



River to Coast Children's Services

Resources, Referrals, and Support / Recursos, Referencias, y Apoyo

Parent & Child Care Provider Program Guide

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Welcome

Dear Parents:

We are pleased to be able to serve your family. We have designed this guide to help you understand our procedures and policies. Please read this guide and if any part is unclear to you, please call your family case manager immediately and ask for clarification as **you are responsible for understanding and following the rules**. We have included a glossary of words and phrases, beginning on page 4.

About Us:

Welcome to River to Coast Children's Services. We are a nonprofit agency, providing a wide variety of services to children and families in Western Sonoma County. We have been providing these services since 1976. RCCS advocates for the well-being of children and families in Western Sonoma County providing subsidized child care, resources and referrals, provider/parent trainings and education, and community outreach as a way of addressing the community's diverse and ever-changing needs.

Our Mission:

Our mission is to nurture the healthy development of children and families in our community. We offer resources, referrals, support and opportunities to child care providers, families, and communities in Western Sonoma County.

Definitions (Alphabetical)

- **CalFresh:** Formerly known as Food Stamp Program, Federally known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- **CalWORKS:** California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids is California's version of welfare reform.
- **CDE:** California Department of Education.
- **Case Manager (CM):** A Case Manager is assigned to each family and is responsible for determining the family's initial and continued eligibility. Your family's Case Manager may be changed periodically, depending on caseload distribution.
- **Child Care Attendance Sheets (CCAS):** The RCCS form which providers use for each child in the program who is subsidized by RCCS and receiving current child care services. The CCAS is completed by parents on a daily basis and is submitted by the provider for reimbursement each month.
- **Child Care Service Certificate:** The certificate issued to the parent and the provider stating hours/days of care that have been certified and approved for each child. These certificates include the provider's requested private rate, and the maximum childcare reimbursement category (applicable ceiling) that applies to the parent's need for services.
- **Child Development Resource Specialist (CDRS):** The Child Development Resource Specialists work within the Family Child Care (CFCC) Program. The CFCC Program is funded by CDE/ELCD and Federal Child Care Network contract. Qualified CDRS' visit Family Child Care (Home Education Network) or FCCHEN homes on a regular basis when RCCS-subsidized children are enrolled. These RCCS staff members create a profile of the developmental growth of infants, toddlers, preschool and school-age subsidized children and assist the child care provider with individual curriculum planning for each child profiled. They may also offer enriching activities for ALL of the children in the child care home.
- **Co-payments:** The difference between the amount the provider charges for services and amount that RCCS can reimburse (based on the Regional Market Rate (RMR) regulations set by the CDE/ELCD), the enrolled parent is responsible for paying any difference directly to the provider. Providers can only charge this copay to families enrolled in our AP program.
- **The County:** Sonoma County Health & Social Services Department- also referred to as the Welfare Department.
- **Days:** Calendar days, unless otherwise noted.
- **Days of Non-Operation (DNO):** Days that a provider would normally be open for business, but due to the provider's holiday, vacation or a staff development day, the facility is closed for business.
- **Delinquent Fees:** Family fees are considered delinquent (late) if they are not paid by the 7th of the month. Parents will receive a termination Notice of Action (NOA) if not paid by that date.
- **ELCD:** Early Learning and Care Division.
- **Exceptional Needs Children:** Children who have an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and are receiving early intervention services, or appropriate special education and services, and require the special attention of an adult in a child care setting.
- **Family:** Family means the parents and the children for whom they are responsible; who comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living. Family also can mean any persons who present themselves as a family unit, whether or not they are legally married. EXCEPTION: when a

child and his/her siblings are living in a family that does not include their biological or adoptive parent, “Family” shall then be considered the child and related siblings.

- **Family Fee (also called Parent Fee):** A family fee chart is prepared by CDE/ELCD in order to have parents share a cost of child care allowing the program to expand services to other families in need of subsidized child care services. The amount the family is expected to pay is based on the gross monthly income of the family and the family size. The family fee is based on one child in the family who uses the most care; parent pays these fees directly to RCCS.
- **Fiscal Specialist:** The Fiscal Specialist processes the provider reimbursements and the family fees. Contact this person for any clarification or questions regarding these issues.
- **Fiscal Year:** RCCS runs on CDE/ELCD’s fiscal year calendar, which starts on July 1st and ends on June 30th of the following year.
- **Fraud:** An intentional program violation, stealing by deceit, providing inaccurate and incomplete information **knowingly and intentionally** to receive a benefit.
- **Homeless:** Living in transitional housing or sleeping in a public or private space not ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- **Notice of Action (NOA):** A written notification issued by RCCS that informs parents of RCCS’ decision to approve, deny or change child care services. NOAs are also issued to inform parents that they no longer meet our program’s “need” or “eligibility” requirements, or that the level of services/ child care contract or fee will change.
- **Notice (of Action) to Provider (NTP):** A written notification issued by RCCS’ fiscal department that informs providers of an action being taken by RCCS, which may affect reimbursement to the provider.
- **Parent:** A biological parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, foster parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, registered domestic partner of the parent or any other adult living with a child who has the responsibility for the care and welfare of the child.
- **Provider:** A person (other than the parent) who takes care of a child for part of the day, for a fee.
- **Provider’s Notice Period:** The provider’s required advance notice from the parent when an enrolled child will no longer be attending that provider’s child care facility. This notice period is based on the provider’s business practices as applicable to all families/children whether subsidized or private-pay. The notice period may be waived at the provider’s request or with the provider’s consent. RCCS may reimburse this notice period if the child is in attendance, or if there was a reasonable expectation that the child would attend and only if the parent has days of unexcused absences remaining, and only if stated in the provider’s current policies on file at RCCS.
- **Provider’s Rates:** The usual and customary published rates (& policies) that a provider charges all parents, regardless of whether they are subsidized or paying privately.
- **Regional Market Rate Ceilings (RMR):** The average rates charged for various types of child care services as determined by a statewide survey of providers. The results of this survey determine the maximum amount (the ceiling) RCCS is allowed to reimburse providers for child care services based on the county in which they provide care.
- **Religious/Sectarian Instruction:** Some funding prohibits providers from including religious instruction or worship in their program while receiving subsidy reimbursements from RCCS. Please let RCCS know if you are including religious worship in your program.
- **Sonoma County Human Services Department (SCHSD)** Where parents can go to sign up for cash aid (TANF), CalFresh, assistance with health coverage and other benefits.

- **Stage 2/3:** Families who are subsidized through the Stage 1 funding source, County of Sonoma (SCHSD) CalWORKs, may be transferred to RCCS in the Stage 2 program for child care services, when the parents are deemed stable (usually working and often no longer receiving cash aid (TANF)).
- **State Medium Income: (SMI)**

Families may use Stage 2 child care for two years from their cash aid end date, providing they remain eligible. After this date, if funding is still available, they would then be transferred to Stage 3 child care and may remain eligible, contingent upon continued eligibility/need and funding, until the child's thirteenth birthday.

- **TANF:** Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; formerly AFDC - cash aid for eligible families.
- **WEL:** West (Sonoma) County Eligibility/waiting List

Subsidized Child Care Program Eligibility & Need

The Subsidized Child Care Programs are designed to provide subsidy payment reimbursements for child care services on behalf of eligible families. The goal of this program is to assist and promote the health, growth, care, development, and education of children in Western Sonoma County. These services are for children under the age of 13 (thirteen). Children with exceptional needs and severely disabled may be served to the age of 21 (twenty one). In order for families to be eligible for these services parents, including custodial adults and guardians, and all adults counted in the family must meet the following eligibility and need criteria.

- **Eligibility Criteria:**

Eligibility and need for child care services is determined by guidelines established by the funding source (California Department of Education, Child Development Division; Sonoma County Human Services Department; etc.) Each program has differing Eligibility and Need Criteria. In the parenthesis () after each criterion, RCCS has listed the funding code of the program(s) that apply to these criteria. To receive subsidized child care services, families must meet at least one (1) criterion (the conditions described after each letter in the lists below) in each of the “Eligibility” and “Need” areas that follow:

- **Child Protection Services /Children At Risk of Abuse and Neglect**

A referral letter is required from Child Protective Services or a licensed legal, medical or social service agency professional (i.e. licensed therapist, counselor, social worker, etc.).

- **Income Eligibility:**

It is required that parents notify RCCS within 30 calendar days of any changes to the family’s adjusted monthly income and family size, which exceeds 85% of SMI, as shown below:

Family Size	Family Monthly Income	Family Yearly Income
1-2	\$5,540	\$66,479
3	\$6,157	\$73,885
4	\$7,069	\$84,822
5	\$8,199	\$98,393
6	\$9,330	\$111,965
7	\$9,542	\$114,509
8	\$9,755	\$117,054
9	\$9,967	\$119,598
10	\$10,179	\$122,143
11	\$10,391	\$124,687
12	\$10, 603	\$127,232

- **Current Aid Recipient:**

The parent is currently receiving CalWORKs Cash Aid or has received CalWORKs Cash Aid within 24 months of the time he/she applies for subsidized child care services. (CalWORKs Stage 2 only).

