Communication is Key!

Most of us have heard this statement and understand the importance of communication in all facets of our lives. Unfortunately establishing effective communication is sometimes easier said than done. We provide you with tips and suggestions for how you can establish and/or improve the way you are communicating with parents and guardians.

Summer is Heating Up!

With the hot temperatures and humidity we are all looking for ways to keep cool and our kids are no exception! Look inside to find some creative alternatives to wading and/or swimming pools that are not only fun, but safe, too.

Measles—What You Should Know

Learn more about what the Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing Division recommends regarding vaccinations and where you can find more information.
A Partnership with Parents

We all know that children benefit when their childcare providers develop positive relationships and communicate well with their parents. Good communication is essential for building relationships but it doesn't just happen. Here are some communication tips to assist you as caregivers, as you collaborate with your families.

7 Keys to Good communication, taken from Extension Alliance for Better Childcare:

Be interested. Reflect on your own attitudes towards parents and take a genuine interest in what they think. Ask them how they would like communication regarding their children’s daily childcare life and be flexible (when possible). Remind yourself often that every person has a story and every family has a unique life.

Be humble. Even though you may be a seasoned childcare provider and have expertise in caring for children; it is helpful to maintain a view of yourself and parents as co-contributors to the growth and wellbeing of the children. As you approach parents with an attitude of curiosity and humility, parents in turn will be more likely to seek out your opinions and suggestions.

Be respectful. It is important to maintain an attitude of respect for the parent’s role even if you may sometimes disagree with a parent’s decision or viewpoint. Be intentional about expressing your belief that parents want what’s best for their child and that their role is incredibly important. Being respectful also means doing everything possible to make sure that

(Continued on page 3)
communication barriers are overcome.

**Be inviting.** Some parents communicate openly, however others need to be intentionally invited to communicate. Ask questions that show you are interested and are paying attention. Ask open ended questions that invite a thoughtful response.

**Be a good listener.** Since drop off and pick up’s can be hectic, it is suggested that caregivers take time to listen to what parent’s want from a provider, as well as what the child may need. Some providers offer the use of a daily log book which is passed along from parent to provider, as a way to communicate. Other’s hold family conferences. Conferences offer parents the opportunity to sit down and talk about ways to continue to care for their child, as they would like. It develops a foundation for an ongoing positive communication system. For more information regarding family conferences click this link: [virtuallabschool.org](http://virtuallabschool.org)

**Be positive.** Don’t only communicate when there is an issue or when a problem arises. Share fun stories and be sure to tell parents about the positive things you observe in their child.

**Be creative.** Today, there are so many ways to communicate! Ask your families how they would like to communicate with them regarding their children. Never assume that they actually see the note you put in their child’s backpack. Be creative and responsive. Parents will appreciate your efforts.

Remember, a connection between families and caregivers is an important part of developing a high quality care and learning environment.

*Article by Suzette Bechly*

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**Child Care Licensing Staff**

*Coverage Line: 612-348-3883*

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Negative Licensing Actions

Complaints that are determined to have “Occurred” will result in a correction. If the complaint involved an incident that resulted in a legal determination that “Imminent Harm and Danger” to a child occurred or there was a potential of “Imminent Harm and Danger” to a child we will consult with the Department of Human Services and the County Attorney office to determine if a “Temporary Immediate Suspension” should be initiated. If the violation is serious but does not rise to the level of “Imminent Harm and Danger” a correction order will be given to the provider and the team will consult about the appropriateness of further Negative Action. In situations where a provider has had repeated safety violations, we will likely recommend either a “Conditional License” to DHS or a “Revocation” of the license. If you have had a previous conditional license and continue to disregard the rules we will likely seek a revocation. Please remember it is our job to ensure the safety of children in your daycare by monitoring compliance with the laws and rules for Minnesota Family Childcare. Following or not following the laws and rules is completely in your control so please, please, please follow the rules and maintain a safe program!! We are happy to answer any questions. You can email us or call the coverage line or consult with you licensing social worker.

Common Complaints:

Capacity/Ratio

The most common mistake that providers make that gets them in trouble is being over capacity and out of ratio. Please review the Capacity/Ration Guideline frequently and make a habit of checking children’s birthdates monthly to keep track of when children move from one age group to another. Feel free to make copies of the guide to handout to parents so they are aware of the limits you are required by law to follow. We are happy to take the blame when you have a parent upset after you tell them you cannot take their new baby due to capacity limits. Feel free to have them contact us if they need an explanation. Also, call your licensing worker to discuss potential issues so they can help problem solve with you. Often there is a way to accommodate the situation by a change in license class, getting a temporary second caregiver or making adjustments to scheduling. We are here to help!

