

## Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre

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## POLICIES RELATED TO STAFF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN A CHILD CARE PROGRAM

The purpose of this resource is to provide some key points for consideration when developing policies related to **Staff Children Enrolled in a Child Care Program**. Additional reading material related to policy development for the organization and for the child care program is also suggested.

It is important to note that each child care program's policies are unique to their organization. When you are creating your policies, they will reflect the purpose/mission of your organization/licensee and the philosophy of your child care programs.

The points to consider have been divided into four areas: organizational, child care program, human resource, and financial. We hope that this resource stimulates discussion for organizations clarifying their policy and procedures on staff children enrolled in a child care program.

### Points to consider when developing a policy and procedures:

#### **Organizational:**

- In a multi-service organization and multi-program child care setting, state clearly who the policy includes:
  - children of all employees;
  - children of some employees (e.g., child care employees); and
  - discretion based on a set of criteria (e.g., in emergency situations, where a person will be unable to return to employment without child care).
- Consider how you will handle situations such as parent visitations or an employee's child attending during staff meetings outside of program hours. Will all other policies for families be identical for employees or might there be exceptions?
  - Ensure any exclusions or exceptions in the policy and procedures does not contravene human rights or be perceived to be unfair personnel practice.
- Procedures should be developed to ensure confidentiality and sharing of information are on a "need to know basis".

- A review process and time lines could be built in to ensure that the arrangement is working for the child and the employee; and for the other staff, children and families. If there is a probation period, consider the following:
  - Who will be involved in the review and what steps may be taken if it is not working or the challenges cannot be successfully resolved to the satisfaction of all parties?
  - Who will have final decision making responsibility if the differences cannot be successfully resolved? What amount of notice will be given if termination of the child care service is decided as the next step?
  - How will this affect the employee for whom child care is being provided?
- Membership of a non-profit society includes those who use the service. If all families using child care programs are members of the society, could there be a “conflict of interest” (e.g., at a parent meeting and/or at a meeting of the Society membership)?
  - What might arise that is a “conflict of interest” or that other parents/families may perceive to be a “conflict of interest” for an employee who uses the child care programs?
  - What procedures will be in place to ensure sensitive handling of such a situation?

***Child Care Program:***

- Enrolment procedures should be clearly stated, outlining how the organization will handle things such as the waitlist, priority enrolment and limitations.
  - Will the waitlist be the same for employees as it is for other families?
  - Will there be priority enrolment? Will exceptions be made for all employees or only for child care employees of the organization? Could priority enrolment for a particular group contravene any legal agreements that the organization has (e.g., with funders)?
  - Will priority enrolment for staff be communicated to parents placing their children on the waitlist?
  - Will there be a limit to the number of employees who will be eligible to use the child care programs, and any limitations as to which programs an employee can utilize?
  - Will there be a limit to the number of employees’ children enrolled in a particular child care program within the organization, or a limit to the number of children from each family?
- Procedures should explain if staff are permitted to have their children enrolled in the program where they work.
  - Could the employee be the primary caregiver for her/his child?

- Will any special arrangements be needed for an employee who is breastfeeding her child?
- Procedures should outline steps to facilitate appropriate communication between caregivers and employees who use the child care program.
  - What opportunities might be provided to facilitate staff team building if issues arise?

**Human Resource:**

- Procedures should state if employees are eligible to utilize the child care program when the centre is open or only during their work shift.
- Procedures should ensure that parenting issues are kept separate from employee performance issues by all involved.

**Financial:**

- Procedures should outline if the fees and deposit for the child care program will be identical for all users, or will there be a reduced monthly fee/waiver of the required deposit for employees.
  - If there is a reduced fee or deposit waiver, what will the financial implications be for the organization and the employee? Canada Customs and Revenue Agency might consider the fee reduction to be a taxable benefit - consult a financial professional for clarification on this question.
  - Would staff not using the child care program expect a comparable benefit from the organization, money towards different child care arrangements, or another benefit?
  - What would the implications be regarding a monthly child care fee reduction if the staff leaves but their child remains at the centre?

**For more information, please refer to related resources:**

- *Policies and Procedures: The Rulebook for a Centre*, Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
- *Policies and Procedures for Child Care Programs - Tough and Sensitive Issues – Part I*, Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
- *Caring for the Little Ones*, Karen Miller, “Child Care Information Exchange”, March 1997 (available in the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre Library)

*This information is presented as a resource for licensed child care facilities. Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre does not assume responsibility for actions taken based on information provided.*