- **Homeless:**
The family is homeless and needs child care services to find permanent housing.
- **Programs for the Severely Handicapped:**
Children with disabilities or special health care needs whose individualized education programs (IEP) and individual family support plans (IFSP) include early childhood education services.
- **Residency Requirements:**
Parents or guardians as well as children, must live or work in the State of California.

- **Need Criteria:**

- **Child Protection Services /Children At Risk of Abuse and Neglect**
The child is a recipient of Child Protective Services (CPS) or is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation and has a referral in place from a licensed legal, medical or social service agency professional (i.e. licensed therapist, counselor, social worker, etc.). Child care services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.
- **Employment:**
When the parent is approved to use child care services while working, the hours of care may cover the parent's work hours (including the lunch break) and the amount of time it takes the parent to travel between the work site and the child care facility. Child care services can be authorized for no less than 24 months. Parents may use care for the hours worked and travel time. Travel time is limited, not to exceed half the daily hours authorized for employment up to a maximum of 4 hours a day. In certain cases, if you work between 10PM and 6AM, sleep time may be authorized; your Case Manager has more details.
- **Employment in the Family Home:**
If the employment is in the family's home or on property that includes the family's home, the parent must provide justification for requesting subsidized child care and development services based on the type of work being done and its requirements, the age of the child for whose services are needed, and, if the child is more than five years old; the specific child care needs. Child care services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.
- **Employment in a Licensed Family Day Care Home:**
Parents working as an assistants in a large family day care home pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1596.78(b), and are requesting services for the family's child in the same family day care home, the parent must submit a copy of the following:
Family day care home license for which s/he works that indicates that the family day care home is licensed as a large family day care home, a signed statement from the licensed provider that states that the parent is the assistant according to staffing ratios established in Title 22, proof that the parent's fingerprints are associated with the indicated family day care home as its assistant and payroll deductions withheld for the assistant by the licensed provider, which may be a pay check stub. Child care services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.
- **Self-Employment:**
RCCS will require the parent to submit a copy of his/her business license or permit as applicable. In order for child care services to be approved for self-employed parents, a Self-Employment Declaration of Income Form (supplied by RCCS) must be completed. Additionally, the parent will be required to submit receipts of earnings and expenses, a

copy of the Profit and Loss Statement(s) used to file income taxes, and/or a copy of the income tax return that has been filed with the IRS and Franchise Tax Board. Child care services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.

➤ **Seeking Employment:**

Child care services for parents who are seeking employment is provided for no less than 12 months, per parent, per fiscal year, no more than five (5) days per week and for less than 32.50 hours per week. RCCS requires a signed, seeking employment declaration agreement which includes the parent's plan to secure, change, or increase employment and a general description of when services will be needed. Parents with school-age children are expected to seek employment during their children's school hours and are generally not eligible for "seeking employment" eligibility except during the child's school vacations.

➤ **Seeking Employment Combined with Other Need:**

At certification or recertification, parents who are seeking employment and have another basis of need, are eligible for no less than 24 months. However, the authorization for seeking employment hours is limited to no less than 12 months within a 24-month period. After the families have used 12-months of care for seeking employment, they will not be authorized for child care for seeking employment again until their next 24-month.

➤ **Student Parents:**

Vocational training is limited to six (6) years from the first day of approved child care services, or 24 semester units if the parent already has a bachelor's degree, whichever comes first. RCCS will require proof of progress of classes at the time of recertification. Student parents must maintain at least a "C" (2.0) Grade Point Average (GPA), in a graded program, and pass the program's requirements in at least 50 percent of the classes or meet the training institution's standards for making adequate progress. Failure to do so may result in termination of child care services. You may be eligible for additional study hours depending upon the number of academic units in your course load. Child care services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.

➤ **Parental Incapacity:**

In some cases, RCCS can approve child care for a parent who is not able to care for his/her child, without assistance, due to a medical/mental condition. Child care services may be authorized for no less than 24 months. In such cases, a legally qualified health professional must complete the Statement of Parent/Guardian Incapacitation (supplied by RCCS) describing why services are needed and the duration of services. The maximum child care allowed is 50 hours a week.

➤ **Approved Welfare to Work Activity (CalWORKS Program only):**

Parents may receive child care services while they participate in an approved Welfare-to-Work activity for no less than 24 months.

Description of Subsidized Child Care Programs

RCCS has programs/funding sources as described below. For more detailed information, please call RCCS.

- **CFCC: California Family Child Care Home Education Networks Program**

This program serves parents who qualify for child care subsidy in a licensed Family Child Care Home that is part of our Family Child Care Home Education Network and is monitored and receives services from RCCS' Child Development Resource Specialists (CDRS). The CDRS' profile the development of each subsidized child in this program and assist the provider with plans and activities. A copy of the developmental profile for your child will be available. You will be contacted to schedule a parent conference with the CDRS and/or your provider twice per year. Parents are encouraged to discuss each child's development with providers on a regular basis. Our network area varies depending on newly contracted providers. Child care must be provided in a licensed Family Child Care home contracted with RCCS' Family Child Care program, in the West Sonoma County Union High School District, the Sonoma County portion of the Shoreline Unified School District or in the Kashia Rancheria School District, and **including some RCCS licensed and contracted providers in Santa Rosa and other areas.**

- **CAPP: California Alternative Payment Program:**

Child care must be provided, OR the parent must live, in the West Sonoma County Union High School District (including Sebastopol), in the Sonoma County portion of the Shoreline Unified School District or in the Kashia Rancheria School District. Care may be provided in the setting of the parents' choice, such as in a licensed or licensed-exempt center, licensed Family Child Care Home, or care in a license-exempt provider's home that may be a friend or relative's home. These license-exempt providers may care for children of only one family at a time. License-exempt providers may not provide care at the enrolled parent's home; unless, the parent is willing to sign a declaration stating that they understand they are the provider's employer (see page 20 for more information).

- **CalWORKS Stage 2 & 3 Child Care Program:**

The CalWORKs program serves families who are currently receiving TANF cash aid or who have received it within 24 months before being accepted into the program. The 24-month rule pertains to the date that the parent's cash aid ended (not the children's cash aid, as the children of some families may be receiving cash aid while their parents are excluded from the grant). The Sonoma County Human Services Department (SCHSD) usually refers these families. Parents may receive child care services while they participate in an approved Welfare-to-Work activity. However, families with one child under two or two children under five years of age can now choose to be exempted from activities. RCCS works with two stages of the CalWORKS program, Stages 2 and 3. The CalWORKs Child Care System is designed to continue services to eligible families without interruption. Regulations regarding approved hours, eligibility, countable adults in the home, etc., may differ between CalWORKs and RCCS.

Please Note: If you stopped receiving cash aid within the last 24 months and have a documented need and eligibility for services, there is no waiting for enrollment onto a C2AP program.

WEL: West Sonoma County Eligibility List:

RCCS has established a waiting list (WEL) for the purposes of enrollment into RCCS' subsidized child care programs. This waiting list is open to everyone who lives or intends to use childcare services in Western Sonoma County. Once RCCS has funding available, parents on WEL will be contacted in order of eligibility/priority, according to state regulations.

Initial Application Process

- One-on-one, or occasionally in a group setting, RCCS staff will provide information about our agency and the Subsidized Child Care Program Rules and Regulations (in this program guide). RCCS will also help parents become familiar with program forms and participation expectations.
- Assigned Case Managers will usually meet with parents on an individual basis. The application process includes many required documents which will be requested from the parent before the application appointment date. Each parent will be called prior to his or her meeting, and the required documents based on their individual case will be discussed.
- The parent must sign the application before the application process will be considered complete. Before the application can be approved, the parent must choose an eligible provider, and give their Case Manager the name, address, and telephone number of the provider, so RCCS can complete any needed paperwork with the provider before care can commence. Parents have 30 days maximum from the signing of the application to the beginning of child care subsidy date. The application will be denied if all paperwork is not received and approved within the 30-day period.
- **Immunization Records and Emergency Contact Information:**
RCCS must have all records for all non-school-age children, including immunization record, Medical Practitioner's Report (MPR) and Emergency and Identification Information Form for all enrolled children, on file, prior to enrollment into our program.
- **Recertification Process:**
Recertification is the process of determining a family's continued need and eligibility for child care services. Failure to complete the recertification process within the timeframe given will result in termination or non-payment of child care services by RCCS. The recertification process applies to all parents enrolled in our subsidized child care programs. RCCS requires a face-to-face re-certification interview at least once; no more than once every 24 months. The parent will receive a re-certification notice requesting them to call their Case Manager to make an appointment. They will be given a list of documents/ information required to determine continued eligibility. If parent fails to recertify within the stated deadline of their recertification, services will be terminated.
- **Childcare Hours and Arrangements:**
Approved child care hours are based on the parent's authorized activity, which depends on the parent/child's eligibility and need criteria. This information can be found on your Child Care Certificate. These hours may include lunch & transportation time, and sometimes study time (for student parents), as allowed by the program in which the parent is enrolled.
- **Document Request Procedure:**
Your case manager will mail all requests for documentation to your last known address and is not responsible for calling as a reminder of your pending deadline.

