



## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A HOME CHILDCARE PROVIDER

They are not nannies, babysitters or daycare workers in a center. Their lesson plans every day includes how to take turns, how to have "nice hands" and "walking feet," how to say please and thank you, how to walk behind someone without pushing, how to take turns, and how to have "listening ears."

They are not just teachers. They are also janitors and nurses. They make boo-boos feel better and dry up tears. They spray, wipe, sanitize, sweep, mop, vacuum, and take out the trash.

They balance little plates and cups. They pick up squashed peas, rice, and fruit off the floor. They scoop up seconds when children ask for more. They fill up water cups, pour milk and make bottles. They remind the toddlers not to throw their food from their highchairs.

They change six dirty diapers within 10 minutes. They have many funny stories about poopy diapers and bodily fluids, they could write a book. They get six little ones to follow in a row on their way to the playground. They create a curriculum and fun activities. They produce fun holiday activities and gifts.

They run a small business on their own. They must always be prepared for licensing visits. They buy everything for their business out of pocket. They must complete many training courses

and keep up on paperwork. Their home is also their business and filled with toys and baby items. They set up tours on the weekends and answer business calls for potential clients. They advertise potential spot openings and gather enrollment forms.

They barely have time to eat, drink and go to the bathroom themselves. They do not get a a one-hour lunch break or have a helper to step in. They are used to loud noises and over stimulation, but they would not have it any other way.

Many of us are homebodies but also have the biggest hearts, kindest souls, strong work ethics and a large moral compass. They value kindness and compassion and are very protective of the people they love. They love to be creative, read, and sing and dance to silly songs with the little ones.

They tie tiny shoes. Snap tiny pants. Fold tiny blankets. Wipe tiny noses. Spend 5 minutes fixing the heels of tiny shoes. They learn to do things with one hand while holding a baby and helping a toddler at the same time. Multiply all of this by six on some days.

They are there before parents go to work and do not get off work until the last child is picked up, sometimes after closing time. They work through illnesses, not always feeling great and exhaustion. They are strong, resilient, and hard-working warriors, but they never complain and get back up and do it all again the next day.

They communicate and build relationships with six different families. They know it takes a village to raise a child. They sometimes have to say no and be the bad guy by setting boundaries and making tough decisions. When illnesses and ouches happen, it can make families frustrated, but they do their best to provide a safe and healthy environment. They make mistakes and take accountability and learn and grow and say I am sorry when they

are wrong. They forgive others and keep improving and keep moving forward. They have self-worth and enforce their rules and expectations to maintain a healthy and safe home and business. They know they are the only person taking care of multiple children. They know some things are out of their control but do their best each day no matter what.

They open their homes to families to provide childcare. They give out their address and personal information and must hope the families are trusting, safe and will make good and moral choices with their own words and actions. Sometimes this is not the case though. This is one of the hardest parts of their jobs. They know that most people are good and have good intentions though, but also know they need to be very careful about who they enroll.

They lay out cots, pillows, blankets, and pacifiers. They know who gets a pacifier, who gets a 6 oz bottle, who must have all the lights out, who will wake up early, who came in late and will lay awake. They sit between cots patting restless toddlers to sleep. They spend the rest of nap time keeping the one early riser from waking the others.

When the last child goes home, they cook for their own family, clean their homes again and take care of their own children. They are wives and moms too. They somehow find time to rest their tired feet. They do this 5 days a week for 50+ hours. They love what they do. It is hard, but anything worth having is challenging work. They are grateful and blessed.

They are patient and kind. They are trustworthy. They are nurturing and gentle. They do their best with no promise of rest. They do not enjoy disciplining but do it with love. Their heart swells to see your child grow, learn, smile and play. They laugh at the funny things the kids always say. Say thank you to your

childcare provider. They are superheroes to your little ones. They are human and have good days and bad days too. They are underpaid and often underappreciated. They grow bonds with the children they care for and then have to say goodbye when they move on. They love your child and the families they provide care for and they love their job.

### *Favorite Childcare Provider Poems*

*Although I'm not their mother, I care for them each day. I cuddle, sing and read to them and watch them as they play. I see each new accomplishment and help them grow and learn. I understand their language and listen with concern. They come to me for comfort, and I wipe away their tears. They proudly show their work to me, and I give the loudest cheers. I am not their mother, but my role is just as strong. I nurture them and keep them safe, though maybe not for long. I know someday the time may come when we will have to part, but I know each child I've cared for is forever in my heart.*

*This isn't just a daycare; it is a second home. Our children aren't just cared for, we love them like our own. They learn life lessons every day. Strong values we enforce. We make learning fun with play; our spirit sets the course. They love the way you read to them and sing those silly songs. In this special place that we create, they feel like they belong.*