MONTANA CHILD CARE BUSINESS CONNECT
Small Business Support. Big Community Impact.

POLICIES: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT SHOULD THEY CONTAIN?

"A policy is a document that contains instructions that determine how things are done in your organization. It clearly defines modes of conduct, reflects the organization's values, and determines the cultural structure of your organization. Your policy is your organization's action plan."

Purpose

To provide written communication for the purpose of identifying processes, practices, and procedures that staff and families who utilize the service of licensed childcare in Montana need to know.

Expectation

The development of written policies for processes, practices, and procedures within licensed childcare facilities communicates expectations for all persons involved with licensed childcare facilities.

Scope

A policy is intended to provide guidance to staff and families that utilize the childcare facility. It includes important processes that need an explanation for proper implementation for health and safety purposes. A policy may be designed to guide staff and families or may be intended for just one or the other.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the staff to know, understand, follow, and implement the policies in place. To ensure this, the policies and procedures need to be studied and converted to memory.
When developing policies thought should be given to how the tasks (procedures) should occur. Practicing procedures can be one way to enhance understanding. Additionally, better awareness and implementation of policies can occur when employees and leadership are both involved in creating them.

It is the responsibility of the director to ensure families have reviewed and signed any policies that pertain to them.

Benefits

Policies that are well-developed and known by staff and families help keep people safe in instances of a crisis or emergency. This is considered a strong risk management practice.

Review

Policies should be reviewed annually at a minimum. Be sure the most current version date is on both the policy itself and the Policies & Procedures handbook to ensure staff and families have the most up-to-date information.

Related Documentation

There are many written policies required within MT Child Care Licensing rules and regulations for Family/Group programs and Center programs. It is important that these policies be written and implemented prior to providing care.

POLICY VS. PROCEDURE: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

In order to be successful, a business must have both policies and procedures, not one or the other. What is the difference between them?

- Policies set guidelines for decision-making but leave room for flexibility. They show the "why" behind an action.
- Procedures explain the "how." They provide step-by-step instructions for specific routine tasks. They may even include a checklist or process steps to follow.

When it comes to creating, updating, and implementing your policies and procedures, there are some key differences.

Policies:

- Do not change often
- State the who, what, when, or why
- Are more general

Procedures:

- Often change to improve processes
- State the what, how, when, or who
- Are very detailed with step-by-step instruction

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