A. Original request may be verbal or written (phone, email or post card), with a clearly indicated due date

B. Second request will be a written Final Notice (no extensions unless extenuating circumstances) - ***Please note that there is a maximum of three Final Notices per fiscal year or services may be terminated.***

- **Verification of Information:**

The parent will be required to complete Permission to Release Information form which will be used by program staff to obtain and verify the family's income, need status, grant status, and any other necessary information in order to determine eligibility for child care services. Case Managers will contact employers, school administrators, social service agencies, doctors, etc. as needed. In most cases, RCCS requires original documents be submitted. Your original documents will be returned to you.

- **Additional Hours:**

It is the responsibility of the parent to pay the provider directly for any extra hours of care that are not listed on the Child Care Certificate - until, if applicable, those additional/new hours are approved by the Case Manager.

- **Shared Custody:**

When parents share custodial care of a child, RCCS will only reimburse for child care when the child is in custody of the enrolled parent. The provider will only be paid for services during the enrolled parents' custodial days. The enrolled parent will be required to give written information to RCCS, and to the provider, as to when the child will be in the other parent's custody. These are considered non-contracted days and the Child Care Certificate will be written to cover only the days the enrolled parent has custody.

- **Note About Payments:**

Under all programs administered by RCCS (other than Stage 2 transfers from SCHSD), RCCS cannot reimburse for child care services provided for ANY AMOUNT OF TIME BEFORE the application process is COMPLETE and RCCS has EVERYTHING needed to determine the family's eligibility for services.

It is important that the parent, and child care provider, QUICKLY submit ALL required documents and information to RCCS so that the approval process is not delayed.

- **Choosing a Provider:**

It is the responsibility of the parent to choose the provider who best meets the needs of the family. RCCS has a Resource & Referral Program that can help parents find providers in our community. Referrals are given to any parent needing assistance finding child care in the West County area. All providers are asked quarterly to keep their information current so that parents can have updated information.

NOTE: If the parent starts services with a provider before getting approval from an RCCS Case Manager, the parent will be responsible for paying that provider. If the provider does not meet all State/County/ Agency requirements; RCCS will not be able to reimburse that provider at all.

- **Back-Up Providers or Multiple Providers:**

According to state regulations, RCCS will reimburse only one (1) provider per child when the first provider selected by the parent is open for business during the hours the child care is needed; when the primary provider is not licensed and the parent is in one of the AP programs; the parent may also choose to use a Licensed Center to help prepare the child for Kindergarten.

NOTE: Back-up providers can only be paid by RCCS when the primary provider is unable to provide the care due to the primary provider's paid day of non-operation or the child's illness. The only exception to this is if the parent has a documented need for care during non-traditional days or hours (evenings after 6 PM or weekends) or if a child is sick and cannot use the primary provider or if the primary provider is closed. These exceptions are for up to 10 days per fiscal year for child illness and up to 10 days for primary provider closure (even though the primary provider did not provide the care).

- **Child Care Service Certificate (Original):**

When the parent and the provider have completed all of the requirements, a CM will go over the details of the Child Care Service Certificate with the parent. The certificate states the approved child care schedule, provider's requested rate, and appropriate ceiling category, which is the maximum amount that RCCS is able to reimburse for each child.

A copy of this certificate is sent to the parent. The original (and a copy for the provider's file) is sent to the provider for signatures and for return to the CM for the parent file. If RCCS has not received the signed Certificate from the provider within two weeks, the CM will be sending the parent a 19-day Final Notice to remind both the provider and the parent that this item is overdue. If the signed Certificate is still not received within this time period, the CM will then issue a 19-day Termination Notice to the parent and care may be terminated.

NOTE: In order for RCCS to reimburse for services and as mandated by State regulations, a signed child care certificate must be on file prior to any provider payment. If a signed child care certificate is not on file, payment for services will be placed on hold until the certificate is signed and submitted to the office. If the certificate is submitted after provider payment has been made, payment for services will be delayed until next month's provider payment.

- **Child Care Service Certificate (Change):**

For all changes of the child care schedule, provider's rate and/or applicable ceiling, or when an extension of services is approved, the parent and provider will be notified in writing through a new Child Care Service Certificate. The parent may voluntarily request a reduction to their service hours. The parent shall submit a written request indicating the days and hours requested, with a proposed effective date for the reduction of service hours. The parent shall also acknowledge in writing that they understand their right to retain the current service hours.

- **Miscellaneous Information Regarding Child Care Service Certificates:**

The parent is responsible for paying for care before the family is approved by RCCS, and for care that is not covered by the schedule on Child Care Service Certificate. The provider has the responsibility

of reporting (to RCCS) changes in a subsidized child's attendance within three (3) business days of the change, such as an increase or decrease in hours of care. Failure to report these changes may result in non-payment of services provided but not approved by a Case Manager.

- **Family Fees and Delinquent Fees:**

A family fee is the CDE/ELCD mandated fee charged to the family based on their income and family size. A family fee schedule is prepared by the CDE/ELCD in order to have parents share in the cost of child care and to increase services to other families in need of subsidized child care services.

As changes happen in either the family's income or family size, the family fee may change. If you suspect a possible decrease in your family you may voluntarily report this information to your Case Manager, in order for your income to be assessed and family fee to be reduced, as applicable. For more detailed information- please refer to the document titled Family Fee Contract on page 31. You may also request a copy from your Case Manager.

NOTE: Child Support received is counted in the family's income and affects the family fee, which may change when child support is increased, reduced, or stopped. If a family is receiving TANF (cash aid) they will not be assessed a Family Fee while receiving this cash grant.

- **Termination due to Delinquent Fees:**

If a family is terminated from the program while owing family fees, they must pay their delinquent family fees in full, before they can be eligible for re-enrollment into any Child Care & Development Program funded by the CDE/ELCD of California. Any family, having left the program owing a fee, will be sent to a Collections Agency if the fee is not paid in full.

- **Co-Payments:**

If a parent chooses a provider who charges more than the maximum reimbursement that the CDE/ELCD mandates RCCS to use (based on the RMR ceilings issued by the CDE/ELCD), the parent can still use that provider if the parent agrees to pay the difference between the provider's rate and the amount RCCS can reimburse. This difference is called a co-payment and it is the responsibility of the parent to negotiate or to make payment directly to the provider. Providers can only charge this copay to families enrolled in our AP, Stage 2 & Stage 3 programs.

NOTE: Co-payments are paid to your provider and family fees (paid to RCCS) are two entirely different things; one does not offset the other.

- **Changes:**

Changes in eligibility or need do not need to be reported during the no less than 24 -month eligibility certification, with the following exceptions: Families who have been certified as income eligible must notify their CM within 30 calendar days of ongoing income that causes their adjusted monthly income to exceed 85% of SMI. Families may voluntarily report changes in order to reduce family fees, increase service schedule, or extend the period of eligibility before recertification.

NOTE: In order for RCCS to be able to effectively communicate with parents, it is required that parents inform their CM of changes to their contact information, such as phone number, email address, and address, within 5 calendar days.

- **Absent Parent Declaration Requirement:**

When the birth records name a second parent and only one parent has signed the application for enrollment in child care services, the parent shall self-certify the presence or absence of the second parent under penalty of perjury on the CD-9600 application.

- **Termination for Failure to Keep Payment Plan:**

If you are unable to pay your monthly family fee bill in full, the parent must contact RCCS before the effective date of the Termination Notice of Action (NOA) to set up a mutually agreed upon payment plan. RCCS will verbally accept a reasonable payment plan from the parent for payment of delinquent fees and then mail the parent a copy of the agreed upon arrangements to be signed and returned. RCCS will continue to provide services to the enrolled children, with the understanding that the parent will continue to pay all current fees by their due date, and comply with the provisions of the payment plan. If the parent fails to pay the agreed amount(s) on the specified date(s), per the payment plan agreement, a Termination NOA will be issued immediately and parent will have 19 days to pay the past-due amount IN FULL. No additional payment plan will be accepted for the same NOA or for subsequent NOAs issued for non-payment of fees, as long as there is a past-due balance. Upon termination of services for non-payment of delinquent fees, the family shall be ineligible for child care and development services with RCCS until all delinquent fees are paid.

- **More Child Care Hours Needed:**

Reported on Time: If the parent needs more child care hours for an approvable activity, the change may be approved to start on the date of the change as long as the parent reports the information to their assigned CM within five (5) days of the change. The parent and provider will then receive a new Child Care Service Certificate.

- **Increase in Income:**

It is required that parent report changes to ongoing income that causes their adjusted monthly income to exceed the 85% SMI, as shown below, within 30 calendar days. Once this change is reported to the CM, an income assessment will be completed and if it is found that family’s adjusted monthly income exceeds the 85% SMI ceiling for the verified family size and if the family does not meet another basis for eligibility, a Notice of Action for termination of services will be issued to the family.

