Employee Handbook Outline

This is a guide that can be used for homes and centers who are working to develop a handbook for staff. Not all items are necessary for all child care programs, but they are recommended for best practice. There may be additional items you would like to add to your handbook as well. The items with an * are <u>required</u> by licensing.

Part One: Welcome

- Include a 'welcome' paragraph. Also include expectations you have of all of your employees – "as an employee of this center you will be expected to exemplify…"
- Mission and Philosophy of the Center

Part Two: Employment

Orientation

- Licensing requires all employees of child care centers have an orientation. Please explain your center's orientation process.
- Include a statement about Maine being an At-Will employment state.
- Explain your center will not hire based on age, gender, race, religion, creed, national origin, marital or veteran status, national origin, or the presence of disabilities.
- All facilities must follow the Americans with Disabilities Act standards, including no discrimination, appropriate training for special needs, reasonable accommodation, etc.

***Training and staff qualifications**

- This is where you would state licensing requirements for training as well as any additional training you may require. You may include information about who pays for trainings, etc.
- Staff will need to provide a copy of any diploma or other qualifications they may have.

Staff Meetings

- It is recommended to hold monthly staff meetings.
- When will meetings be held?
  Is attendance mandatory (recommended for best practice)?

***Supervision of staff**

- Who supervises staff? How often?
- Is there a policy or procedure for staff reporting concerns? Asking for help, etc.?
- How often will employees have evaluations? Reminder that they are required annually

***Staff files**

- Where will employee records be kept? What information goes into these files?

Delegation of Responsibilities and the Decision-Making Process

- Create a chart showing the different levels of the center- this chart will help explain the grievance procedure.
- What is the grievance procedure?

Staff Schedules

- Where are schedules posted and when they are posted?

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Calling in Sick

- What is your procedure for staff calling in sick?
- How much time is needed?
- Does staff need to find their own sub?

Part Three: Benefits

Paychecks

- Discuss when pay periods are and how paychecks will be distributed.
- If your center offers direct deposit; what is the process to set it up through the staff members bank.

Health/Dental Care, Life Insurance

- If your center provides insurance list the availability guidelines.

Childcare benefits

- If your center provides for free or discounted child care tuition for the children of staff, please explain the details.

Time off:

- What is your vacation policy?
- List all holidays that the center is closed and staff will be given paid time off.

Bereavement Leave

- List how many days are given.
- It is recommended to explain that this policy is for immediate family members only.

Part Four: Personal and Professional Behavior

Professional Demeanor

- Explain the importance of using good judgment in each employee's behavior. Provide examples/scenarios

Gross Misconduct

- It is recommended to list offenses that may occur that would require immediate disciplinary action and quite possibly, termination. Some examples of prohibited activities are:
  1. Neglect or physical abuse of a child.
  2. Withholding of food, nap or other comforts from a child.
  3. Yelling or the use of harsh tones of voice.
  4. Failure to report to work.
  5. Falsification of center records.
  6. Conviction of a felony while employed at the center.
  7. Leaving a child/children unattended.
  8. Allowing a child to leave the center with an unauthorized person.
  9. Sleeping while supervising children.
  10. Insubordination.

Dress Code

- Jewelry – should be conservative. It is recommended that long chain necklaces

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or pendants not be worn as they can present a safety hazard to small children.

- Earrings should also be small, conservative and secure, to prevent children from grabbing and pulling loose.
- Shoes – must be neat and in good repair at all times. Tennis shoes or flats are best. Since you are expected to engage the children in activities on the playground then shoes should be appropriate for the situation. Open toe or open heel shoes are not recommended for safety reasons (this would include flip flops).
- Clothing – should be clean and in good repair at all times. You are hired to work with children and being down and on the floor frequently is part of the job responsibility. Clothing must be appropriate to engage children in all types of activities throughout the day. Clothes that are too revealing should be avoided. Clothes that have graphic designs should be avoided. Clothing should not have holes or lavish accessories. It is highly recommended to use a conservative outlook when deciding upon clothing.

Nametags

- If applicable, the importance of wearing employee nametag/identification.

***Smoking**

- Smoking in not permitted on a child care facility premises or in the child care home when children are present

Personal Phone Calls

- Personal calls for staff should be conducted either before or after a shift, or on a lunch break.

Cell Phones

- It is recommended to not allow the use of cell phones while staff are with the children.
- Personal cell phones are occasionally used for emergency purposes only when staff and children are off site.
- A policy on texting and use of internet is advised.

Coaching/Mentoring:

- If your center has a coaching/mentoring process explain how you match the new employee and mentor and the expectations of both employees.

Conflict Resolution

- What are the procedures for resolving conflicts?

Part Five: Policies and Procedures

Confidentiality

- Explain that due to the sensitive nature of information you will know as a teacher/caregiver, it is extremely important to keep sensitive information confidential. Information should be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.
- Information of one child is not to be shared with other families. Sensitive information should not be shared in any public area of the center.
- Give examples/scenarios of information that is okay to share and what is not okay to share.

State Licensing Rules and Regulations

- It is expected that all employees will be knowledgeable in the Maine Child Care Licensing

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Rules and Regulations handbook and follow all procedures. Each staff member is required to sign that they have read the licensing book. It is recommended this is revisited yearly.

