

**Choices for Children**



Child Development Incorporated

# **Parent & Provider Handbook**

**Subsidized Child Care Program**

# Definitions

**Adult** – a person who is at least eighteen (18) years of age and has not attended high school.

**Parent or Guardian** – any person living with a child who has legal responsibility for the care and welfare of the child.

**Appeal Hearing** – a hearing coordinated by a hearing officer not involved with the action taken.

**California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)** – families enrolled on CAPP are selected from the Choices for Children Eligibility Wait List as vacancies occur or funding becomes available.

**California Department of Social Services** – programs administered are CalWORKs Stage 2, CalWORKs Stage 3, and CAPP.

**California Department of Social Services (CDSS)** – CalWORKs Stage 1 childcare program administered by CDSS for families receiving cash assistance through Santa Clara County Department of Human Services.

**Stage 1** – childcare for CalWORKs families referred to Choices for Children by Santa Clara County Department of Social Services (CDSS) for approved CalWORKs activities.

**Stage 2** – childcare for families transitioning from Stage 1. Childcare is available for those family's meeting eligibility and need criteria following 24 months after termination of cash aid.

**Stage 3** – as funding is available, childcare for families who have exhausted their 24 months after receiving cash aid.

**Fiscal Year** – the time between July 1 and June 30 of each year.

**Family Fee** – the fee determined from the Family Fee Schedule prepared and issued by the California Department of Social Service. This is the parent's share of childcare cost determined by increases or decreases in childcare need, income, and/or family size.

**Child Care Certificate** – for the purposes of this program, this document contains authorized childcare hours, reimbursement amount, and enrollment dates.

**Co-payment** – any provider charges above the Regional Market Rate Ceilings. The co-payment is paid directly to the provider by the parents.

**TRUSTLINE Registered** – A TRUSTLINE registered exempt clear provider has a clear criminal history with the California Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation. TRUSTLINE is exclusive to the State of California.

**Exempt Child Care Provider** – a childcare provider not licensed by the State of California, Community Care Licensing:

- **Family** – aunt, uncle, or grandparent to child by blood, marriage, or adoption.
- **Friend or Neighbor** – not related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Non-relatives will need to be TRUSTLINE registered.

**Licensed Child Care Provider** – a childcare provider with a valid license granted by the California Department of Social Services, or a federal license to operate a childcare facility on a military base.

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# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The California State Department of Social Service, Child Development Division, funds childcare subsidy programs that include the California Alternative Payment Program and CalWORKs Program. These programs help income eligible families and CalWORKs participants find and pay for childcare. Child Development Inc. /Choices for Children (CFC) administers these programs serving children and their families in Santa Clara County. The agency's name, Choices for Children, is derived from the fact that parents have the freedom to choose licensed childcare centers, family day care homes and license exempt providers.

All Choices for Children programs are administered on a nondiscriminatory basis, according to equal treatment and access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic background, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability/special need.

The use and disclosure of any information maintained in the basic data file concerning enrollees, their families, and providers, will be limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of these programs. The California Department of Social Service's legal office affirms that Title 5 regulations, as written, do not violate provisions of the Information Practices Act (IPA) or any other statutes regarding privacy. There are provisions requiring agencies to treat information received from unsubsidized families as confidential.

No other use of this information shall be made without prior written consent from the enrolled parent(s). Enrolled parent(s) shall have access to information in their child's basic data file.

# Parent Information and Responsibilities

To receive state subsidized child development services, families must meet both eligibility and need criteria.

## Eligibility

Eligibility for childcare subsidies is determined by Title 5 Regulations and Funding Terms & Conditions for Child Development Programs as published by the California State Department of Social Service. These guidelines establish three basic purposes for all state subsidized childcare programs:

- Providing a safe, healthy environment conducive to the development and growth of young children.
- Providing parents with the opportunity to support their families through employment or to prepare for employment.
- Preventing or lessening child abuse and neglect through the provision of childcare.

Eligibility may be established by one of the following criteria:

## California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP):

- The family has a child who is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or receiving child protective services through the county welfare department.
- The family is income eligible. When the number of family members and the amount of family income has been determined, eligibility may be established by reference to the family fee schedule.
- Children are eligible for initial certification or recertification until their thirteenth (13<sup>th</sup>) birthday. Children over the age of thirteen are ineligible for initial certification or recertification for subsidized services except for those children with exceptional needs who may be served to age twenty-one (21). Children with exceptional needs shall also meet the criteria for that age group specified in EC Section 56026 and California Code of Regulations, 5CCR, section 18089.
- The family is a public assistance recipient.
- The family is homeless.

Choices for Children will select the families from our agency waitlist based on the following priorities:

### First Priority:

Families whose children are receiving child protective services or families whose children are at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation shall be admitted first. Within this priority, a current referral letter from a legally qualified professional verifying the need for childcare must be on file.

### **Second Priority:**

All children and families not within the priority for admission shall be admitted based on the income eligibility requirement; the lowest gross income in relation to family size will be admitted first.

Within the priority,

- a. When two (2) or more families have the same income ranking, the family whose child has exceptional needs shall be admitted first.
- b. If there is no family of the same priority with a child with exceptional needs, the eligible family whose primary home language is a language other than English shall be admitted first.
- c. If there is no family of the same priority in which the primary home language is a language other than English, the family of the same priority that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.

### **CalWORKs Stage Two Child Care (C2AP):**

- The local county welfare department determines that the family is employed, participating in employment activities and/or in training.
- The family remains eligible for up to twenty-four (24) months after the parent is no longer receiving cash aid as long as the family is income eligible.
- Children are eligible for initial certification or recertification until their thirteenth (13<sup>th</sup>) birthday. Children over the age of thirteen are ineligible for initial certification or recertification for subsidized services except for those children with exceptional needs who may be served to age twenty-one (21). Children with exceptional needs shall also meet the criteria for that age group specified in EC Section 56026 and California Code of Regulations, 5CCR, section 18089.

### **CalWORKs Stage Three Child Care (C3AP):**

- The family is income eligible.
- AND**
- The parent is enrolled in CalWORKs Stage 2 and has fully exhausted the twenty-four (24) months of eligibility for childcare (timed out).
  - Children are eligible for initial certification or recertification until their thirteenth (13<sup>th</sup>) birthday. Children over the age of thirteen are ineligible for initial certification or recertification for subsidized services except for those children with exceptional needs who may be served to age twenty-one (21). Children with exceptional needs shall also meet the criteria for that age group specified in EC Section 56026 and California Code of Regulations, 5CCR, section 18089.

### **Family Size Required Verification**

The parents shall provide supporting documentation regarding the number of children and parents in the family.

### **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.

## **Family**

Family means the parents and the children for whom they are responsible, who comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living. Family also can mean any person who presents 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.

## **Documentation to determine number of children:**

- (A) Birth records.
- (B) Court orders regarding child custody.
- (C) Adoption documents.
- (D) Records of Foster Care placements.
- (E) School or medical records.
- (F) County welfare department records; or
- (G) Other reliable documentation indicates the relationship of the child to the parent.

## **Need Eligibility**

Need may be established through one of the following conditions:

- Families whose children are receiving child protective services or families whose children are at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation shall be admitted first. Within this priority, a current referral letter from a legally qualified professional verifying the need for childcare must be on file.
- The parent or guardian is employed or has an offer of employment.
- The parent or guardian is seeking employment.
- The parent or guardian is incapacitated, as verified by a legally qualified professional, to the extent that the parent’s ability to provide childcare is significantly limited.
- The parent or guardian is participating in a vocational training or education program leading directly to employment in a recognized trade, para-profession, or profession.
- The family is homeless.
- The family is seeking permanent housing or family stability.
- The family is currently certified as eligible to receive benefits or services from at least one of the following means-tested government programs such as Medi-Cal, CalFresh, California Food Assistance Program, WIC, the Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation, Head Start, Early Head Start and CalWORKs. The 85% SMI limit may not apply to families enrolled under means-tested government programs. The family may still need to pay a family fee.



## **Initial Enrollment**

Parents are screened to determine the family's eligibility and to provide the parent with information on Choices for Children's policies and services. Parents must bring current financial information, verification of referral, and other written material as requested by Choices for Children to the initial and subsequent recertification of eligibility interview. Initial enrollment may be completed in person or electronically. The documentation provided shall be maintained in a confidential file.

## **Transfer of Families: CalWORKs Stage 1 to CalWORKs Stage 2**

Families transferring from CalWORKs Stage 1 to CalWORKs Stage 2 will not have any break in childcare services. They will not be required to come in or submit any documentation to continue childcare services in CalWORKs stage 2. Families will receive the same childcare services in the CalWORKs Stage 2 program for no less than twelve (12) months from the date of the transfer from Stage 1 to Stage 2. Families may voluntarily report any changes to increase or decrease services or request a reduced family fee.