Income Ceilings (85%)

Family Size	Family Monthly Income
1-2	\$5,343
3	\$5,802
4	\$6,719
5	\$7,794
6	\$8,869
7	\$9,070
8	\$9,272
9	\$9,473
10	\$9,675
11	\$9,876

12	\$10, 078
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- **Decrease in Income:**

Decrease in income is voluntary: If the parent reports a decrease in income, the family fee will be assessed to see if a change is applicable. Any reduction in the family fee will be effective on the first of the following month.

Note: Although, voluntary, if the family has a family fee it is in the parent’s benefit to report a decrease in income immediately in order to decrease/stop their family fee

- **Changing Providers:**

As an agency that promotes quality child care, RCCS suggests that parents change providers only when it is in the best interest of the child, who may be negatively affected. Many providers require at least a **2-week notice** from the parent when their child care arrangement will end prematurely. Please keep this in mind when changing providers. For provider changes to be processed, please contact your Case Manager.

NOTE: The changes would go into effect when all information has been received and verified by the Case Manager.

- If a parent starts using a new provider WITHOUT reporting the change within five (5) days, RCCS will begin paying the provider on the date the change is reported— not the date the change took place, AND only if the parent & provider are eligible to receive services/payment from RCCS.
- If a parent begins to use another provider before requesting changes from their CM, the parent will be responsible for paying the new provider without RCCS reimbursement.
- If a parent stops using a provider without giving proper notification, (such as, but not limited to, cases of disagreements between the parent and the provider), RCCS may not reimburse for services beyond the last day of actual care by the provider - the parent, not RCCS, will be responsible for paying the provider’s notice, according to the provider’s policies.
- In these cases, RCCS will NOT approve a new provider to begin services until the day AFTER the previous provider’s notice period has ended except in cases of legitimate health and safety concerns or provider is not available for care.

Parental Complaint Procedure

- **License -Exempt Child Care Settings:**

Parents with children in license-exempt care may file a complaint against the license-exempt provider using the following process: The complaint must be written and must include the nature of the complaint, the date and approximate time of the occurrence, the name and address of the provider being complained about, and it must be signed by the parent. Only complaints received about health and safety noncompliance will be accepted.

These complaints will be deemed substantiated solely by the parent's written declaration: Upon receipt of a complaint, RCCS will inform the license-exempt provider of the parent's complaint and inform the provider of his/her right to submit a written rebuttal. RCCS will also notify the parent and the provider that payments will cease in 14 days unless a written declaration signed by both parties has been received by RCCS stating that the health and safety deficiency has been corrected. RCCS will also notify the Child Protective Services unit of the county welfare department.

- **Licensed Child Care Settings:**

Parents with children in a licensed child care facility may file a complaint against the licensed facility by notifying:

- Community Care Licensing at (707) 588-5026
- Their assigned CM or the RCCS Resource and Referral Coordinator
- If pertinent, Child Protective Services unit, at (800) 544-8696 or/and the local police department.

Note: Parents may also contact Community Care Licensing, at (707) 588-5026 to ask about any complaints already filed against licensed providers.

Megan's Law provides the public with internet access to detailed information on registered (child) sex offenders. Parents can visit the Department of Justice "Registered Sex Offender" database at www.meganslaw.ca.gov

- **Parent Termination Policy:**

All parents participating in the Subsidized Child Care Program are required to follow all laws, regulations, and guidelines, which govern the operation of these programs. Failure to do so may result in termination of child care services. Services may also be terminated at the parent's request.

If subsidized child care funding becomes limited or unavailable, RCCS will dis-enroll families as directed by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

Other Reasons for Termination including, but not limited to:

- When the Parent does not meet the eligibility and need criteria based on the program in which they are currently enrolled.
- When the child reaches the age limit set by the program's rules & regulations.
- When the parent submits falsified documentation or information to RCCS.
- When the parent intentionally withholds information regarding their ongoing need or eligibility.
- When the parent fails to pay family fees or defaults on a Family Fee Payment Plan.
- When the parent fails to abide by program rules & regulations.

- When the parent fails to complete enrolled classes or fails to maintain a grade point average of “C” (2.0) or better, for student parents.
- When the parent fails to complete, sign, or submit required documentation
- When the parent fails to complete the Recertification or update process.

NOTE: RCCS will not tolerate threatening, violent, or harassing behavior from anyone. RCCS may refuse to serve any parent or provider during the time they exhibit these behaviors. Therefore, under these circumstances, services to the parent and/or contracts with a provider may be terminated.

- **Notice of Action (NOA):**

Whenever RCCS takes an action (approving, denying, or terminating services) or is changing (reducing or increasing) a client’s child care services, this action is communicated through a Notice of Action (NOA). The main message to the parent appears at the bottom of the NOA under Reason for Action. The parent must read this section carefully as it explains the action fully.

NOTE: Pay close attention to the Effective Date on the NOA as this is the date that the action will take effect unless an appeal is submitted to the office by the parent. Both the Effective Date and the Appeal Date appear on the upper right-hand corner of the NOA. When a NOA is sent informing the parent of termination, the provider is also notified by receiving a copy of the terminated child care certificate.

- **Parental Appeal Rights:**

If a parent does not agree with the decision being made, the parent may appeal the intended action. The appeal process is on the reverse of (or included with) every NOA that the parent receives. The instructions are clearly described in a listed step-by-step process. RCCS must have the parent’s appeal/request for hearing no later than the Appeal Date on the NOA. Appeals may be mailed, faxed (707-869-2616) or put in the drop box at RCCS.

If the appeal is received by the due date, RCCS will issue payment to the provider for child care services rendered during the appeal process. If you appeal, the proposed action will not become effective until the appeal rights process is over. If RCCS’ decision is upheld, the parent will be billed for any payments made to the provider during this period.

Provider Participation: General Information

- Providers must be at least 18 years of age and legally allowed to work in the United States.

- If a licensed family child care provider does not carry liability insurance they will maintain an accident insurance policy of at least \$10,000 or an insurance waiver signed by the parent for the children in the child care home. Proof of this policy must be on file at RCCS.
- All license-exempt providers must attend a Subsidy Provider Orientation at the RCCS office. If they are a licensed family child care provider applying to be a part of our Family Child Care Home Education Network, the orientation may be done in their home at the initial application visit. They must also attend 6 hours of training throughout the year. For licensed AP providers, RCCS may mail documents and request their return. Providers must meet the provider requirements as stated in this handbook and as described in any notice given by RCCS, in order to receive payment from us. Specifically ALL providers must allow access into their homes or centers to parents and RCCS at any time.
- Payments cannot be made for services when child care is provided by parents (biological/adoptive/foster) or legal guardians. If the family is receiving TANF (cash aid), payment cannot be made to members of the parent's assistance unit (other people included in the grant).
- When a provider's policies conflict with RCCS' policies, RCCS' policies override the provider's. In some cases, the provider may hold the parent responsible for any additional requirements, as long as the provider ensures that the parent is made fully aware of them, in writing.
- Provider information given to RCCS may be shared with different departments in the agency: Subsidized Child Care Program, Resource and Referral Program and the Fiscal department.
- As required or as appropriate, this information may also be reviewed by, or shared with, the SCHSD Special Investigations Unit, Community Care Licensing, Child Support Division, the Employment Development Department, representatives of the CDE/ELCD, the Federal Government, independent auditors and others as necessary for the administration of the program.
- All providers must give RCCS the physical address where care is being provided and a current telephone number. Changes in the location of care must be reported to RCCS PRIOR to the change. It must be followed up in writing to RCCS within five (5) days of the change and must include the signature of the provider and parent. Providers are also required to submit a copy of the updated license with address change.
- License-Exempt Providers must submit verification of their physical address to RCCS. For the safety of the children, we require that all providers have a working phone (land line or cell) available at all times while the children are in their care. The phone number should be listed in the provider's file.
- A signed Certificate for Child Care Services must be on file for every child receiving subsidized services in order for a provider to be paid. A phone message left for a Case Manager does not mean child care services are approved, nor is it a promise of payment from RCCS.

- Providers are not employees of RCCS; they are considered independent contractors. They are responsible for reporting income and paying applicable federal and state income taxes. RCCS does not withhold taxes from payments. Every January, RCCS will issue a 1099-MISC Form to any provider who earns more than \$600 or more in a calendar year; this will include the total income earned in the prior calendar year. This income is reported to the IRS, the California State Franchise Tax Board and the Employment Development Department.
- If parents choose an in-home (care in child's home), license-exempt provider, the parent must sign a declaration stating that they understand that the provider is considered their employee. As the employer, the parent would be obligated to fulfill requirements guaranteeing minimum wage to the provider and would sign that they must pay all appropriate state and federal taxes, unemployment insurance, disability insurance, worker's compensation insurance, social security and Medicare on all wages paid.
- Additionally, providers caring for children in the child's home will only be contracted if care is being provided for a minimum of 4 subsidized children, depending on age, at the same time, from the same family (to ensure minimum wage requirements are being met). If, at any time, the provider cares for fewer than 4 or 5 children, depending on age, services cannot continue in the child's home and care must then be provided in the provider's home. This also applies in situations when one or more children leave for school and fewer than 4 children are left with the provider. When the parent and the provider live together the home is considered the child's home and this rule applies to all programs.
- Parents and Providers: Please remember, any corrections made to the in/out times on attendance sheets must be initialed by both the Parent and the Provider.
- Providers must offer activities for children that nurtures their growth and development. Providers are encouraged to attend workshops related to Child Development, Health and Safety, Nutrition, etc. RCCS and other training sites offer these workshops. Those in the Family Child Care Network must attend at least 2 trainings per each fiscal year.
- Providers must allow the parent and RCCS Staff unlimited access to the child care facility (licensed or license-exempt) while the enrolled child is in care.

