



Child Care Fund Program Participation Manual

August 2013

The Contra Costa Child Care Council is a private, non-profit corporation governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that has provided a variety of services to children and families in Contra Costa County since 1976. Through Area Offices in Richmond, Concord, and Antioch, the Council offers a wide variety of child care programs and services designed to support and empower parents and child care providers.

The purpose of this booklet is to inform both parents and licensed child care providers of the requirements which govern the Child Care Council's subsidized programs. Updated versions of this Manual supersede any previous versions. Parents and providers have the option to participate in this program and as participants have a duty to abide by the rules and regulations herein.

The **Child Care Fund Program** operates in accordance with applicable State laws and regulations, and advocates for high quality child care placements for all children. Staff speaks a number of diverse languages and offers culturally competent services to the families of Contra Costa County. Staff also receives ongoing training on case management and confidentiality as well as training on early indicators of program misrepresentation and is directed to contact their supervisors if they have concerns. The Child Care Council is committed to open and timely communication. It is our policy to treat all families and child care providers fairly and respectfully.

OUR VISION

Contra Costa County's children are nurtured, healthy and achieve their full potential.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Contra Costa Child Care Council provides leadership to promote and advance quality care and early education.

Through a variety of initiatives, programs and services, the Child Care Council partners with:

- *Parents - to strengthen families*
- *Child Care Providers - to build a system of quality care and early education that respects parents as primary caregivers and teachers, values diversity and encourages children to make positive life choices*
- *Community - to broaden the base of support for children, families and quality care and early education*

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SECTION I: VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The Contra Costa Child Care Council's **Child Care Fund** is a government-funded, voluntary program, which offers eligible families the ability to choose a child care provider and receive reimbursement for child care and development services. This program gives parents the duty to select a child care provider who best meets the needs of their family and to monitor the quality of care provided. Children can move from one child care program to another and still receive financial assistance as long as the family continues to meet the eligibility and service need requirements.

Parental Choice

The Child Care Fund subsidizes the cost of child care for children whose parents qualify for the program based on income eligibility, service need, and who live, work or have a child care provider in Contra Costa County. The Child Care Fund is a parental choice subsidy program that supports the parents' responsibility to select the most appropriate child care provider for their children. Parents may select child care services from licensed centers, licensed family child care homes, or license-exempt providers. The Child Care Council has no duty to supervise children, and parents have a duty to choose, inspect, and monitor the quality of care provided.

Daily Sign-In and Sign-Out Requirements

The California State Department of Education requires parents to sign in and sign out daily for authorized services. On a daily basis, parents are responsible for using the Child Care Council issued "Attendance Sheet" or "Attendance Record" system for tracking child care utilization, which includes making sure the Attendance Sheet is filled out correctly. Child care providers, in partnership with parents, are required to confirm the accuracy of the form.

Licensed Providers: Both parents and providers are required to sign and date the Attendance Sheet for monthly submission to the relevant Area Office. The completed Attendance Sheet also serves as the child care provider's invoice for reimbursement. If the family has a family fee, both the parent and provider must sign the back of the Attendance Sheet indicating the family fee has been paid.

Exempt Providers: Parents choosing a license-exempt provider are responsible for signing and dating the Attendance Record, confirming the accuracy, and for submission to the relevant Area Office. Exempt providers are required to sign the back of the Attendance Record verifying that 1) Family Fees have been collected (if applicable), and 2) The provider understands that they are an independent contractor and not an employee of the Child Care Council.

Five-Day Reporting Rule

Families are required to report and submit verifiable documentation of any changes in their employment, job search, incapacitation, training status, family size (including, but not limited to, marriage, birth of a child, adoption, mother or father of the child coming into or leaving the household), hours of care needed, income, address, or phone number within five calendar days of the change to their Subsidy Counselor. Changes to services based on reported changes will never be authorized retroactively.

Failure to report the changes may lead to termination from the program. In addition, if the family fails to report changes within five calendar days and is later found to be not eligible for services the family will be terminated for fraudulent use of the program, and parents will be held accountable for all unauthorized charges.

Unauthorized Use of Care

At the time of enrollment parents are issued paper work, including a "Notice of Action", and a "Child Care Certificate" which establishes the parameters of a child's authorized use of care. Services used which pre-date or are outside of the authorized days or hours of care are the financial responsibility of the parent.

Throughout the time parents are using services, additional paper work will be sent to the parent's home address, and parents are expected to respond within a designated time frame determined by Subsidy Staff. Failure to respond will result in termination of services. Parents are required to keep their mailing address up to date (Please see above for more about the Five Day Reporting Rule).

Parents who have had an interruption in their child care services are required to re-certify their need for services, and receive a new Child Care Certificate prior to starting care. For example, parents who have been on Limited Term Service Leave due to an interruption in their vocational training schedule, or due to maternity leave, must meet with their Subsidy Counselor prior to services being re-authorized.

11 & 12 Year Olds

Prior to their 13th birthday, parents of 11 and 12 year olds are required to make a choice regarding free State funded programs in their community. Parents will be contacted by mail to select their option.

Non-Discrimination

The Child Care Council does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, in determining which children are served. If a child's parents speak a language other than English or are hearing impaired, information shall be provided either through written materials or through an interpreter in the language the parents understands. All Child Care Council offices are designed to offer full access for our community.

American's with Disabilities Act

The Child Care Council welcomes the participation of adults and children with disabilities, and provides offices and services which offer full access for our community.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The law requires that the Child Care Council and child care providers do not discriminate based on a child's disability. Providers are required to offer reasonable accommodations to enable children with disabilities to become fully included in their program. An accommodation is considered "reasonable" if it does not cause "undue hardship" to the provider. This is assessed on a case- by-case basis, taking into consideration the provider's available resources. The Child Care Council's Inclusion Program can assist providers in assessing and providing reasonable accommodations.

