

FIS factsheet

What do I need to know about childcare contracts?

What is a contract?

The contract is an agreement between you and the childcare provider as to what both of you are expected to do regarding the care of your child. It is very important that you are aware of what commitment you are agreeing to and in case any problems arise in the future.

What should a contract contain?

- The retainer fee or deposit to secure your child's place
- The amount you pay and what it covers (e.g. nappies, food, days out)
- The hours/days your child will attend
- What you pay if your child or the carer is sick
- How much notice you have to give if you wish the childcare to end

Other points to consider

- The agreed method of payment
- Length of contract
- Whether you pay if your child does not attend due to sickness, holiday
- Expenses
- Any personal additions such as limiting TV watching, no sugary treats or juices
- Complaints procedure

Read the small print

Common causes for concern are over conditions in the childcare contract so please read your contract carefully e.g. payments, pick-up times. It is a really good idea to be clear about what you expect from each other from the start. If you are not happy about anything in the contract you are given by a childcare provider discuss it with them and try to negotiate something you can both agree to.

Where to go for advice

If you need further advice about contract disputes contact your local Citizen's Advice Bureau see your telephone directory or log on to www.citizensadvice.org.uk or call the Working Families helpline on 0800 013 0313 or visit www.workingfamilies.org.uk

Other concerns

If you have a complaint or concern about the standard of care your child is receiving, this should first be raised with the childcare provider and if not resolved this should be reported to the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Please see our Fact sheet 'What do I do if I am unhappy with the childcare my child is getting?' for more information.

Warwickshire Family Information Service: 0845 090 8044 or 01926 742274
Ofsted complaints: 08456 404040