

KIDBIZ NEWSLETTER
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A Newsletter for Early Childhood & Child Care Professionals

Brought to you by:
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I am back from the NAFCC Conference in Nashville, Tennessee and what a week it was! If you missed it this year, I'm telling you get out your calendar and write this down... July 21-23, 2011 in Las Vegas YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS ANOTHER ONE! What a fantastic opportunity for high level trainings, networking with people from all across the country, recharging your batteries, and being a part of the wonderful things happening at NAFCC! Thank you to all the amazing people I met over the past week that attended my sessions, the energy in the room from you kept me going all week despite the lack of sleep! There were just too many people I wanted to meet and network with to bother with sleep, or food. Which reminds me, thank you to the woman who gave me crackers after I got light headed doing a cartwheel in my Teaching the 3 Cs class! So many kind people, and intelligent people, and interesting conversations. I hope you will all join me again next year!

*Hug a kid for me!
Patricia*

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATORS SCALE: PART TWO – Using the Parent Handbook to Meet Standards

For the past few months I have been running a series of articles highlighting the score item areas covered by the assessment tool: Business Administrators Scale for Family Child Care. I have been and will be providing guidelines on meeting and exceeding these qualifications. Child Care Center Staff: please read these too! The qualifications for FCC are very similar to those for center

care and the tips in the articles can help you to set improvement goals for yourself and your classroom as well. If you missed any of the previous articles, you can find them under "KIDBIZ Newsletters Archive" on my websites: www.patriciadischler.com and www.KIDBIZResources.com.

The Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care by Teri N. Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom is the newest addition to the ever-popular line of child care assessment tools produced by Teacher's College Press (otherwise known as BAS). It is designed to complement the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS), covering the business side of running a quality family child care business. It is being used by many states Quality Rating & Improvement Systems as the assessment tool for verifying a provider's level of competence on their Quality Rating Scale. My first book, *From Babysitter to Business Owner*, was used as a resource in creating BAS, specifically in the areas of parent communication, marketing and creating a Parent Handbook. Given that, I thought I could offer some insight and examples for providers who are looking to increase their scores.

This month I'll take a look at items 6, 7 and 8: Risk Management, Provider-Parent Communication, and Community Resources. (Note: I am skipping items 4 & 5: Fiscal Management and Recordkeeping, for these I defer to the master, Tom Copeland, and highly recommend you read his books on these topics as they are top notch and provide you all the information you need to meet these standards.) The topics covered in this article, Risk Management, Provider-Parent Communication, and Community Resources, are all addressed in what I have termed the "Parent Handbook." The Parent Handbook, as described in my book "From Babysitter to Business Owner," contains all the information parents WANT to know about your child care business (Program Information), everything they NEED to know (Policies), and lays out the framework for what you AGREE on within your partnership (Contract) and well as everything you need to know about the family and child (Enrollment Forms) and resources and information for the parents (Parent Resources). To keep all this information in one place, create a binder with a tab for each section, then you will have everything you need to conduct interviews, enroll families, and lay a foundation for communication and partnerships.

Risk Management, as described in the BAS, is having written policies in place to protect the provider, children and parents from incidents that compromise the health and safety of the children and all who enter the family child care home. Think of it as your "what-if" guide. Parents both want and need to know that you have put thought into possible situations and have made a plan to protect their child. Providers are also often required to implement policies in this area in order to meet licensing standards in their state. Everyone hopes and sometimes assumes, that nothing will occur to put the children at risk, or even themselves as providers, but the truth is that things do happen and if the provider has not consider the possibility and made a plan for protection and correction, both the

business and the child will be at risk. These items fall under the “Policies” tab of your binder.

It is important to note here the format for writing policies in the parent handbook. First, write the policy. This will be a short, one sentence statement, that clearly identifies where you stand on this particular issue, what your goal is to achieve. Second, write the procedure to follow when the policy has been compromised in some way. And third, explain why this policy exists. Using this three part format will help you to clearly define your policies in a way that parents can understand, appreciate and respect. It will provide the provider with clear guidelines to follow as well. Too often policies are written in language that makes them seem like a “rule” for parents. When policies are clearly stated, a procedure described, and the reasoning shared, they change from a “rule” into a plan, something a parent can appreciate and see the value of.