Oliver's Law and Notification of Parent's Rights (Open Door Policy)

Parents are informed that prior to choosing a child care program, they have the right to review Community Care Licensing reports on licensed facility site visits and substantiated complaint investigations. Parents also have the right to visit their child's programs anytime during operating hours. Licensing regulations require both homes and centers to have an open door policy, but they also state that anyone coming into the facility or home shall be respectful of the children's routines and activities. Child care centers must be available for drop-in visits by the public anytime during business hours. Licensed homes must be available for inspection by the parents of children enrolled in their program during business hours. The Child Care Council reserves the right to visit licensed homes and centers unannounced at any time during hours of operation.

Conduct Limitation/Zero Tolerance Policy

The Board of Directors of the Child Care Council has adopted a policy that prohibits inappropriate behavior towards Council Staff, volunteers, or in the presence of families or providers on the program at any Child Care Council location. Such conduct will not be tolerated and includes, but is not limited to, persistent and belligerent emails or voicemails, physical or emotional harassment, verbal abuse, racial slurs, foul language, destruction of property, and threats or acts of physical violence. Documentation of such action will result in delay of services or termination from the program.

Immunization of Children (Licensed Exempt Only)

The California School Immunization Law requires that children be up-to-date on their immunizations (shots). Diseases like chickenpox, measles and whooping cough spread quickly, so children need to be protected. The Child Care Licensed programs are required by law to keep immunization records on file for each child. The Child Care Council requires proof of immunizations at the time of enrollment and at each recertification for all children below school age who are enrolled in the Child Care Fund Program, and whose parent has chosen a license-exempt provider.

Priorities for Enrollment

The Child Care Fund currently consists of local, state, and federally funded subsidy programs:

- FACT Contra Costa County's Family and Children's Trust
- CAPP Combined Alternative Payment Program
- C2AP Combined CalWORKs Stage 2
- C3AP Combined CalWORKs Stage 3
- Preschool Makes a Difference (PMD)

Each funding source has regulations to follow. Although most of the information for eligibility and service need is similar for each program, one major difference is how families enter our program. The CalWORKs Stage 2



families are transferred to the Child Care Council from Community Service Bureau (CSB) or other Stage 2 programs in a different county. CAPP families are selected from the Contra Costa Child Care Council Eligibility List.

Child Care Eligibility List (CCEL) is a list of families who are waiting for subsidized child care. It is identified as an “eligibility list” rather than a “waiting list” because families are ranked in terms of their eligibility for services, rather than by time on the list.

Eligibility Based on Income

Subsidized child care services are generally limited to low-income families. In order to participate in the Child Care Fund parents are required to document their “countable” income.

If the family’s monthly income is more than the Monthly Income Ceiling listed below for their family size, the family is no longer eligible for subsidized child care services and will be terminated from the program. Monthly income is calculated by the Subsidy Counselors, not parents, and reflects gross, not net, earnings.

Family Size	1 or 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Monthly Income Ceiling	3,283	3,518	3,908	4,534	5,159	5,276	5,394	5,511	5,628	5,745	5,863

Eligibility Based On Service Need

Families who are income eligible must also have at least one “service need” in order to be enrolled or to continue services. The family (including custodial adults and guardians and any other adult counted in the family size) must be working, looking for work, attending vocational training, medically incapacitated, seeking permanent housing, or be a child in a family that must be receiving Children and Family Services (Child Protective Services) or be at-risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Working

Parents who work are required to submit one complete month of original wage stubs, and document the days and hours of employment. Their employers will be called or sent a letter to verify the parent’s employment. Additional paperwork may be required to verify employment. Parents who work a variable schedule (this includes parents on a rotating schedule, temporary, seasonal, on-call or substitute workers) will be required to submit additional paperwork every month.

- Child care services will not be authorized for work performed for relatives or friends unless the relative can show proof of both a Business License and copies of check stubs received for work performed by the parent.
- Child care for parents on the CalWORKs program may be provided if the parent has received a firm commitment from an employer that he/she will be employed within the next two weeks or if the parent is temporarily not working but has a firm commitment of employment or re-employment within the next thirty days.
- If the parent (or other adult counted in the family size) works in the home, the nature of the work must not include the supervision of his or her own children. Thus, family child care providers are not eligible for subsidized services because their work includes the supervision of their own children.
- Parents employed by child care centers may receive child care services. If the parent is a family child care home assistant in a large family child care home and registered with Community Care Licensing they may receive child care.
- Parents who work for In Home Service agencies and have school-age children may be required to submit additional documentation for child care services to be approved during evenings and weekends. If a provider is a recipient of any In Home Services; they cannot be an exempt provider and provide care for children on the program. In addition, when a parent cares for an in home services recipient, and they reside in the same home, the provider cannot live in the same home as the parent, child(ren), and recipient.
- Parents who are self-employed must submit verification of their monthly income, a letter from the source of their income, and their work schedule on a monthly or quarterly basis, depending on whether the parent works consistent hours, or has a variable schedule. Parents must also sign a declaration that includes a description of the employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked each week. Self-



employed parents are required to submit a copy of their tax returns each year, beginning the first year after child care services are approved. Additional Business Records such as, but not limited to, ledgers, receipts, business logs, a workspace lease, a Business License, and client information may also be required. Within three months, all self-employed participants must be making minimum wage for each hour of care authorized.

Looking for work

Child care for parents seeking employment can only be authorized for part time services and for no more 60 working days within a fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th). Parents of children who are in 1st grade and above who are seeking employment will only receive child care when the child's school is not in session. Parents must submit a written declaration stating they are looking for employment.

Vocational Job Training

Parents who are participating in training activities must declare their vocational goal and explain how their goal will lead to self-supporting work. Students will be given a reasonable time to complete their vocational goal at an accredited institution. Documentation of the training schedule is required. A secured electronic copy of the class schedule and/or registration from the college will be accepted. Grade reports or official transcripts must be submitted at the end of every term. Parents are required to have a 2.0 G.P.A. or in a non-graded program, pass the program's requirements in at least 50 percent of the classes or meet the training institutions standard for making adequate progress. Any parent who receives a grade lower than a 2.0 GPA for a term shall be placed on academic probation for the following semester, quarter etc. and may be terminated if grades do not improve the following term. Services will not be approved for continued training activity without grades from the previous term. No services will be provided during breaks between terms unless the parent has another approved service need. Study time is authorized based on the number of academic units a student is taking. (Limitations: Authorization for training hours may not exceed six years, or 24 units post BA degree).