## **Notice of Action**

After reviewing family's eligibility and need documentation at initial enrollment or recertification, parents will receive notification of their enrollment status in the program on a Notice of Action (NOA). A Notice of Action is issued when certification, recertification or change in status is completed. It is the parent's responsibility to review the information on the NOA and contact the Family Childcare Counselor if there are any questions.

## **Duration of Service Requirement**

Once a family has been certified for services, contract service hours and family fees remain the same throughout the full duration of the family's eligibility period; twenty-four (24) months. Family eligibility period may be extended if a new child is added in the family size during their twenty-four (24) months to ensure the new child receives at least twelve (12) months eligibility.

## **Recertification of Eligibility**

All families will have a recertification date no less than twenty four (24) months. All recertifications may be completed in-person or electronically. A fifty (50) Day Recertification Letter will be mailed out to parents thirty (30) days prior to the twenty-four (24) month certification period. Failure to comply with the fifty (50) Day Recertification Letter will result in a Termination Notice of Action. The Notice of Action will give the parent nineteen (19) days in which to comply to avoid termination from the program. The recertification deadline will be enforced.

## **Income Calculation:**

To calculate a family's adjusted monthly income for purposes of determining income eligibility and/or calculating a family fee, the calculation shall be done using an income calculation worksheet, and shall be calculated as follows:

1. When a family's income is regular and steady, we will use one month of check stubs from either month of the two-month window immediately preceding the initial certification, or the recertification of the eligibility for services.
2. When a family's income fluctuates because of agricultural or seasonal work; inconsistent and/or unstable employment or self-employment; or intermittent income, the adjusted monthly income shall be determined by averaging the total countable income from at least two months. A family may choose to provide up to the twelve preceding months of income information as necessary for purposes of determining income eligibility or calculating a family fee.
3. All parents will receive a copy of an income calculation worksheet at the initial certification, recertification, and voluntarily reporting changes regarding income or income exceeding ongoing income eligibility.

**An "Income Ceiling Level Guideline Form" is provided to ALL Parents at the time of enrollment and/or recertification. Please request this information from the APP Child Care Family Counselor if you do not receive or misplace this information.**

### **Family Monthly Fee**

Families enrolled in the **California Alternative Payment Program and CalWORKs** programs may be required to pay a **monthly fee**. Family monthly fees are determined by family size and gross income and are based on the California Department of Social Service sliding fee scale. The family monthly fee is calculated and invoiced monthly, in advance, by Choices for Children.

Families with a certified need of less than 130 hours per month will be assessed a part-time fee, while families with a certified need of 130 hours or more per month will be assessed a full-time fee. Pursuant to EC Section 8273 (f). Fees may only be assessed at certification and recertification unless a parent voluntarily requests a reduction in their family monthly fees. A parent may have to pay a family monthly fee and at the same time, must pay the provider a co-payment.

### **Family Monthly Fee Invoice Process**

**The family monthly fee invoice is mailed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the following month of service. Payment in full is due by 5:00 p.m. on the 1<sup>st</sup> and is delinquent after 7 calendar days from the 1<sup>st</sup> if not paid.**

Families will receive a nineteen (19) day Termination Notice of Action for **DELINQUENT FAMILY MONTHLY FEES**. Failure to pay by the last day indicated on the Notice of Action will result in the termination of subsidized childcare services, as required by The California Department of Social Services Child Development Division.

It is the **responsibility** of the parent to contact the Child Care Family Fee Coordinator **before the due date** to request for a "**Payment Plan**" arrangement. No adjustments in the family monthly fee billing shall be made for any childcare absence (s). Family monthly fees are billed while the parent is selecting a new provider.

**Families who leave the program owing family monthly fees will not be considered for re-enrollment until all outstanding family monthly fees have been paid.** Choices for Children will attempt to recover funds by developing a **“Repayment Plan”** with the parent. If the parent does not respond or misses a payment as outlined in the repayment plan, he/she will be referred to a collection agency.

## Family Monthly Fee Payment

Family monthly fees must be paid by credit card, check, or money order (**No Cash Payments**) and payable to Choices for Children. Any check returned for **Insufficient Funds** must be paid by a **Money Order or Credit Card**. All further payments will be required to be paid by **Money Order or Credit Card only**.

## Right to Voluntarily Report Changes

A parent may at any time voluntarily request the following changes:

- Reduce family fees.
- Increase the service level.
- Reduce the service level.

Choices for Children will only use the voluntarily reported information to reduce the family fee, increase the family’s services or extend the period of eligibility.

To reduce the hours of care, parents must submit a written request that includes days and hours per day and the date of the proposed reduction of childcare hours.

After receipt of the written request and documentation to support the requested change, Choices for Children will issue a Notice of Action within ten (10) business days indicating the outcome of your request. No other changes will be made to the family service agreement, other than the requested change(s).

## Reporting: Income Exceeding 85 Percent of The State Median Income

State law requires a family who is initially certified or recertified on the basis of income eligibility to notify Choices for Children within 30 calendar days of any current and on-going income change that causes the family’s adjusted monthly gross income to exceed 85% of the State Median Income (SMI).

### Income Ceiling Schedule Effective 7/1/2024

Family Size	1 or 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Monthly Income	\$6,595	\$7,472	\$8,712	\$10,106	\$11,500	\$11,761	\$12,023	\$ 12,284	\$12,545	\$12,807	\$13,068

## Special Note

Feel free to contact Choices for Children with any questions or concerns regarding your income and/or eligibility. The Alternative Payment Program, Choices for Children subsidized childcare programs is designed to assist income eligible parents with their childcare needs. Choices for Children makes every attempt to provide clear and consistent policies for all enrolled parents and their childcare providers.

## **Employment**

### **Employment by Employer**

If the basis of need as stated on the application for services is employment of the parent, the documentation of the parent's employment shall include the days and hours of employment. If the total number of hours worked each week is consistent, but the days and hours of employment vary, the documentation shall support the total number of hours worked each week.

Parents with an employer shall provide one of the following:

- Pay stubs that indicate the days and hours of employment; or
- Pay stubs that indicate the total hours of employment per pay period, as long as the hours correlate with the parent's requested number of hours needed each week.

When the employer refuses or fails to provide requested documentation or when the parent states a request for documentation would adversely affect the parent's employment, the parent shall complete a self-declaration of income and/or provide other records of income to support the parent's income eligibility.

### **Employment by Self-Employment**

If the parent is self-employed, parent shall provide the following documentation:

- A Self-Employment Profit and Loss Wage form that includes a description of the employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked per week; and
- As many of the following documents needed to support the days and hours of employment:
  - a. Appointment logs, client receipts, job logs, mileage logs, a list of clients with contact information, or similar records; or
  - b. As applicable, a copy of a business license, a workspace lease, or a workspace rental agreement.

To document Self-Employment, a Self-Employment Profit and Loss Wage form detailing days and hours of work and a description of the nature of work must be completed and submitted with a combination of documentation necessary to establish current income eligibility for at least the month preceding the initial certification or recertification. Further required documentation may include, but is not limited to, a copy of appointment logs, client receipts, job logs, and mileage logs to demonstrate days and hours worked, as well as a copy of a business license, a workspace lease, or a workspace rental agreement.

### **Employed as an Assistant in a Large Family Child Care Home**

When a parent/guardian is employed as an assistant in a licensed large family childcare home, and is requesting childcare services for a child in that same family childcare home, the parent shall provide documentation that substantiates all the following:

All the following will need to be provided:

- A copy of the family childcare home license indicating it is licensed as a large family childcare home.
- A signed statement from the licensee stating that the parent is the assistant.
- Proof that the parent's fingerprints are associated with the licensed family childcare home as its assistant a teacher and/ or caregiver.
- Proof of payroll deductions withheld for the assistant by the licensee, which may be a check stub.

When a parent works in the same **SMALL** family childcare home where their child is enrolled, this employment **DOES NOT** preclude caring for their own child and the family would not be eligible for childcare services for this type of employment.

If parent's work is conducted in the family's home or on the property that includes the family's home, the parent must provide justification for requesting childcare services based on the type of work being done and its requirements, the age of the family's child for whom services are being requested, and, if the child is more than five (5) years old, the specific child care needs. (Title 5, Section 18086.1)

## **Travel and Sleep Time for Employment**

Parents may request childcare for travel time to and from the location where childcare services are provided and the place of employment. Choices for Children will determine the travel time authorized, based on your request and the amount that is reasonable based on the distance and your method of transportation.