You may notice in the BAS, that under the “notes” section, it refers to a list of written policies as “procedures” to be implemented to reduce risks. I highly recommend you use the three step process for these, rather than only sharing the procedures. A Parent Handbook is a communication tool for you to use with parents and the more user-friendly it is, and the contents clearly defined, the more successful it will be. For example, an emergency policy may state:

(Policy – Goal is NO fires!) Patty Cake Preschool will follow all safety guidelines in the Wisconsin State Licensing Standards in order to prevent fires occurring on the property.

(Procedure – If there is, you have a plan to keep children safe.) In the event of a fire, all children will be immediately guided to the classroom door leading to the back yard play area and asked to gather and meet at the sandbox, located at a significant distance from the house. If this exit is unaccessible due to the fire location, children will be guided towards alternate exits out the front door of the house, or the window located in the kitchen area, whichever is most easily accessible and out of reach of the fire location. A teacher will take a Fieldtrip Bag outside with the children, hanging at each exit and containing emergency numbers, child information, and other necessities for the care of the children. 911 will be called if phone was easily accessible upon exiting the building otherwise, once every child is accounted for, the group will move to the neighboring house to have 911 called. The first priority for all teachers is to safety guide children away from the building.

(Reason – Meet state regulations and because you care.) Fire prevention and emergency procedures are not only licensing requirements but also a reflection of Patty Cake Preschool’s first priority, which is the safety and well being of the children in care.

By using the above format, you are doing more than reacting to an emergency, you are showing that your policy is to prevent them from occurring in the first place, then when that doesn’t happen, you have a procedure to follow, and finally, that you do all of this to maintain licensing standards and protect the well being of the children. It is well thought out and clearly defined for the parents understanding.

There are many possibilities for risk management policies, many are suggested in the BAS and your state licensing standards book is also a good place to look for ideas. Basically, you want to think of every possible scenario, make a plan to prevent it and make a plan to return to a place of safety when it does occur. Be very detailed here. The example above is only stating that you are working to prevent a fire and what you will do if one occurs. But you would also want to write policies on the types of things you will do to prevent fires, and what you will do when they are not done. For example, a policy that you will conduct a fire drill the first Thursday of each month with the procedure that if it is missed (due to school closure, field trip, etc.) that it will be conducted on the following Thursday. The BAS provides many examples of the topics that should be covered by policies and have plans for implementation, consult it (and your licensing handbook) to be sure you've covered everything. The more you put things in writing, the more protected you (and the children and families) will be.

Section 7 of BAS is Provider-Parent Communication and, as stated earlier, the Parent Handbook is a key component in communications with parents. It is more than the policies and procedures, it is a tool for identifying your entire program. It is a place to share all the wonderful things you offer for children, the opportunities for parents to get involved, the choices they have and the items that are set in stone. Remember that what parents want to know is what are you going to do with their precious child? The policies to them are just supplemental information, their priorities fall under your program offerings, what happens all day, and who is interacting with their child. So tell them! I suggest this type of information be placed behind the "Program Information" tab and placed at the front of your Parent Handbook, to mirror it's place of priority for the parent.

This section in BAS covers all the items to be included in a Parent Handbook including the program information, policies, and contract information. Everything a parent could ever want to know or need to know about your program should be in writing and in the Parent Handbook. By doing this you create a tool for conducting interviews! Think of every question a parent could ask, and be sure the answer is in the handbook. Think of every question you have for a parent (regarding their child's development, routine, allergies, general health, etc.) and make a place for it in the handbook. Forms they can fill out can be put in the back of the binder behind a tab labeled "Enrollment Information" so that everything remains in one place. You will then have a tool to sit down with the parents and review, cover to cover, knowing that every issue will be discussed and covered, providing everyone with a firm foundation for communication and understanding. When interviews are conducted using the Parent Handbook, it becomes easier for parents and providers to identify if they are a good match, if their priorities are in alignment and if what the program offers matches what the parent needs.

