



## Guiding Children Together

I drop my child off for someone else to take care of him. I will take care of him when I am in charge. Why should we have to work together?

Childcare is a partnership. Communication between you and your provider is very important to keep everything running smoothly. Finding good childcare is only the first step. You have to keep working with the provider to build a good relationship. That will help you meet your needs and your child's needs. Remember that childcare is a process. It is not a one-time decision that you make and don't think about again.

- You and your childcare provider both care about your child. You are the expert on your child. You know him best, and you care about him more than anyone else. But your childcare provider may have more experience with children. She may be able to make decisions about your child without getting emotional about it. You each bring different skills. Together, you can help each other do better than you could do alone.
- When there is a problem with your child, it is good for your childcare provider to talk with you about it. She will be able to do that if she trusts you. This is true if you have a concern, too. If you trust your childcare provider, you will be able to talk to her.
- Sometimes both of you have concerns about the child. If you care about each other, you will be able to work together. You can deal with your concerns.

- Your child will learn good behavior if she has lots of chances to learn. If you and your provider try to teach the same things, it will help your child. If you use a lot of the same discipline methods, your child will know what to expect. You do not need to be exactly alike, but you can be similar.

### ***Talking to Your Provider About Discipline***

Here is one approach for talking with your provider. You also may want to explore other communication ideas.

1. Know your provider. Know what he or she believes about discipline.
  - Ask questions about discipline when you choose a provider.
  - Tell your provider about any behavior problems with your child. Ask the provider how she would deal with that behavior. Explain how you deal with it.
  - Choose a provider who uses discipline methods that are comfortable for you.

2. Stay involved with your child's discipline after you choose a provider.
    - Talk with the provider each day about any discipline problems or successes with your child.
    - Visit and observe the childcare setting now and then. Watch how the provider handles discipline issues. Tell her when you like what she does. Ask questions when you don't understand.
  3. Sometimes you will not agree with what the provider is doing. At other times, both of you will see problems that you can't solve alone. The two of you can work together to find answers.
    - First, define the problem. What is happening?
    - Try to be clear about exactly what you do or don't like. Why don't you like it?
    - Watch your child to see what she is doing and how she is reacting.
    - Decide what you want to happen.
    - Tell the provider about the problem. Do not blame anyone for the problem. You could say "I am worried, because I saw something happen, and I wondered if we could talk about it."
    - Offer your ideas for how to solve the problem. Ask the provider for her or his ideas. If you have no ideas, you might get some from parenting books or from another professional. You could share the ideas with your provider.
- Decide together what both of you would like to try.
  - Listen to the provider's concerns and ideas.
  - Stay calm. If you are upset, take a deep breath before you say anything. Count to ten.
  - Value the caregiver. Let her know that you appreciate her. Tell her that you are willing to work together to find a solution.
  - Check progress after a few days or weeks. Talk with the provider to decide if the new solution is working well. Make changes if it is not working.

For more information go to:  
<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/familydevelopment/components/7268k.html>

This page includes ways to communicate with your provider and also tips on how to handle conflict with him or her.

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