens responds more to noise knows mother from others makes small sounds and grunts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> responds to faces, especially mom's recognizes parent's voices and can respond with smile coos when happy cries when frightened, hungry or in pain |
| Three to Six Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can sit with support can pull to sitting position when hands grasped may stand if weight supported follows moving object with eyes attempts to reach and grasp object | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> more curious about his world babbles constantly some imitation of sounds m-m-m coos, chortles, laughs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> senses that feet and hands are part of self is becoming aware of strangers wants to be near people responds to voices and faces other than parents |
| Six to Twelve Months | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sits well crawls pulls self to standing position on furniture - may be able to stand alone pre-walks (using furniture, etc) eye-hand coordination improving able to feed himself crackers develops pincer grasp (able to pick up small objects) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seeks out hidden object wants to taste, touch and shake objects imitates more sounds (e.g., mama, dada) responds to own name knows own toys may say some words (e.g., dog, bye) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enjoys peek-a-boo shouts for attention may fight for a toy they want shows moods like anger and reacts to being left alone knows the difference between angry and happy talking imitates adult movements |
| One to Two Years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> walks, but still a bit unsteady feeds self can sit from a standing position begins to climb and explore can throw objects and begins to catch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> likes to explore his world wants to be independent uses the words "no" and "mine" can follow simple instructions is curious - gets into everything understands more than he can express | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> very self-centered may be possessive of toys and has difficulty sharing plays next to other children but not with them |
| Two to Three Years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> shows signs of being ready to begin toilet training likes to climb, run, ride tricycle can string beads, build towers with blocks can feed self but often spills enjoys painting or play dough | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attention span about 10 minutes uses three-to-four word sentences recognizes some shapes and colors has difficulty with abstract concepts such as time begins to count memory begins to develop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> likes to imitate adult actions and wants to help with chores can tidy up toys can dress self partially and is better at undressing still possessive but learning to share seeks approval from adults |
| Three to Five Years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to ride a tricycle, climb stairs easily, hop and skip can throw and catch a ball well-dresses self but needs help with zippers and snaps enjoys puzzles, painting, lacing-type toys, and crayons able to cut with scissors learning to copy designs, letters and numbers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> longer attention span very curious and asks many questions is interested in "why" imitates others likes dramatic play begins to distinguish between fantasy and reality begins to understand the concept of past, present and future appreciates music, rhythm, stories may have an imaginary friend | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can ask for help when they need it plays more with their peers, able to share turns wants to please and be helpful can be bossy, and at other times protective of younger children has a sense of right and wrong has a sense of pride for his belongings and accomplishments |
| Six to Nine Years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> plays actively with children their own age enjoys rinning games: tag, dodge ball, skipping, etc. catches with one hand capable of using tools, scissors with ease becoming more coordinated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> leaning to read and grasp basic math concepts can plan ahead and problem solve like to play with peers and can play cooperatively shows greater interest in reality and less in fantasy play improving vocabulary and ability to use language to explain emotions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> likes group activities and team games can accept more responsibility enjoys a challenge likely to have a best friend likes praise and seeks approval from adults and peers often states dislike for opposite sex learning to control his fears |

What Every Child Needs

In the sections to come we will be discussing children from infancy through school-aged and the special needs of each age group. But there are many things that every child needs from infancy onward.

Every child needs adequate food, rest, fresh air, clothing appropriate to the weather, exercise, proper hygiene and appropriate medical and dental care. Children also need an environment that is safe from hazards, and one which provides sufficient space and light for their needs.

But children have other needs that are not as tangible or as easy to meet. In order to feel good about others and the world around them and to fit successfully and happily into that world, children must first feel good about themselves. A sense of self-esteem and confidence develops in many ways. As a caregiver you can greatly influence the way children feel about themselves through:

Warmth and Affection: Children need to know that we like them. Greet them warmly each day and let them know throughout the day that you're glad they are with you. This isn't always done with words. A warm smile, showing an interest in something they do, taking time out to really listen when they want to talk, sitting right down on the floor with them to build that block village, stopping the vacuum cleaner to go and examine that wonderful tent before the blankets fall down again. All of these things, while they may not seem important at the time, convey the message to a child that you enjoy being with them and think they are special people.

Children also need physical contact. From a gentle pat on the shoulder to a warm hug, we all need to touch; it makes us feel warm, cared about and caring.

A Sense of Accomplishment: A feeling of accomplishment is very important in developing self-esteem. The twelve-month-old who wants to feed himself, the two-year-old who wants to put her own snowsuit on, the six-year-old who insists on picking out his own clothes for school, are all trying to gain control and independence. Even if lunch is a little messier or if it takes twice as long to get dressed to go outside, or if the school clothes don't match, letting children do things themselves tells them you have confidence in them, a big step toward their having confidence in themselves.

