

Choices for Children



Child Development Incorporated



Parent Handbook

Subsidized Child Care Program

Choices for Children



Child Development Incorporated

Visit one of our locations

Office Hours

Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

San Jose Office

20 Great Oaks Blvd, Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95119
(408)297-3295

Modesto Office

1165 Scenic Dr, Suite C-4
Modesto, CA 95350
(209)860-5030

Drop box available 24/7 outside of both office buildings.

Website

www.cfcsc.org



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Choices for Children



Child Development Incorporated

Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome to the Choices for Children childcare subsidy program! We are glad that this program can provide you the financial support needed to make safe, high-quality childcare affordable.

The Choices for Children Alternative Payment Program provides childcare subsidy assistance to low-income families who live or work in Santa Clara County and Stanislaus County. This critical financial support is available for children through age 13, or up to 21 years of age for children and young adults with exceptional needs. In our program you get to choose the best childcare option for your family and your child's needs – selecting between a licensed family home daycare, childcare center, or a trusted friend, relative, or neighbor.

Whether you are working already, looking for work, completing training, or going to school for your dream career, we are pleased to be part of your family's journey. We believe that access to reliable childcare brings tremendous peace of mind and enables you to build a better future for you and your children.

This Parent Handbook serves as a guide to the rules and requirements you should understand when you participate in our childcare subsidy program. In addition to this Handbook, our family counselors, provider specialists, and the rest of our Choices for Children team are here to help and support you every step of the way. Never hesitate to reach out and talk with them as your needs change, if you have a question or need help resolving an issue. They are here to support you.

I'm proud that our organization serves almost 3,000 families and 4,800 children across Santa Clara and Stanislaus Counties, and I am pleased to welcome your family to the Choices for Children program too. I hope that the support provided by this childcare subsidy program and our team has a positive impact for your family and gives you the opportunity to build a better life for you and your children.

Best Regards,



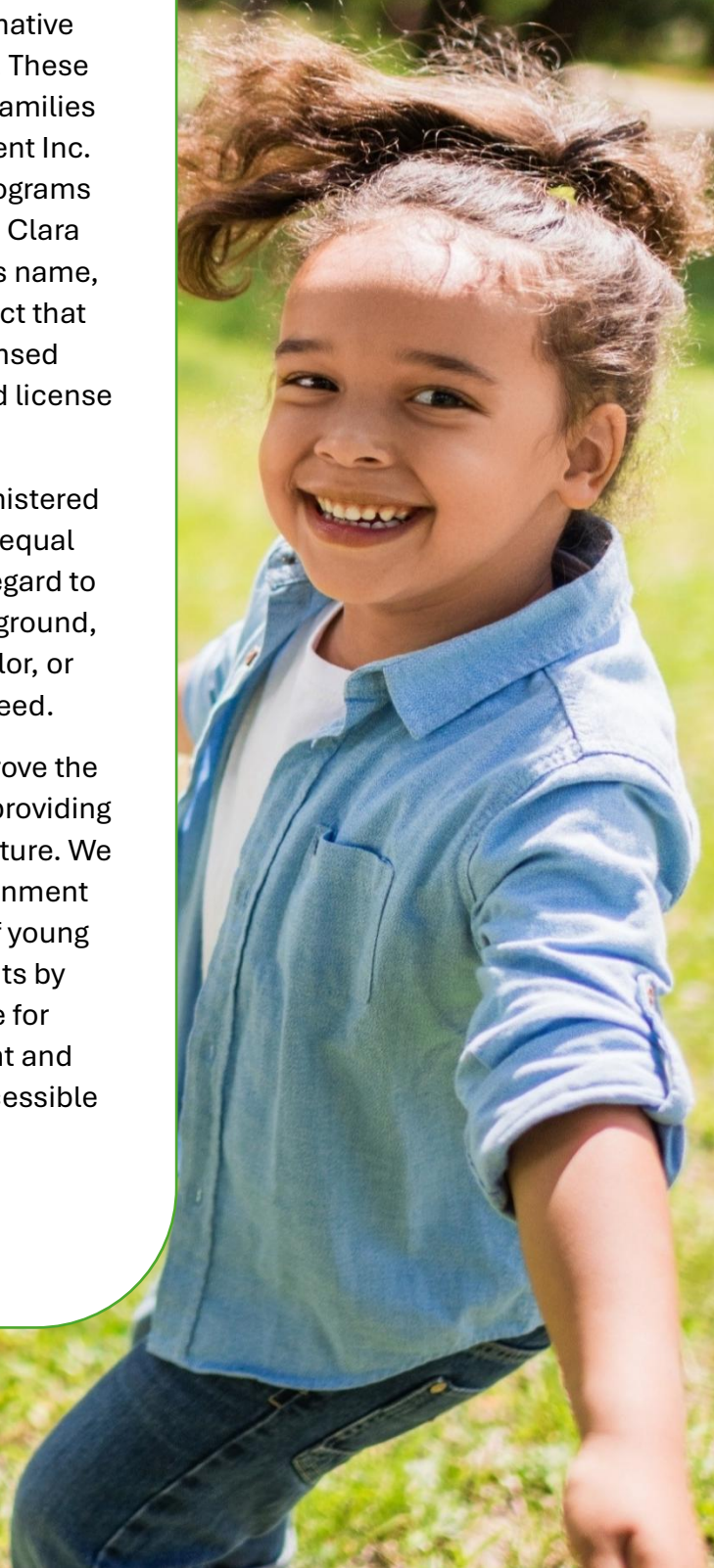
Elizabeth Dunn Andreini
Executive Director, Choices for Children
CEO, Child Development, Inc.