Supervision Concerns

Now that the warm weather has arrived, toddlers and preschoolers are anxious to get outside and play. It’s important that you plan ahead for how you will provide supervision to sleeping infants and watch children playing outside simultaneously. Have your strollers and an outdoor containment space ready for when you need it for infants that are awake. Develop a routine for transitioning from indoor time to outdoor play so that older children get used to the safety rules by following the same routine daily. For example:

Toddlers and preschoolers sit down by the door and sing a special song right before outdoor playtime. This will allow you the time to gather up the infant items and get the infant properly buckled in the stroller before heading outside. Make sure you have your backpack ready to go the evening before so you aren’t scrambling to gather necessary items. Following these simple routines will reduce your stress and help the children to be able to practice patience.

We would love to hear from you about your success stories. Please email us at HSPH.ChildCareInfo@hennepin.us so we can share your ideas in our next newsletter.

Article by Jan Goetz
Of the many circumstances that can worry a provider, complaints are sure to hit the top of the list. This article is intended to help you understand the complaint process, identify the most common complaints and help you to avoid complaints regarding your program.

Understandably no provider wants to have a licensing worker show up unannounced to follow up on a complaint that was received, however it is a very common occurrence. Complaints come to the licensing unit in a variety of ways and through a number of sources. Complaints can come in through email, phone calls or letters. The most common way to receive a complaint is from a phone call to our coverage line. When a complaint is received the first step that occurs is that it is reviewed by the supervisors to determine if it is a possible rule violation. Sometimes we receive reports that are considered a business dispute such as the provider closed for the day and the parent was stuck without childcare, or the provider charged me a late fee when I was 1 minute late picking up my child. This kind of report is not a complaint because it does not involve a potential rule violation. When these reports are received we generally call the provider and let them know about the report in general terms however we never reveal the name of the person that made the report. We are happy to discuss ideas for settling business disputes between parents and providers in a general way, but we cannot offer legal advice. Sometimes these business dispute can escalate between providers and parents and parents can initiate a civil lawsuit. (Although liability insurance is not required for providers, we strongly recommend that providers carry insurance to protect themselves should something unforeseen occur.)

Reports that are received that involve a potential rule violation are investigated by our Quality Assurance Social Workers. We have 2 in the program, Cassandra Dutrieuille and Azur Walters. It is their job to look in to the complaint and make a determination regarding the specific complaint. Sometimes we receive a report that contains more than one complaint. When that happens it is possible to have more than one outcome, one outcome for each of the complaints contained in the report. There are 3 possible outcomes to a complaint:

- Occurred
- Did Not Occur
- Unable to determine

When a QAS (Quality Assurance Specialist) comes to your daycare it is best if you follow these basic recommendations.

1. Allow the worker to enter your home (if you fail to allow them in, it will result in a correction and possible further negative action)

2. Answer their questions truthfully and fully (we want to give providers the benefit of the doubt, however if we find out later that the provider was not honest it creates an atmosphere of mistrusts which can result in the investigation taking more time to resolve.

3. Try to remain calm during the visit. We don’t want children to become upset or frightened because they see you raising your voice or becoming physically aggressive.

In the event that a complaint involves alleged caregiver abuse or neglect, we cross report to Child Protection. They will conduct their own investigation on these matters and will make a determination of substantiated maltreatment or not substantiated maltreatment. The licensing division will also investigate the Rule Violation part of the complaint. Sometimes the workers will visit your home together and sometimes they will do separate investigations. Don’t be offended if your worker or other licensing staff are unable to provide you with detailed information, there are laws that prohibit us from disclosing certain types of information during a pending investigation. We will try to keep your informed to the best of our ability as we move forward with the process.

Article by Jan Goetz
Strict Requirements for Pool Use in Family Child Care Homes

Due to heavy state regulations surrounding swimming and wading pool use and child care homes many providers have chosen to refrain from using them altogether.

Find out what other options are out there for kids to play in the water that are a lot of fun without the risks associated with a swimming or wading pool.

Skip the Pool...Fun Alternatives

With the warmer weather that we hope will get here soon, many child care providers and children will be spending increasing hours playing outside in the sun and heat.

Here are some ideas that we’ve come up with for water fun in the sun that don’t involve pools: sprinkler play, misting attachment for your hose, squirt toys, and water hose competitions. Water tables are also very popular with children. Water tables can be modified to keep a child’s interest by changing out play accessories including cups, scoops, spinners, screens, turkey basters, slotted spoons, funnels, and many other items – just use your imagination!

Please remember to drain and clean water tables daily. Other fun outdoor water activities can include washing the outside toys and “painting” the house, garage, or fence with water using hoses, sprayers, and paint brushes.

Summer is a great time for messy outdoor play as an outdoor hose can be used for clean-up and the mess stays outside! Ideas for messy outdoor play include making mud pies, playing with shaving cream and/or whipped cream, eye drop painting, and splatter painting.