While a great start, the Parent Handbook is not the only mode of communication to offer parents. However, it should lay out what all the possibilities are. Include under "Program Information" a list of the many ways you will strive to

communicate with parents, and ways for them to communicate with you. Remember that all humans communicate in different ways, some prefer verbally, some are more visual, etc. Offer a variety of communication techniques in the hopes of addressing the styles for each enrolled parent.

When a Parent Handbook is well thought out and complete it becomes a roadmap for the parent to the services they will receive, this includes how the program will work towards developmental improvement for their child. The first section, Program Information, is a place to share the philosophy behind the curriculum and the tools that will be used to implement it including the lesson plans and developmental records. As part of parent communication, the provider will want to schedule conferences with the parent to discuss in detail, and private, their child's developmental growth. Including information on what will be taught (and explain WHY as well!), how it will be monitored and how it will be reported to the parent will help the parent better understand the process and work with you.

To supplement this information, and provide some parent education, the provider can include a section in the Parent Handbook with a tab titled "Parent Resources." Doing so will help you to meet the standards in the "Community Resources" area of BAS. In this section, list the many resources available for the parent in your community as well as tax information. Names and contact information for local doctors and psychologists who do developmental screening and groups who do early intervention such as Birth to 3 programs. Provide the parent with information on local community centers and parent organizations, support groups or crisis centers. A list of places that offer programs for children, such as sports or ballet, is also often appreciated. For parents of young children, receiving information on the local school system, registration information and contact numbers for questions, is appreciated. Finally, provide information on how placing their child in child care can affect their taxes and what you will do to provide them the necessary receipts in order to claim these benefits.

Meeting the standards in BAS in many areas can be accomplished through a thorough Parent Handbook. The Parent Handbook lays a foundation for your business, provides both you and the parent a roadmap to follow, becomes your emergency plan, a tool for communication in interviews and beyond, and an informational resource for the parent. Parents appreciate getting to know everything up front, surprises are where disagreements can happen so the more detailed your Parent Handbook the more successful your partnerships with parents will be!

NEXT MONTH: The final article in the series on BAS: Marketing!

For more details on writing policies and communicating with parents, check out: "From Babysitter to Business Owner" available at: www.patriciaidischler.com.

TIPS AND TRICKS

The following is an article by my good friend, Jeff Johnson, the king of stress reduction and fun! If you haven't yet, be sure to stop by his website and see all the great resources there to help you out!

<http://www.explorationsearlylearning.com/>

Tips For Adding Stress To Your Life

Burnout and stress may be as foreign to you as traditional Uzbekistani folk dancing. You may be the calmest and coolest person in any room you enter. You may actually be looking for ways to add stress to your life so that you can understand what the rest of us are fussing about. If so, here are some tips.

How to Add Stress to Your Life:

- Help each child in your care lose a sock or shoe every day for two weeks. When parents ask what's going on, just shrug and smile.
- Enact a no-nap policy.
- Every time a parent makes a request, smile, say, "I'll take care of it," and completely forget the request as soon as possible. Never mention it again. If the parent brings it up, act confused and puzzled.
- Forget ratios—the more, the merrier!
- Three words: Toddlers, Scissors, Kittens.
- Work longer hours and burn 25 percent of your income each payday.
- Avoid trying anything new. Any excuse will do: It's too messy. It's too expensive. There's not enough time. The kids won't like it. This ensures hours of whiny, bored youngsters and the stress that they bring.
- Tell everyone you meet what you think about everything . . . all the time. Give advice freely, specially on topics you know nothing about. The stress you add to the lives of others will come back to you threefold.
- Add at least three items to your to-do list for each task you complete.
- Be a minimum of forty minutes late everywhere you go.
- Play loud music for the children all day, every day.
- Expect perfection from everyone you come into contact with: the children, the parents, your family, and especially yourself!
- Don't let emotional wounds heal—pick away the scab every chance you get. Adopt a "Let It Fester" policy.
- Cut communication with parents in your program (and your loved ones) down to once a week. Talk less and grunt more. If there are problems or concerns, hold off even longer.
- Swear off outdoor time for the kids. Make any excuse for keeping them indoors every day. Then act surprised when the yelling, running, and fighting start.
- Quit sleeping, give up exercise, and eat anything you want.
- Make time with your significant other every day to doubt, shout, and pout.

