



Child Care Aware® is committed to helping parents find the best information on locating quality child care and child care resources in their community. In partnership with Child Care Resource & Referral agencies (CCR&R), Child Care Aware® builds consumer awareness and supports families in making choices for the care and education of their children.



For additional resources or help finding your local Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R), call:

**1-800-424-2246**

TTY Line: 1-866-278-9428

**ChildCareAware.org**

For local information contact:

# All in the Family



**Making Child Care Provided by Relatives Work for Your Family**



Child Care Aware®, a program of Child Care Aware® of America, is partly funded by the Office of Child Care (OCC), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

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## Why parents often choose a relative caregiver. . .

- » Comfort – Children are generally more at ease with people they know.
- » Love and attention – A close family member is likely to have a genuine affection for your child.
- » Trust – You know them well and you know which values you share.
- » Flexibility – They can help you meet your schedule, especially if it is part-time, evening hours or rotating shifts.
- » Familiar location – You are comfortable in your home or a relative's home.

## There can also be problems. . .

- » Relative care can be lonely for your child and for your relative.
- » Child care raises unexpected and sensitive issues that can complicate family relationships.
- » You and your relative may underestimate how time-consuming and tiring it is to provide child care.
- » Ideas about discipline may differ.
- » Children's needs change as they grow, and an arrangement that once worked for your child may not work as your child gets older.

## Making it work smoothly for everyone. . .

- » Take time to talk regularly, when children are not around.
- » Discuss and clarify your ideas about discipline with your relative, including how you want him or her to set rules and guide your child.
- » Talk about your child's daily routines: sleeping, feeding and outdoor play. Talk about how to handle crying.
- » Make sure your relative has the time, energy and health to keep up with your child.
- » Ask if your relative sees this as a long-term or short-term arrangement.
- » Discuss plans with your relative about television, reading, friends and chores for your child.

## Remember, SAFETY FIRST!

- » Double check for child safety in your or your relative's home. Use a safety checklist.
- » Prepare for emergencies with a safety plan: provide medical and allergy information and a list of all emergency phone numbers. Make sure your relative has a fire extinguisher and smoke detectors.
- » Agree on who may pick up your child.

- » Remember, safety for a young child means no hitting or shaking. Talk about how to handle discipline issues.
- » Babies should be placed on their backs to sleep.
- » Count numbers! If your relative is caring for children other than your own, group size should be considered.

## Creating a payment agreement. . .

- » Be clear about exactly when and how you will pay your family member.
- » Write down your agreement so there is no misunderstanding about your arrangements and payments.
- » You'll need to agree about holidays, vacations and sick days for your child and relative.
- » Be creative. In addition to money, what can you do to show your appreciation?
- » Learn about sample agreements and tax implications from your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency.

## Keeping good relationships. . .

- » Offer to pay for a first aid and CPR class.
- » Ask your family member what might be helpful to them in providing child care.
- » Call your Child Care Resource and Referral agency to see what information is available for relative caregivers. Ask about resources like toy libraries, story hours, community activities and opportunities to network with family child care providers.
- » If you change child care, remember, your relative caregiver is still family!

## When there are problems. . .

- » Find the right time and place to talk about it, when you are both relaxed.
- » Express gratitude for all your family does for your child.
- » Keep the focus on the child.
- » Show respect for your relative's point of view, even when you disagree.
- » Think about how to avoid the problem in the future.
- » Decide if you are still comfortable with the arrangement or if you will need to start looking for another child care arrangement.

## You may need to make a change. . .

- » If your relative finds it too hard to take care of your child everyday.
- » If your child needs a preschool experience with other children.
- » If your schedule changes.
- » If it just doesn't work out.

## But family is still family. . .

- » Thank your relative for helping.
- » Consider asking if your relative could help with back-up care.

For information on local licensing requirements to ensure compliance with any applicable state regulations, contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral agency (CCR&R).

Find your CCR&R by contacting Child Care Aware® at 1-800-424-2246 or visiting [ChildCareAware.org](http://ChildCareAware.org).