



Parent & Provider Guide

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Welcome

We're so glad you're here! Since 1976, RCCS has proudly served families and child care providers across Western Sonoma County by offering child care resources and referrals, child care subsidy assistance, and educational resources.

Our Subsidized Child Care Programs—CFCC, CAPP, and CalWORKs C2AP & C3AP—are designed to help eligible families by covering part of their child care costs. These programs support working parents, those in school, engaged in welfare-to-work activities, seeking employment or housing, facing health challenges, or involved with Child Protective Services, or other Means Tested Government Programs.

At RCCS, we believe child care providers are vital early childhood educators. That's why we actively encourage participation in our professional development workshops and those offered by other child development organizations.

Our team reflects the vibrant diversity of the community we serve, and we're here to support you in both English and Spanish. If you require assistance in another language, just let one of our staff members know—we're happy to help!

This program guide is packed with helpful information for both parents and providers. While it may not answer every question, it's a great place to start and will help point you in the right direction.

Welcome aboard—we look forward to working with you!

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 childcare providers, families, and communities in Western Sonoma County.

For a copy of our current strategic plan including philosophy, goals and objectives, please contact our office.

Definitions

Attendance Sheets: A legal document used to record child care hours utilized per day and per month and returned to the contractor (RCCS) at the end of the service month for payment.

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.

CAPP: California Alternative Payment Program

CDSS: California Department of Social Services.

CFCC: Family Child Care Home Education Network

Full Time: Full time care is categorized as 6 hours or more per day, 25 hours or more per week, or 130 hours or more per month.

Part Time: Part time care is categorized as less than 6 hours per day, less than 25 hours per week, or less than 130 hours per month.

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.

CCDD: Child Care Development Division.

Childcare Service Certificate: The green certificate, issued by the corresponding case manager, confirms services issued to the parent and the provider stating hours/days of care for each child. 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. Providers are **required** to sign **and** return the certificate to the case manager.

Childcare Provider: An individual or entity (other than the parent) who is contracted with RCCS to provide childcare services for a fee during the established need for child care. This includes License Exempt Providers.

Child Development Resource Specialist (CDRS): The Child Development Resource Specialists works within the CFCC program and its families and children that fall in it. CDRS' communicate and visit providers regularly to support CFCC children receiving services. Resource specialists support professional growth of providers, resources for

parents and developmentally appropriate activities to children, while meeting state contract requirements. The CFCC Program is funded by CDSS/CCDD and Federal Child Care Network contract.

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 CDSS/CCDD). The enrolled parent is **responsible for paying any difference** directly to the provider. Providers **may not** charge CFCC families a remaining balance that RCCS is not able to provide due to contract requirements.

Days of Non-Operation (DNO): Days that a licensed 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. There are up to **10** reimbursable days per fiscal year.

Delinquent Fees: Family fees are considered delinquent (late) if they are not paid by the 7th of the month. Parents will receive a discontinuance Notice of Action (NOA) if not paid by the due date.

Exceptional Needs Children: Children who have an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and are receiving early intervention services, that require the special attention of an adult in a childcare 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 can also mean any persons who present themselves as a family unit, whether 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 fee a family may be expected to pay based on their countable gross monthly income, their family size, and hours of care certified for the month. A family fee chart is prepared by the CDSS so that parents above the 40th percentile of the state median income can share in the cost of child care. These fees are paid by the parent to RCCS. A parent MAY be assessed a family fee and pay the provider a co-payment as well. (One does not offset the other)

Fiscal Manager: The Fiscal Manager processes the provider reimbursements and the family fees. Contact this person for any clarification or questions regarding these issues.

Fiscal Year: RCCS runs on CDSS/CCDD'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.

Homelessness: Living in transitional housing or sleeping in a public or private space not ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Need: Need for child childcare. Pursuant to Title 5. 18085.5 “need” may consist of the following: 1) Child is a recipient of child protective service or at risk, 2) Parent is employed, 3) Parent is seeking employment, 4) Family is experiencing homelessness, 5) Parent is seeking permanent housing, 6) Parent is enrolled in vocational/educational program, 7) Parent is incapacitated 8) Means Tested Government Program.

Notice of Action (NOA): A written notification issued by RCCS that informs parents of RCCS’ decision to approve, deny or change childcare 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/ childcare contract or fee will change.

Notice of Action to Provider: A written notification to providers issued by RCCS’ case management department informing them of pending action.

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’s Rates: Providers have customary published rates (& policies) for families, regardless of whether they are subsidized or private pay.

Regional Market Rate Ceilings (RMR): A survey of the average child care rates charged by various types of child care providers, which determines the maximum reimbursement ceilings allowed by CDSS for subsidized child care services by county, provider type, payment type, and child’s age.

Religious/Sectarian Instruction: Some program funding (such as CFCC) **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.

State Medium Income (SMI):

Income ranking table set forth by California Department of Social Services to be used to determine a family’s income eligibility for state subsidized childcare and development programs.

TANF: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; formerly AFDC – cash aid for eligible families.