- **Travel Time** For employment cannot exceed half of the daily hours authorized for employment or four (4) hours per day (whichever is less).
- **Sleep Time:** A parent may request childcare for sleep time if the work hours are anytime between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Childcare for sleep time may not exceed the number of hours approved for employment and travel time during the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

## **Seeking Employment**

If the basis of need for services is **ONLY** seeking employment, the parent's period of eligibility for childcare and development services is for not less than twenty-four (24) months. Parent will be required to sign the Seeking Employment Agreement:

- Each parent in the family unit is eligible to seek employment.
- A written plan is needed to secure, change, or conduct other job search related activities which are reasonable and necessary for securing employment.
- A seeking employment schedule (days and hours) is discussed with your counselor.
- Service hours may be authorized for less than thirty (30) hours per week and no more than five days per week.

## **Educational Programs**

If the basis of need as stated on the application for services is educational programs as defined in section 18078, early learning and care services shall be limited in total:

- Six years from the initiation of services based on enrollment in educational programs.
- The period of eligibility for services shall be no less than (24) months.
- Parents may voluntarily report changes to increase their childcare service level at any time during their (24) months eligibility.

The following criteria and documentation are required:

The parent shall provide documentation of the days and hours of enrollment in an educational program, which shall include:

- The name of the institution that is providing the instruction.
- The parent's current class schedule that is either an electronic print-out from the educational program or, if unavailable, a document that includes all the following:
  - a. The classes in which the parent is currently enrolled.
  - b. The days of the week and times of day of the classes; and
  - c. A registration confirmation from the educational program.
- At recertification, the continuation of services for Educational Program is contingent upon the parent making adequate progress.
- To document adequate progress for the last enrolled quarter, semester, or training period. The parent shall provide documentation from the college classes, technical school, or apprenticeship for which subsidized care is provided demonstrating the following:
  - a. In a graded program, achievement of a minimum 2.0 grade point average; for the last enrolled quarter, semester, or academic enrollment period; or
  - b. In a non-graded program, passing the program's requirements in at least 50 percent of the classes or meeting the training institution's standard for making adequate progress.
- If at recertification the parent has made adequate progress based on the provided documentation, the certified schedule may be established.
- If the parent has not made adequate progress and cannot establish another basis of need for services, the family shall be:
  - a. Disenrolled from services; and
  - b. Once disenrolled, the parent shall be ineligible to be certified for services based on enrollment in the Educational Program for six months from the date of disenrollment.

## Vocational Training

If the basis of need for services is vocational training, the parent's period of eligibility for services shall be no less than (24) months. The parent may voluntarily report changes to increase their childcare service level at any time during their (24) months eligibility.

Vocational training as defined in section 18078, early learning and care services shall be limited in total, to whichever occurs first:

- (1) Six years from the initiation of services based on need for vocational training; or
- (2) Twenty-four semester units, or the equivalent, after the attainment of a bachelor's degree.

The following criteria and documentation are required:

- The name of the training institution that provides vocational training.
- The parent's current class schedule that is either an electronic print-out from the training institution, if unavailable, a document that includes all the following:
  - (A) The classes in which the parent is currently enrolled.
  - (B) The days of the week and times of day of the classes; and
  - (C) The signature or stamp of the training institution's registrar.
- At recertification, the continuation of services for vocational training is contingent upon the parent making adequate progress.
- To document adequate progress for the last enrolled quarter, semester, or training period, the parent shall provide documentation from the college classes, technical school, or apprenticeship for which subsidized care is provided demonstrating the following:
  - (1) In a graded program, achievement of a minimum 2.0 grade point average; for the last enrolled quarter, semester, or academic enrollment period; or
  - (2) In a non-graded program, passing the program's requirements in at least 50 percent of the classes or meeting the training institution's standard for making adequate progress.
- If at recertification the parent has made adequate progress based on the provided documentation, the certified schedule may be established.
- If the parent has not made adequate progress and cannot establish another basis of need for services, the family shall be:
  - (1) Disenrolled from services; and
  - (2) Once disenrolled, the parent shall be ineligible to be certified for services based on enrollment in vocational training for six months from the date of disenrollment.

## **Travel and Study Time for Educational Programs/Vocational Training**

Parents/guardians may request childcare for travel time to and from the location where childcare services are provided to the location of your vocational training. Choices for Children will determine the travel time authorized, based on your request, and what amount is reasonable based on the distance and your method of transportation.

- **Travel time:** Granted for vocational training cannot exceed half of the weekly hours authorized for training or four (4) hours per day (whichever is less).
- **Study Time:** Two hours per week per academic unit and on a case-by-case basis, no more than the number of class hours per week for non-academic or non-unit bearing training.

## **Incapacity**

If the basis of need is incapacity, childcare services for parental incapacity may not exceed fifty (50) hours per week. The period of eligibility for services when the need for services is incapacity is for not less than (24) months. A statement that the parent is unable to provide care and supervision for the child(ren) due to a physical or mental condition documentation of the incapacity must be obtained from a legally qualified health professional.

The documentation must state or include all the following:

- a. Parent/guardian is incapacitated.
- b. Parent/guardian is incapable of providing care and supervision for the child(ren) for part of the day, and the extent to which you are incapable of providing care and supervision.
- c. The days and hours per week that childcare services are recommended to accommodate incapacitation, taking into account the age of the child(ren) and the childcare needs.
- d. The name, business address, telephone number, professional license number, and signature of the legally qualified health professional who is rendering the opinion of incapacitation and, if applicable, the name of the health organization with which the professional is associated.

## **Homelessness**

If the basis of eligibility and need is homelessness, the family data file shall include documentation of homelessness. The documentation of homelessness shall include:

- Written referral dated within three (3) months prior from one of the following entities.
  1. A legal, medical, or social service agency.
  2. A local educational agency liaison for children and youth experiencing homelessness.
  3. A Head Start program; or
  4. An emergency or transitional shelter
  5. A written parental declaration that the family is homeless and a statement describing the family's current living situation.
- Services shall be as requested by the parents and shall occur on no more than five days per week and for less than (30) hours per week.
- The period of eligibility for services when the need for services is homelessness is for not less than (24) months.



## **Seeking Permanent Housing**

If the basis of need is seeking permanent housing, the parent's initial certification or recertification period for childcare services shall receive no less than (24) months. The parents will be required to sign the Seeking Permanent Housing Agreement.

The parent shall provide:

- A written parental declaration that the family is seeking permanent housing must be signed under penalty of perjury.
- The parent must have a written plan to secure a fixed, regular, and adequate residence.
- A seeking permanent housing schedule (days and hours) is discussed with your Family Childcare Counselor.
- Service hours may be authorized for less than thirty (30) hours per week and no more than five days per week.

## **Methods of Communication to Parents**

Choices for Children will contact Parents through a variety of communication methods such as telephone, mail, email, and/or SMS text messaging. All mail, electronic email and/or SMS text messaging is considered deliverable based on the most current home and email address and/or mobile phone number on file provided by the parent(s) to Choices for Children. Parents are responsible and encouraged to voluntarily report any changes relating to their home or email address to ensure Choices for Children has the most current information.

## **Regional Market Rate Ceilings (RMR)**

The average rates charged for several types of childcare services as determined by a statewide survey of providers. The results of this survey determine the maximum amount (the ceiling) Choices for Children is allowed to reimburse providers for childcare services based on the county in which they provide care.

## **Child Care Subsidies**

To complete enrollment in the program, the parent is allowed ten (10) business working days to select an eligible childcare provider.

To be eligible, the childcare provider must meet the following:

- Be eighteen years old.
- Provide a current childcare license or authorized work status, a social security card and valid picture identification. The parent is free to choose the type of care that reasonably meets the needs of the family. This includes licensed childcare centers, licensed family childcare or a license exempt provider. The parent may request a "provisional provider" (exempt non-relative family, friend, or neighbor) if there is an immediate need for childcare.

Immediate need is when the parent is employed, engaged in a CalWORKs activity, training or incapacitated and no childcare is reasonably available from a licensed provider. (MB 13-01) In addition to the above definition, Choices for Children interprets "immediate need" as a request made by the parent for a provider who meets the cultural and linguistic requirements of the family and/or whom the parent trusts to provide for the physical and emotional safety of their children. Choices for Children will provide resources as to the care available in the county.

If a license exempt provider is chosen, the provider may need to complete the TRUSTLINE application process before care begins. A license exempt provider becomes an eligible provider when their TRUSTLINE registration is cleared. If the provider fails to complete the TRUSTLINE application process, the parent may need to select a licensed provider or other eligible license exempt provider. If the TRUSTLINE application is DENIED, the provider is immediately ineligible to receive payment, and any care costs accrued are the responsibility of the parent. **Parents have unlimited access to their children in all types of childcare arrangements.**

*Choices for Children will not issue a Certificate for Child Care Services until the child care provider is eligible to receive reimbursement. New providers have thirty (30) days to complete the eligibility process. No payment will be authorized until the “Provider eligibility process” is complete and approved by Choices for Children.*

## **Child Care Schedules**

Documentation of family’s basis of need, child(s) need for care, plus applicable travel time, will be used to determine family’s days and hours of authorized childcare. The authorized childcare is referred to as family’s “certified need for childcare.” The certified need for childcare will be either a set or variable schedule.

