

“Help...My child is sick and I have to go to work!”

This situation happens to almost every parent at one time or another. The key to handling this problem is to be prepared. What is your regular provider's policy regarding caring for sick children? Some providers do not mind if a child has a cold, but most providers will not take children who are feverish, vomiting, have diarrhea, or unexplained rashes. Respect your providers policy regarding sick children. It is intended to protect the health of your child and the provider.

If your regular child care provider will not be able to care for your sick child, then check with your back up providers. Try to give them as much notice as possible. If your child is not feeling well in the evening, start right away to find someone to provide care the next day.

If your back up plans cannot care for your sick child, check with neighbors and other relatives. Give as much notice as possible.

What if you have tried everything and you still can't find anyone to care for your sick child? Call your employer and let them know your situation. Let them know what you have tried and ask if they have any other suggestions. Maybe they can rearrange your work schedule or you can trade hours with a coworker. Employers will appreciate the fact that you tried to find care for your child and that you are calling in ahead of time to let them know that you will not be at work and why.

Remember, planning ahead for sick child care is the key to dealing with it successfully. Give everybody as much notice as possible, including your provider and your employer. Leave a copy of the Child Information Sheet with the person caring for your child so they will know about your child and how to reach you if necessary. The more prepared you are, the easier this problem will be to handle.