Online Classes: Online or televised classes that are unit bearing classes from an accredited training institution are acceptable and will be counted as one hour per week per unit. A copy of the class syllabus or other documentation is required and, as applicable, the Web address of the online program.

A parent enrolled in an online class with a school age child will be required to take their online class during the hours the child is in school. However, on a case by case basis, if the parent has another status need or the online class requires the parent to log on or meet with the class after the hours the child attends school, child care services may be authorized with proper documentation to prove the need of child care services for their school age child.

Children and Family Services (Child Protective Services)

If a child is receiving CPS services through the county welfare department, the child's welfare services worker submits verification and documentation that child care services are part of the case plan. If a child is not receiving Children and Family Services but is at-risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation a legally qualified professional (e.g., social worker, psychologist, doctor) must submit verification of the child's case and indicate that child care services are necessary for the health and safety of the child.

Seeking Permanent Housing

Families receiving services through the CAPP program may have a service need of seeking permanent housing in order to stabilize the family. The parent and the homeless shelter staff or public social services representative will be required to submit a signed declaration describing current living arrangements. Child care services will be granted part time and limited to 60 working days within the fiscal year.

Medically Incapacitated

Some families may be eligible to receive child care services because they have a medical or psychiatric special need. To qualify, these circumstances must significantly limit the parent's ability to provide normal care for their child. A release is required signed by the incapacitated parent authorizing a legally qualified health professional to disclose the necessary information. A referral from a licensed medical professional is required. Referrals will be updated at least every three months, or as appropriate. Eligibility for medical incapacity will only be determined after a careful review of the referral and a phone call to the licensed medical professional, and the Council's assessment of certified need for services. Foster parents on our program cannot be approved for services based on incapacitation.

Children with Exceptional Needs

Families may receive child care services for children ages 13-21 that have exceptional needs. To qualify, the following documentation is required: a copy of the child's current Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and a statement signed by a legally qualified professional that states that the child requires special attention of adults in a child care setting. In some cases, the child's provider may receive a small differential, if the caregiver submits a letter of request documenting the reason for the adjustment. The Child Care Council's Inclusion Department will review the request.

Temporary Leave of Absence (LTSL)

Families can be temporarily placed on "Limited Term Service Leave". This means they are eligible for child care services but are temporarily not in need of care. The criteria for Limited Term service Leave may include but is not limited to, up to 16 weeks for medical reasons, maternity leave and/or interruption in a vocational training schedule, and up to 12 weeks for children's school vacations or family emergencies.

Families are required to put their request in writing. If awarded, families will not be terminated from the program during the Limited Term Service Leave.

Families awarded Limited Term Service Leave due to maternity or medical leave will be required to submit additional documentation from the parent's physician, prior to going on leave, and then again when returning from leave. The parent is responsible for contacting the Subsidy Counselor when he/she is approved to go back to work.

The Child Care Council will not pay for any unauthorized use of care, or for any fees associated with registration, re-enrollment, or any other new charges.

Parents should check with their child care providers to determine if space will be available when they return to child care. Families cannot use child care services while on Limited Term Service Leave. Child care providers cannot submit an Attendance Sheet/Attendance Records for child/children while they are on Limited Term Service Leave.

SECTION II: AUTHORIZATION OF SERVICES

Certification of Child Care Services

The Child Care Certificate is an agreement for services between the child care provider and the parent. The Certificate is based on the child's authorized need for services. The Child Care Certificate delineates the family's certified days and hours of child care needed and the parent's reimbursement ceiling. If applicable, the Child Care Certificate will indicate the family's family fee and/or co-payment. The Council requires that the parent review, sign, and return the Certificate within ten (10) days of receiving it. It is the parent's responsibility to send the signed Child Care Certificate back to the Subsidy Counselor. For families choosing a licensed provider, the provider is required to sign and return the Child Care Certificate before care can be authorized.

The signed Child Care Certificate indicates that the parent and the Child Care Council agree to the provider's rates and the days and hours of child care. The provider's reimbursement or payment will be based on the signed Child Care Certificate.

Child care services are not approved until parents have submitted documentation of their income eligibility and service need. Council staff will issue a Notice of Action and Child Care Certificate to the parent.

Family Benefit Ceilings

At each certification, the family's need for child care will be discussed, and a determination made of the amount of authorized hours necessary to meet that need. Child care benefit levels are assigned per child depending on the child's need in the context of the family's overall need. A child's certified need can never exceed the need assessed for the family.

Recertification

Families are required to update their records in person at least every twelve months or more frequently based on the Subsidy Counselor's assessment of the case. Families must report any changes within 5 calendar days.



The Subsidy Counselors will meet with families to discuss their continued eligibility and need for services. A new Notice of Action will provide a new start and stop date for services, contracted hours and days approved for child care, and family fee and/ or co-pay information (if applicable).

The Council will send a Notice of Action terminating participation in the program if the parent does not comply with the requirements outlined in the Notice of Action.

SECTION III: SHARE OF COST

Family Fee Collection by the Child Care Provider

Some families will have to pay a portion of their child care costs directly to their child care provider. The providers' reimbursement will be reduced by the calculation of the family fee owed per authorized day. The sliding fee schedule used to determine a "family fee" is prepared by the State of California, Child Development Division. This fee is state mandated and is based on family size and family income. The amount of the family fee a parent must pay is indicated on both the Notice of Action and Child Care Certificate. The family fee is paid for each day that child care services are contracted (including licensed providers authorized 10 non-operational days) and is only applicable for the child who uses the most care, which is usually the youngest child in the family. Family Fees will begin once the family's gross monthly income reaches the level indicated below. Family Fees are subject to change.