- Stop accepting payment for care. Just do it because you love it so much.
- Ignore inquisitive four-year-olds.
- Let the phone ring twenty times before answering. If it's a parent, pretend you get disconnected. Keep the ringer set as loud as possible, especially during quiet time.
- Forget nutritional guidelines. Serve only sugary food, Kool-Aid, cookies, and the Halloween candy you stock up on each year when it goes on clearance.
- Buy eleven blue chairs and one pink chair for the pre-schoolers to use.

The smile on your face right now was brought to you by Jeff Johnson at Explorations Early Learning, for more things that will make you smile visit: www.explorationsearlylearning.com!

If you have some great tips to share, send them to: contact@patriciadischler.com, putting "NEWSLETTER TIPS" in the subject line to be included in the next newsletter!

 IN THE NEWS

The Creativity Crisis

Exchange Every Day recently sent a link to a story in Newsweek about the lack of creativity in the schools and how it is affecting our children and our future. Always nice when research proves my point for me! To see the article visit: <http://www.newsweek.com/2010/07/10/the-creativity-crisis.print.html>. And to do something about it, get a copy of my book, Teaching the 3 Cs: Creativity, Curiosity & Courtesy at <http://www.patriciadischler.com>! Let's take control and bring some creativity back!

 THIS MONTH'S SALE ITEMS

July Sale Item: KIDBIZ Trainer's Guide – Professionalism in Child Care – 20% Off!

Professionalism is the cornerstone to any successful child care business! Both versions of this trainer's guide are available – Professionalism for Family Child Care, and Professionalism for Center Staff. Great asset for CCR&R's looking for materials their staff can use to conduct quality trainings for providers or center staff, and a must-have resource for center directors to use at staff meetings to raise the level of professionalism for their teachers. Each trainers guide contains a Power Point presentation, a detailed lecture, handouts for participants and an outline with objectives. Based on the presentations of Patricia Dischler and the book *From Babysitter to Business Owner*, each guide also includes a free copy of the book!

Regular Price: \$75 Sale Price: \$60

August Sale Item: KIDBIZ Trainer's Guide – Half Day Trainings 20% Off!

After the incredible response from the NAFCC Train-the-trainer sessions in Nashville, I've decided to offer any of my half day Trainer's Guide's at a discount so those of you who couldn't get into my classes (and get the free copy) can get a discount to help you obtain the topics you missed! There are three half day's available: From Babysitter to Business Owner, Teaching the 3 C's: Creativity, Curiosity & Courtesy, and Communicating with Parents 101. Each gives you a 3-4 hour training including: the book it is based on, the power point, lecture, handouts and outline/objectives – everything you need to present these topics in your area! See the website for complete details on the topics covered.

Regular Price: \$185 Sale Price: \$148

Order yours today at: www.patriciadischler.com or www.KIDBIZResources.com!

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 24, 2010

Korean American Adoptee Adoptive Family Network Annual Conference
Hershey, Pennsylvania

Because I Loved You: Understanding Birthmothers

For more information visit: www.KAANet.com

August – Spending time with my family, see you in September!!

If you are a member of a group planning a training event and would like to book one of my keynotes or workshops, visit the Lecture page on my website and contact me for availability. Visit www.patriciadischler.com/lecture.php.

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Patricia Dischler

Author, *From Babysitter to Business Owner, Because I Loved You, Tips and Tricks* and *The Patty Cake Kids & The Lost Imagination Cap*.

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