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 low- and moderate-income families find and pay for childcare. Child Development Inc. /Choices for Children administers these programs serving children and their families in Santa Clara County and Stanislaus 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. We provide 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 or special need.

Child Development, Inc.'s mission is to improve the quality of life for children and their families, providing them with the opportunity to build a better future. We strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment that fosters the development and growth of young children. Additionally, we empower parents by supporting their ability to gain or prepare for employment, while also working to prevent and reduce child abuse and neglect through accessible childcare services.



Enrollment Checklist



Enroll on our waitlist

Families can enroll on our waitlist by calling our office or emailing: waitlist@cfccsc.org



Documentation

Families must make sure to bring all required documents to their initial appointment.



Certification Process

A counselor will review all documents. If the family meets income and need requirements, we'll enroll them.



Completion

Once the family is approved, services will be provided for 24 months.



Types of Child Care Funding

CalWORKs Stage 2 (C2AP)- Families are placed in Stage 2 once a parent's approved activity is stabilized or when they are transitioning off cash aid. Families may continue receiving childcare under Stage 2 for up to 24 months after they no longer receive cash aid.

CalWORKs Stage 3 (C3AP)- Families who have exhausted the 24-month limit under Stage 2 may transfer to Stage 3. Stage 3 can continue as long as the family remains eligible and still requires care. If a family reaches the 24-month limit, they will be automatically transferred to Stage 3.

Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)- Available only in Santa Clara County, families are enrolled in this program through an internal waitlist managed by Choices for Children. Families are ranked for enrollment based on guidelines set by the State of California. Enrollment priorities are as follows:

- **First Priority** is given to children receiving child protective services or those at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, upon receiving a written referral from a legal, medical, or social services agency.
- **Second priority** is given to families with the lowest gross monthly income, adjusted for family size.
 - Within this priority, if two or more families have the same income ranking, priority will go to the family whose child has exceptional needs.
 - If no family within this priority has a child with exceptional needs, the family whose primary language is not English will be given priority.
 - If no family within this priority speaks a language other than English, the family that has been on the waiting list the longest will be given priority.

Note: Choices for Children enrolls families from the internal waitlist based on priority order as funding becomes available.

Each program has specific eligibility requirements, and parents will be informed of these requirements prior to the initial enrollment appointment. It is the responsibility of the parents to comply with the program's policies.

PARENT ENROLLMENT



Transfer from another CalWORKs Agency

When a family is transferred from CalWORKs Stage 1 to CalWORKs Stage 2, they will continue to receive the same level of childcare services for a minimum of 24 months, with no interruption in services. A family may, at any time, voluntarily request changes to increase or decrease the service level or reduce family fees. Based on the type of voluntary change, Choices for Children may request additional documentation.

Enrollment Requirements

Parents must attend an initial enrollment appointment to complete an application for childcare services. During this appointment, parents will need to provide documents that establish their family size, eligibility, and need for childcare services. These documents will be used to create a family data file and will be kept confidential.