NOTE: RCCS reserves the right to terminate Child Care Service Certificates or refuse to issue a Child Care Service Certificate to any provider if RCCS has reason to believe that care by that provider would not be in the best of the child- including, but not limited to, placing the child at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation or if the provider is found to be lacking in quality care.

- **Provider Availability:**
Providers are expected to provide care during their hours of operation and during their contracted period as specified on the Certificate for Child Care Services. If they do not, for any reason (i.e. provider is unable, unwilling or unavailable), their payment will be pro-rated to allow payment to the back-up provider.

Supervision by the contracted provider or their registered adult assistant **MUST** be maintained at all times when children are in attendance.

- **Provider Days of Non-Operation:**

Many providers have identified days when their business is closed for holidays, vacations, staff development days or other various reasons. These days are called Provider Days of Non-Operation (DNOs).

- In order to be reimbursed for provider DNOs, the provider must submit the RCCS “Non-Operation Days (DNOs)-Reimbursed and Non-Reimbursed” form (found within their Agreement) to RCCS annually; which will clearly state their closures and if payment is expected. Providers are limited to 10 DNOs per fiscal year.

- **Provider’s Rates:**

Licensed providers must provide RCCS with a copy of their rates and policies AND display their child care rates in a public area, next to their facility license. The provider’s rates must be:

- The usual and customary charges made to every family, whether or not the family receives subsidized child care; and if the provider’s usual and customary rates exceed the Regional Market Rate (RMR) ceiling for the area in which child care is being provided according to the RMR regulations, the parent would be responsible for paying the difference directly to the provider (co-payment). Providers can only charge this copay to families enrolled in our AP program.

NOTE: If the provider’s rates seem unreasonably high for the local area, RCCS has the right to request documentation that the provider charges, and receives, this rate from other private paying parents.

- **Provider Rate Increases:**

RCCS will only accept provider rate increases ONCE per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30 of the following year). Any rate increases requested after March 15th will not go into effect until July 1st, the beginning of the next fiscal year. If the provider raises their child care rates more than once per fiscal year, the parent will be responsible for paying the difference between the rate RCCS is reimbursing and the provider’s new rate. If the rate (old or new) is above the applicable Regional Market Rate Ceiling, the parent is responsible for paying the difference (co-payment) as well. Providers can only charge this copay to families enrolled in our AP programs. Providers must inform RCCS at least two weeks’ prior to the effective date of increased rates.

Requirements for Providers who are Exempt from Needing a Child Care License

- **License-exempt Child Care Centers:**
License-Exempt Centers must submit documentation from Community Care Licensing that supports their license-exempt status.
- **TrustLine Registry Providers:**
In California, providers who are not licensed to do child care, and do not fall under the category of “TrustLine-Exempt” as defined in the next section, are required to go through the TrustLine process. This process includes completing and turning in a TrustLine application; fingerprinting of the provider using the Live Scan process and a criminal background investigation, including a Child Abuse Index check through the Department of Justice. **RCCS can only make payments once the provider is TrustLine registered.**
- If the provider’s TrustLine status is closed, denied, or revoked, RCCS **MUST** stop payments to the provider. A 19-day termination of care Notice of Action (NOA) will be sent to the parent upon receipt of the denial notice.
- TrustLine-Exempt providers can only care for the children of one (1) family at a time that is not related to the provider by blood, marriage or court decree.
- **TrustLine Exempt Providers:**
Providers who are Aunts, Uncles, or Grandparents to the enrolled children do not need to be TrustLined. However, the child’s older brothers/sisters, great-grandparents and great aunts/uncles **DO** need to be TrustLined.
- The relationship between the provider and the child must be by blood, marriage, or court decree; once this relationship is dissolved, the provider **MUST** be TrustLined in order to continue to receive payment from RCCS for eligible children.
- TrustLine-exempt providers are not eligible to receive child care payments from RCCS until they turn in a Health & Safety Self-Certification form.
- **NOTE: TrustLine-Exempt providers can only care for the children of one (1) family at a time that is not related to the provider by blood, marriage or court decree.**

Child Care Attendance Sheets (CCAS):

- The Child Care Attendance Sheet is the document that generates payment to the provider. Its completeness and accuracy is extremely important because it verifies the actual times the child was with the provider each day. RCCS and our State, Federal and County funding sources require them. They are reviewed yearly by auditors, are closely monitored when RCCS has State CDE Contract Monitoring Reviews and are used in child care fraud investigations.
- If the provider does not have a CCAS at least one (1) week before the first day of the month of service, he/she must request replacements sheets. Until the provider receives the replacement, all times and signatures must be kept on a calendar and transferred to the official CCAS when received. The calendar must then be attached to the official CCAS when submitted to RCCS for payment.

- **Note to Parents & Providers: Before signing a CCAS, make sure the form is complete and accurate. Never sign a blank CCAS and do not sign or submit CCASs before the last day of care in that month.**
 - If the parent used child care, but was ineligible for those services, the parent will be responsible for paying the provider directly or reimbursing RCCS for payments made to the provider for this ineligible period of time.
 - If a provider or parent includes hours of care on the CCAS that were not actually provided, they will be responsible for repaying RCCS for those hours of misuse.
 - If a submitted CCAS is filled out incorrectly they will be accepted and considered for payment based on the contract, however RCCS will address this issue with the parent taking the following steps:
 - 1. Phone call - first occurrence
 - 2. Written warning - second occurrence
 - 3. Termination - final occurrence
- RCCS will not reimburse for private education (Kindergarten through 12th grade). Our payment will be limited to the extended child care services (before and after school hours) only.
- Providers will only be paid for services they provide as a Provider and only when that care is provided in accordance with the parent's approved activity. If a provider chooses to care for the child beyond the approved hours, those hours of care are NOT to be claimed on the CCAS.
- **NOTE: For full instructions on completing CCAS, please refer to the back of each attendance sheets, or call our Fiscal department for assistance.**

Submitting the CCAS for Payment

- Completed attendance sheets are to be received by RCCS, by the 5th of the month following care. (If the 5th falls on a weekend or an observed RCCS holiday, the CCASs are due by 5:00 PM on the prior business day) to River to Coast Children's Services, P.O. BOX 16, Guerneville, CA 95446. Make sure that you put enough postage on your envelope. If attendance sheets arrive late due to lack of postage, they will be considered late. They can be hand delivered to:
River to Coast Children's Services located at 16300 1st Street in Guerneville, CA 95446, also by the 5th of the month following care. (If the 5th falls on a weekend or an observed RCCS holiday, the CCASs are due by 5:00 PM on the prior business day.) There is a drop box at the bottom of the rear (staff entrance) stairs, if the office is closed.
- Only original Attendance Sheets issued by RCCS are accepted. Faxes or copies are not acceptable and will not be processed for payment. An invoice for each CCAS must be attached or payment will not be processed.
- CCASs received more than two months after care was provided will not be paid unless prior arrangements have been made. July 31st fiscal year deadline also applies (see below).
- Child Care Providers: Please remember to report changes in a child's attendance to the Family Case Manager assigned to that family within three (3) days of the change. Please read the back of the CCAS for more detailed information about completing it and when to submit

it. RCCS staff is available to answer questions as well. Please call our office at (707)869-3613 for assistance.

- **Fiscal Year Deadlines:**

RCCS' fiscal year closes on June 30th. CCASs for services provided up through June 30th must be received by RCCS by July 31st in order to be paid.

- All child care provided in the fiscal year (July 1st - June 30th) must be claimed by July 31st.

- Any discrepancies in payments must also be settled by July 31st. If the 31st falls on a weekend, the due date will be the next business day.

- **How/When is Payment Made:**

- State regulations require that child care reimbursements be issued to providers directly. Reimbursement to parents is not permitted.
- Normally, correct and completed CCASs received by RCCS by 5:00 PM on the 5th of the month following care will be processed and the checks will be issued or paid by direct deposit on the 18th of the month. If the 5th falls on a weekend or an observed RCCS holiday, the CCASs are due by 5:00 PM on the prior business day. If the 18th falls on a weekend or an observed RCCS holiday, payments for CCASs received on time will be processed and the checks will be issued or paid by direct deposit on the prior business day.
- Payments will be based on the provider documentation on file at RCCS of the usual and customary rates that is charged to all parents, capped at the Regional Market Rate (RMR) applicable ceilings mandated by the CDE/ELCD. Ceilings may be hourly, daily, weekly or monthly but the CDE/ELCD mandates a maximum amount to be reimbursed. The ceilings may also be pro-rated on a non-full month such as the holiday season.
- Regardless of when CCASs are received by RCCS, they are not payable until the month after the services are provided. RCCS does not issue payments to providers before the applicable pay date. RCCS will not make exceptions to this policy even if the provider has an immediate financial need. If checks are to be mailed, the provider is responsible for keeping the mailing address current. Direct deposit is available and encouraged for your convenience.