Two Week Notice (of Disenrollment): When a parent or provider gives advance notice from which an enrolled child will no longer be attending that provider's childcare facility. This notice period is based on the provider's business practices as applicable to all families/children whether subsidized or private pay. (Refer to page 23 for additional information)

WEL (West (Sonoma County) Eligibility/waiting List): RCCS has established a waiting list (WEL) for the purposes of enrollment into RCCS' subsidized childcare 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.

Description of Subsidized Childcare Programs

CFCC: California Family Child Care Home Education Networks Program

This program serves parents who qualify for childcare subsidy in a licensed Family Childcare 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, upon request. 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. Childcare must be provided in a licensed Family Childcare Home contracted with RCCS' Family Child Care program, which include: 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 Windsor.**

CAPP: California Alternative Payment Program:

Childcare 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 Childcare 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 22) for more information).

Stage 2 & 3 Childcare 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 childcare 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. **Stage 2 families** are transferred from Stage 1 once the family becomes stable in their work activity. They are eligible to receive services without interruption. Stage 2 child care services ends 24 months from the last day the parent received cash aid. If funds are available the family will then be transferred to Stage 3.

Stage 3 families are transferred from Stage 2 on the 1st day of the 25th month after no longer receiving cash aid. Families are eligible for services until their children reach the age of 13 at recertification, or they no longer meet the eligibility and need requirements for the program.

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 into the C2AP program.

Eligibility & Need

RCCS' subsidized childcare Programs provide reimbursement payments for childcare services on behalf of eligible families. The program's primary goal is to support the health, development, education, and overall well-being of children enrolled in RCCS programs. Services are available for children under the age of 13. However, children with exceptional needs or severe disabilities may continue to receive services up to age 21. To qualify, families must meet specific eligibility and need-based criteria.

Eligibility Criteria:

All families must meet the income eligibility requirements for subsidized child care services. Based upon the family size, a family is eligible if the family's adjusted gross monthly income is at or below the 85 percent of the state median income for CDSS programs. In order to determine family size, the parent or guardian must provide documentation regarding the number of children and parents in the family. Income from all sources must be reported for every member of the family. When the information provided to determine eligibility indicates the child(ren) in the family has another parent whose name does not appear on the application, then the parent who signed the application shall under penalty of perjury self-certify the absence of the second parent. The parent who signed the application is not required to provide further documentation proving the absence of the second parent.

Child Protection Services /Children At Risk of Abuse and Neglect

A referral letter dated within 6 months immediately preceding the date of the application for services is required from Child Protective Services or a licensed legal, medical or social service agency professional (i.e. licensed therapist, counselor, social worker, emergency shelter, etc.).

Childcare services can be authorized for no less than 24 months unless referral states differently.

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	Gross Monthly Income	Gross Annual Income
1-2	\$6,860	\$82,326
3	\$7,785	\$93,418
4	\$9,020	\$108,237
5	\$10,463	\$125,555
6	\$11,906	\$142,873
7	\$12,177	\$149,367
8	\$12,718	\$152,615

Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS)

Subject to change based on CDSS

Current Aid Recipient:

A family who is receiving CalWORKs Cash Aid (TANF) or has received CalWORKs Cash Aid within 24 months of the time they applied for subsidized childcare services. (CalWORKs Stage 2 only).

Recipient of Means-Tested Benefits: Family who has a member of its household who is certified to receive benefits from the following: Medi-Cal, CalFresh, California Food Assistance Program, California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), The Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Head Start, Early Headstart,

Homeless:

The family is homeless and needs childcare 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 /At Risk Children 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.). Childcare services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.

Employment/ Self Employment

Employment Verification forms will need to be completed and submitted to their Case Manager. Hours of care may cover work hours (including a lunch break) Travel time between a parent's job/school and the childcare facility may be authorized upon parents' request. Travel time is limited, not to exceed half the daily hours authorized for employment up to a maximum of 4 hours a day. Sleep time may be authorized for those working between 10:00PM and 6:00AM but may not exceed the number of worked hours or eight hours a day. Childcare services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.

Employment from the Family Home:

Parents working from home or on property that includes the family's home, must provide justification for requesting subsidized childcare and development services based on the type of work being done and its requirements such as the age of the child. Childcare services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.

Employment in a Licensed Family Day Care Home:

Parents working as 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:

A statement from the large, licensed provider confirming employment of that individual according to staffing ratios (established by title 22), along with fingerprint confirmation and a pay statement with payroll deduction. Childcare services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.

Homelessness: Family may establish both need and eligibility when documentation has been provided, such as: a written referral dated within three months from a legal, medical or social service agency, local educational, or a written parental declaration signed under penalty of perjury. (Please refer to your case manager for additional information)

Self-Employment:

RCCS will require the parent to submit a copy of his/her business license or permit as applicable. A Self-Employment Declaration of Income Form (supplied by RCCS) must be completed to receive services. Additionally, the parent may be required to submit supporting documentation such as: 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. Childcare services can be authorized for no less than 24 months.

