

Contract & policy templates

The contracts and policies every centre should have — and exactly what each one must cover.

01 Why templates matter

You do not have to write everything from scratch. A good template gives you the structure — you just adapt the details to your centre.

Below is a list of the templates every centre should have, with notes on what each one should cover.



You do not need to create these from scratch. Visit **Grow ECD's Resource Centre**, where you can download and adapt a wide range of forms, templates, policies, contracts and other resources for ECD centres.

You will need to register and sign in to access the resources.

Visit the Resource Centre →

Employment contract

Used for: Every staff member — teachers, assistants, cooks, cleaners, volunteers receiving a stipend.

Must include:

- ◆ Employer and employee details (full names, ID numbers, job title)
- ◆ Start date
- ◆ Working hours and days
- ◆ Salary amount, payment date, payment method
- ◆ UIF and PAYE responsibilities
- ◆ Annual leave, sick leave, family responsibility leave
- ◆ Daily duties (job description)
- ◆ Code of conduct and confidentiality
- ◆ Disciplinary process
- ◆ Termination clause (usually 1 month's written notice)
- ◆ Signatures and date

Admissions policy

Used for: Telling parents how children are accepted into the centre.

Must include:

- ◆ Age range accepted
- ◆ How to apply (forms, interview, visit)
- ◆ Required documents (birth certificate, clinic card, immunisation record, parent ID)
- ◆ Admission fee and deposit
- ◆ Priority criteria (e.g. siblings of current children, first-come first-served)
- ◆ Waiting list policy
- ◆ Trial period (if any)

04

Child protection policy

Used for: Setting out how the centre keeps children safe from harm — abuse, neglect, injury, exploitation.

Must include:

- ◆ Your commitment to child safety
- ◆ Staff vetting (police clearance, references)
- ◆ Code of conduct around children
- ◆ Rules on physical contact, photographs, social media
- ◆ How suspected abuse is reported and to whom
- ◆ How children are released from the centre (and to whom)
- ◆ Visitor protocols

This is required for registration. Take it seriously.

05

Health and safety policy

Used for: Keeping children, staff, and visitors safe from accidents, illness, and emergencies.

Must include:

- ◆ Daily safety checks (gates, playground, classrooms)
- ◆ Hygiene and handwashing routines
- ◆ Cleaning schedules
- ◆ First aid procedures and trained first aiders
- ◆ Medication policy (who can give what, with parent consent)
- ◆ Sick child policy (when children must stay home)
- ◆ Emergency evacuation plan and fire drills
- ◆ Reporting injuries and incidents

06

Nutrition policy

Used for: Setting out how the centre feeds children and what standards you keep.

Must include:

- ◆ Meal and snack times
- ◆ Type of food provided (or guidelines for lunchboxes)
- ◆ Allergy management
- ◆ Special diets (religious, medical)
- ◆ Kitchen hygiene
- ◆ Where food is stored

07 Discipline policy (for children)

Used for: Setting out how staff guide children's behaviour — positively, respectfully, age-appropriately.

Must include:

- ◆ The centre's belief in positive guidance (no shouting, shaming, or physical punishment)
- ◆ How staff redirect difficult behaviour
- ◆ How staff support children's self-regulation
- ◆ When and how parents are involved
- ◆ What is not acceptable (corporal punishment is illegal in South Africa)

08 Staff discipline policy

Used for: Setting out the fair process when a staff member's conduct or performance falls short.

Must include:

- ◆ Steps (verbal warning → written warning → final written warning → hearing)
- ◆ What counts as misconduct
- ◆ What counts as serious misconduct (grounds for immediate dismissal)
- ◆ The staff member's right to be heard

- ◆ The staff member's right to representation
- ◆ Record-keeping

09 Parent code of conduct

Used for: Making clear how parents are expected to behave at the centre and in communications.

Must include:

- ◆ Respect for staff, other parents, and children
- ◆ How concerns or complaints should be raised
- ◆ Drop-off and collection rules
- ◆ Late collection fees
- ◆ Communication channels (WhatsApp, email, in person)
- ◆ Photographs and social media rules
- ◆ Consequences of breaching the code

10 Fee and payment policy

Used for: Making payment terms clear from the start, so parents and the centre both know where they stand.

Must include:

- ◆ Monthly fee amount
- ◆ What the fee includes (meals, materials, outings)
- ◆ Registration / admission fee
- ◆ Due date each month
- ◆ Accepted payment methods
- ◆ Late payment consequences and procedure
- ◆ Holiday fees (do parents pay during school holidays?)
- ◆ Refund policy
- ◆ Notice required when leaving the centre

How to use these templates

- ◆ Download the template that fits your need.
- ◆ Read it carefully. Make sure you understand each clause.
- ◆ Adapt it. Add your centre's name, your specific rules, your numbers.
- ◆ Have a trusted person review it — your PAL, mentor, or someone on your board.
- ◆ Discuss it with your team (for staff policies) or parents (for parent policies).
- ◆ Get signatures where signatures are needed.
- ◆ Keep one signed copy in your centre file. Give one to the other party.
- ◆ Review yearly. Update policies as your centre grows and changes.

A final note on policies

Policies are not just paperwork. They are how you put your centre's values into practice. They protect children, protect staff, protect parents, and protect you.

A centre with clear, written policies is a centre that takes itself seriously — and others will take it seriously too.

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Clarity is kindness. When everyone knows what is expected, everyone feels safer.