- **Delay in Payment or Non-Payment of Child Care Services:**

- In the event that RCCS does not receive money from the CDE/ELCD in a timely manner, RCCS may have to delay payments to providers. Should such a delay occur, providers would be notified as early as possible.
- If there is NO state budget, or cuts in state budgets allotted for child care, families will be terminated based on regulations developed by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

Children's Absences

For absences that happen on contracted days (when a parent would normally attend work/school or other approved activity), but the child did not attend the child care facility due to illness, family emergency or court ordered visitation rights, etc., reimbursement can be made for absences according to RCCS' Absence Policy as follows:

- Providers may be reimbursed for children’s absences according to their own business policies and only up to the limits as described in this guide. RCCS will reimburse for a maximum of two consecutive weeks of absences. If RCCS does not have a copy of the provider’s policies on file, payment for children’s absences WILL NOT be made.
 - Parent must notify their provider (s) of any planned absences before they occur. When a child is absent or leaves early, the parent must clearly state the reason for the absence on the CCAS. The parent’s full signature is required for each explanation of absences. RCCS staff will determine under which category the absence falls.
 - When a child is unexpectedly absent from child care for three (3) contracted days in a row without notification from the parent, the provider must call RCCS immediately so the Case Manager can contact the parent to follow-up on their child care needs. NOTE: RCCS keeps track of each individual child’s absences. Therefore, whenever RCCS addresses limits, please keep in mind that these limits apply to each enrolled child within the family and not for all children together.
- **Best Interest Days (Maximum of 10 per fiscal year):**
 - Best Interest Days are defined as quality time for the child. Best Interest Days are to be used only at the discretion of the parent.
 - These absences are limited to ten days per fiscal year and are to be recorded and clearly explained on the CCAS. Any Best Interest Days recorded on the CCAS, beyond the limit of ten per fiscal year, will not be paid by RCCS; the parent must pay the provider for these types of absences for the remainder of the fiscal year. Best Interest Days include the following:
 - Child on vacation
 - Out of town
 - Stayed home with parents/relatives
 - School program/field trip/camp
 - Child’s birthday
 - Child visiting with grandparents or non-enrolled parent
 - Other reasons which are clearly in the best interest of the child
- **Excused Absences include, but are not limited to:**
 - Illness of the child enrolled in the program
 - Enrolled parent’s illness
 - Dental, medical appointment (enrolled child or parent)
 - Quarantine (specify illness of highly contagious disease)
 - Family emergency (death, funeral, serious illness)
 - Car problems/lack of transportation
 - Sibling illness when no back-up provider is available to care for the sick child
 - Child’s occasional visitations with the non-enrolled parent
- **Unexcused Absences (Maximum of 10 per fiscal year):**

If a parent fails to record and clearly state the reason for the absences on the CCAS, the absence will be considered unexcused. RCCS is able to reimburse for a maximum of ten (10) unexcused absences per fiscal year; all other unexcused absences - from the 11th on will not be paid by RCCS. The parent must pay the provider for these types of absences for the remained of the fiscal year. When the child does not attend on a regularly contracted day (e.g. parent work days have changed but not reported

to RCCS), this would be considered an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Child did not feel like getting up/parent overslept
- Personal business/family business
- Any absences without the parent's signature on the CCAS
- Any absences without specific reasons on CCAS

Termination of Certificates for Child Care & Discontinuance of Payments:

- Providers are asked to give a written notice, of at least two (2) weeks, to parents and RCCS if they are going to end services to subsidized children.
- Payment during the provider's notice period is made only for the parent's approved days within that notice period.
- Licensed Family Child Care Providers must give RCCS at least a two-week notice when they plan to move out of their licensed home. Because moving invalidates their child care license, RCCS will only reimburse for services rendered up to the last day that care was provided in the licensed home. Payment from RCCS will not resume until the date the new license is issued.
- RCCS reserves the right to terminate Certificates for Child Care Services or refuse to issue a Certificate for Child Care Services to any provider who exhibits threatening or violent behavior; uses abusive language or profanity, harasses RCCS staff or is non-cooperative with RCCS staff.
- RCCS reserves the right to terminate Certificates for Child Care Services or refuse to issue a Certificate for Child Care Services to any provider, if RCCS has reason to believe that the arrangement would not be in the best interest of the child, including but not limited to placing the child at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of provider quality issues.
- RCCS attempts to pay providers their advance notice requirements. In certain circumstances a child care certificate may need to be terminated immediately, due to a parent being found ineligible to receive our services.
- RCCS reserves the right to terminate Child Care Service Certificate immediately, without giving advanced notice, when the child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in the child care facility or in the provider's care; or when the provider is non-compliant with licensing regulations; or if there is an obvious quality issue that would negatively affect their standing with RCCS.
- Providers must notify RCCS when a child is absent more than 3 days or parent withdraws from care without notice.
- All Child Care Service Certificates issued to the provider will be terminated and ALL payments will be discontinued for reasons including, but not limited to those listed below:
 - When the provider does not meet all State/County/Agency requirements
 - When the provider forges or falsifies any information/documentation used to determine his/her eligibility for reimbursement from RCCS
 - When the provider uses corporal or unusual punishment defined as infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of punitive nature, including, but not limited to: interference with eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding shelter, clothing, medications or aids to physical functioning

- When complaints received from RCCS staff, the general public, or enrolled parents are substantiated
 - When the provider violates the Health & Safety Self-Certification Agreement
 - When RCCS is aware of the criminal history of any person in the child care setting, which may place the child in harm's way
 - Denial, Temporary Suspension, or Revocation of the provider's child care license
 - Closure, Denial, or Revocation of the provider's eligibility for TrustLine Registry
- Note: Providers in situations listed above will, depending upon nature of violation, either be placed on three month probation or issued a formal termination letter.**

Provider Grievance Procedure

- Any provider, who does not agree with any action or termination, may use the grievance procedure as described in this section.
- The purpose of this procedure is to provide a way of discussing and settling differences involving only the interpretation or application of the policy or any alleged violation thereof. It is the intent of this procedure to settle grievances fairly and in a timely manner.
- The person filing a grievance will be free from restraint, coercion, discrimination or reprisal. When grievances arise, they are not to be considered as reflecting unfavorably on either RCCS or the provider, but are to be considered their right. All grievances must be presented in writing to the Executive Director within 14 days after the occurrence that caused the disagreement.
- The Executive Director will contact the provider within five (5) business days upon receipt of the written grievance to discuss the matter at hand. After discussing the grievance with the provider, RCCS will send the provider a written response within ten (10) business days. The provider may appeal to have a hearing.
- During the hearing, the provider may speak for him/herself, or may be represented by another party of his/her choice. If needed, an interpreter will be made available by RCCS.

Fraud Policy and Misuse of Services

- Any parent or provider who provides false information or acts in a fraudulent manner is jeopardizing their participation in this program.
- If child care is used for reasons other than those for which a parent has been approved, RCCS will bill the parent for the amount paid to the provider(s) for that period of time. This includes changing jobs/schools/classes/address (especially if new area address impacts the program requirements), and NOT reporting the change within five (5) days.
- Federal and state regulations require RCCS to collect child care payments which have been made to providers for services the parent or provider was not eligible to receive, due to fraud on the part of the parent or provider.
- Once RCCS suspects fraud has occurred, the parent/provider record and CCAs are open for review by our funding sources, the Sonoma County Special Investigations Bureau, and the District Attorney's Office.
- If it is determined that a parent or provider has provided fraudulent information, or failed to disclose a fact in order to benefit from the program, services may be terminated. Parents and providers will be notified in writing of any action RCCS will take based on the findings of the investigation.

- When a parent’s child care services are terminated due to child care fraud, they will not be eligible for re-enrollment into our program.
- RCCS will bill the responsible party/parties for the total costs of all services provided—including those services which were provided during the appeal process - as applicable.
- RCCS staff will work with parents/providers to determine a reasonable repayment plan. However, if the parent/provider refuses to reimburse RCCS for misuse of services, RCCS may:
 - Assign the collection to a collection agency
 - Pursue payment through small claims court
 - Refer the matter to the District Attorney’s Office
- As child care is part of the support services for CalWORKs recipients, any suspicion of fraud under these programs (C2AP (Stage 2) and C3AP (Stage 3)) will be referred to the Sonoma County Welfare Fraud Unit for investigation/legal action.