### **Set Schedule**

A set childcare schedule will be approved when the days and hours of care are the same each week or have a predictable cycle or pattern.

An example of a set childcare schedule is Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

### **Variable Schedule**

A variable childcare schedule will be approved when the days and hours of care vary each week and are not predictable. Variable childcare schedules are authorized “up to” a maximum number of hours per week.

An example of a variable childcare schedule: variable up to 45 hours per week.

## **Child Care Certificates**

### **Establishing Certificate**

Upon initial approval of childcare services, a Child Care Certificate will be issued to you and your family’s approved provider. A certificate signed by the Child Care Counselor will be issued for each child reflecting the authorized hours of care and the estimated amount of reimbursement from Choices for Children. The certified need of care will not include the scheduled instructional time of a public educational program or private school in which the child is enrolled. The maximum reimbursement amount is based on age of the child, the certified need of childcare and the facility type of care to identify the applicable regional market rate ceiling (RMR). The reimbursement amount is either the RMR ceiling or the provider’s usual and customary rate for the same type of services, whichever is less. Both the parent and the provider must review, sign, and return the certificate within ten (10) business days of receiving it.

The end date of the Child Care Certificate is the last day of the family's current need. Childcare services may end or change prior to that date and such changes are always communicated with a Notice of Action to the parent and a notice to the childcare provider.

A new Child Care Certificate shall be issued any time a family has a new childcare provider, hours of care have changed or the estimated reimbursement amount changes due to a change in childcare services or rates (Ex: a provider's rate change).

### **Additional information about the Child Care Certificate:**

If a child's schedule changes, but a new certificate has not been issued and sent, the parent is encouraged to voluntarily report and contact their Family Child Care Counselor.

The following Nulls and Voids an active/valid Child Care Certificate:

- If altered, modified, or in any way changed (other than the signature) by a CFC Staff.
- Upon parent's or child's loss of authorization.
- When subsequent certificates are issued to modify previous ones.

### **Co-payments**

If a parent chooses a provider with rates exceeding the maximum subsidy amount for the type of care provided, the parent is responsible for paying the difference. This difference is considered the parent co-payment. This co-payment shall be paid directly by the parent to the provider and will not be accounted for by Choices for Children.

### **Registration Fees**

Form CDFS9525 is used to determine the amount of a provider's registration fee that is reimbursable. The parent may pay any remaining registration fee to the provider as a co-payment. If a provider's rate is already at the maximum, then NONE of the registration fee is reimbursable.

### **Provider Non-operation Days**

Choices for Children will pay ten (10) days per fiscal year for the provider non-operation days, regardless of child's date of enrollment. Provider non-operation days are when the provider is closed for business and requires payment, such as holidays and other days as specified in the provider's policy or contract. The provider must provide documentation that this policy applies to unsubsidized and subsidized families who use the same service. If the provider has more than ten (10) days per fiscal year, Choices for Children will only pay the first ten (10) days on the provider's closure date list beginning each new fiscal year from July 1st to June 30th or ten non-operation days as designated in writing by the provider. The parent is responsible for any difference in the payment to the provider.

The provider needs to provide an updated list of non-operational days every year. If CFC does not receive a provider's current closure list each fiscal year, any program closure days will remain non-paid until provider submits documentation to their designated provider specialist. If the provider specifies a holiday by name (such as Memorial Day) then it will be assumed that the named holiday dates every year will be designated as non-operational days each year unless the provider specifies otherwise. If the provider wants to choose to receive reimbursement for the ten closure dates or days other than the first ten days on their list, the provider must send a request in writing.

## Multiple Providers

Choices For Children will reimburse only **one provider for childcare services per child** when the hours of operation of childcare provider selected by the parent can accommodate the certified need for childcare. However, Choices for Children may reimburse more than one provider per child when the hours of operation of the first provider cannot accommodate the certified need for childcare or the following circumstances:

- 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.
- **An alternate or back-up provider** is needed when a family's primary provider is closed for scheduled non-operational days, or your child is ill and cannot attend childcare center or home. The alternate or back up provider will be reimbursed as approved childcare hours for ten (10) days per fiscal year if the primary provider requires payment for absences.

## Provider Notices

If the parent has any changes in their childcare need (e.g., change provider, hours, days of care, family fee and terminations), Choices for Children will inform the Child Care Provider by mailing a "Provider Notice" to the provider and/or mail a copy of the Parent's Notice of Action.

## Attendance Guidelines

A family enrolled in the **California Alternative Payment Program**, or the **CalWORKs** program agrees to use specific days/hours of care based on the need authorized on the Child Care Certificate issued by Choices for Children.

## Attendance Log(s)

Parents and providers must maintain an attendance log on a daily basis to record the child's attendance with the childcare provider. Parents are responsible to report the child's actual time in and out daily.

School-age children must also reflect an actual time in and out for school hours (this can be done by the provider). The **attendance logs are legal documents; therefore, they must be completed**, accurately by **both** the parent and the provider. **They must reflect the actual time in and out of care (see sample). Parents are responsible for paying providers for any care used but not approved by Choices for Children.**

Attendance logs must be completed properly by the parent and the childcare provider before payment can be made. Failure to complete the attendance logs in a prompt and proper manner may result in termination from the program.

**The provider is responsible for submitting the attendance logs monthly to Choices for Children for reimbursement.**

Original attendance log must be received by Choices for Children no later than the fifth business day of the month following the month of care by 5:00 pm. Choices for Children will mail or direct deposit your reimbursement check to your bank account on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) working day of the month. The attendance logs submitted after the fifth business day of the month may result in a delay of reimbursement. The late attendance logs will be reimbursed by the last Wednesday of the month.

Choices For Children recommends that providers make a copy of all attendance log(s), for their own records, **prior** to submitting them to Choices for Children for reimbursement.

Attendance log(s) may be mailed or dropped off directly at Choices for Children's office at **20 Great Oaks Blvd, Suite #200, San Jose CA 95119** or left in drop box outside the office location. Choices for Children is not responsible for Attendance log(s) lost in the mail or left in the drop box.

Once attendance records are received by Choices for Children; they are stamped date received and distributed to the assigned Family Child Care Counselor.

## **Attendance Log(s) Review**

Choices for Children is responsible to review the use of childcare services to ensure that the days and hours of care are broadly consistent with family's authorized childcare schedule.

**Broadly Consistent:** The days and hours used by the parent are the same or those approved on the childcare certificate and would not result in a change of authorized hours of care and/or authorized rate.

If there is a temporary or one time change in the parent's schedule, and the parent notified the subsidy counselor of the change, it will be considered as broadly consistent in approved hours of care. If the parent reports any changes, applicable changes in authorized childcare hours will be made after necessary documentation is received and verified.

### **Unauthorized and/or additional hours of care reported on the Attendance Log(s)**

To receive consideration for reimbursement of additional hours parents must do the following:

- Inform your Family Childcare Counselor of the need for additional childcare hours.
- Submit supporting documentation of your childcare need for the additional hours.
- Supporting documentation may include: (Employer generated work schedule, letter from employer written on company letterhead, pay stub showing the additional hours worked).

While the additional childcare hours may be eligible for reimbursement, the reimbursement to your provider may not necessarily increase as the estimated rate may already be the maximum allowable reimbursement amount.

### **Set Schedule**

When a family is authorized a set childcare schedule, the childcare usage is reviewed when Choices for Children processes the attendance records for reimbursement. **If there is a pattern of care usage which is broadly inconsistent** with the authorized days and hours, the parent may contact the APP Family Childcare Counselor to increase the child's hour of care.

## **Variable Schedule**

When a family has a variable childcare schedule, childcare usage and need activity are reviewed by your Family Childcare Counselor based on the maximum of your work hours plus travel time.

## **Provider Reimbursement based on the certified need:**

Effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, CFC will continue to reimburse providers based on the certified need regardless of attendance.

- For families certified for variable schedules, providers shall be reimbursed based on the maximum authorized hours of care.
- For license-exempt providers that provide part-time services, providers shall be reimbursed based on the maximum authorized hours of care.

## **Excused Absence Policy**

Choices for Children will pay for the days and hours of care as approved on the childcare certificate for excused absences if they are noted on the attendance log. Excused absences include:

- Illness of the child
- Illness of the parent
- Family emergency (death in the family, court dates, automobile accident, etc.)
- Family quarantine
- Parents' work vacation or other time spent which is in the best interest of the child.

If the children are recipients of protective services or at risk of abuse or neglect (CPS), excused absences "in the best interest of the child" shall be limited to ten (10) days during the fiscal year.

