



Records and Documentation

“Records” are defined as a collection of documents that are gathered over a period of time containing written information, reference material or statistics to capture events, thoughts, actions and information that may be important at a later date.

Why should I keep records?

The quick answer is easy - the *Child Care Licensing Regulation and Standards of Practice for Safe Play Space* require you to document specific information regarding your employees, the children in care, aspects of your program and policies and procedures to name a few. These records provide evidence that you are complying with the expectations of the legislation. Good record keeping and documentation helps you and the families who rely on you by:

- Helping you to be prepared and organized in the event of an emergency or when communicating critical information to families and emergency personnel.
- Demonstrating good hiring practices that you follow to ensure that all employees have the character, temperament, skills and experience to work with children.
- Providing the necessary information to care providers and substitute care providers so that they can provide care that meets all children’s needs; and make consistent and appropriate health and safety decisions.
- Tracking proactive steps taken to address health and safety risks.
- Documenting discussions, observations and decisions in the event that a conflict or dispute arises.

There are a number of benefits of maintaining good documentation that you may have not considered. We have included some scenarios that help to illustrate these situations.

Records should clearly capture decisions regarding a child’s unique care needs and ongoing communications between parents and caregivers such as *care plans, custody orders and consent forms*.

Scenario

A parent arrives to pick up their child, however; there is a custody order on file stating that the parent is not to have access to the child. The child’s registration form indicates that the child can only be released to the custodial parent. The custody order and registration records are on file to guide staff so that the child is safely released only to persons who are authorized in writing. Staff and substitute care providers rely on written information obtained by the licensee, so that they can make important health and safety decisions when situations arise.

Records are essential not only to protect the health and safety of children, but also to protect the care provider from potential liability. Records often come into play in the event that a complaint is made or in the review of a serious incident.

Scenario

A disgruntled parent alleges that you are caring for too many infants; that the boys play on x-box all day and you only feed them hot dogs and Kraft dinner. The Licensing Officer reviews attendance and children's records to determine the ages of children and hours of attendance and finds that you are in compliance with your license. We review your program of activities and find that the theme for the week was fire safety, with crafts, field trips, special books and activities to help them learn to stay safe. A review of the nutrition policy and the food served for that week indicate tasty, inventive meals and snacks that follow the Canada Food Guide and good feeding practices.

What type of records do I need to keep at my facility?

Requirements for records are generally categorized as follows:

Employee records confirm that the licensee has met with and pre-screened all employees to verify that they meet character and skill requirements. The licensee will collect documentation such as; a criminal record and reference checks, resume, training certificates, medical clearance, immunization status and first aid certification to show due diligence in their hiring practices.

Children's records include things like; registration forms, medication administration records, care plans, consent forms and attendance records that specify dates and times that care was provided. These records are kept to keep track of the child's health status, emergency contact information, permissions, special care instructions and attendance.

Day to day operations and maintenance include records, logs and reports that mitigate risk, such as; serious incident reports, monthly fire drill logs, annual emergency/disaster drill logs, outdoor play area maintenance records (daily, monthly and annual), log of minor accidents, illness or unexpected events. These records are kept to show evidence of the proactive steps taken to address and prevent potential incidents and injuries.

Policies and procedures must be in place to communicate important information and expectations about the program to staff and parents. A policy is a general rule that covers a particular issue or situation. A procedure refers to the specific steps that one must take to ensure the general rule is followed. The *Child Care Licensing Regulation* requires facilities to develop and implement written policies and procedures such as; a parent repayment agreement if fees are paid in advance, safe release of a child, behavioral guidance, policies and procedures respecting food and drink served to children, health and hygiene, and care and supervision. These policies and procedures can prevent injuries, accidents or complaints, by communicating expected standards and best practices to staff; and by giving parents a clear understanding of what they can expect from the care services being provided.

It is important to have a reliable record keeping system that works for you. You should consider how you will ensure this information is available and accessible at all times including when a computer issue, power outage, or emergency situation arises. Facility records must be organized and secure and be reviewed regularly to ensure the information is accurate and up to date.

In the normal course of an inspection, Licensing Officers will ask to review your policies and procedures and facility records to see that you are operating in compliance with provincial standards. How you record the information is up to you; however, this information must be kept in a single place at the facility and be readily available at all times for inspection purposes.

If you have any questions or require clarification regarding the above information, please contact your Licensing Officer for further assistance.

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