Uniform Complaint Procedure

- It is the intent of RCCS to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Individuals, agencies, organizations, and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding RCCS’ alleged violation of federal or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (ED code sections 200 and 220 and Government Code section 11135) in any program or activity funded directly by the CDE/ELCD or receiving federal or state financial assistance.
- Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the CDE/ELCD Department of Education and addressed as follows:
 - Child Development Division –
Complaint Coordinator
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814
- If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing in this event.
- A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including, but not limited to: injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders. Legal Reference: 5 CCR, Chapter 5.1 Uniform Complaint Procedures
- River to Coast Children’s Services operates in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws governing non-profit organizations. The agency is governed by a board of directors that establishes policy and provides input from the community. RCCS operates on a non-discriminatory basis, and gives equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, age, religion, or mental or physical disability, or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one (1) or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. RCCS refrains from religious instruction or worship.
- For complaints of discrimination, please contact:
 - State Department of Education
Child Development Division
Complaint Coordinator
1430 N Street, Suite 3410

Sacramento, CA 95814

- The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the enrolled child and his/her family will be restricted to purposes directly connected with the administration of this program. RCCS will permit the review of the basic data file by the enrolled child's parent(s) or parent's authorized representative, upon request and at reasonable times and places. RCCS may also share parent/provider information, as necessary and for review, with representatives of the CDE/ELCD, the Federal Government, independent auditors or others as necessary for the administration of the program, including Special Investigations Bureau and the District Attorney's office, etc.
- If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call your Family Case Manager.

Confidentiality Policy

- Family records will be maintained in a locked file cabinet. The use or disclosure of all information about the child and family will be restricted to the purpose directly connected with the administration of the program. RCCS does have the right to access information regarding the subsidized family from various governmental sources.

Discipline/Child Abuse

- **Discipline in Child Care Facilities.** Corporal punishment (such as spanking) and harsh discipline in any form are illegal in licensed child care homes and centers. Depriving a child of food or sleep cannot be used as a means of discipline. If parents suspect that any illegal methods of discipline are being used in a licensed facility they should contact Community Care Licensing or RCCS.
- **Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Law:** It is the law that people who work with children (such as child care workers, teachers, medical professionals and counselors) must report known or suspected child abuse to a child protective agency. This law applies to family child care providers, center providers and our staff members.

Sexual Harassment Policy

- Sexual harassment is prohibited by RCCS and is against the law. Every independent contractor should be aware of what steps to take if harassment occurs.

How to Stop Sexual Harassment

- When possible, confront the harasser and ask him/her to stop. The harasser may not realize the advances or behavior are offensive. When it is appropriate and sensible, you may want to tell the harasser the behavior or advances are unwelcome and must stop. Sometimes a simple confrontation will end the situation.
- You are strongly encouraged to report sexual harassment and contact RCCS. Sexual harassment or retaliation should be reported in writing or verbally. You may report such activities even though you were not the subject of the harassment.
- An investigation will be conducted. RCCS will investigate, in a discreet manner, all reported incidents of sexual harassment and retaliation.
- Appropriate action will be taken. Where evidence of sexual harassment or retaliation is found, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may result.

Parent Participation

- We welcome parents' help. You may volunteer at RCCS by helping with children's activities, doing gardening or carpentry, working on the newsletter, donating your special skills, and serving on the

RCCS Board of Directors or other committees or by writing or calling your elected representatives about issues affecting children. If you are interested in working on any of these projects, call the RCCS office at (707) 869-3613.

Administration and Membership

- **Policies:** RCCS' policies are determined by funding terms and conditions from CDE/ELCD Department of Education and other funding sources and by the RCCS' Board of Directors. Most of the policies are stated in this guide.
- **Evaluation:** All RCCS' programs are evaluated on an annual basis. Parent and provider feedback is requested on a regular basis, and representatives of these groups participate in the evaluation review.
- **Board of Directors (Voting Members):** The Board of Directors consists of no less than five members, each serving a two-year term. At least one board member is a parent user of RCCS. The Board of Directors generally meets once a month and anyone may attend general meetings. Dates and times are announced in the newsletter. RCCS' Board responsibilities include but are not limited to: establishing and changing policies, setting annual goals and objectives, overseeing fiscal management, evaluating the agency, and taking an active role in community relations. A copy of RCCS Bylaws can be requested from the office.

Accessibility: Disability Access Statement

- River to Coast Children's Services (RCCS) maintains a fully accessible office located at 16300 1st Street in Guerneville, CA. Access is available through an ADA compliant elevator and the physical site has been fully renovated to meet or exceed ADA accessibility requirements.
- RCCS conducts all meetings and other business in a fully accessible manner. RCCS embraces diversity on all levels, including employment. RCCS will make all reasonable accommodations for new employees and those employees returning to work after an injury or illness.

Family Services Programs

RCCS has other, non-governmental grant programs that assist families in other ways.

Emergency Resources:

All eligible families may receive a bag of groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables when available, diapers or other miscellaneous toiletry items that may be needed once a month. RCCS also has, on a limited basis, bus vouchers, and emergency gas vouchers that our enrolled families may use when going to social service or medical appointments.

Emergency Housing:

Local families with children may ask Case Managers about the possible availability of local lodging for emergency situations, for a maximum of two (2) nights.

Car Seat Program:

RCCS has a certified, bi-lingual (Spanish/English) car seat technician on staff that is able to check your car seat for safety and appropriateness for your child's age/weight/height. RCCS can supply new car seats for you at a reduced cost. Please call to make an appointment.

Family Counseling Program:

RCCS' counseling program provides sliding scale counseling services to subsidized parents, children and providers. Non-subsidized community members may also utilize these services. No one will be denied counseling due to an inability to pay. Please call the front desk to make an appointment. Our counseling intern meets clients at our Guerneville office or at other, more convenient locations when available.

Kindergym:

Designed for children 0 - 5 years and held Monday and Tuesday mornings from 10 AM to 12 PM at the Guerneville Vet's Hall in Guerneville (at the corner of First and Church Street, kitty-corner from RCCS' offices).

RCCS has added another Kindergym venue in Forestville, at the United Methodist Church on Thursday from 10 to 12. See newsletter for current details.

Recreational Activities:

RCCS has a Learn-To-Swim program each summer, with available funding, usually held at the Rio Nido Pool. Please find details in your RCCS newsletter in early summer; visit the website or call us at (707) 869-3613.

Growing Readers Book Program:

Participate in literacy activities with your child, complete our monthly calendar and each month you may come in with your completed calendar and receive a new, free book for your child (or children).

Please call RCCS at (707) 869 3613 for more details of the above fun activities.

Family Fee Contract

1. The family fee is based on:
 - *gross income of all applicable family members, including all wages or salaries, in-kind work with an exchange value, commissions, financial aid (grants or scholarships, excluding school related expenses and loans) alimony, child support, any payment received directly for housing, car or other expenses, social security, unemployment compensation and regular, ongoing cash gifts.
 - * total net income if parent is self-employed
 - * number of family members.
 - * number of hours in the child care contract.
2. The family fee is charged on one child per family - the child who receives the greatest number of hours of care per month.
3. Fees are charged for all regularly contracted hours.
4. The family fee is charged as a monthly fee. A part-time fee will be charged for less than 130 hours per month, and a full-time fee will be charged for 130 or more hours per month.
5. The family fee will change as income, family size and the child care contract change. In the family's best interest, per your Notice of Action, higher family fee changes will be effective the 1st of the month after the 19 days. If the fee is reduced, the lower (or no) fee will be effective the 1st of the next month.

BILLING:

1. Family fees are billed one month in advance. Near the end of the month, bills will be mailed for the following month's care.
2. Family fees are due on the first of the month for which the fee applies.
3. If River to Coast Children's Services is unable to meet all of the family's need for child care, and the parent/responsible party must pay privately for child care for which he/she is eligible for subsidy, RCCS can grant a fee credit equal to the amount to the other provider if valid verification is received.
 - * The total amount of credit cannot exceed the amount charged by RCCS in a given month and the applicable maximum reimbursement-ceiling amount.
 - * The fee will not be carried over beyond the billing period to which it applies.
 - * Fee credit shall not be given for any costs the parent/responsible party pays their contracted provider beyond the amount RCCS pays; i.e., the credit cannot apply to a co-payment a parent or responsible party may have. To receive credit, turn in a completed verification form.

DELINQUENT FEES:

1. Fees are delinquent on the 7th of the month. If fees are delinquent, a Notice of Action will be sent after the 7th stating that services will be terminated 19 days after the date of notice. If a parent/responsible party is unable to make their family fee payment in full it is possible to make arrangements. Please call the office and speak to the Case Managers. If fees are delinquent and arrangements have not been made prior to the effective date on the Notice of Action, services will be terminated. You have the right to appeal a termination decision; instructions are on the back of, or with, the Notice of Action.
2. A fee of \$10.00 per occurrence will be charged for returned (bounced) checks. If a check is returned (bounces) a 2nd time in 12-month calendar period, fees must be paid with cash or money order from that moment onwards.
3. Upon termination of services for nonpayment of delinquent fees, the family shall be ineligible for child care services until all delinquent fees are paid, including 1.5% per month interest charges.

Family Counseling Program

The River to Coast Children's Services Counseling Program provides short term counseling services to:

- Families receiving respite or subsidized child care from RCCS
- Families (not subsidized) receiving care at a RCCS contracted child care homes
- Families in the west county community who request counseling or are referred by other community agencies or service providers

Counseling is provided by trainees, registered MFT (Marriage and Family Therapist) interns working toward licensure and/or licensed MFTs. The clinical supervisor provides guidance and case conferences on clinical and policy issues. Modes of therapy available include individual or couples therapy for parents on issues related to children and family life, play therapy for children 3 years and older and individual therapy for youth up to 14 years old relating to family relationships. The specific length of the short-term counseling is determined on an individual basis by the counselor and client(s), with input from the clinical supervisor. The

focus of the RCCS Counseling Program is on parenting and family relationships, with an emphasis on the prevention and treatment of child abuse.