Seeking Employment:

RCCS requires a signed declaration agreement including the parent's plan to secure, change, or increase employment and a specified schedule of when services will be needed. Services for those seeking employment is provided for no less than 24 months, no more than five (5) days per week and for less than 30 hours per week.

Student Parents:

Vocational training/Educational programs are limited to six (6) years from the first day of approved childcare services, or 24 semester units if the parent already has a bachelor's degree,

whichever comes first. The parent shall provide documentation of the days and hours of enrollment, name of the institution that is providing the instruction, and current class schedule. You may be eligible for study hours depending upon the number of academic units in your course load. Childcare services can be authorized for no less than 24 months. Please contact your case manager to request study and travel time.

Seeking Permanent Housing:

Services should occur no more than five days per week and less than 30hrs/wk for no less than 24 months. Documentation shall include a written parental declaration signed under penalty of perjury that the family is seeking permanent housing.

Parental Incapacity:

In some cases, RCCS can approve (with a statement of incapacity, filled out by a legally qualified professional) their limitations from caring for their child some part of the day. Childcare services may be authorized for no less than 24 months and no more than 50 hours a week.

Approved Welfare to Work Activity (CalWORKS Program only):

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

Admission Priorities (WIC 10271.5 CCR 18106)

First Priority:

- Must be given to families whose children are recipients of child protective services, or who are at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social services agency.
- Within the first priority for services children receiving protective services through the local county welfare department shall be enrolled before children identified as at risk of being neglected or abused or exploited.
- If an agency is unable to enroll a child in this first priority category, the agency shall refer the child's parent or guardian to local resources and referral services so that services for the child can be located.

Second Priority:

- Sibling Priority (Siblings of actively enrolled children)
- All children and families who are not within the first priority for admission shall be admitted in accordance with family income, with the lowest income ranked families admitted first.
- For purposes of determining the order of admission, families with the lowest gross monthly income in relation to family size as determined by the income ranking schedule adopted by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) shall be admitted first. Public assistance grants are counted as income.
- When two or more families have the same income ranking, families shall be admitted in the following order:
 - the family that has a child with exceptional needs shall be admitted first.
 - If there is no family with a child with exceptional needs, the family in which the primary home language is a language other than English shall be admitted first,

- If there is no family with the same income ranking that meet the criteria in (c) above, the family with the same income ranking that has been on the waiting list the longest shall be admitted first.
- Contractors shall not deny service to nor assign a lower priority to a family that needs less than full-time services.

Application Process

Assigned Case Managers will request required documentation prior to meeting in person to discuss RCCS, programs, rules, regulation and family expectations. Parents must sign the application for it to be considered complete. During the meeting, case managers will clarify parent questions or concerns related to childcare services. 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 signing the application to the beginning of childcare 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, and Emergency/Identification information. All information must be on file prior to enrollment into our program.

Recertification Process:

The recertification process applies to all parents enrolled in our subsidized childcare programs. Recertification is the process of determining a family's continued need and eligibility for services 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. Families will be given a list of documents/information required to determine continued eligibility. If parents fail to recertify within the stated deadline of their recertification, services will be **disenrolled**.

Childcare Hours and Arrangements:

Approved childcare 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 in the green childcare 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.

1. A Notice of Incomplete will be issued with the item or list of items due with and the indicated due date. (Typically a two (2) week period from when the notice was issued.)
2. A Final Notice will be issued granting the family two (2) more weeks to turn in previously requested items with the final due date. (No extensions unless extenuating circumstances & prior arrangements are made with your case manager.)
3. A Notice of Action Disenrolling the family from services for failure to comply with program requirements will be issued indicating the last day of services.

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 to determine eligibility for childcare 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 childcare 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 childcare 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 childcare 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 will not reimburse for childcare services provided for any amount of time before the application process is complete and RCCS has everything needed to determine eligibility for services.

It is important that the parent, and childcare provider, submit all required documents and information as soon as possible 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 childcare 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 their 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:

A back-up child care provider is used when the child's primary care provider is not available. Care can be authorized with the back-up provider only for the time when the primary care provider not available, such as for school closures, illness, scheduling changes, or provider closures.

Changing Childcare Provider:

As an agency that promotes quality childcare, 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 childcare arrangement will end prematurely. For provider changes to be processed, please contact your Case Manager.

NOTE: *Changes are only in effect when all information is received and verified by the Case Manager.*

- If a parent starts using a new provider *without* reporting the change, the parents will be responsible for paying the new provider. RCCS will begin paying the new provider on the date the change is reported and authorized; **not** the date the change took place and only if the parent and 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 disagreement between the parent and provider), RCCS may not reimburse for services beyond the end of the two-week termination period. Limitations may apply.
- 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.

Childcare Service Certificate (Original):

Once parent has completed all necessary requirements, the case manager will issue a Childcare Service Certificate. This certificate referred to as the "green certificate" is the original contract for care issued for signatures and serves as the official agreement between parents/guardians, child care providers, and RCCS. This certificate outlines the approved child care schedule, the provider's requested or customary rates, and the applicable ceiling category (RMR), which represents the maximum reimbursement RCCS can provide per child. (A copy of the "green certificate" will be provided to parents and providers for their records.)