Family Size	1 or 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Fee Begins	1,820	1,950	2,167	2,513	2,860	2,925	2,990	3,055	3,120	3,185	3,250

Non-Payment of Family Fees

Family fees will be considered delinquent on the date the Council is notified by the provider that the family fees have not been paid. A Subsidy Counselor will issue a Notice of Action for Delinquent Family Fees and the parent will have nineteen days to pay the delinquent family fees or create a reasonable payment plan with their provider that will be signed by both the parent and the provider. The Council will continue to provide services to the family, provided that the family pays the current family fee when due and complies with the provisions of the payment plan. If the parent fails to make payments once the payment plan is put in place, the family will be terminated from the program. Upon termination of services for nonpayment of delinquent family fee, the family will be ineligible for child care and development services until all delinquent family fees are paid.

Providers are asked to collect family fees in advance of providing child care services. The provider will indicate on the back of the Attendance Sheet/Attendance Record that the family fee for the month has been "paid". For families using multiple providers, family fee collection is given to the provider caring for the child with the most hours of care. When an error is made in the calculation of the family fee, parents will be issued an under-payment/ or over-payment notice. Accounts must be settled prior to the next invoice period.

Co-Payment

When a family chooses a child care provider who charges a higher rate than the parent's benefit ceiling, the parent will be responsible for paying the difference. This difference between the benefit ceiling and the additional amount charged by the provider is known as a co-payment. Co-payments are paid directly to the child care provider, just like family fees.

Additional Costs

Parents are responsible for any fees or costs related to the use of any unauthorized days of care. These costs are due to the provider, and are not part of the family's benefit ceiling.

SECTION IV: SELECTING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Choosing Care

Parents are responsible for the selection and monitoring of their child care provider or center. Parents must have chosen a child care provider before they can enroll with the Council. A Child Care Certificate will not be issued until all necessary paperwork has been completed.

The Council can assist parents in choosing the best child care program for their children by providing parents with at least four referrals to licensed child care providers. These referrals are not to be construed as



recommendations, but rather as suggestions of a larger universe of caregivers from which parents can choose. Information may also be available if a parent chooses a license exempt provider. For families participating in the Child Care Fund programs, the family's child care program must be located within 20 miles from where the parent lives, works, attends training, or where the child attends school.

Community Care Licensing, the State's regulatory agency, sets minimum standards for care which include the ratio of children to adults, and the safety of the environment. Parents may phone Community Care Licensing to check on a program's history, or complaints. Parents have the duty to monitor the day to day care of their children and to report any unusual activity to Community Care Licensing. The Regional office is located in Oakland; they may be contacted at (510) 622-2602.

TYPES OF CARE

Licensed Centers (also known as preschools, nursery schools, or day care centers)

Licensed child care centers are facilities that provide child care services, and are monitored by The State of California's Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division Title 22. Licensed programs are required to have a practice that they charge the same rates for subsidized and non-subsidized families.

Licensed Family Child Care Homes are private homes that provide child care and development services in a smaller setting. Many homes are open "non-traditional" hours and are available to serve multiple ages of children. They must also have a policy that they charge the same rates for subsidized and non-subsidized families.

License-Exempt Providers are not licensed by the State. Parents are responsible for hiring, firing and setting the days and hours they will be using care. The Child Care Council will only reimburse licensed exempt providers on behalf of the parent for the services authorized. Parents are responsible for keeping their own Attendance Records, and being sure this form is submitted to their local Child Care Council Area Office for reimbursement. Parents are responsible for payment to the provider for any unauthorized use of care, and for any un-reimbursed expenses owed to the provider.

In-Home Exempt Caregivers under special circumstances, if a parent wishes to use an in-home exempt caregiver they are required to submit the following documentation before a Child Care Certificate can be issued: (1) A copy of a Worker's Compensation policy that the parent has taken out for the employee (caregiver), (2) A copy of required documents the parent has filed indicating that they (the parent) are the employer and will be withholding income tax, social security tax, and additional withholds from the provider's pay as required for the Internal Revenue Service, the Franchise Tax Board and Social Security Administration, (3) Must register with TrustLine and obtain a Tuberculosis clearance (this excludes verified grandparents, aunts, and uncles), and (4) Complete the required Contra Costa Child Care Council Licensed Exempt Provider packet and In-Home Exempt Caregiver Agreement.

Parents are also responsible for ensuring their children's immunization records are up to date and on file with the Child Care Council and selecting and monitoring the health and safety of these homes.

License exempt providers and In-home exempt caregivers are required by the State of California to be fingerprinted and have a TB clearance. License exempt providers and In-home exempt caregivers who are not aunts, uncles, or grandparents, are also required to be TrustLine registered. TrustLine is a mandatory background check required of all license exempt child care providers who are not related to the child as an aunt, uncle, or grandparent. License exempt providers and In-home exempt caregivers must be cleared through TrustLine within 30 days of the submitting the TrustLine application in order to be reimbursed for services. In the event that the exempt provider is not cleared during this time period, the parent will be required to find another provider, and the exempt provider will not be eligible to receive reimbursement for any child care services provided on the Child Care Fund Program. If the exempt provider is cleared within the 30 day allotted time, the exempt provider will be reimbursed for authorized services. If a provider's TrustLine Application is denied or revoked, he/she is immediately ineligible to be paid. **Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles:** A Declaration of Exemption from TrustLine Registration and proof of being related is required for grandparents, aunts and uncles **Family, Friends and Neighbors** (also known as Kith and Kin Care): In addition to being cleared by TrustLine, parents choosing an unlicensed provider must submit State required documents including a Health and Safety Self-Certification form, and a Tuberculosis (TB) clearance.

