**Welcome to TX Child Care tools.**

**Today, we'll be learning all about policies and procedures.**

This video will help familiarize you with resources that will strengthen your policies and procedures, especially as it relates to interaction with the families you serve and business operations.

We will review

The Family Handbook template

Posters, and

Required Postings. Let's get started.

No one likes to be the bad guy, right? Especially when it could have been prevented by having communicated your position with a well written policy and procedure.

Benefits of workplace policies include that they provide rules and guidelines for decision making in routine situations, provide a consistent and clear response across the company in dealing with situations. Provide an accepted method of dealing with complaints and misunderstandings to help avoid claims of bias and favoritism. And finally, they provide a means of communicating information to families and staff.

This overview will cover only a small number of very specific policies and procedures that will be useful for high quality business operations and working with families. Let's start by taking a look at the Family Handbook template.

Putting effort into developing a good Family Handbook is important because it communicates expectations to families about how you will care for their children, as well as the rules that families must follow to support your effort in the care, education and safety of their child.

Here we are on TX Child Care Tools and we're looking at the Family Handbook resource page. We got here by going into “Engaging Families / Admin Tools.”

This is a great set of resources, whether you already have a Family Handbook or whether you need to create one from scratch. There are two complete templates here for center-based and home-based programs in English and Spanish, and also a wealth of the individual policies that you can use to modify or augment any of your existing policies if you already have an existing handbook. This is a great comparative tool. If you need to start one from scratch, here is a great tool to get started. Let's take a look at that now.

Here are the instructions for a Center-based Family Model Handbook. The first thing to note is that it is not all inclusive. It's provided to help you get a jumpstart on creating your own Family Handbook. Items marked in red can vary widely and should be reviewed carefully prior to adoption. And you can modify or adjust policies and procedures in this handbook to reflect your own program’s practices. Most importantly, after you create your own family handbook, be sure to have it reviewed by qualified law counsel to be sure it's in compliance with applicable federal, state and local law.

Next, let's prepare this handbook for distribution. First, save a copy of this handbook to your computer. This entire handbook is editable. Be sure to review any red text that is recognized policy that you might want to keep, modify or delete. Also, anything that is in yellow highlighted brackets, be sure to go ahead and change that to reflect your own policies and procedures. And anything in green text can easily be searched for and replaced with the name of your own program by following the instructions right here. It's really as simple as one, two, three. Now, moving on, I’ll be able to show you the wealth of information and how easy it is to make these changes. So here we are. Again, we're going to click on the “Click here to insert your program's logo”, but we're going to delete it. We don't want to put the logo in at this time. And down below, we want to enter the year. You'll notice how it adopts the formatting and gets rid of any of the highlighting.

Let's begin with the welcome letter. You'll see a lot of red text, which is suggested content for your program’s welcome to families. Writing a welcome letter expresses the warm and caring relationship you strive to provide in your program and establishes a personal relationship with families. Let's jump into the table of contents. You can see that this is a very comprehensive set of policies and practices, but you'll also notice that there aren't a lot of pages to this document. And the reason being we wanted to make it as simple and easy for families to read it and to make themselves familiarized with how you'll care for their child and their expectations, it's organized with typical topics like “Curricula and Learning,” “Guidance,” “Tuition and Fees,” which we will spend some more time on in just a moment, and “Drop off and Pick up,” “Personal Belongings,” “Nutrition,” “Health,” “Safety,” “Emergencies” and even “Family Activities” that the families may get involved in to really work with their program intimately. Last but not least, we're going to look at a Family Handbook Acknowledgment form a little later.

But first, let's look at “Tuition and Fees.” As you can see, very comprehensive. But if you have not reviewed your tuition and fee policies lately, you need to do it now. So much has changed with the pandemic that it's really important to make sure you're as up to date as possible. You'll notice that there's still a lot of yellow text here and those things need to be changed to reflect your own business practices. The first one is “click to enter the name of person responsible for collecting fees.” I'm going to click here and put ‘business director’ just to show you how this works. You can enter whatever name you need to. The next thing in red that I'm clicking over, you'll notice that there's a specific policy there, which is nationally recognized, but which you may change if you think it meets your policies. Change the text to black if you want to keep it. Now, let's move on. We're going to look specifically at the “Credits and No Credits” section. So important, and especially with regard to weather or environmental issues or pandemic, which is what we have been dealing with over the past so many months. And if you don't have a policy about how you will collect fees during this time, you need to have one. You do need to make sure that you're in compliance with your own state and local requirements for collecting fees while you're closed. But if you don't have a policy, you should state one. Here near the very end of the handbook, you'll find a “Family Handbook Acknowledgment” form, which you should require that families sign. This forms a binding contract that you will have with families in addition to any other documents and forms they will sign. In summary, I'm sure you can agree that the Family Handbook template is an incredible tool. You should also know that it undergoes regular review to ensure it is up to date with most current practices.