NOTE: *A signed Childcare Certificate must be on file before any provider payment can be issued. If the signed certificate is not received within two (2) weeks or by the first of the following services month, the case manager will issue a check hold until the certificate is received. (If the green certificate is not signed and returned to RCCS, there is no official agreement between all parties.)*

Childcare Service Certificate (Changes to Schedule):

Any changes to the child care schedule, provider rate, applicable reimbursement ceiling (RMR) will be communicated to both the parents and provider through a newly issued Childcare Service Certificate. Parents may voluntarily request a change to their child care schedule by submitting a Voluntary Change Request Form (Please see page 16 "Reporting Changes" for more information.)

NOTE: *When a schedule change is processed but reimbursement is not affected only copies of the "green certificates are issued to the parent and provider stating "Only a Schedule Change", signatures are not required except from your case manager as the payment for services does not change.*

Miscellaneous Information Regarding Childcare 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 Childcare 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.

Types of Child Care Schedules:

There are three main types of child care schedules for enrolled children described below and documented on the Certificate for Child Care Services.

Pay enrolled Schedule: This is a fixed schedule and the child care is paid based on the hours contracted for service. For example, if a child needs care Monday through Friday from 2:30 – 5:30, the provider will be paid for 3 hours for each contracted day. School age children may have two contract amounts – one for school days and one for vacation days. Absences will be paid based on the contracted hours only if a clear reason is given on the attendance sheet and followed by a full legal signature of the parent and or recorded contractor NDO's. Minimum days should be noted on the attendance sheet, and will be paid as actual hours used. RCCS staff will monitor each child's attendance sheets and notify the parent and provider if the child's attendance does not generally match the contract schedule.

Actual Hours and Unpredictable Schedules: If the parent's need for child care is unpredictable and specific days and hours cannot be verified, the schedule will be set up to the maximum hours needed based on the documentation provided. The provider is reimbursed only for the actual hours of care used up to the maximum amount listed on the Certificate. The amount of child care on the certificate will be listed as a daily schedule or weekly, with maximums for school days and vacation days. Since the certificate lists the maximum hours of care authorized any amount over this maximum is the financial responsibility of the parent (with the exception of families in the CFCC program). Minimum school days are paid up to the maximum of the vacation day schedule. An actual hours schedule does not allow payment of any type of absence or day that child care is not actually used. All family child care license exempt providers are required to have actual hours schedules.

Variable Schedule: This schedule is a combination of pay enrolled and actual hours schedule for families who have variable work schedules or Rotating Days Off (RDO). The schedule will be contracted for a certain amount of hours each day, but the days of the week may change from week to week based on the parent's schedule. Documented Absences on the attendances sheet due to illness or other reasons and then sign with a full legal signature. Days the child is not in attendance, because the parent does not need care, will not be paid.

Family Fees and Delinquent Fees:

A family fee is mandated by CDSS/CCDD to a family based on their income, family size and the fee schedule. The family fee may change depending on either full or part time care and if there are changes to income or size. If you suspect a possible decrease in your family income, you may voluntarily report this information to your Case Manager, to re-assess your fee. If your payment has not been received after the 7th of the month, it is considered a delinquent fee.

NOTE: *If a family is receiving TANF (cash aid) they will not be assessed a Family Fee while receiving this cash grant.*

Disenrollment due to Delinquent Fees:

If a family is disenrolled 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 Childcare & Development Program funded by the CDSS/CCDD 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.

Disenrollment 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 due date 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 Disenrollment 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, if there is a past-due balance. Upon disenrollment of services for non-payment of delinquent fees, the family shall be ineligible for childcare and development services with RCCS until all delinquent fees are paid.

Co-Payments:

If a parent chooses a provider who charges more than the maximum reimbursement that the CDSS/CCDD mandates RCCS to use (based on the Regional Market Rate (RMR) ceilings issued by the CDSS/CCDD), 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 CAPP, Stage 2 & Stage 3 programs (not CFCC).

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.*

Reporting Changes:

Families must report within 30 days if their income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) located on page 8. They will receive a copy of the current schedule of income ceilings. If the income exceeds 85% of the SMI, a notice of action will be issued and the family will be disenrolled. Other changes may be voluntarily reported using a Voluntary Change Request form to:

- Increase eligibility
- Decrease family fees
- Increase or decrease child care hours

Some changes may require supporting documentation, which the agency will use only to adjust family fees or service levels. To reduce service levels, parents must submit a written request including:

- Desired days and hours
- Desired effective date of change (Changes cannot be back-dated)
- Acknowledgement that they understand they can keep their current service level. Once documentation is received, a Notice of Action will be issued within 10 business days. (Title 5, Section 18084.2 – The Family's Right to Voluntarily Report Changes)

NOTE: *It is required that parents inform their case manager of changes to their contact information, such as phone number, email address, and address, within 5 calendar days. It is in the child's benefit to provide updated information to ensure important documents and communications are delivered.*

Absent Parent Declaration Requirement:

When the birth records name a second parent and only one parent has signed the application for enrollment in childcare services, the parent shall self-certify the absence of the second parent under penalty of perjury and on the CCD-26 application.