If an excused absence is based on the time spent with a parent or other relative as required by a court of law, a copy of the Court Order must be in the parents' file.

The parent may notify Choices for Children of the child(ren)'s absences by telephone or in writing. If the Family Childcare Counselor verifies the excused absences by telephone, we will write and sign on the verification of excused absence form. The form should be attached to the attendance log. Choices for Children will not disenroll any family due to excessive absences unless we determine that the family has abandoned the care.

## **Non-Reimbursement of Attendance Log(s)**

All or part of an attendance log(s) may not be eligible for reimbursement when:

- Attendance log(s) is faxed, or a copy is submitted, without an authorized reason.
- Missing times, provider and/or parent's signature on the attendance log(s) may prevent reimbursement.
- Hours of care on the attendance log(s) are inconsistent with those on the childcare certificate.
- A license-exempt non-Relative childcare provider is not registered with TRUSTLINE within thirty (30) days of TRUSTLINE Registry Background Check Application (TLR Date).
- Providers who have not completed their eligibility process and have not been approved.
- A provider's childcare license is suspended or revoked.
- The parent and/or provider has committed fraud regarding eligibility or childcare services provided.

## **Abandonment of Care**

The provider must promptly notify Choices for Children if the family has not used care for seven consecutive calendar days and has not notified or been in communication with the provider of the reason for absences.

Choices for Children will attempt to contact the parent through a variety of communication methods. Our staff will inform the parents that failure to respond to our request within 30 days may result in termination of childcare services.

Choices for Children will issue a Notice of Action to disenroll the family on the basis of abandonment of care when there has been no communication with the provider or CFC counselors for a total of thirty (30) consecutive calendar days.

## **Changing Providers**

When a family decides to change childcare providers, the parent must give two (2) weeks notice to both the current provider and Choices for Children. Failure to do so may result in termination from the program.

If two (2) week notice is not given to the provider, the parent is liable for payment to the new provider. Families and providers may mutually agree to end contracted care before a two (2) week notice period has been used. In such cases, both parties must contact Choices for Children to verify the agreement. If a family terminates childcare with a provider and the family remains enrolled in the program, a new provider must be found within **ten (10) business working days**.

If a license exempt provider is chosen, the provider may need to complete the TRUSTLINE application process before care begins. A license exempt provider becomes an eligible provider when their TRUSTLINE registration is cleared. If the provider fails to complete the TRUSTLINE application process, the parent may need to select a licensed provider or other eligible license exempt provider. If the TRUSTLINE application is DENIED, the provider is immediately ineligible to receive payment and any care costs accrued are the responsibility of the parent.

**Oliver’s Law Oliver’s Law AB633 (Benoit)** – 2006 (AKA: California Child Day Care Facilities Act) Oliver’s Law gives parents the right to access any substantiated or inconclusive complaints concerning the care of licensed childcare providers (centers or family childcare homes). Parents may access this information by calling Community Care Licensing at (408) 324-2148 FAX (408) 324-2160.

**Megan’s Law Megan’s Law HR 2137 (AKA: Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994)** Megan’s Law requires states under the State’s sex offender registration program and under “the designated State law enforcement agency and any local law enforcement agency authorized by the State agency [to] release relevant information that is necessary to protect the public concerning a specific person required to register under this section.” Additional information can be found at the State of California Department of Justice / Megan’s Law website at <http://meganslaw.ca.gov/>.

## **Transfer**

When a family moves out of Santa Clara County, Choices for Children can provide referral information for subsidized childcare in other counties in California. Programs throughout the state **may** enroll families who transfer from Choices for Children if funds are available to accept the transfer at that time and if it is the other agency's policy to accept transfers on a priority basis.

## **Confidentiality of records:**

All information obtained in the case file is confidential. Files are only viewed by the agency childcare counselors, program management, or by designated individuals to meet internal or external audit state requirements for audit purposes. Information is not shared with any outside party without a court order or subpoena. Parents/Foster parents may view their files at their request.

## **Anti-Harassment/Zero Tolerance Policy**

The Company is committed to providing a work environment free of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. This policy applies to all persons involved in the operation of the Company and prohibits harassment by or towards any employee of the Company, including co-workers, third parties, supervisors, managers, independent contractors, and any other persons. This policy is reflected in **CHAPTER 2 General Policies (Pages 4 and 5) and CHAPTER 7 HEALTH AND SAFETY (Page 35) from the Employee Handbook for CHILD DEVELOPMENT, INC.**

Harassing conduct towards employees 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. Inappropriate or harassing behavior may result in delay of services or disenrollment from the program.

## **Fraud Prevention**

Choices for Children takes the issue of childcare fraud very seriously. Fraud is a serious issue that impacts our ability to serve children. Choices for Children reserves the right to request repayment for services determined to be obtained fraudulently and may refuse future participation with any program administered by the agency. In addition, we will not hesitate to terminate parents and/or providers who purposefully do not follow the Title 5 Regulation and the Parent and Provider Policies and Procedures Guidelines.

The Choices for Children Eligibility Waitlist has many children who are eligible and waiting for subsidized care. Our ultimate goal is to ensure those who truly need help receive it and that the taxpayers of California have confidence in the way we spend tax dollars.



## Termination/Fraud Policy

Choices for Children may terminate a family from program eligibility for any of the following:

1. Delinquency in payment of the family fee.
2. Collaborating with other individuals to commit fraudulent acts.
3. If you are enrolled and currently receiving services from another alternative payment program for childcare services in Santa Clara County or any other county in California.
4. Failure to provide current and correct information as requested at certification or recertification.
5. Fraudulent, false, or misleading documentation regarding training programs, schools, medical incapacitation, employment, and/or income.
6. Harassing conduct towards employees, as defined in CFC's Parent Handbook.
7. Per parent request. *Please note: If our agency has funding available for enrollment, a family who voluntarily disenrolls from our program before their 24-month eligibility period ends can be reinstated and use the remaining eligible months without submitting any new documentation or another application for services.*
8. For Cause

If any of the above applies the family will receive a nineteen (19) day Termination Notice of Action. **This Notice of Action is not an extension for any previous Termination.**

# UNIFORM COMPLAINT POLICY

## Child Development Inc. / Choices for Children

Child Development Inc. /Choices for Children strives to provide the community with the highest quality programs and services for children, families, and providers. We live within the guidelines of all applicable laws, regulations, and ethical standards. We therefore welcome feedback and suggestions from parents, families and providers about our programs and services. It is our agency's desire to handle all issues and complaints as quickly as possible.

Individuals, agencies, organizations, families, providers, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding our program's alleged violation of federal and/or state laws. It is our agency's preference that complaints be filed with our agency first. However, in the event that any party is not satisfied with the services rendered and wants to express or file a formal complaint, we will handle such complaint in the following manner:

- We will provide the complainant with information about their rights and guidelines for filing a formal complaint with the appropriate government agency or department that has jurisdiction for the program.
- If the family or provider is not satisfied with the final decision of the agency, remedies may be sought in federal or state court.
- When a written complaint is brought directly to any staff manager at Child Development Inc./Choices for Children, they will acknowledge receipt, in writing, within 3-5 working days.
- Child Development Inc. will conduct an internal investigation regarding the issue or complaint.
- Depending on the nature and severity of the issue, Senior Management will decide on the composition and size of the team conducting the investigation.
- An independent party will be designated to coordinate and conduct the investigation.
- The family and/or provider will not be negatively affected by the continued usage of our services due to their action in filing the complaint.
- We will treat the family and/or provider with respect in the investigation of the complaint.
- We expect the family or provider to provide necessary information and cooperation in the investigation of the complaint.
- We will give the employees who are involved in the situation the opportunity to give an account of the events and explain their perspectives.
- The decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing within thirty (30) days. Any extenuating circumstance that might require more time will be communicated at least one week prior to the date the decision is due.
- An officer of the company will make the final decision on the outcome of the investigation, should there be any conflict or disagreement about the initial decision made by the in-house independent investigation.
- The time limit a complaint can be filed is governed by our funding terms and conditions and in the absence of those, is two years.

# Parent & Provider Handbook

## Fraud Policy

### Receipt and Acknowledgment

My signature below indicates that I have received the Choices for Children Parent & Provider Handbook and that I understand the Fraud Policy.

I understand that failure to provide information regarding my eligibility and/or providing false, fraudulent, and misleading information will result in termination from Choices for Children's subsidized program. I also understand that Choices for Children may refer cases involving suspicion of fraudulent activity to the California Department of Social Services and/or refer for criminal prosecution to local law enforcement agencies for investigation and/or prosecution to recover funds, as necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Family Child Care Counselor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Choices for Children



Child Development Incorporated

## Provider Section



**Dear Child Care Provider,**

Thank you for providing childcare services to our Choices for Children families.

Please follow the reimbursement process carefully and ensure that the Attendance Sheet is filled out completely and submitted in a timely manner.