***Reporting Licensing Violations:**

- All staff are expected to follow Maine Child Care Licensing Rules and all violations need to be reported to DHHS.
- What is your policy for reporting violations (i.e. do staff speak with director or do they make report on their own)? Include a clause that staff will not be punished/reprimanded for reporting violations, if applicable

***Reporting suspected child abuse/neglect**

- Mandatory reporting. The facility must make all childcare personnel aware of their status and responsibility as mandated reporters to the Department of Health and Human Services when there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a child under the age of eighteen (18).
- Policy for handling suspected instances of child abuse or neglect. The facility must adopt written policy for handling suspected instances of child abuse or neglect in accordance with Maine law.
- Training: All employees must complete Mandated Reporter training every four years as required by law.

***Guidance and Socialization (Discipline)**

- State the procedure for positive child guidance of the children in your care.

Curriculum

- What curriculum do you use?
- Include inserts of all of the rooms daily schedules
- If applicable, what are the expectations of lead teachers and assistant teachers for planning time, parent teacher conferences, primary caregivers, etc.

Outdoor Play

- Policy for going outdoors should include the high and low temperatures that would prevent children from going outside. This policy should be posted in all classrooms
- Discuss importance of all children having outdoor time every day weather permitting. What happens in the event of inclement weather?

Field Trips

- If your center participates in field trips, state your policies and your expectations of staff on the field trips.

Mealtimes

- What are your procedures for meal time including sanitizing tables, keeping food covered, washing staff hands and children's hands, wearing gloves and/or using tongs when serving children?

Diapering, Toileting, and Washing Up

- What are the procedures for Diapering and Toilet Training?
- It is recommended to post the step-by step procedures next to the appropriate areas.

Napping

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- Your policy and procedures for rubbing backs?
- What is the plan for children who do not nap or wake up early?
- Whose responsibility is it to plan activities for the children who do not sleep?
- Ratios for nap are the same as when children are awake.
- Safe Sleep Policies. These should be created with the recommendations of the Safe Sleep Campaign and American Academy for Pediatrics (i.e. Infants placed on their backs to sleep, tight fitting crib sheet, nothing in the crib with them, etc).

Supervision of children

- What are your expectations for supervision throughout the day? Specifically address supervision for eating, sleeping, playing outdoors, playing in gym/large motor room, field trips, children using the bathroom independently, etc.
- Include a ratio chart.

Food and Beverages

- What is your policy on staff eating in classrooms?
- If your center serves meals family style it is recommended for staff to serve the same food to themselves as to the children and for staff to serve as role models to the children by eating nutritiously in front of the children.
- Staff should avoid drinking hot beverages around the children to avoid possible burns.
- All other beverages should be kept in a closed container and kept away from children.

Television

- It is recommended to not use a television or at least limit it to very special occasions. If the television is used it is recommended on a very limited basis (20 minutes at a time) and only G rated movies should be used. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends NO screen time for children under 2 years of age.

Maintaining Equipment and Materials and Purchasing

- What are teacher's roles in rotating resources?
- How are resources/equipment purchased?
- Do individual classrooms have a monthly/yearly budget?
- Do classrooms keep an ongoing wish list and turn it in to the director at specified times?

Part Five: Heath, Safety, and Emergency Procedures

***Emergency/Evacuation**

- Explain your procedure for emergencies, including evacuation, lock down, and any other natural disasters that could occur in your area. Consult your local emergency management team as needed.
- Where will your point of evacuation will be in the event of an emergency and how parents can contact you if this situation should occur? What is the shelter location for weather related events?
- Explain the safe place and procedure for lock down situation.
- What is your procedure for dealing with natural disasters?
- Where is your emergency evacuation plan kept?

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Accident Procedure

- Explain when accident reports will be written up, when parents will be called and when emergency services will be called.
- Will there be training for filling out accident reports?

***Fire Drill procedure**

- Fire evacuation drills must be conducted at least once a month for all children and adults present using at least two (2) means of exit.
- What are your fire drill procedures? Fire drills must be conducted according to policies and procedures that are posted in each room utilized by children.

Children with Special Health Care Needs

- Explain that all children with diagnosed special health needs have a current care plan signed by a health care provider and parent/guardian, as well as a release of information form signed by parent. Care plan must be updated at least yearly.
- Emergency medication and/or equipment specified in the care plan must be available at the program at all times and when the child is taken off site during child care hours.
- All staff are recommended to be familiar with all of the children in the program with care plans.

Guidelines for Exclusion Due to Illness

- Offer detailed information regarding your exclusion policies for common illnesses in children such as diarrhea, fever, rash, respiratory illness, vomiting, etc.
- List illnesses that children are diagnosed with that parents need to inform the center of immediately.
- Explain procedure that will be followed if children become ill while at the center.

Hand Washing

- List all times children and adults are required to wash hands.

Handling Body Fluids

- What is the procedure for cleaning up body fluids (vomit, spit-up, blood, etc.)?
- What is the procedure for an exposure incident?

Health Policies

- What is the process for notification of communicable diseases?
- How will staff get trained in the centers health and illness policies?

Medication Policy

- What is your policy for administering medication?
- Written permission and instructions from a health care provider and the child's parent are recommended to be obtained to administer prescription and over-the-counter medications.
- Written parental permission is suggested to apply any over-the-counter products such as sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream/ointment, etc.

Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting

- What products you use for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting.
- The procedure and frequency for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting items and surfaces.

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Conclusion

Please sign the attached forms that document your understanding of the enclosed policies.
By signing below, employees and director agree to abide by the written policies.

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