More Childcare Hours Needed:

Reported on Time: If the parent needs more childcare hours for an approvable activity, the change may be approved to start on the requested date of the change if the parent reports the information to their assigned CM within ten (10) business days prior to the change (using a Voluntary Change Request Form). The parent and provider will then receive a new childcare service certificate that must be signed and returned. (Additional documentation may be requested to substantiate this change.)

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 disenrollment of services will be issued to the family. (Please refer to page 10 for the SMI ceiling chart.)

Change in Income:

Reporting a change in income is voluntary *unless* exceeds 85% SMI: 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 to decrease/stop their family fee.*

Family Fee Contract

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 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 of care, and a full-time fee will be charged for 130 or more hours per month of care.

5. Family fees shall be assessed at initial enrollment, recertification, or when a parent requests a change pursuant to (5CCR; 18108) Section IV, paragraph D, “A family’s right to Voluntarily Request Changes”.

BILLING:

1. Family fees are billed one month in advance. Near the end of the month, bills will be emailed for the following month’s care.
2. Family fees are due within the first seven (7) days of each month.
3. If River to Coast Children’s Services is unable to meet all of the family’s need for childcare, and the parent/responsible party must pay privately for childcare for which they are eligible for subsidy, RCCS can grant a family fee credit equal to the fee amount (whichever is less) if valid verification is received.
4. The total family fee credit cannot exceed the amount your family fee amount. The fee will not be carried over beyond the billing period to which it applies.

Note: *Fee credit shall not be given for any costs. The parent/responsible party pays their contracted provider beyond the amount RCCS pays. For example, the credit cannot apply to a co-payment a parent or responsible party may have. To receive credit, you must complete a verification form. Please speak to your case manager for more information.*

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 of the month, stating that services will be discontinued 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 request a payment plan. 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 discontinued. You have the right to appeal a disenrollment NOA; 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 childcare services until all delinquent fees are paid.

Childcare Attendance Sheets (CCAS):

The childcare Attendance Sheet is a legal document that generates payment to the provider. **Its completeness and accuracy are 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 CDSS Contract Monitoring Reviews and are used in childcare fraud investigations.

If the provider does not have attendance sheets at least one (1) week before the first day of the month of service, they must request replacement sheets. If the child starts service after the 1st of

the month, the provider must request the CCAS within the first week of service used and document attendance until the CCAS has arrived. Until the provider receives the replacement, all times and signatures must be logged and then transferred to the official attendance sheet when received. The logged hours 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. Be sure to put your in and out times on every day of attendance with a full signature as well as full signatures by both parent and provider at the bottom. If there is an absence, put in the code and also sign that line.*

Once we receive attendance sheets, they cannot leave the office. The parent and/or provider must come to the office to make the corrections.

An attendance sheet is considered incomplete if it is missing full signatures on each day of attendance plus any absences; not recording actual drop off or pick up times, no provider initials or parent signatures on each recorded time in and out, and no full signatures at the bottom at the end of the service month.

If the parent used childcare, 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 the 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 may be accepted and considered for payment based on the contract, however RCCS will address this issue with the parent and provider taking the following occurrences:

1. Phone call- Providing technical assistance and documented in the family & provider file
2. Written notification regarding policy and documented in family & provider file
3. In person meeting for training -Parent or Provider must come to the RCCS office
4. Disenrollment

RCCS will not reimburse for private education (Kindergarten through 12th grade). Our payment will be limited to the extended childcare 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 the case management department for assistance. Also, any corrections made to the in/out times on attendance sheets must be initialed by both the parent. White out/correction tape will not be accepted. Be sure to use blue or black ink only and initial next to any corrections.*

Broadly Inconsistent Attendance

RCCS will reimburse the provider according to the certified hours as stated on the child care certificate. If a child's attendance is not broadly consistent with the family's certified hours for at least one month and it changes provider reimbursement from full time to part time OR if child care hours change from day to evening hours and changes the provider reimbursement, RCCS will contact the parent to determine if a schedule change is needed on a permanent basis and to inform parent of their right to voluntarily request changes to their schedule. (Full time care is child care used / authorized for 130 or more hours per month; Part time care is care used / authorized for less than 130 hours per month). If the parent needs to increase their service hours, the parents' application will need to be updated according to the regulations. If no Attendance sheet is received for 2 months or it has been received blank and the parent cannot be reached, a NOA for abandonment of child care will be issued.