**Attendance Sheet Submission Process**

- The Attendance Sheet is the legal document used to verify that child care services were provided as authorized by Choices for Children. The parent must sign in and out on a daily basis reflecting actual times.
- The provider is required to complete the service month section on the agency’s Pre-Filled Attendance Sheet. If copies of the Pre-Filled Attendance Sheet are needed, please contact our office at 408-297-3295. If the Pre-Filled Attendance Sheet is not utilized, providers must insure that the service month, parent’s full name (first and last), child’s full name (first and last), child’s date of birth, provider’s business name, provider payee’s name, and mailing address are filled out on the attendance sheets to prevent any error or delay in payment.
- The provider must indicate absent reason under absence reason for the dates children did not attend.
- At the end of each month, the provider and the parent both sign the bottom of the Attendance Sheet certifying actual child care services provided during the month. If both signatures are not on the Attendance Sheet, the sheet will be considered incomplete, and reimbursement may be delayed.

**Attendance Sheet Submission Deadlines & Reimbursement Timing**

- Attendance Sheets must be received by Choices for Children no later than the fifth (5th) business day of the month following the month of care. Choices for Children will mail or direct deposit your reimbursement check on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) business day of the month.
- Attendance Sheets received by Choices for Children between the 6<sup>th</sup> business day to the 15<sup>th</sup> business day of the month will be processed, and we will mail or direct deposit your reimbursement check on the last Wednesday of the month.
- Attendance Sheets received by Choices for Children after the 15<sup>th</sup> business day of the month will be processed and mailed out by the 10<sup>th</sup> business day of the following month.

For your convenience, the **MAIL OUT DATES for 2025** are listed below:

<b>January 15, 2025</b>	<b>July 15, 2025</b>
<b>February 14, 2025</b>	<b>August 14, 2025</b>
<b>March 14, 2025</b>	<b>September 15, 2025</b>
<b>April 14, 2025</b>	<b>October 15, 2025</b>
<b>May 14, 2025</b>	<b>November 14, 2025</b>
<b>June 13, 2025</b>	<b>December 12, 2025</b>

Please allow seven (7) business days for your reimbursement check to arrive. To help avoid a delay in your reimbursement, please follow the above procedures and immediately inform us of any change in your mailing address. Please feel free to call if you have any questions at (408)297-3295.

Thank you again for your cooperation and the services you provide for our families.

# Provider Information and Responsibility

## Providers as Independent Contractors

Thank you for your interest in contracting with Choices for Children to provide childcare services to a family enrolled in the subsidized childcare program. **All providers must welcome enrollment of children and families on a nondiscriminatory basis, according to equal treatment and access to services without regard to sex, race, religion, ethnic background, physical handicap/other special needs, or sexual preference.**

All payments for services will be issued to the provider on record. The State of California Employment Development Department requires Form DE 542 be completed for all active childcare service providers receiving payments from our agency. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact one of our Provider Compliance Specialists, @ 408-297-3295, during normal business hours.

Providers are **NOT** employees of Choices for Children and are held as **Independent Contractors** for Federal and State Tax purposes. You are **NOT** eligible for Workman's Compensation, Disability Insurance or Unemployment Benefits through Choices for Children.

**It is imperative that the correct mailing address and Taxpayer Identification Number be on file with our agency.**

This information must be the same for all requested documentation. For license exempt providers this Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) will be your social security number. Licensed providers and Day Care Centers who employ workers in their facilities may furnish their Employer Identification Number (EIN).

As an Alternative Payment Program, Choices for Children is required to report all payments of \$600 or more received by the childcare provider during the calendar year (January through December) as **Non-Employee Compensation** on IRS Form 1099-MISC. All payments reported are considered "self-employment" and no Federal or State taxes are withheld. You will receive Form 1099-MISC in the mail postmarked by January 31<sup>st</sup> of the year following the receipt of the payments. The information is also being furnished to the Internal Revenue Service and the California Franchise Tax Board. Choices for Children is **not** required to complete a Form 1099-MISC for providers who received less than \$600 in payments per calendar year. However, providers **are** required to report all income received for childcare services on their individual tax returns. Please contact your tax advisor if you are subject to withholding requirements and self-employment tax.

## Notification(s) to provider:

Choices for Children will provide written notification to providers regarding changes to a family's level of services, including childcare certificate, family fee, reimbursement amount, change of provider, disenrollment from services.

## **Abandonment of Care**

The provider must promptly notify Choices for Children if the family has not used care for seven consecutive calendar days and has not notified or in communication with the provider of the reason for absences.

Choices For Children will attempt to contact the parent through a variety of communication methods. Our staff will inform the parents that failure to respond to our request within 30 days may result in termination of childcare services.

Choices For Children will issue a Notice of Action to disenroll the family on the basis of abandonment of care when there has been no communication with the provider or CFC counselors for a total of 30 consecutive calendar days.

## **Eligibility to Receive Payment for Services**

Choices For Children is authorized to reimburse licensed family day care, childcare centers, and license exempt providers for childcare services. Choices For Children will not establish hours of care to be paid without a copy of the current Child Care License, and, if applicable, verification that TRUSTLINE registry has been CLEARED. **All providers must grant parents unlimited access to their children.**

Care is not reimbursable until all the provider paperwork is signed, returned and complete. **Choices For Children will not issue a Certificate for Child Care Services until the child care provider is eligible to receive reimbursement. New providers have 30 days to complete the eligibility process.**

**Until the child care provider is found to be eligible the parent will be responsible for child care reimbursement.**

Choices For Children will reimburse the provider directly for childcare services rendered as authorized on the childcare certificate. Reimbursement for childcare services is made on a prior month basis (after childcare has been provided).

**Example:** Providers can bill Choices for Children for October care on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **Fraud Prevention**

Choices For Children takes the issue of childcare fraud very seriously. Fraud is a serious issue that impacts our ability to serve children. Choices For Children reserves the right to request repayment or hold the payment for services determined to be obtained fraudulently and may refuse future participation with any program administered by the agency. In addition, we will not hesitate to terminate parents and/or providers who purposefully do not follow the Title 5 Regulation and the Parent and Provider Policies and Procedures Guidelines.

The Choices for Children Eligibility Waitlist has thousands of children who are eligible and waiting for subsidized care. Our goal is to ensure those who truly need help receive it and that the taxpayers of California have confidence in the way we spend tax dollars.

## **Termination/Fraud Policy**

When a family chooses to terminate from the program or from a childcare provider, it is required that they notify both Choices for Children and their childcare provider two (2) weeks in advance of their termination.

When a childcare provider terminates a family enrolled in the program, they must notify both Choices for Children and the parent two (2) weeks in advance of the termination to allow the family time to seek other care.

Choices For Children may terminate providers for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to provide current and correct information regarding childcare attendance.
- The childcare situation is deemed detrimental to the health and welfare of the child(ren).
- Submission of fraudulent or collusive information on requested paperwork.
- Submission of false or misleading documentation regarding program participation or payment for services.
- Failure to provide correct and current information as requested by Choices for Children.
- Cashing a reimbursement check that has already been reported lost.
- Collaborating with other individuals to commit fraudulent acts.
- A provider's childcare license is suspended or revoked.
- Denial of TRUSTLINE Clearance.
- Anti-Harassment/Zero Tolerance Policy
- For Cause.

If Choices for Children advises a provider that their affiliation with the program will be terminated, the childcare provider may appeal by offering documentation that disproves the allegation. The program director will then review the decision and inform the provider of the outcome of the appeal within ten (10) days. A final appeal may be made to the agency's corporate office if the provider is dissatisfied with the outcome of the agency appeal.



# **UNIFORM COMPLAINT POLICY**

## **Child Development Inc./ Choices for Children**

Child Development Inc. / Choices for Children strives to provide the community with the highest quality programs and services for children, families, and providers. We live within the guidelines of all applicable laws, regulations, and ethical standards. We therefore welcome feedback and suggestions from parents, families and providers about our programs and services. It is our agency's desire to handle all issues and complaints as quickly as possible.

