

Contents

Acknowledgments

Part I: Establishing Businesslike Relationships

- Chapter One: Being Businesslike in a Caring Profession 3**
 - Learning to Balance Caring and Business3
 - Do Your Clients Respect Your Business?5
 - You Set the Rules for Your Business6
 - What Are Contracts and Policies?6
 - Tools for Writing Your Agreements7
 - Contracts Are the Basis of Business Relationships8
- Chapter Two: Practicing Good Communication11**
 - Keep Careful Records12
 - Communicate Regularly13
 - Use Tools to Improve Communication16
 - Record Problems as They Arise18
 - Use a Written Contract and Policies19

Part II: Writing Your Contract

- Chapter Three: What Should Be in Your Contract?25**
 - The Key Elements of Your Contract26
 - The Sample Contracts in Appendix A27
 - Include a Trial Period in Your Contract28
 - Avoid Contradictions in Your Contract29
 - State That Your Contract Will Be Enforced29
 - Subsidy Programs Have Their Own Rules30
 - Do You Need to Copyright Your Agreements?31

Chapter Four: The Key Elements of Your Contract .....	.33
The Names of the Parties to the Contract .....	.33
Hours of Operation .....	.35
Terms of Payment .....	.36
Termination Procedure .....	.37
The Signatures of the Parties to the Contract .....	.39
Chapter Five: Terms of Payment .....	.43
Setting Your Rates .....	.43
Raising Your Rates .....	.45
Require Payment in Advance .....	.46
Payment Due Date .....	.49
Late Payment Fees .....	.50
Early Drop-off and Late Pickup Fees .....	.51
Holidays, Vacations, and Absences .....	.53
Holding Fees .....	.57
Other Fees .....	.59
 Part III: Writing Your Policies	
Chapter Six: What Should Be in Your Policies? .....	.65
The Key Elements of Your Policies .....	.66
The Sample Policy Handbook in Appendix B .....	.67
Discuss Your Policies with Your Clients .....	.67
Should Your Clients Sign Your Policies? .....	.68
Chapter Seven: You and Your Client .....	.71
Provider Information .....	.71
Client Responsibilities .....	.75
Chapter Eight: Caring for the Children .....	.79
Your Child Care Program .....	.79
Your Illness, Health, and Safety Policies .....	.84
Your Policies for Transporting Children .....	.88
 Part IV: Making Your Contract and Policies Work	
Chapter Nine: Before You Sign the Contract .....	.95
Assess the Initial Contact .....	.96
Conduct an Interview .....	.96
Review Your Contract and Policies .....	.98
Check the Client's References .....	.99
Decide Whether to Enroll the Child .....	.101
Complete a Trial Period .....	.103
Sign the Contract .....	.103

Chapter Ten: Making Changes and Exceptions to Your Rules	105
Changing Your Contract and Policies	105
Raising Your Rates	107
Negotiating Exceptions to Your Contract and Policies	110
Chapter Eleven: Enforcing Your Contract and Policies	117
Take Your Agreements Seriously	117
What Are the Consequences?	119
What If Clients Leave Your Program?	121
The Three Choices	122
Chapter Twelve: Terminating a Contract	125
When the Client Wants to End the Contract	125
When You Want to End the Contract	126
Steps for Terminating a Contract	128
Use a Termination Notice	130
Payment Issues during Termination	130
Handle the Notice Period Professionally	132
Chapter Thirteen: Taking a Client to Court	133
Try to Resolve the Problem First	134
Taking Your Case to Court	136
How Will the Judge Decide?	139
Hiring a Lawyer	140
Final Words	143
 Appendixes	
Appendix A: Sample Contracts	145
Sample Contract 1: Basic Contract	146
Sample Contract 2: Child Care Agreement Form	147
Sample Contract 3: Fully Customized Contract	149
Appendix B: Sample Policy Handbook	153
Child Care Policy Handbook	154