DOCUMENTATION OF RATES

Licensed Family Child Care Homes and Centers are required to submit copies of their “usual and customary rates and services”, and copies of the contracts or agreements they use with all subsidized and non-subsidized parents, to the Child Care Council’s Resource and Referral Department. Information which addresses rates, holidays, staff training days, school closures, discounts for siblings, registration fees, scholarship programs, etc. will be shared with the Child Care Fund to ensure accurate reimbursement. Licensed homes and centers can be reimbursed based on enrollment, not attendance if only their policy clearly states that all parents are charged the same, and that no extra charges are applied to subsidy parents. The Child Care Council can pay up to a family’s benefit level; the parent is responsible for any additional costs.

License Exempt Providers and In-Home Exempt Caregivers are reimbursed on behalf of the parent only for days and hours authorized on the Child Care Certificate. Parents should ask their provider to fill out a statement which shows how they expect to be paid. The parent must sign and date the form. The Child Care Council can reimburse on behalf of the parent up to a family’s benefit level. The parent is responsible for any additional costs.

Family Benefit Ceilings

Families participating in the Council’s Child Care Fund programs are assigned a Benefit Ceiling based on regulatory State Department of Education codes. Children attending less than thirty hours a week will be reimbursed at a part time Benefit Ceiling. Children attending thirty hours or more hours per week will be reimbursed at a full-time Benefit Ceiling. When the child’s hours regularly vary more or less than thirty hours, the Child Care Council will assess the appropriate Benefit Ceiling.

The Child Care Council will consider the provider’s usual and customary rates when assigning a family’s Benefit Ceiling. However, the Child Care Council is not allowed to pay more than the rate the provider charges other children. Additionally, the Council is not allowed to pay more than the full-time Benefit Ceiling in any category. Specific regulatory language dictates calculation limitations in certain instances.

The Child Care Council can only pay up to a family’s benefit level; the parent is responsible for any additional costs. Thus, if the parent is assigned a part-time Benefit Ceiling (fewer than thirty hours), and uses more time, the parent, not the Child Care Council, is responsible for the unauthorized hours.

Complaints Regarding Licensed Providers

Parents using licensed care, whether in a child care center or in a licensed family child care home, are encouraged to contact Community Care Licensing, or the Child Care Council to report health and safety concerns.

If a provider’s child care license is suspended or revoked by Community Care Licensing, the Child Care Council will terminate subsidized child care with the provider within one to two days of receiving notification. Both the parent and provider will be notified that payment will be terminated. Parents will be given 19 calendar days to find a new child care provider.

The Council will not continue making child care payments to a provider if his or her child care license is suspended or revoked, even if the provider chooses to become a license-exempt provider after having his or her license suspended or revoked.

If a provider’s license is placed on probation, a Subsidy Counselor will notify all parents by a phone call and follow up in writing within two days of receiving notification. Parents have the option to stay with the provider, (parental consent) or choose another caregiver. The Resource and Referral Department can help by providing at least 4 referrals from which parents can choose.

Complaints Regarding Licensed Exempt Providers and In-Home Exempt Caregivers

If parents with children in license-exempt care have a complaint they should talk to the provider.

Changing providers

Parents have a right to change child care settings. The Council limits changing license-exempt providers to twice per fiscal year (July 1st to June 30th). If the parents wish to change license-exempt providers more than twice in a fiscal year they must request a meeting with the Area Director to discuss their child care situation.

Parents who are currently enrolled in the program will be given 19 calendar days to find a new child care provider. If a provider is not found within 19 days, the parent may be terminated from the program. Additionally, prior to changing providers, participating parents are required to settle any and all past debts, including family fees, to their current provider in order to authorize child care with the new provider.

If a parent terminates care with no notice given, and the provider requires a two week notice, the Child Care Council can pay the provider for (1) week of authorized child care services.

Multiple or Alternate Providers

The Council can pay only one provider for child care services per child. However, there are some exceptions:

- The Council may reimburse more than one provider per child when the hours of operation of the first provider cannot accommodate the certified need for child care, or
- When a family's first provider is not a licensed center and the parent also chooses a licensed center for the specific purpose of providing the child with "large group school readiness" experiences, the agency may also reimburse the services provided by the licensed center. This is only for children birth-5 years.
- The Council will pay an alternate child care provider for days of non-operation of the primary provider for up to 10 days per fiscal year.
- The Council can pay an alternate child care provider when the child is ill and cannot go to the primary provider for up to 10 days per fiscal year.
- The Council can pay for more days with verification from the child's physician.

SECTION V: REIMBURSEMENT

The Child Care Fund will only reimburse providers for Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records that are correctly submitted and reflect the authorized days a child attends child care as outlined on the Child Care Certificate. Providers will receive a Child Care Certificate for each child authorized to receive services. The Child Care Certificate contains the parent's name and address, the child's name and date of birth, the child's first day of enrollment, the authorized days & hours, the rate and the period of enrollment.

Customary Rates and Services (Licensed Only)

Child care rates charged to the Child Care Council must be the same as the rate charged to non-subsidized parents. These are also known as "market" rates.

Daily Record of Attendance

Parents must sign the Attendance Sheet/ Attendance Record "In" and "Out" on a daily basis with full signatures in ink, and sign and date the back of the Attendance Sheet/Attendance Record each month in order for payment to be processed without delay. If the child was absent, the parent must write the reason for any absence and sign with his or her full signature.

1. Providers must sign school-aged children in and out each day of attendance and may use initials.
2. Original Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records must be submitted for payment. Payment can never be reimbursed on a copy.
3. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain accurate records and oversee correct and timely signatures.

License-Exempt Providers/In-Home Exempt Caregivers-Attendance Records

Parents are responsible for submitting the Attendance Record. Both the exempt provider and the parent are required to sign the back of the Attendance Record.

Failure to submit accurate Attendance Sheets or Attendance Records may result in the parent having to complete a Corrective Action. If the Attendance Sheet/Attendance Record is filled out incorrectly 4 times within a Fiscal Year, the parent will be terminated from the program.