Absences

For absences that happen on contracted days (when a parent would normally attend work/school or other approved need), but the child did not attend the childcare 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.
- Parent must notify their provider(s) of any planned absences before they occur. When a child is absent, the parent must clearly state the reason for the absence on the CCAS.
- If a child is absent for more than three (3) consecutive days without any communication, or if a parent withdraws the child from care without prior notice, the Case Manager will contact the parent to follow-up on their childcare needs. On the fourth consecutive day of an unexcused absence, a two-week notice will be issued informing the family that their services may be considered abandoned. To avoid discontinuation of services, parents must contact their Case Manager promptly.

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. (CPS families have unlimited best interest days).

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 family
- 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 visiting family

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 can 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 remainder of the fiscal year. When the child does not attend on a regularly contracted day (e.g. parent workdays 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

Codes below are in the back of attendance sheets

B	Best interest Day of Child (limited to 10 per fiscal year)
C	Provider Closure (paid non-operational days must match those indicated in provider's policies on file with RCCS- (limited to 10 per fiscal year))
E	Family Emergency
S	Child was sick (or other medically related absence)
U	Unexcused This code is used when no information for an absence is provided (limited to 10 per fiscal year)

Discontinued Certificates for Childcare & 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 Childcare Providers must give RCCS at least a two-week notice when they plan to move out of their licensed home. Because moving invalidates their childcare 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 end Childcare Services or refuse to contract with any provider who exhibits threatening or violent behavior, including but not limited to placing the child at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, use of abusive language or profanity, harassment of RCCS staff or is non-cooperative with RCCS staff.
- RCCS strives to meet providers' 2 week notice requirements. However, in certain situations – typically when a parent's appeal is denied – a childcare certificate may need to be discontinued immediately due to the parent being deemed ineligible.

NOTE: *Typically, in this instance, providers have already been provided a two (2) week notice; however, an appeal process may extend the family's discontinuance date, allowing them to continue receiving care while their appeal is under review. If an appeal is denied, the denial date will be the last day of care.*

- RCCS reserves the right to discontinue Childcare Services immediately, without giving advanced notice, when the child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in the childcare 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.
- **Pro**viders are required to notify RCCS if a child is absent for more than three (3) consecutive days without any communication, or if a parent withdraws the child from care without prior notice, the Case Manager will contact the parent to follow-up on their childcare needs. On the fourth consecutive day of an unexcused absence, a two-week notice will be issued informing the family that their services may be considered abandoned. To avoid discontinuation of services, parents must contact their Case Manager promptly.
- All Childcare Service Certificates issued to the provider will be disenrolled 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 the provider violates the Health & Safety Self-Certification Agreement
 - When RCCS is aware of the criminal history of any person in the childcare setting, which may place the child in harm's way.
 - Denial, Temporary Suspension, or Revocation of the provider's childcare 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.*

Child Care Reimbursement

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 next business day) to River to Coast Children's Services, P.O. BOX 16, Guerneville, CA 95446.

River to Coast Children's Services is located at *16300 1st Street in Guerneville, CA 95446*. 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.* For licensed child care providers and centers, an invoice for each CCAS must be attached or payment will not be processed.
- If an attendance sheet is submitted for multiple children and not all individual sheets are complete and adequate, RCCS will not withhold payment for those attendance sheets that are adequate.

Childcare Providers:

Please remember to report changes in a child's attendance to the 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.

If a parent fails to provide the required signature on the attendance sheet, RCCS may process payment when all of the following conditions have been applied:

- Parent has not communicated with the provider for a minimum of 7 consecutive days.
- The provider has notified RCCS of the parent's lack of communication
- RCCS has documented the provider's unsuccessful attempts to collect signature.

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 5th in order to be paid.

- All childcare provided in the fiscal year (July 1st - June 30th) must be claimed by July 5th.
- Any discrepancies in payments must also be settled by July 5th. If the 5th falls on a weekend, the due date will be the next business day.

How/When is Reimbursement Made:

State regulations require that childcare reimbursements be issued directly to providers. Complete and accurate attendance sheets received or postmarked by RCCS by 5:00 PM on the 5th 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 next business day. If the 18th falls on a weekend or an observed RCCS holiday, payments for CCASs received on time will be processed on the next business day. All other CCAS will be paid within 21 days of corrections being made and missing items received.

Reimbursement 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 CDSS/CCDD. Ceilings may be hourly, daily, weekly or monthly but the CDSS/CCDD mandates a maximum amount to be reimbursed. The ceilings may also be pro-rated on a non-full month.

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 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 Childcare Services:

If the state budget is not signed on time and If RCCS does not receive funds from the CDSS/CCDD 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 childcare, families will be disenrolled based on regulations developed by the California Department of Social Services, Child Development Division.

If RCCS is unable to make payment due to extenuating circumstances, the provider will be notified within a reasonable time frame. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, an emergency or any type of system malfunction.

Any overpayments or underpayments made by RCCS will be processed accordingly during the next provider payment.

Parental Complaint Procedure

License-Exempt Childcare Settings:

Parents with children in license-exempt care may file a complaint against the license-exempt provider using the following process: complaints must be written and 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 19 days unless a written declaration signed by both parties has been received by RCCS stating that the health and safety deficiency has been corrected. If pertinent RCCS will also notify the Child Protective Services unit of the county welfare department.