Article by Jodie Young-Haaf
Measles in Minnesota

Currently there are measles outbreaks in Hennepin, Ramsey, and Crow Wing Counties. However, unvaccinated children could be in any child care setting. The Minnesota Department of Human Services Licensing Division recommends that all child care facilities confirm that all children attending your facility have received their required vaccines, including at least 1 documented dose of the MMR (measles/mumps/rubella) vaccine between 12 and 15 months of age, or have claimed an exemption as allowed under Minnesota law. Any child who is not current on immunizations is at risk if the child comes into contact with a child or adult who is infected. If you believe that a child in your care has been exposed to measles or is showing symptoms, you should immediately contact the Minnesota Department of Health, Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Division, at 651-201-5414.

The Minnesota Department of Health has information about measles and the measles outbreak in multiple languages that you and your families may find helpful. So far, several child care centers and a family child care have had children diagnosed with measles. Those centers and the family child care are working closely with the Minnesota Department of Health.

Children who have not had all of their shots are at risk of serious illness, and they also pose a risk to the health of other children in your care. As a child care provider, you must ensure that the children in your care have gotten certain vaccines or have filed appropriate exemptions as allowed by Minnesota law (Minn. Statutes, section 121A.15). The exemption form is included in the MDH Child Care Immunization Form.

If you are enrolling new children, you must obtain documentation of current immunization or a statement of exemption, as allowed by Minnesota law, for each child at the time of enrollment.

For more information about measles and immunization requirements, please contact the Minnesota Department of Health:

- Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevention and Control Division: 651-201-5414 (for questions about measles)
- Minnesota Immunization Program: 651-201-5503 or 1-800-657-3970 (for specific questions about immunizations or legal exemptions to immunizations)
- If you have specific questions about complying with licensing rules, please contact your county Licensor.

(Information taken from Minnesota Department of Human Services)

Recipe

Ingredients:
- 4 packages blueberry jello
- 2 cans whipped cream

Make jello according to package directions, allow jello to set. Breakup jello with a spoon into small pieces. Alternate layers of jello with layers of whipped cream in small clear plastic cups. Once the jello and whipped cream settle into the cups, it looks just like a gorgeous summer sky, full of fair weather clouds! You can cut some smiling suns out of cheap construction paper and tape them to the ends of the plastic spoons. Place the spoons in the jello.

Article by Azur Walters
Free Training -

For Hennepin County Providers

**Title:** Supervising for Safety for Family Child Care, Develop ID #248360

**Description:** This series based course intended for new Family Child Care providers meets Licensing pre-service requirements as well as the health and safety requirements from the Child Care Development Fund. Participants will explore MN Rule 2 licensing standards and best practices around supervision challenges experienced by family child care programs. We'll look at strategies a child care provider can implement within their setting.

**Trainer:** Amanda Vesta

**Location:** Ridgedale Library - 12601 Ridgedale Dr, Minnetonka, MN 55305

**Date:** Saturday, August 12th, 2017 **Time:** 9:30am-4pm, 6 in-service hours*

**Title:** Health and Safety I - Family Child Care (In-service), Develop ID #248361

**Description:**

This series based course intended for experienced providers meets Licensing in-service requirements as well as the health and safety requirements from the Child Care Development Fund. Participants will explore MN Rule 2 licensing standards and best practices around health and safety.

**Trainer:** Sheryl Warner

**Location:** Ridgedale Library - 12601 Ridgedale Dr, Minnetonka, MN 55305

**Date:** Tuesday, August 1st, 2017 **Time:** 6:30-8:30pm, 2 in-service hours*

**Title:** Health and Safety II - Family Child Care (In-service), Develop ID #248362

**Description:**

This series based course intended for experienced providers meets Licensing in-service requirements as well as the health and safety requirements from the Child Care Development Fund. Participants will explore MN Rule 2 licensing standards and best practices around health and safety.

**Trainer:** Sheryl Warner

**Location:** Ridgedale Library - 12601 Ridgedale Dr, Minnetonka, MN 55305

**Date:** Tuesday, August 8th, 2017 **Time:** 6:30-8:30pm, 2 in-service hours*

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**PLEASE NOTE:**

Participants who miss 15 minutes or more of training will NOT receive in-service credit.

**Pre-registration is required.**

To register, call the exclusive Think Small Hennepin County Training Line at 651-287-8597. This is a voicemail line.

Please leave only one detailed message including the following information for the person to be registered:

1. Spelling of full name
2. Develop Individual ID number**
3. Phone number
4. Start date and title(s) of training

**A Develop ID number is required for registration. If you need assistance in creating a Develop account, please call the Think Small Technical Assistance Line: 651-641-3549.**

Participants who miss 15 minutes or more of training will NOT receive in-service credit.
NOTICE:

Off-Year Visits To Begin Starting September 1, 2017! More information to come!

Have a great summer!