

# How Do I Implement My Child Care Services Contract?



**DECAL**  
**Thriving Child Care**  
**Business Academy**

**Understand how to navigate the challenges of enforcing your child care contract**

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## **Introduction**

Now that you have a child care contract in place, it's essential to take the necessary steps to ensure it is implemented effectively and is properly enforced. This guide will walk you through ensuring families clearly understand the expectations associated with the child care contract and how to navigate challenges when families do not meet the terms of the agreement.

## **How can I ensure a clear understanding of the contract terms by families?**

A contract will only be effective if everyone has and understands the information. First and foremost, share the contract and the family handbook with family members, ensuring they have a clear understanding of the terms and expectations. Collect signed copies of the agreement to formalize the commitment and maintain a record of mutual consent. For new families, take time to review the contract terms and family handbook together. This will provide an opportunity for families to ask clarifying questions and for any misunderstandings or concerns to be addressed promptly. Make sure that you collect and maintain signed copies of your child care contract for every child in your care. Your agreement will contain language that certifies that families have read and understood the agreement and family handbook at the time of signing.

## **What should I do if a family breaks the agreement?**

Even with the best of intentions and a well-written contract agreement in place, disagreements between families and child care businesses can still happen. If you suspect that a family member has not met the terms of your agreement, here are some things you should do:

- **Review the contract:** Before taking any action, verify that the terms of the agreement have actually been breached.
- **Discuss the contract violation:** Contact the family member(s) to discuss the breach in contract with the intention of reaching a solution. Calmly review the terms outlined in the signed contract and explain how the family member's actions do not align with what is written. Give them an opportunity to correct the error.
- **Document the problem:** Keep detailed records of all conversations or interactions with the family member about the issue, including the date and time of the conversation, what was discussed, and any agreements reached.
- **Consider mediation if you need support:** If you are unable to settle the problem through direct conversation, mediation may be an option.
- **Terminate the agreement:** The decision to end the agreement between a family and your child care business is a significant one, but unfortunately it is sometimes necessary when issues cannot be resolved.
- **Seek legal counsel if needed:** If you continue to experience issues despite your efforts to settle the matter, legal action may be required.

It is critical to remember that each scenario is unique, and the steps you take will be determined by the exact circumstances of the problem. If you are unsure about your options or how to proceed, it is always a good idea to consult with a lawyer or other legal professional.

### What should I do when having a difficult conversation with a family member?

Having these difficult conversations can be frustrating, stressful, and even intimidating for child care business owners, but it is critical to take a proactive and constructive approach in order to resolve the situation. Here are some things to keep in mind during tough conversations:

- **Communicate openly and respectfully.** Try to understand their point of view and be sympathetic to their position.
- **Clarify expectations.** Remind them of the child care contract, what actions are expected, and why.
- **Provide solutions.** Work together to find a solution that works for both of you if at all possible.
- **Establish boundaries.** If tensions rise during the conversation, take a break or resume the conversation at another time when all parties are calm.
- **Remember to stay calm and professional at all times.** Dealing with difficult conversations can be challenging, but it is important to maintain a positive and constructive attitude.

## If I still need to terminate the child care contract, what should I do?

After attempting to resolve the issue(s), if you still need to terminate a child care contract, having a plan in place is critical. Your plan should outline the steps you need to take to end the contract in a fair and polite manner so that 1) you don't have to stop and figure out what to do next and 2) the process is consistent and fair.

Here are some steps to consider when terminating agreements:

1. **Review the child care contract:** Examine the contract first to check that you are in accordance with the terms outlined in your contract termination policy.
2. **Inform the family:** Inform the family in writing. This notice should include the clear and straightforward reasons for termination, the terms and conditions that were not met, the steps your business took to resolve the dispute, the decision to terminate their contract, and the date by which the termination is effective.
3. **Provide a fair notice period:** If and when possible, allow families a reasonable notice period to make alternate arrangements for the care of their child.
4. **Make plans for property return:** If the family has any property or personal goods at the child care program, make arrangements for their return.
5. **Reimburse any payments:** If applicable, reimburse any fees received in advance for child care services that will not be supplied.
6. **Obey all applicable laws and regulations:** Make certain that all applicable laws and regulations regarding the termination of child care services are followed.

The termination procedure should be handled with kindness and professionalism since it may be a painful and emotional experience for both the family and the child care provider. Make a record of all communications and interactions with the family member(s) preceding the decision to cancel their contract. Finally, be prepared to respond to any questions or concerns that other families may have about the termination respectfully and compassionately.

Though issues may arise from time to time, you can still take the steps to craft a thorough child care contract to set clear expectations and minimize the chances of disputes. Investing in a solid contract from the start can help minimize misunderstandings and problems later on, making it a worthwhile investment for all parties involved.

## **Additional Resources**

**If you have questions or need help, assistance is available.**

[GaPDS Website](#)

[DECAL Thriving Child Care Business Academy Website](#)

[Georgia Licensing Rules and Regulations](#)

**To Find Other Study Guides:** Click on [Resources](#) on the Academy home page

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**For questions about coaching or study groups:** Email [GAcoaching@civstrat.com](mailto:GAcoaching@civstrat.com)

**To Find Other ECE Resources:** Visit the [DECAL Website](#)

**For General Questions about the Academy:** Email [thriving@decals.ga.gov](mailto:thriving@decals.ga.gov)

**For More Information:**

[Family Child Care Learning Home Rules and Regulations](#)

[Child Care Learning Center Rules and Regulations](#)