Payment Deadlines

- 1) Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records are due in the Child Care Council offices by on the fifth (5th) day of each month in order for payment to be mailed on the twentieth (20th) of the month.
 - a) If the fifth (5th) calendar day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Holiday, the Child Care Council will accept the completed Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records on the first following business day.
- 2) Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records received after the fifth (5th) of the month will be reimbursed on the twentieth (20th) of the following month.



- 3) Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records turned in more than thirty days following the month care was provided will be considered past due and may not be reimbursable.
- 4) Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records for the month of June are due no later than the fifteenth (15th) of July to be paid. Any Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records submitted past the 15th of July will not be paid.

Payment Limitations

It is the responsibility of the parent participating in the Child Care Fund to select the best child development services for their children based on the family's benefit ceiling, documented eligibility, certified need and the child's schedule. The Resource & Referral Department has listings of licensed child care providers in each area of the county to help parents select the most appropriate facility.

It is the parent's responsibility to pay for expenses that the Child Care Council will not pay for:

- Any child who does not have a signed Child Care Certificate
- Service days and hours not authorized on the Child Care Certificate
- Charges incurred after a family has been terminated
- Overtime or Late Fees
- Private school tuition, educational fees
- Transportation
- Diapers, clothing items, or other expenses that are not part of the basic child care costs
- Instructional minutes for any child that is attending a private or public kindergarten program

Rate Increases

A request for a rate increase is limited to once per fiscal year. The Child Care Council requires 30 calendar days advance written notice for rate increases. All increases must be submitted in writing and approved by the Child Care Council.

All rate increases are subject to the availability of funds.

Registration fees

Rate of reimbursement of the registration fee is determined by State guidelines, and will be paid no more than once per fiscal year.

Form 1099 (Statement of Non-Employee Earnings) (Applies to both Licensed and Exempt providers)

Reimbursements to providers of \$600.00 or more during the calendar year will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service, the California Franchise Tax Board and any other government body as required by law. At the end of the calendar year, the Child Care Council will send the program/provider a 1099 Form stating the total amount of money paid by the Child Care Council during that calendar year. Each provider is responsible for paying her/his own Social Security and other taxes. All providers are independent contractors and are NOT employees of the Child Care Council.

LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES AND CHILD CARE CENTERS

Absences

Providers have a duty to notify the Child Care Council staff when the following circumstances exist:

- A child is absent for more than three (3) consecutive days and the parent has not contacted the provider with the reason of the absence. If the Child Care Council is not notified on the third day, payment will not be made for absences that occur after the child's last day of attendance.

Excused

Parents using a licensed provider may use an unlimited number of excused absences including sick days, per child per fiscal year. The following are examples of absences that would be considered excused if documented properly on the Attendance Sheet:

- Child illness such as sore throat, fever and/or flu (do not write "sick" or "ill")
- Parent illness
- Dental, doctor or therapy appointment (parent, child or sibling)
- Family emergency
- Court-ordered visitations

10 Unexcused

Parents using a licensed provider can use up to a maximum of ten (10) days per child per fiscal year. All absences not identified as excused are considered unexcused absences.

10 Non Operational Days

Licensed child care homes and centers may also claim to be paid for up to ten closure days for things like holidays, staff in-service days, or other school closure days per fiscal year. Policies on school closures must be clearly stated in the programs handbook and/or rate sheet.

EXEMPT PROVIDERS/IN-HOME EXEMPT CAREGIVER

Absences

Days of Attendance: Regardless of the amount of time the parent is authorized, only the actual authorized days and hours of care used are reimbursable. Thus, licensed exempt providers are not reimbursed on behalf of the parent for child absences, holidays, or other closure days. Payments for these days are the sole responsibility of the parent.

Child's Best Interest Days – 10 (Licensed, Exempt Providers and In-Home Exempt Caregivers)

The State of California also authorizes ten "BEST INTEREST DAYS" to each child authorized to receive services. These days can be used any time during the current fiscal year, July 1st to June 30th for each child on the program. Once the parent has used all 10 days, the parent then resumes the responsibility of paying any other Best Interest Days used. If documented properly on the Attendance Sheet, Best Interest Days can be used for:

- Vacation with parent or relative
- Out of town with parent or relative
- Stayed home with parent, relative, or friend over the age of 18
- School program or field trip
- Special family events or trips
- Transportation problems
- Other reasons that are in the best interest of the child

Excessive Absence Policy

All parents and providers should be aware that excessive absences may be cause for termination of the child's enrollment in the Child Care Fund program.

1. The Child Care Council will monitor Attendance Sheets/Attendance Records each month and tally month by month the number of excused, unexcused and/or Best Interest Days.
2. Excessive absences will cause a review of the case. For reasons other than illness, absence for longer than two weeks may be grounds for termination.
3. This policy is implemented to encourage maximum usage of child care funds. The Council encourages both parents and providers to communicate with each other and with the Child Care Council regarding any problems in attendance in order to avoid termination.

PROGRAM INTEGRITY AND FRAUD POLICY

The California Department of Education requires the Council to create a Fraud Policy which applies to families on the program and providers receiving reimbursement from the program. The Council has designed policies around program integrity which will help prevent, detect, and when necessary refer improper use of State funds to the District Attorney's office. The Council will also actively pursue recovery of any payments received through deceit, fraud or misrepresentation.

1. Deceit is to intentionally cause someone to believe that which is not true.
2. Fraud is a deliberate deception to receive something for which you are not eligible.
3. Misrepresentation is to give misleading or incorrect information in order to gain something for which you are not eligible. Recovery of funds may include administrative costs associated with child care payments and the cost of recovering these payments. Any additional family fees owed will also be pursued.

Any parent or provider whose participation is terminated under the Fraud Policy will not be eligible to participate in the Child Care Fund Program for a minimum of twelve months. Any past debts or expenses must be paid in full prior to reinstatement.

Confidentiality

The use or disclosure of any information maintained in the family file concerning families is limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program. Families on our program can request and receive access to the information in their file. The Council retains the right to verify documentation supplied by families. In certain circumstances, records may be submitted to legal authorities when requested.