Licensed Childcare Settings:

Parents with children in a licensed childcare 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 (707) 565-4304 or (800) 870-7064. and/or 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

License Facility Search:

The department of Social Services website: <https://www.cclld.dss.ca.gov/carefacilitysearch/>

Parent Disenrollment Policy:

All parents participating in the subsidized childcare program are required to follow all laws, regulations, and guidelines, which govern the operation of these programs. Failure to do so may result in disenrollment of childcare services. Services may also be disenrolled at the parent's request.

NOTE: *If subsidized childcare funding becomes limited or unavailable, RCCS will dis-enroll families as directed by the California Department of Social Services, Child Development Division.*

Other Reasons for Disenrollment 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, sign, or submit required documentation.
- When the parent fails to complete the Recertification or update process.
- When the parent no longer lives in California
- Abandonment of Care

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 discontinued.*

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

Whenever RCCS takes an action (approving, denying, or discontinuing services) or is changing (reducing or increasing) a client's childcare services, this action is communicated through a Notice of Action (NOA). The main message to the parent appears on section 7 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 discontinued childcare 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' designated Appeals Officer must have the parent's appeal/request for hearing no later than the Appeal Date on the NOA.

- *Appeals may be faxed:* **Attn: Julian Villarreal (707) 869-2613**
- *Dropped off at the RCCS office:* **Attn: Julian Villarreal, 16300 First St. Guerneville, CA 95446**
- *Or Mailed in:* **Attn: Julian Villarreal, P.O. BOX 16, Guerneville, CA 95446**

Provider Participation

Providers requesting to partner with RCCS must be at least 18 years of age and legally allowed to work in the United States. 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.

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.

Provider must be in good standing with Community Care Licensing, have no convictions of any crime involving violence against, abuse or neglect of children and operate on a non-discriminatory basis giving equal treatment and access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic-group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color or mental / physical disability.

Provider information given to RCCS may be shared with different departments in the agency: Subsidized Childcare Program, Resource and Referral Program and the Fiscal department. This may include information in the providers handbook. 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 CDSS/CCDD, the Federal Government, independent auditors and others as necessary for the administration of the program.

Providers agree to maintain confidentiality regarding all children and families receiving services.

Providers are required to offer age-appropriate activities that support the health growth and development of the children in their care. To support this, providers are encouraged to attend workshops on topics such as child development, health and safety, and nutrition. These workshops are offered by RCCS and other training organizations.

Providers participating in the Family Childcare Network (CFCC) must complete a minimum of two (2) trainings per fiscal year and collaborate with their Child Development Resource Specialist (CDRS) to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities.

Licensed Family childcare providers applying to join the Family Childcare Home Education Network (CFCC) must meet specific requirements in order to be eligible to receive this funding source. Providers may complete their orientation at home during the initial application visit. In addition, they are required to complete 6 hours of training annually.

For licensed Alternative Payment (AP) providers, RCCS may send training documents by mail and request they be completed and returned.

Providers must not expel or unenroll a child because of a child's behavior nor persuade or encourage a child's parents or legal guardians to voluntarily unenroll from the program due to a child's behavior. If a child exhibits persistent and serious behaviors, the program shall document reasonable steps, including, but not limited to, consulting with the child's parents or legal guardians and teacher, and, if available, engaging an early childhood mental health consultant, to maintain the child's safe participation in the program. The program shall inform the parents or legal guardians as well as the Child Development Resource Specialist of a child exhibiting persistent and serious behaviors and the program's plan for maintaining the child's safe participation in the program.

When a provider's policies conflict with RCCS' policies, RCCS' policies override the providers. 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.

Providers must allow the parent and RCCS Staff unlimited access to the childcare facility (licensed or license-exempt) while the enrolled child is in 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 Childcare Services. Supervision by the contracted provider or their registered adult assistant **must** be always maintained 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. Providers have a maximum of 10 DNOs per fiscal year. These days are called Provider Days of Non-Operation (DNOs). 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.

Provider’s Rates:

Licensed providers must provide RCCS with a copy of their rates and policies and display their childcare 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 the family receives subsidized childcare or not; and if the provider’s usual and customary rates exceed the Regional Market Rate (RMR) ceiling for the area in which childcare 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 Change:

Licensed child care providers may alter their rates as needed and shall provide the agency with a copy of their updated rates which will be effective within 60 days of submission of the updated rate sheet. 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.

Liability Insurance:

HSC section 1597.531 requires all licensed family child care homes to choose of the following ways to meet the requirement with respect to liability coverage:

- Purchase Liability Insurance covering injury to clients and guests in the amount of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per occurrence and \$300,000 in total annual aggregate coverage. OR
- Purchase a bond in the aggregate amount of \$300,000. OR
- Maintain a file of affidavits signed by each parent or authorized representative or every child enrolled in the home, with the affidavits stating that the parent or authorized representative has been informed that the family child care home does not have liability insurance or a bond.