Let's take a look at “Tuition and Full Fee Collection.” TX Child Care Tools has a number of resources to help you with this important work, including Tuition Reminder templates and a guide on How to Have a Difficult Conversation with Families About Money. A set of Late Fee Letters and Termination Notices, as well as best practices and other fees to consider. All of these resources are provided to support and amplify your current tuition and fees collection practices. Well, many of these resources aren't policies. They are procedures and best practices to ensure that you are paid in full and on time. Let's take a look at the TX Child Care Tools website.

Now, here we are on TX Child Care Tools. We're looking at the “Financial Management Resource Page,” which can be found under “Successful Program Management.” There are a number of great resources here. I highly recommend you spend some time exploring this section when you have a moment. It will help you with fiscal sustainability.

We are going to look at “Budget Planning and Preparation.” There's three important components here: “Full Enrollment” best practices, “Tuition and Full Fee Collection” and “Revenues That Cover Per Child Costs.” Those are known as the ‘Iron Triangle,’ and they help you with fiscal sustainability. If you'd like to read more about the ‘Iron Triangle,’ here's a great article.

First and foremost, make sure your Family Handbook has a good payment policy. Next, there are reminder letters in English and Spanish, How To Have A Difficult Conversation With Families About Money, also in English and Spanish, tuition, late fee letters and termination notices--if you need to send those kinds of messages to families. Also, let's take a look at best practices for regular tuition increases. And there's a notification letter available for you to do so. And finally, some other fees to consider to help with your fiscal sustainability. A tremendous amount of resources here, and we've only just scratched the surface. Please take some time to take a look at all of these “Tuition and Full Fee Collection” resources.

We've already taken a look at the Family Handbook template. Now let's move into “Posters.” Every child care program I've ever had the pleasure of visiting has a variety of posters on everything from handwashing, diapering, employment, posters and so many others here on TX Child Care Tools. You have access to over 30 posters on all kinds of topics. They're free. You simply download them, print them and post them. Let's take a look at a few right now.

Let's take a look at our ‘Be Prepared For An Earthquake’ poster. This is a professionally designed tool that you can use as a handout for families or you can simply post. It's a great reminder to protect yourself and what those steps look like.

Our ‘Nut Free Zone’ poster is a visual alert to families and others know that a child in your care has a nut allergy. What a wonderful way to alert families and others about this critical need.

Next our ‘Diapering’ poster, which is available in 3 pieces; simply print it out. You may decide to laminate it if you'd like and post it. It's a great reminder of the proper diapering procedure.

Our ‘How To Wash Your Hands’ poster is a wonderful reminder of the importance of hand hygiene. This step-by-step poster makes it easy to remember the proper processes.

And taking it in a completely different direction, let's look at our Preschool Language And Literacy Tool. It's organized in phonological awareness and interactive and dialogic reading. Again, it can be used as a handout with families as you're working on these topics with their children who are in your care.

And last but not least, ‘Please, No Cell Phones During Drop Off And Pick Up,’ what a wonderful visual reminder that parents’ full attention is needed when they're picking up their child.

We've explored a number of great posters, but there is one section, we haven't looked at and that has to do with Required Postings. Let's take a look now.

Let's explore the required ‘Workplace Posters,’ you can find this information on the “Posters” page and click on ‘Department of Labor Workplace Posters.’

These typical posters include things like the ‘Fair Labor Standards Act,’ the ‘OSHA Job Safety’ poster, ‘The Family Medical Leave Act,’ and finally, ‘Equal Opportunity Employment.’

As an employer, you are required by the US Department of Labor and locally by your State Department of Labor on required workplace notices. There are penalties that can be imposed if you do not comply. We've just shown you a sampling of the typical workplace posters most often required. All of them are available in multiple languages. And you can download them all for free. If you have any questions on which notices you are mandated to post, use the ‘eLaws Poster Advisor’ available on TX Child Care Tools.

We've talked about three really important business processes. Your policies with families. They're an incredibly important part of family engagement and quality business operations.

You'll want to revisit your Family Handbook and related policies at least annually, to be sure everything is relevant and to make changes when needed.

Your tuition and fee collection practices are critical to your financial stability.

And finally, your workplace postings, which are required by both state and federal law and penalties, may be imposed for noncompliance.

While these topics may feel unconnected, they do form an important foundation for strong business practices that can help you strengthen your overall programmatic and administrative operations. The resources on tax childcare tools can be your source of knowledge and guidance to help you navigate the details of these difficult topics more easily.

TX Child Care Tools

What can tax childcare tools do for you today?