In order for families to experience no interruption in their child care services due to a transition between the stages of child care, the Education Code requires agencies administering CalWORKs child care services to share the information necessary to administer the program. From time to time legal subpoenas or court requests will require the Council to give authorized representatives access to identified information.

Independent Contractor Status

Parents and Providers enter into an agreement with each other. Thus the Child Care Council reimburses the provider on behalf of the parent. This Parent/Provider relationship should in no way be construed as a "business partnership" with the Child Care Council. The Child Care Council relinquishes control over the manner and means by which child care services are performed. Parents are responsible for overseeing when and how work is performed, and should request a change of providers if the level of care does not meet their expectations.

Indemnity and Defend

Parents and providers participating in the program agree that the Child Care Council assumes no responsibility for injury or damages arising from the performance of services and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Contra Costa Child Care Council, its officers, and employees in any costs, suit or liability allegedly arising from the provision of child care services.

Uniform Complaint Policy

The California Department of Education, Child Development Division, requires programs receiving state and federal funding to inform participants of their rights to due process. A Uniform Complaint is a written statement alleging discrimination or a violation of federal or state law within the Child Development program or a variety of other state and federally funded programs.

For information regarding the Uniform Complaint Policy and Procedures, contact:

California Department of Education
Child Development Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901
(916) 319-0929

SECTION VI: Termination and Grievance Procedures – Parents

By participating in the Child Care Council's subsidy program, it is the parent's duty to abide by all policies, procedures, and regulations set forth by the Child Care Council and the State of California. Failure to abide by these policies, procedures, and regulations may result in immediate termination from the Child Care Fund subsidy program.

Reasons for Termination – Parents or Child

The Council may terminate parents for any, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- Failure to adhere to any rules established by the Council.
- Failure to be recertified or failure to keep scheduled appointments.
- Failure to report any changes that affect eligibility or service need within 5 calendar days.
- The family's gross monthly income exceeds the state income ceiling.
- Failure to pay family fees by the required date.
- Failure to submit information regarding eligibility or service need, or any other required information, by the assigned due date.
- Falsification of or refusal to sign the Attendance Sheet/Attendance Record
- Excessive absences for reasons other than illness (absences for longer than 2 consecutive weeks may be grounds for termination).
- Failure to maintain a 2.0 G.P.A, per term if parent is receiving child care to attend vocational training.
- Providing the Council with any fraudulent, false or misleading information or documentation.

- Using abusive or vulgar language, attempting to bribe, coerce or extort any Council employee or threatening any Council employee.
- Failure to sign an Attendance Sheet “in” and “out” as authorized.
- The child on the program has turned 13 years old.
- Failure to correctly complete the Attendance Sheet/Attendance Records 4 times within a Fiscal Year.

Grievance Procedures

Families have the right to request a local appeal hearing if they disagree with a decision and/or change made by the Subsidy Counselor or Payment Analyst. On the back of the Notice of Action, you will find instructions on how to appeal a decision with the Area Office Director. If families disagree with the local appeal hearing decision their next step is to appeal to the California Department of Education’s Child Development Division. Families are required to complete the local appeal hearing process before appealing to the state. A sample of the Notice of Action, including the steps for filing an appeal is included at the end of this manual.

In addition, if a family has been terminated from the Council on three occasions for not complying with the requirements of the program, even though the family is eligible and has a service need, the family will be ineligible for child care services through the Council for a period of twelve months from the date of the last termination.

SECTION VII: Termination and Grievance Procedures – Providers

Participation in the Child Care Council’s subsidy program is voluntary, and it is the provider’s duty to abide by all policies, procedures, and regulations set forth by the Child Care Council and the State of California. Failure to abide by these policies, procedures, and regulations may result in the provider being ineligible to participate in the Child Care Fund subsidy program

Reasons for Termination-Provider

The Child Care Council reserves the right to immediately suspend or terminate a provider’s participation in the Child Care Fund program without notice, if there is a substantial complaint of corporal punishment, if the provider is the subject of an investigation by Community Care Licensing for chronic deficiencies, or is the subject of a complaint of a “serious” nature.

Current and future Child Care Provider Agreements may also be terminated and the provider may be determined “Ineligible to Participate” in the Child Care Fund Program if any of the following occurs:

- A licensed provider refuses or is unable to provide the Child Care Council with a copy of a current license, or if a program’s license is suspended or revoked
- The provider fails to provide current and correct information regarding child care attendance and child care rates.
- The provider falsifies or misrepresents information and documentation in any way to receive a higher rate of reimbursement
- The provider repeatedly fails to comply with the Child Care Fund program regulations and procedures, including collection of “family fees” (if any) directly from the parent.
- Failure to maintain TrustLine Standards
- Failure to abide by the Child Care Councils policies and procedures
- Failure to maintain regulatory or Community Care Licensing standards
- Knowingly concealing or obfuscating a parent’s status or activities
- Refusal to admit Child Care Council staff when making an unannounced site visit.
- Failure to maintain Attendance Sheets with “in” and “out” parent signatures as authorized.

Grievance Procedures

Disagreement with the Child Care Council’s Child Care Fund Policies and Procedures is not legitimate grounds for a grievance.

Licensed family child care homes and child care centers, who feel they have been treated unfairly, should discuss the issue with the Area Office Director in their local Area Office. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the provider may lodge a grievance with the Child Care Council’s Executive Director as follows.



A letter from the provider detailing, documenting and supporting their case, must be submitted to the Child Care Council within fourteen (14) days of discussing the matter with the Area Director. Grievance letters should be addressed to:

Office of the Executive Director
Contra Costa Child Care Council
1035 Detroit Ave, Suite 200
Concord, CA 94518

Within fourteen (14) calendar days following the receipt of a grievance, the Executive Director, or designee, will call to schedule an appointment. Arrangements will be made with the provider to determine a convenient time for the hearing. The provider is required to attend the hearing. Tardiness or failure to appear will be considered abandonment of the grievance.

