**Difference between Contracts and Policies**

A contract is a **legally binding agreement** that spells out exactly what you provide and what the parent must do. Policies are how you run your program-what your **procedures and rules** are for your program.

**Contract or enrollment agreement:**

A Contract is the agreement that tells what is actually provided between you and the parent.All the financial information is in your contract. It is a stand-alone document. If you are faced with a legal dispute this contract should contain all necessary information to take to court. It should not include all your policies or procedures. Policies and procedures should be included in your Family Handbook but can be referred to in the contract.

**CONTRACT SHOULD INCLUDE**:

* + Name of parties involved
  + Days and hours care is provided
  + How and when you want tuition payments
  + Payment rates, late payment fees, overtime charges, returned check fees (NSF), deposits, enrollment fees or material fees, etc.
  + Payment due for Absence or sickness
  + List of holidays or days you will be closed (paid or unpaid)
  + Collection policy
  + Substitute care arrangements
  + Your termination policy
  + Signature of BOTH parents and provider with dates
  + Contract renewal date

Be sure parent names, address, phone number and driver’s license is on the contract.

You can add a statement at the end of your contract or on the first or last page of your policy handbook that parents sign acknowledging they read your **policies:** Example

* By signing this page, you indicate that you have read my policies and procedures and agree to follow them. I will give you 30 day written notice before revising my current policies or adding a new policy.

**Family Handbooks-Your Policies and Procedures**

**This will include everything else about your program.** Policies explain how you run your program and what your rules are. This is how you do things and how you will handle day-to-day activities. Putting your policies in writing can help when problems arise.

**Policies to include in your Handbook**

* Your hours of operation and days of the week
* Program closures and holidays
* Vacation or sick time policy for children
* Tuition policy-when tuition is due, how you can be paid, late and return check policies. DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR RATES HERE since they will change each year. Your rates are in your contract..
* Define part time and full time if you provide them
* Arrival and departure procedures
* How you handle other authorized persons picking up children
* Guidance or discipline policy
* Required emergency plan
* Illness policy when children need to be excluded
* Administering medication
* Information on transportation if you provide it
* Nap policy
* Meal program and special diets
* Clothing requirements
* Toys from home-do you allow them?
* Parents provisions of diapers, wipes, baby food, etc
* Supplies you require of parents

To be proactive you may want to also include

* Your basic schedule or routine
* A policy on how you will handle a parent arriving under the influence or without a car seat
* What you will require in the event parents divorce
* Your supervision of children policy
* Plans for parent meetings or conferences

Contact CCR&R for handout ***Family Handbooks:List and Tips for Writing Policies and Procedures*** to help with your handbook