Eligibility:

Clients may call the counseling staff at the RCCS office for an initial intake and assessment. Referrals may also be made to the counseling staff by other agencies or individuals on their behalf, (e.g. child care provider, child development specialist or other professional working with the family). During the initial intake, a RCCS counseling staff member will gather general information about the family’s needs for counseling. If need is determined, and there is an opening in the program, a referral will be made to a therapist in the program. If no openings are available, the counseling staff will give referrals to other therapists and make an effort to secure an appointment for the family.

Families are enrolled in the Counseling Program according to the following priorities:

1. Families currently receiving Respite child care, (e.g. referred for Child Protective Services reasons.)
2. Families currently receiving subsidized child care, (e.g. low income working parent.)
3. Non-subsidized families attending RCCS contracted child care homes.
4. Other families in the West County community.

RCCS has a commitment to referring families to other appropriate agencies if the family’s need cannot be sufficiently served by RCCS or if the waiting period is lengthy.

Family Counseling Program, Ineligibility

RCCS staff members, Board members, and their families are ineligible for individual or family counseling services. Volunteers who work in the capacity of a staff member for RCCS on more than a once a week basis, and their families, are ineligible for counseling services. Parents who serve in an advisory capacity to the agency (e.g., Board of Directors committee member) may be eligible for counseling services. However, if an issue comes to the Committee regarding the counseling program or staff, the parent will refrain from participating in any vote regarding that matter. The agency reserves the right to determine ineligibility for counseling services based on any other conflict of interest.

This policy is based on the belief that a clear boundary should be drawn between those employed or contracted by RCCS and those served therapeutically by RCCS. Such a boundary ensures that therapy will not be compromised by a client’s need to fulfill a dual role at RCCS (e.g., client and staff member), and that employees’/contractors’ relationships will not be complicated by the intense emotional and personal reactions that therapy sometimes evokes. The distinction between client and employee/contractor attempts to protect both the client and the RCCS Counseling Program from bias in decision-making and evaluating, as well. In addition, clients benefit in therapy from having a “neutral” therapeutic environment that is separate from all other personal relationships, roles and responsibilities. It is this neutrality, in part, which makes the counseling office a safe place to share oneself.

Reasons for Counseling

Families enter the RCCS counseling program for a variety of reasons. Children in the family may be experiencing or demonstrating behavior or feelings which are a concern to their parents, teachers, day care providers, medical personnel or to the children themselves. Parents may seek counseling to learn parenting, coping, and/or conflict resolution skills. The family may be facing a difficult transition, trauma or change

such as a pending divorce, birth of a child, disclosure or behavior which suggests abuse or trauma to one of the children in the family.

Fees for Counseling Services

Fees are on a sliding scale for counseling, based on family income and size. No one will be denied services due to inability to pay.

There is no fee for consultation to RCCS contracted providers. Initial consultations to private providers and centers are provided free of charge; subsequent consultations (generally not exceeding three sessions) are provided on a fee-for-service basis.

Toy Library Policy

The RCCS Toy Library includes toys, games, puzzles, curriculum kits, videotapes and large play equipment. For Family Child Care Program, contracted provider's only, long-term loans of easels, cubbies, tables and benches, and infant furniture when available.

Providers:

RCCS service area licensed Child Care providers, License-Exempt/In-Home providers who are contracted with a subsidized child care program, and licensed Foster Home providers may borrow any library item.

- Licensed providers may borrow a maximum of 8 items total at any time (4 puzzles or puppets or cassette/book sets count as one item). Long-term loan items do not count towards the maximum of 8 items.
- License-Exempt/In-Home providers may borrow a maximum of 2 items at a time, for a 3-month probationary period. After 3 months of beginning contracted care, these Providers may borrow a maximum of 8 items.

For how long can items be borrowed?

- The length of time is variable, depending on other requests and/or waiting list.

Book and Video Loans for Other Borrowers:

- Subsidized parents and other community members in the RCCS service area may borrow up to 2 books (for one month) and 2 videotapes (for 3 days).

Can I Request an Item?

- If you would like to borrow an item that is not in, you can request to be put on a waiting list. When the item comes in, RCCS staff will call you to come get the item. You have one week to pick up the item.

Responsibilities of Library Use:

In order to preserve the materials and ensure that everyone gets a chance to use them:

- Be sure children are properly supervised when playing with the toys and that the children are playing with toys meant for their age level. We have found that damage often occurs when older children play with toys meant for young children and vice versa. Toys meant for older children can be unsafe for younger children.

- Store all items indoors or covered from the rain, in a safe place.
- Clean toys and equipment before returning them.
- Check contents list to be sure all items are accounted for.
- Remember to return them on time. Some items may be renewed. If an item is overdue and not renewable, no more items can be borrowed until the overdue item is returned.
- We expect materials to show signs of wear and tear with use, and we just ask that the borrower use reasonable care with the equipment.

Child Passenger Safety

New Law Effective 1/1/2017:

California law requires children under 2 years of age to ride in a rear-facing car seat unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds OR is 40 or more inches tall. The child shall be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the car seat.

- Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat.
- Children who are 8 years of age OR have reached 4’9” in height must be secured by a safety belt. California law also requires that ALL passengers be restrained by seat belts.
- RCCS provides a low cost car seat and booster distribution program for providers and parents, who are enrolled in our child care subsidy program or who are residents of West Sonoma County Union High School District, the Sonoma County portion of the Shoreline Unified School District or in the Kashia Rancheria School District.
- Children should be seated in the safer rear seat, unless all other rear seats are occupied by other children. Children should never ride in the cargo compartment of a station wagon, hatchback, van, or pick-up truck. Sitting children in front of an air bag is especially dangerous.
- Motor vehicle crashes account for nearly 42% of all unintentional childhood injury related deaths (0-14).
- Averages of six US children (0-14) were killed and 732 were injured each day in motor vehicle crashes during 2001.
- Child safety seats are 71% effective in reducing deaths for infants in passenger cars. They are 54% effective in reducing deaths for children ages one to four in passenger cars.
- Fifty percent of auto accidents occur at speeds of 30 mph or less. In a head-on crash at 30 mph, an unrestrained 40 lbs. child is hurtled with a force equivalent to 1200 pounds. (A child riding on an adult’s lap is in the “child crusher” position).
- You are four times more likely to be killed if you are thrown from a car in an accident.
- Ejected occupants are also 14 times as likely to sustain cervical spine injury as those who remain within the vehicle. It is a myth that “people are safer if thrown free of the car.”

- Unrestrained occupants are more likely to be injured as they make and impact with the vehicle's interior and are more likely to be ejected from the vehicle.
- Use of child restraint devices substantially reduces children's movement and disruptive behavior in cars, which reduces the incidence of motor vehicle accidents.

River to Coast Children's Services Contact Information

Address: 16300 1st Street, Guerneville, CA 95446 (physical)
P.O. Box 16, Guerneville, CA 95446 (mailing)

Phone: (707)869-3613

E-mail: info@rccservices.org

Website: <http://rccservices.org>

Executive Director: Soledad Figueroa, ext. 111, sfigueroa@rccservices.org

Fiscal Specialist: Christina Kellogg, ext. 106, ckellogg@rccservices.org

Child Development Program Director:
Diana Avila, ext. 105, davila@rccservices.org

Child Development Resource Specialists:
Lupita Dominguez, ext. 118, gdominguez@rccservices.org
Sheila Nuñez, ext. 112, snunez@rccservices.org

Family Case Managers:
Teresa Bernabe, ext. 109, tbernabe@rccservices.org
Ana Morales, ext. 114 amorales@rccservices.org

Community Resources and Referral Coordinator:
Elaina Boyce, ext. 104, eboyce@rccservices.org

Administration Support:
Vanessa Osorio, ext. 107 vosorio@rccservices.org

Front Desk/Reception/Referral:
Mayra Moncada, ext 101, mmoncada@rccservices.org

Counseling: For an appointment call front desk, please leave a message and phone number and the counseling intern Sabrina Dannels will return your call.

Who to call?

- For general questions or information ----- Front desk
- For childcare referrals or resources information --Community R and R Coordinator
- For any change in family circumstances ----- Family Case Manager
- For counseling or parenting help ----- Front desk
- For family fee billing or payment questions ----- Fiscal Specialist
- For complaints regarding providers ----- Executive Director
- For complaints regarding agency services ----- Executive Director

- Contents approved by RCCS Board of Directors, June 2000
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, March 2001
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, October 2001
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, November 2001
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, January 2002
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, January 2003
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, October 2003
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, February 2004
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, November 2004
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, June 2006
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, May 2007
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, June 2008
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, June 2009
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, August 2011
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, September 2011
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, May 2012
- Revisions approved by RCCS Board of Directors, May 2013
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