



Handling Complaints

(With Child Care Providers)

When to Talk...

Choose a time when neither of you is tired or "in the heat of anger" and when both of you have a free moment.



How to Talk...

Talk in a polite, helpful manner. Phrase your comments more positively and ask for the provider's help or advice. "Timmy seems more tired than usual lately. Has he had trouble sleeping at school?"

How to Get Them to Listen...



It will be easier for providers to accept your complaint if they know that you see their good points too. Comment sincerely on helpful things the providers do for your child. If you let them know you think they are doing a good job, they may be more open to hearing your suggestions.

Steps for Solving Problems



Step 1 - State the Problem

Parent: Ms. Sims, I noticed Jon's teacher was late every day this week. If you will remember the mutual agreement you signed when Jon began coming here, you

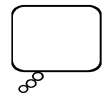
told us his teacher would be here at 8:00 a.m.

Step 2 - Listen to the Provider's Explanation

Ms. Sims: I'm sorry, but things have been so crazy at work. They are talking about layoffs, and I'm really trying to stretch coverage in the early hours so that I don't lose a position.

Step 3 - Summarize to Check Your Understanding

Parent: I see. So you are stretching some staff because you are worried about job security? How long do you feel you will have to be doing this?



Ms. Sims: As long as it takes. It could be a few more weeks or months.

Step 4 - Share Your Thoughts and Feelings

Parent: I can understand your dilemma. However, I really need to know that Jon is secure with the person I am leaving him with. When I leave Jon with a different person each day, it really makes the separation hard.

Step 5 - Brainstorm Solutions

Parent: Let's try to think of some solutions.

Ms. Sims: Well, I guess I could arrange for Jon's teacher to cover the early shift if you don't mind someone else covering the afternoon. He will have to

A project of The Florida Partnership for Parent Involvement

Center of Excellence ♦ Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute ♦ Florida's Children's Forum
Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters ♦ Hillsborough County Head Start ♦ Hillsborough County Even Start

have a different person at some point in the day because he is here for more than 8 hours.

Parent: If that doesn't work, I might be able to shift my hours at work to go in later so that when I drop Jon off, his teacher is already here.

Step 6 - Try to Reach an Agreement. Be Specific as Possible.

Ms. Sims: I'll ask his teacher if she could make that change in her schedule. I'll let you know this afternoon how it turned out.

I f Problems Cannot be Solved

If despite your best efforts things just don't work out, don't blame yourself. It may be the result of a personality clash, differences in beliefs about child rearing, or unrealistic demands made on you or the child.

Contact your local child care resource and referral office to find other options in your area.

Reprinted with permission from the National Network for Child Care NNCC. (1993) Oesterreich, L. Holt, B.G., Karas, S. "Handling Complaints and Solving Problems" Iowa Family Child Care Handbook. Pp. 61-63. Iowa State University Extension. Ames, Iowa.

For Further Information Contact:

|



The Center for Parent Involvement (FCPI) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education; Goals 2000, Educate America Act from 1994-1999. Guided by an advisory board of parents and professionals, the FCPI's goal was to tap the power of parents.

The FCPI gathered information on parent needs, coordinated the information, and created a series of resources organized by theme, including fact sheets for parents and professionals, "Beyond the Basics" resources, and resource identification lists. Many of the resources have been translated into Spanish language versions, and every effort has been made to preserve the meaning and flavor of the original English documents. This series of materials provides a wealth of current information for both parents and providers; the complete set of resources can be obtained in PDF format on the Department of Child and Family Studies Website at www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/fcpi. The staff of the FCPI are hopeful that their work will continue to help children get ready to learn for many years to come.

The series' themes include:

- Family Empowerment
- Parent Involvement
- Parenting Support
- School Readiness
- Violence in the Lives of Children
- Transition to Kindergarten

The Center was one component of a project led by Hillsborough County Center of Excellence in collaboration with the Department of Child & Family Studies at USF's de la Parte Institute and the Florida Children's Forum. Other project partners include HIPPIY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters), Hillsborough County Head Start and Hillsborough County Even Start. For more information about these projects, call 813.974.4612.

Family Empowerment Series, Parent Tip Sheets, #3: Transition: Handling Complaints

© 1999, Tampa, Florida

This is a publication of the Florida Center for Parent Involvement which was funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The opinions contained in this publication are those of the grantee and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Education. All or portions of this work may be reproduced providing the Florida Center for Parent Involvement, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida is properly credited on all reproductions.

Events, activities, programs and facilities of the University of South Florida are available to all without regard to race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, Vietnam or disabled veteran status as provided by law and in accordance with the University's respect for personal dignity.

**University of
South Florida
USF**