Encouragement: Make positive and encouraging words and phrases the most often used part of your vocabulary. Every child needs to hear phrases like: "Well done!" "Nice try!" "Great job! You're getting better at that!" This doesn't mean you have to be phoney in praising a child. You can comment positively on the colors in a picture, even if you don't quite know what it is a picture of. When a child has tried and failed for days to learn to tie a bow, a comment like "Well, you're sure getting good at tying knots, and if you keep practicing your bows will be just as good," will do far more for the child's ego than "I'll do it."

A Sense of Responsibility: Even a toddler feels more of a sense of self-worth and belonging if they have a part to play and feel that they are helping out. Get everyone involved in the day care day. From making decisions about what activities you'll do, to planning and helping out with snacks and lunches, to tidying up the toys, there are many ways children of all ages can help out and feel pretty important doing it.

A Chance to Learn and Explore: Your home offers thousands of wonderful opportunities for children to learn and explore, from the empty margarine containers and wooden spoons that make such wonderful music in your kitchen, to the blankets thrown over the card table to build a 'hide-out' in the play room. Children do not need a lot of expensive toys and equipment to play and learn. In fact, the most important thing you can teach a child is the joy of exploring and enjoying the world around him or her.

In the sections to follow, when we discuss activities for the different age groups, we will be talking about some basic, good quality toys and games that you may want to purchase. But we will also offer many ideas that don't require any expense and make use of what you already have in your home or neighborhood. When you and the children are looking at your home and community in this way, the possibilities are endless.

Child Guidance

Children need the adults who care for them to teach them what is and is not acceptable behavior. As caregivers, we have to be realistic, consistent and

clear about what we expect from children. And above all, we must be patient. We have to remember that the purpose in correcting a child's behavior is not to punish. There is nothing that can be done to change what has already happened. Concentrate instead on teaching the child appropriate behavior.

The following are some basics to keep in mind when helping children learn appropriate behavior:

- ❁ Keep your rules clear and simple and make sure that they are appropriate to the child's age and understanding.
- ❁ Don't embarrass, ridicule or humiliate a child. Talk to him the way you would want to be spoken to if you made a mistake.
- ❁ Don't use corporal punishment. Hitting, slapping or shoving a child doesn't teach them anything, and it's against the law.
- ❁ Respond to a child's feelings even if you have to correct her actions. For example when Mary hits Sue you might say "It's OK to be angry. It's not OK to hit."
- ❁ Help children learn the words to use to express their feelings. Don't wait until there is a problem or an incident to deal with. Children love playing games where they make sad, happy, angry and surprised faces. Read or tell stories that discuss feelings. Talking about how people are feeling and why they feel that way teaches children the language that they need to express their own feelings.
- ❁ Remember to comment on appropriate behavior. If two children have just worked out a way to share a toy or resolved a conflict you might say "You handled that well," or "I liked the way you settled that."
- ❁ When a child does misbehave remember to comment on the deed, not the doer. In the same way, when praising a child, focus on the deed, i.e., "good climbing" rather than "good boy/girl."
- ❁ Try not to let what other people may think influence the way you react to a situation. For example, you may find you feel differently about misbehavior in a shopping center than you do about the same misbehavior in your living room. Try to forget the audience of onlookers and deal with the situation as you would at home.
- ❁ If a child has a temper tantrum, help him first by calming him and helping him to regain control. You

may have to hold or restrain a child physically until he is calmer. Hold him gently but firmly and tell him you will help him calm down. Children can be terrified by tantrums and feel totally out of control when experiencing them. Once the child is calm you can discuss what started the incident and how he might deal with that sort of situation differently in the future.

- ❁ Calm yourself before you deal with any situation. Take a few deep breaths and count to ten if you have to. You are the adult and must be the one who maintains self-control.
- ❁ Make allowances for children when they are tired, hungry or just plain having a lousy day (children have them too).
- ❁ Encourage children, praise their efforts, applaud their successes and minimize their failures. Let them make decisions and challenge themselves. Be there to offer them guidance and act as their safety net when they need you-and they will.

Caring for Infants 0 Months - 18 Months

A child's development in the first eighteen months of life is truly amazing. From a totally helpless and dependent new born, unable to focus their eyes or control their movements, the infant will learn to crawl, sit, stand, walk, talk and more. An infant will also begin to identify with other people and the world around them. They'll learn whether or not the world is a friendly place, whether their needs are met promptly, kindly and consistently, and whether contact with people brings pleasure and comfort.

In addition to an infant's need for food, dry and warm clothing, bathing, sleep and fresh air, what an infant needs most is your warm, loving care and attention.

Infants Needs: An infant learns so much from the people who care for him that his most important teacher and plaything will be you. Not only do you provide for his physical needs, but through you an infant learns about language, emotions, movement and much, much more.

From Birth to Six Months

Baby is not yet mobile and will depend on you to provide interest and variety in his life. Infants will sleep much of the time during the early months, but during waking periods keep him with you or at