Individuals, agencies, organizations, families, providers, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding our program's alleged violation of federal and/or state laws. It is our agency's preference that complaints be filed with our Agency first. However, in the event that any party is not satisfied with the services rendered and wants to express or file a formal complaint, we will handle such complaint in the following manner:

- We will provide the complainant with information about their rights and guidelines for filing a formal complaint with the appropriate government agency or department that has jurisdiction for the program.
- If the family or provider is not satisfied with the final decision of the agency, remedies may be sought in federal or state court.
- When a written complaint is brought directly to any staff manager at Child Development Inc. / Choices for Children, they will acknowledge receipt, in writing, within 3-5 working days.
- Child Development Inc. will conduct an internal investigation regarding the issue or complaint.
- Depending on the nature and severity of the issue, Senior Management will decide on the composition and size of the team conducting the investigation.
- An independent party will be designated to coordinate and conduct the investigation.
- The family and/or provider will not be negatively affected by the continued usage of our services due to their action in filing the complaint.
- We will treat the family and/or provider with respect in the investigation of the complaint.
- We expect the family or provider to provide necessary information and cooperation in the investigation of the complaint.
- We will give the employees who are involved in the situation the opportunity to give an account of the events and explain their perspectives.
- The decision will be communicated to the complainant in writing within thirty (30) days. Any extenuating circumstance that might require more time will be communicated at least one week prior to the date the decision is due.
- An officer of the company will make the final decision on the outcome of the investigation, should there be any conflict or disagreement about the initial decision made by the in-house independent investigation.
- The time limit a complaint can be filed is governed by our funding terms and conditions and in the absence of those, is two years.

# License Exempt Provider

## Relative/Non-Relative Care

In-Home and License-Exempt Child Care Providers may care for children from only one other family besides their own. All license-exempt providers must attend an Orientation at Choices for Children.

## TRUSTLINE

Individuals who are not the grand parent, aunt or uncle by blood, marriage, or court decree of the child(ren) in care are considered “non-Relative.” **All non-relative providers must be CLEARED by TRUSTLINE.** If TRUSTLINE is denied, childcare costs will not be paid and are the responsibility of the parent. The California Department of Social Services will mail a denial letter including information on the appeal process.

## Reimbursement Rates

Each provider may submit a RATE SHEET specifying their childcare rates. Choices for Children will not pay a provider above the state and county maximum reimbursement rate for the type of care provided. Any rate that exceeds the maximum will be the responsibility of the parent.

Questions regarding reimbursement payments or other accounting related issues should be directed to the Family Child Care Counselor.

## Provider Responsibilities and Service Reimbursement

Providers must keep daily attendance logs (provided by Choices for Children) for each child enrolled in the California Alternative Payment Program and CalWORKs programs. Each child must have a record of an actual time in and out of care by the parent/caretaker daily. Attendance logs for children attending school must reflect school hours. These attendance logs are used by Choices for Children to determine enrollment and provider reimbursement payments. **Attendance logs are legal documents. They must be completed accurately.** Attendance logs must be completed by both the parent and the provider.

**They must reflect actual time in and out of care (see sample). The provider is responsible for submitting attendance logs to Choices for Children, NOT THE PARENT.** Choices for Children will reimburse childcare provider(s) based on hours contracted on the Certificate for Child Care Services. If childcare is needed for additional hours or days on a permanent basis, Choices for Children will issue a new Certificate for Childcare Services.

**The Certificate for Child Care Services is a legal contract between the provider, the parent, and Choices for Children. They are utilized to determine the amount of payment to a provider. License-exempt child providers are not reimbursed for any absences or holidays in which the children are not in care.**

- Monitoring the daily documentation of EXACT clock times (IN and/or OUT) on the Attendance Log provided for each child enrolled.
- Entering EXACT daily time IN and/or OUT for school age children with split schedules.

- Signing the bottom of the Attendance Log each month on the last day of childcare stating under penalty of perjury childcare was used as authorized and documented on the Attendance Log. The signature of the provider indicates the person who is named (pre-printed) on the Attendance Log provided the childcare at the address on record with Choices for Children.
- Monitoring parents' compliance and accurately documenting reason for absences (i.e., ill, with grandparents, doctor appointment, etc.).
- Documenting a scheduled or unscheduled closure on the Attendance Log.

### **Provider's Valid ID Policy Requirement**

All exempt license providers (relative and non-relative) must have a valid, unexpired photo ID on file. Choices for Children will track the provider's ID expiration date and request a new ID when the ID expires. The childcare provider must mail or email our staff a copy of their new ID within 30 days of their ID expiring. If the provider does not provide an updated ID, we will send a NOA of termination and the family will be notified that they may need to find a new childcare provider. If the provider still provides childcare services after the renewal ID expires (the second time the ID expires), the provider will be required to meet one-on-one with our staff to go through orientation again, renew all the eligibility documents and provide a new valid, unexpired photo ID.

### **Complaints**

Childcare providers who want to register a complaint regarding the program should contact the Program Director. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved.

Complaints lodged against childcare providers are reviewed to determine if the issue is a personal disagreement between individual parties or if the welfare of the child(ren) in care is in jeopardy. This is done as reasonably as possible. Personal matters are left to those involved for resolution; however, if requested Choices for Children representatives may participate as a mediator. Choices for Children will determine whether or not a two-week notice is to be given to the provider. The more serious matters will be reported to the appropriate agency, such as the Department of Social Services and/or local law enforcement for review. Choices for Children does not make a judgment as to guilt or innocence of the provider, but as a mandated reporter, must notify the licensing agency if a serious complaint is lodged.

**Parent & Provider Handbook  
Fraud Policy  
Receipt and Acknowledgment**

My signature below indicates that I have received the Parent & Provider Handbook from Choices for Children. I understand the information provided and my responsibilities. It is clear to me that Child Care Providers are held as **Independent Contractors** for Federal and State Tax purposes and are **NOT** employees of Choices for Children. I am **NOT** eligible for Workman’s Compensation, Disability Insurance or Unemployment Benefits through Choices for Children.

The Termination/Fraud Policy has been explained to me. I understand that Choices for Children may refer cases involving suspicion of fraudulent activity to the California Department of Social Services and/or refer for criminal prosecution to local law enforcement agencies for investigation and/or prosecution to recover funds, as necessary.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child Care Provider

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Childcare Provider Specialist

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Licensed Providers

## Reimbursement Rates

Choices For Children will not pay a provider above the state and county maximum for the type of care provided. Any rate that exceeds Choices for Children 's maximum will be the responsibility of the parent. **Providers must not charge Choices for Children more than they charge non-subsidized families. Licensed providers are required to provide Choices for Children with a copy of their Contract/Parent Agreement/Payment Policy and a RATE SHEET.** Choices for Children will not pay licensed childcare providers for absences, holidays, and/or vacations unless it is stated on their Contract/Parent Agreement/Payment Policy. Choices for Children can pay no more than 10 (ten) non-Operation days per year, this includes provider vacations. **The California Department of Social Services 's legal office affirms that Title 5 regulations, as written, do not violate provisions of the Information Practices Act (IPA) or any other statues regarding privacy. There are provisions requiring agencies to treat information received from unsubsidized families as confidential.** Payment will be made at an hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly rate depending on the childcare needs of the parent.

ADA laws prohibit the charging of higher rates for children with special needs. If a provider's normal and customary rates charged to all families, is lower than the RMR (Regional Market Rate) ceiling **and** the provider has "on going, extra expenses directly related to caring for a particular child's special needs, the provider can then receive an adjusted rate for services provided.

Any new rates and/or policies requested will be **effective the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the following month** after the request has been submitted. Choices for Children will not back pay for rate change requests submitted late.

Questions regarding your reimbursement payments or other accounting related issues should be directed to the Child Care Counselor.

## Attendance

Providers must keep daily attendance logs (provided by Choices for Children) for each child enrolled in the California Alternative Payment Program and CalWORKs programs. Each child must have a record of an actual time in and out of care by the parent/caretaker daily. Attendance logs for children attending school must reflect school hours. These attendance logs are used by Choices for Children to determine enrollment and provider reimbursement payments. **Attendance logs are legal documents. They must be completed accurately.** Attendance logs must be completed by both the parent and the provider. **They must reflect actual time in and out of care (see sample). The provider is responsible for submitting attendance logs to Choices for Children, NOT THE PARENT.**

Choices for Children will reimburse childcare provider(s) based on hours contracted on the Certificate for Child Care Services. If childcare is provided for additional hours or days on a permanent basis, Choices for Children will issue a new Certificate for Childcare Services.

## **Provider Non-operation Days**

Choices for Children will pay ten (10) days per fiscal year for the provider non-operation days, regardless of child's date of enrollment. Provider non-operation days are when the provider is closed for business and requires payment, such as holidays and other days as specified in the provider's policy or contract. The provider must provide documentation that this policy applies to unsubsidized and subsidized families who use the same service. If the provider has more than ten (10) days per fiscal year, Choices for Children will only pay the first ten (10) days on the provider's closure date list beginning each new fiscal year from July 1st to June 30th or ten non-operation days as designated in writing by the provider. The parent is responsible for any difference in the payment to the provider.

The provider needs to provide an updated list of non-operational days every year. If CFC does not receive a provider's current closure list each fiscal year, any program closure days will remain non-paid until provider submits documentation to their designated provider specialist. If the provider specifies a holiday by name (such as Memorial Day) then it will be assumed that the named holiday dates every year will be designated as non-operational days each year unless the provider specifies otherwise. If the provider wants to choose to receive reimbursement for the ten closure dates or days other than the first ten days on their list, the provider must send a request in writing.

