

MAKING BACK-UP CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS

Stable and reliable child care is very important to all working parents.



A strong child care plan includes alternatives for those “unexpected” occasions, such as when your care provider is ill or has a family emergency or when your child is ill and cannot attend his or her regular program.

With a little pre-planning, you can help make a change or disruption in your usual child care feel manageable.

WHEN YOUR PROVIDER IS NOT AVAILABLE

If your child is in family child care, or you have an in-home provider, it is especially helpful to have an arrangement with a back-up caregiver for your child. Your provider may need to take time off for a family emergency or illness, and even if she has a back up arrangement herself, you may want to have one of your own.

Here are some strategies that other parents have used:

- When you select a provider, be certain your contract is clear about the provider’s vacation and sick-day plans.
- To find a back-up provider, start by asking friends and family members who stay at home if they would be willing to care for your child when the need arises.
- If there are parents you know who stay at home, ask if they would be willing to provide care on an infrequent, drop-in basis. Make it clear that you will pay them and agree on the rate.
- You can advertise in church or synagogue bulletins and local papers to find back-up child care. Bulletin boards at local Y’s and community centers are also good resources.
- Visit www.GetChildCareNOW.com for centers or family child care homes in your area that are willing to provide back-up/temporary care. If you choose this option, keep in mind that you will need a copy of your child’s immunization record and any other pertinent information to bring with the child to the program. Some programs require preregistrations for a back-up or temporary arrangement.
- There are a few in-home/placement agencies that will send a provider to your home to care for your child. Call them ahead of time to gain a full understanding of their services.
- Prepare a brief information packet about your child. Include basic routines, essential medical information including allergies and medications and emergency numbers. Having this packet readily available will make it easier on your child on those days when he or she is cared for by

someone other than the usual provider. It will also help you and the substitute caregiver feel more at ease.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS SICK

Every working parent experiences the frustration of changing work day routines when a child is ill. While there are no perfect solutions in such situations, you can avoid some anxiety by planning ahead. Try not to wait until the first day your child is sick to think about your options.

The following are some strategies that can work:

- When you select child care be certain that you understand the caregiver's or center's "sick day" policy.
- Find out the procedure to be followed if your child should become ill while in care. Ask whether the provider will administer medications. (Some centers have areas where a sick child can rest temporarily or play away from other children)
- Be sure to give the provider the phone number of your child's pediatrician for use in an emergency.
- Be certain about your employer's (and you partner's) sick and personal day policies in case you choose to stay home with your sick child. If you share the responsibility of emergency care with your partner, talk through your plans well in advance. You may be able to alternate care with your partner, or each of you may be able to work half days when your child is ill.
- Keep in mind friends and relatives who would be willing to watch your sick child when other care is not available.
- A select number of hospitals provide sick care for children in their pediatric wards. In these situations, the child is cared for by the nurses on staff. These programs require preregistration. Contact your local hospitals for more information.
- There are a few in-home/placement agencies that will send a provider to your home to care for your sick child
- Prepare a brief information packet about your child. Include basic routines, essential medical information including allergies and medications and emergency numbers. Having this packet ready in advance will make it easier on days when your child is cared for by someone other than his or her usual provider.

Information provided by GetChildCareNOW.com.

For additional information visit our website at www.GetChildCareNOW.com