License Exempt

License-Exempt Providers must submit verification of their physical address to RCCS. For the safety of the children, we require that all providers always have a working phone (land line or cell) available while the children are in their care. The phone number should be listed in the provider's file.

All license-exempt providers must attend a Subsidy Provider Orientation at the RCCS office. Providers must meet the provider requirements as stated in this handbook and as described in any notice given by RCCS, to receive payment from us. Specifically, **all** providers must allow access into their homes or centers to parents and RCCS at any time when children are present.

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.

Additional information:

A green child certificate is required for all children receiving services through RCCS. Providers are responsible for signing and returning the green child certificate by its requested time. Signed certificate for childcare services must be on file for every child receiving subsidized services for a provider to be paid. A phone message left for a Case Manager does not mean childcare services are approved, nor is it a promise of payment from RCCS.

Payments cannot be made for services when childcare 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).

License-exempt Childcare 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 childcare, 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 **will 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 childcare 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.*

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 of RCCS 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.
- Federal and state regulations require RCCS to collect childcare 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 CCASs 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 to benefit from the program, services may be disenrolled. 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 childcare services are discontinued due to childcare 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 to a collection agency.
 - Pursue payment through small claims court.
 - Refer the matter to the District Attorney's Office
 - 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 CDSS/CCDD or receiving federal or state financial assistance. Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the CDSS/CCDD Department of Social Services and addressed as follows:

Childcare and Development Division

Attn: Appeals Coordinator

744 P Street, MS 9-8-351

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 1-833-559-2420

Fax: 916-654-1048

Email: CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Social Services, 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:

**Department of Social Services
Civil Rights Bureau (CRB)
744 P Street, M.S. 9-7-041
Sacramento, CA 95814
or Call collect at : (916) 654-2107
E-Mail address: crb@dss.ca.gov.**

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 CDSS/CCDD, 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.

Other Agency Policies

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 Childcare Facilities. Corporal punishment (such as spanking) and harsh discipline in any form are illegal in licensed childcare 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 childcare workers, teachers, medical professionals and counselors) must report known or suspected child abuse to a child protective agency. This law applies to family childcare 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:

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. We encourage you to attend the Parent Advisory Committee which meets the second Tuesday of each month for dinner. 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 CDSS/CCDD Department of Social Services 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.
-

Zero Tolerance Policy

- RCCS is committed to providing a violence free workplace that is free from acts of violence, or threats of violence. In keeping with this commitment, the agency has established a policy that provides ZERO tolerance for actual or threatened violence by clients or employees toward any person affiliated with RCCS.

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. RCCS also has on a limited basis on 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 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.

Kindergym:

Designed for children 0 - 5 years and held Thursday mornings from 10 AM to 12 PM at the Forestville United Methodist Church. See newsletter for current details.

Recreational Activities:

RCCS has a Learn-To-Swim program each summer, when funding is available, 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.

Toy Library

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

Providers:

RCCS service area licensed Childcare providers, License-Exempt/In-Home providers who are contracted with a subsidized childcare 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

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 childcare 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 an 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.

Contact Information

Address:	16300 1 st Street, Guerneville, CA 95446 (physical) P.O. Box 16, Guerneville, CA 95446 (mailing)
Phone:	(707) 869-3613 Fax: (707) 869-2616
E-mail:	info@rccservices.org
Text:	707-339-6002 (Text Message Only)
Website:	http://rccservices.org

Executive Director:	Soledad Figueroa Ext: 111 sfigueroa@rccservices.org	
Fiscal Manager:	Shauna Lamke Ext: 106 slamke@rccservices.org	
Child Development Program Director:	Donna Roper Ext: 105 slamke@rccservices.org	
Child Development Resource Specialists:	Lupita Dominguez Ext: 118 gdominguez@rccservices.org	Sheila Chaudhary Ext: 112 schaudhary@rccservices.org
	Isis Hernandez Ext: 103 ihernandez@rccservices.org	
Lead Case Manager:	Julian Villarreal Ext: 200 jvillarreal@rccservices.org	
Family Case Managers:	Celina Ortega Ext: 114 cortega@rccservices.org	Teresa Bernabe Ext: 109 tbernabe@rccservices.org
Resource & Referral/ Outreach Coordinator:	Anahi Flores Ext: 104 aflores@rccservices.org	
Office Assistant:	Veronica Hernandez Ext: 107 vhernandez@rccservices.org	

Who to call?

For general questions or information.....Office Assistant
For counseling.....Office Assistant
For family fee billing or provider payment questions.....Fiscal Manager
For childcare referrals and community resource information.....R&R/Outreach Coordinator
For outreach information/becoming a Licensed Provider.....R&R/Outreach Coordinator
For complaints regarding child care providers.....Child Development Program Director
For questions regarding childcare subsidy program or policies....Lead Case Manager
For complaints regarding childcare subsidy program.....Lead Case Manager
For Families with questions regarding their case.....Family Case Manager
For complaints regarding agency wide services or policies.....Executive Director

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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
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