The Executive Director, or designee, shall act as the Hearing Officer. During the Hearing, the provider will be given an opportunity to explain why they believe the decision was incorrect. Only the provider may attend. The Child Care Council staff may present additional information; and if necessary, parents may be contacted to further clarify issues. The Executive Director will respond in writing within fourteen (14) calendar days of the hearing. The decision of the Executive Director shall be considered final, and providers do not have the right to appeal to the Board of Directors or other governing body.

License exempt providers who feel they have been treated unfairly should discuss the issue with the parent. If the issue is not resolved, the caregiver may write a letter to the Area Director of the Area Office describing the situation. The decision of the Area Director shall be considered final and no further grievance opportunities shall be granted

SAMPLE NOTICE OF ACTION (NOA)

Appeal Information: If you do not agree with the Child Care Council's action as stated in the Notice of Action, you may appeal the intended action. To protect your appeal rights, you must follow the instructions described in each step listed below. If you do not respond by the required due dates or fail to submit the required appeal information with your appeal request, your appeal may be considered abandoned.

STEP 1: Complete the following appeal information to request a local hearing:

Name of Parent/Caretaker		Telephone No.
Address	City	Zip
In this section, please explain why you disagree with the agency's action.		
Check Box If an Interpreter is Needed at the Local Hearing: <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature of Person Requesting a Local Hearing	Date

STEP 2: Mail or deliver your local hearing request within 14 days of receipt of this notice to your local area office:

CENTRAL COUNTY

Contra Costa Child Care Council
Attn: Central Area Director
1035 Detroit Avenue, Suite #400
Concord, CA 94518
(925) 676-6610

EAST and FAR EAST COUNTY

Contra Costa Child Care Council
Attn: East Area Director
5095 Lone Tree Way.
Antioch, CA 94531
(925) 778-5437

WEST COUNTY

Contra Costa Child Care Council
Attn: West Area Director
3065 Richmond Parkway, #107A
Richmond, CA 94806
(510) 758-2099

STEP 3: Within ten (10) calendar days following the agency's receipt of your appeal request, the agency will notify you of the time and place of the hearing. You or your authorized representative is required to attend the hearing. If you or your representatives do not attend the hearing, you abandon your rights to an appeal, and the action of the agency will be implemented.

STEP 4: Within ten (10) calendar days following the hearing, the agency shall mail or delivery to you a written decision.

STEP 5: If you disagree with the written decision of the agency, you have 14 days from your receipt of the written decision to file an appeal with the California Department of Education (CDE). Your appeal to CDE must include the following documents and information: (1) a written statement specifying the reasons you believe the agency's decision was incorrect, (2) a copy of the agency's local appeal hearing decision letter, and (3) a copy of both sides of this notice. Mail your appeal to the following address:

California Department of Education
Child Development Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Appeals Coordinator

STEP 6: Within 30 calendar days after the receipt of your appeal, CDD will issue a written decision to you and the agency. *If your appeal is denied, the agency will stop providing child care and development services immediately upon receipt of CDE's decision letter.*



HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES RESOURCES

Child Abuse

(Children & Family Services/CPS)

Central (925) 646-1680

East (925) 427-8811

West (510) 374-3324

Toll Free (877) 881-1116

Child Care and Parenting

**Contra Costa Child Care Council*

Child Care Eligibility List (925) 676-8570

Central (925) 676-KIDS (5437)

East (925) 778-KIDS (5437)

West (510) 758-KIDY (5439)

Brentwood (925) 513-7900

www.cocokids.org

Community Care Licensing, Oakland

(510) 622-2602

Disability Services

CARE Parent Network 1(800) 281-3023

Regional Center of the East Bay (925) 798-3001

**Contra Costa Child Care Council*

Inclusion Program (925) 676-5442

Emergency Services

Amber Alert 1(800) 541-0777

California Poison Control Center 1(800) 222-1222

Public Health Emergency Line 1(888) 959-9911

Financial Assistance

CalWORKs

Central (925) 313-7987

East (925) 706-4580

West (510) 412-3000

Food

Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano (925) 676-7543

WIC Program 1(800) 414-4942

Health Services & Insurance

Healthy Families 1(877) 503-9350

Contra Costa Health Plan (800) 211-8040

Medi-Cal (New applicants) (800) 709-8348

Medi-Cal (Current clients) (866) 663-3225

Family Health Toll-Free Line (800) 696-9644

Homeless/Housing

Contra Costa Crisis Center (800) 808-6444 or 211

Greater Richmond Interfaith Council (510) 233-2141

Legal & Mediation Services

Bay Area Legal Aid 1(800) 551-5554

Center for Human Development

Conflict Resolution Panels

Central (925) 687-8844

West (510) 234-5359

East (925) 753-1004

Crisis Help

Contra Costa Crisis Center (800) 833-2900 or 211

Family Stress Center

East (925) 706-8477

Central (925) 827-0212

Utility Assistance

California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE)

1 (800) 743-2273

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

1 (866) 675-6623

Relief for Energy Assistance Through Community Help (REACH)

1 (800) 933-9677

Energy Assistance Program

(925) 646-5540

For additional resources and referrals please call the Contra Costa Crisis Center at 211 or visit their database www.cccord.org.

**Contra Costa Child Care Council
Administration Office**

1035 Detroit Avenue, Suite #200
Concord, CA 94518
(925) 676-5442
www.cocokids.org

Area Offices

Central/South Area

1035 Detroit Avenue, Suite #400
Concord, CA 94518
(925) 676-KIDS (5437)
central@cocokids.org

West Area

3065 Richmond Parkway, Suite 107A
Richmond, CA 94806
(510) 758-KIDY (5439)
west@cocokids.org

East Area

5095 Lone Tree Way
Antioch, CA 94531
(925) 778-KIDS (5437)
east@cocokids.org

My Important Phone Numbers

Subsidy Counselor

Child Care Provider

Child Care Eligibility List (CCEL)
(925) 676-8570
ccel@cocokids.org

****Copies of the Child Care Fund Participation Manual are always available at any Area Office***

