



Best Practice Insights:

Should my center offer child care?

It may be hard to imagine anyone who loves kids more than the team members at your pregnancy center. So when a client comes in with a couple of bundles of joy and a decision to make about a new pregnancy, it might be tempting to whisk the little ones away to an empty consultation room and give mom a break.

But we wouldn't recommend it.

Providing for the care and custody of children is a significant responsibility that should be undertaken only with a well-considered legal foundation. Instead, centers should advise clients ahead of time that the center does not provide child care. If a client does bring children to the center, the children should remain in their parent's care at all times.

When assisting a client who brings children to the center, ask permission before:

- touching, picking up, or holding children. Ask: *may I hold him while you read the brochure?*
 - sharing any food or drink with her child. If offering food or drink, single serve products are preferable. Offer at least some snack options that are appropriate for people with common allergies, such as products that are dairy free, nut free and/or gluten free. Products should never be offered past the expiration date listed on the package. Ask: *may I offer her something to eat or drink?* Then, allow the parent to choose from available options.
- offering to let the child play with toys. Choose toys carefully. Avoid offering toys with sharp parts or parts small enough to be ingested. To reduce the spread of germs, toys should be sanitized frequently (review cleaning recommendations for child care settings [here](#)). Ask: *would they like to play with anything in our toy basket?*