## **Complaints**

Childcare providers who want to register a complaint regarding the program should contact the Program Director. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem to the mutual satisfaction of all parties involved.

Complaints lodged against childcare providers are reviewed to determine if the issue is a personal disagreement between individual parties or if the welfare of the child(ren) in care is in jeopardy. This is done as reasonably as possible. Personal matters are left to those involved for resolution; however, if requested Choices for Children representatives may participate as a mediator. Choices for Children will determine whether or not a two- week notice is to be given to the provider. The more serious matters will be reported to Community Care Licensing for review. Choices for Children does not make a judgment as to guilt or innocence of the provider, but as a mandated reporter, must notify the licensing agency if a serious complaint is lodged.

Date Received  
**SAMPLE - AFTER SCHOOL**



**EXAMPLE**  
 Counselor's Name  
 ERIC WASHINGTON

**Choices for Children**  
 20 Great Oaks Blvd Suite 200 San Jose CA 95119  
 (408) 297-3295

MONTH JANUARY YEAR 2016 CHILD'S NAME JOHN SMITH CHILD'S ID: 00001  
 CHILD'S BIRTHDAY 08/01/2012 PARENT'S NAME SALLY SMITH PARENT'S ID: 99999

- Fill out one form per child.
- The parent must record **real time in** and/or **time out daily**.
- Indicate absent reason under **absence reason** for that date.
- Provider is responsible for submitting attendance log(s) to the subsidy office by 5:00 p.m. on the fifth business day of the month following service (example: October 2022 attendance log is to be turned in by November 7th).
- **Do not use white out and/or highlighting on attendance log(s).**

**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:** Provider/Business Name: HAPPY PROVIDER Phone #: 408-555-5555  
 Payee Name: HAPPY PROVIDER Provider ID: 22222  
 Address: 0000 MARKET STREET SAN JOSE, CA 95110

DAY OF MONTH	PARENT TIME IN THIS COLUMN	PROVIDER MUST TIME IN & OUT IF CHILD HAS A SPLIT SCHEDULE		PARENT TIME OUT THIS COLUMN ONLY	OFFICE USE
	PARENT TIME IN	PROVIDER TIME OUT	PROVIDER TIME IN	PARENT TIME OUT	ABSENCE REASON TOTAL HOURS
1					HOLIDAY
2			3:00	6:00	
3			3:00	6:06	
4			3:00	6:10	
5					
6					
7			3:00	6:00	
8			3:00	6:02	
9			3:00	6:00	
10			3:00	6:05	
11			3:00	6:15	
12					
13					
14			3:00	5:45	
15			3:00	6:03	
16			3:00	6:00	
17			3:00	5:56	
18			3:00	6:00	
19					
20					
21	NO SCHOOL				
22					
23					WITH DAD
24			3:00	6:00	
25			3:00	6:00	
26			3:00	5:57	
27					
28					
29			3:00	6:12	
30			3:00	6:00	
31			3:00	6:10	

**OFFICE USE ONLY** Last Month's Payment Week Pro-rated:  No  Yes

TOTAL HOURS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x HOURLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL DAYS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x DAILY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL WEEKS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x WEEKLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL MONTHS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x MONTHLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

COUNSELOR  
 \_\_\_\_\_

I declare under penalty of perjury this is a true and accurate log of attendance for this child for the month indicated. This is the same rate charged to non-subsidized families.

I certify the accuracy of the hours in this attendance log.

HAPPY PROVIDER  
 \*\*SIGNATURE OF PROVIDER (Required)  
Sally Smith  
 \*\*SIGNATURE OF PARENT (Required)

Date Received  
**SAMPLE - FULL TIME**

Choices for Children



Child Development Incorporated

Choices for Children

20 Great Oaks Blvd Suite 200 San Jose CA 95119

(408) 297-3295

**EXAMPLE**

Counselor's Name

ERIC WASHINGTON

MONTH JANUARY YEAR 2016

CHILD'S NAME JOHN SMITH

CHILD'S ID: 00001

CHILD'S BIRTHDAY 08/01/2012

PARENT'S NAME SALLY SMITH

PARENT'S ID: 99999

- Fill out one form per child.
- The parent must record **real time in** and/or **time out daily**.
- Indicate absent reason under **absence reason** for that date.
- Provider is responsible for submitting attendance log(s) to the subsidy office by 5:00 p.m. on the fifth business day of the month following service (example: October 2022 attendance log is to be turned in by November 7th).
- **Do not use white out and/or highlighting on attendance log(s).**

**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:**

Provider/Business Name: HAPPY PROVIDER  
 Payee Name: HAPPY PROVIDER  
 Address: 0000 MARKET STREET SAN JOSE, CA 95110

Phone #: 408-555-5555  
 Provider ID: 22222

DAY OF MONTH	PARENT TIME IN THIS COLUMN	PROVIDER MUST TIME IN & OUT IF CHILD HAS A SPLIT SCHEDULE		PARENT TIME OUT THIS COLUMN ONLY	ABSENCE REASON	OFFICE USE
	PARENT TIME IN	PROVIDER TIME OUT	PROVIDER TIME IN	PARENT TIME OUT		TOTAL HOURS
1					HOLIDAY	
2	6:00			4:00		
3	6:10			4:06		
4	6:00			4:00		
5						
6						
7	6:00			4:14		
8	6:00			5:00		
9	5:57			4:00		
10	6:08			4:00		
11	6:10			4:03		
12						
13						
14	6:55			4:11		
15					EAR INFECTION	
16					EAR INFECTION	
17	6:10			4:09		
18	6:00			4:00		
19						
20						
21					HOLIDAY	
22	6:10			3:56		
23	6:00			4:00		
24	6:03			4:03		
25	6:15			4:09		
26						
27						
28	6:00			4:00		
29	5:54			3:51		
30	6:00			4:10		
31	6:01			4:00		

OFFICE USE ONLY

Last Month's Payment Week Pro-rated:

No  Yes

TOTAL HOURS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x HOURLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL DAYS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x DAILY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL WEEKS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x WEEKLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL MONTHS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x MONTHLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

COUNSELOR

I declare under penalty of perjury this is a true and accurate log of attendance for this child for the month indicated. This is the same rate charged to non-subsidized families.

I certify the accuracy of the hours in this attendance log.

HAPPY PROVIDER

\*\*SIGNATURE OF PROVIDER (Required)

Sally Smith

\*\*SIGNATURE OF PARENT (Required)



Date Received  
**SAMPLE - SCHOOL AGE PT**

Choices for Children



Child Development Incorporated  
**Choices for Children**  
 20 Great Oaks Blvd Suite 200 San Jose CA 95119

(408) 297-3295

**EXAMPLE**  
 Counselor's Name  
 ERIC WASHINGTON

MONTH JANUARY YEAR 2016

CHILD'S NAME JOHN SMITH

CHILD'S ID: 00001

CHILD'S BIRTHDAY 08/01/2012

PARENT'S NAME SALLY SMITH

PARENT'S ID: 99999

- Fill out one form per child.
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	PARENT TIME IN	PROVIDER TIME OUT	PROVIDER TIME IN	PARENT TIME OUT		TOTAL HOURS
1					HOLIDAY	
2	6:00	8:00	3:00	6:05		
3	6:10	8:00	3:00	6:00		
4	6:00	8:00	3:00	6:00		
5						
6						
7	6:00	8:00	3:00	6:00		
8	6:00	8:00	3:00	6:15		
9	5:57	8:00	3:00	6:00		
10	6:08	8:00	3:00	6:00		
11	6:10	8:00	3:00	6:03		
12						
13						
14	6:55	8:00	3:00	6:11		
15	6:25	8:00	3:00	6:16		
16	6:18	8:00	3:00	6:00		
17	6:10	8:00	3:00	6:09		
18	6:00	8:00	3:00	6:00		
19						
20						
21					HOLIDAY	
22	6:10	8:00	3:00	5:56		
23	6:00	8:00	3:00	6:00		
24	6:03	8:00	3:00	6:03		
25	6:15	8:00	3:00	6:09		
26						
27						
28	6:00	8:00	3:00	6:00		
29	5:54	8:00	3:00	5:51		
30	6:00	8:00	3:00	6:10		
31	6:01	8:00	3:00	6:00		

OFFICE USE ONLY

Last Month's Payment Week Pro-rated:

No  Yes

TOTAL HOURS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x HOURLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL DAYS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x DAILY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL WEEKS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x WEEKLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOTAL MONTHS OF CARE \_\_\_\_\_ x MONTHLY PAY \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

COUNSELOR

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HAPPY PROVIDER  
 \*\*SIGNATURE OF PROVIDER (Required)

Sally Smith  
 \*\*SIGNATURE OF PARENT (Required)