Family Size Verification

Parents must provide supporting documentation to verify the number of children and parents in their family. Accepted documentation may include:

- Birth certificates or other live birth records.
- Court orders regarding child custody.
- Adoption documents.
- Records of foster care placements.
- School or medical records.
- County welfare department records.
- Any other reliable documentation that indicates the relationship between the child and parent.

Family refers to the parent(s) and the child(ren) for whom the parent(s) are responsible, living in the same household.

For purposes of determining income eligibility and assessing family fees, when a child and their siblings reside with a guardian who is not their biological or adoptive parent, the “family size” will be defined as the child and their related siblings only.

Eligibility

To be eligible for subsidized childcare, the family must meet the following criteria:

- The family must reside in California and live in the county where they are requesting services.
- The child receiving services must be under the age of 13. If the child is 13 or older, the family must provide documentation of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and a letter from a licensed professional stating that the child requires adult supervision in a childcare setting.

In addition to residency and age requirements, families must meet eligibility and need criteria. Once approved, families will receive services for at least 24 months, provided they continue to meet ongoing eligibility requirements. Parents must provide documentation to establish eligibility in one or more of the following categories:

- The parent is currently receiving CalWORKs cash aid.
- The family is receiving Child Protective Services (CPS) through the county welfare department or has a child who is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- The family is experiencing homelessness.
- The family meets income eligibility criteria.
- A member of the family is certified to receive benefits from one of the following means-tested government programs:
 - Medi-Cal
 - CalFresh
 - CalWORKs
 - WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)
 - Head Start
 - Early Head Start
 - Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
 - California Food Assistance Program

Need

"Need" is defined as any approved activity that prevents parents from caring for their child(ren). In a two-parent household, both parents must document a need for childcare, and their need must overlap, meaning neither parent is available to care for the child(ren). Parents must provide documentation of their need in one or more of the following categories:

- Employment or self-employment
- Educational program
- Vocational training
- Seeking employment
- Parental incapacity
- Homelessness
- Seeking permanent housing for family stability
- The child is a recipient of child protective services (CPS) or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation

Employment

When a parent is employed, they must provide documentation that reflects their work schedule, including the days and hours worked. If the total number of hours worked each week is consistent but the specific days and times vary, the documentation must support the total number of hours worked weekly. Acceptable forms of documentation may include one or more of the following:

- Pay stubs that indicate the days and hours of employment.
- Pay stubs that show the total hours worked per pay period.
- An independent written statement from the employer, indicating the days and hours of employment, sent directly to Choices for Children by the employer.
- Telephone verification conducted and documented by Choices for Children, with the parent's confirmed authorization to contact the employer.

Self-Employment

When a parent is self-employed, they must provide documentation consisting of the following:

- A declaration of need under penalty of perjury, which includes a description of the employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked per week
- As many of the following supporting documents are needed to verify the days and hours of employment:
 - appointment logs
 - calendar of daily work activities
 - client receipts
 - job logs
 - mileage logs
 - a list of clients with contact information
 - similar records
- If applicable, a copy of a business license, workspace lease or rental agreement, business cards, advertisements, or other documentation that supports proof of business operations.

Employed as an Assistant in a Licensed Large, Family Day Care Home

When a parent is employed as an assistant in a licensed large family day care home and is requesting childcare services for their own child within that same home. The parent is required to submit documentation supporting each of the following items:

- A copy of the family childcare license, showing it is licensed as a large family day care home.
- A signed statement from the licensee confirming that the parent is employed as an assistant.
- Proof that the parent's fingerprints are associated with the licensed family day care home as an assistant.
- Proof of payroll deductions withheld for the parent by the licensee, which may include a pay stub.

If a parent works in the same small family day care home in which their child is enrolled, the parent is considered available to care for their own child. Therefore, the family is not eligible to receive childcare services during those hours of employment.

Additionally, if a parent operates their own family day care home, they are not eligible to receive childcare services during their established business operating hours.

Parent Working from Home or On Home Property

If the parent's work is conducted in the family's home or on the property that includes the family's home, the parent must provide written justification for requesting childcare services. This justification must address:

- The type of work being performed and its requirements;
- The age of the child for whom childcare services are being requested;
- If the child is older than five (5) years, the specific care needs during the requested childcare hours. (Title 5, Section 18086.1)

Travel Time:

Parents may request childcare to cover travel time between their place of employment and the childcare provider. Choices for Children will determine authorized travel time based on the distance and the parent's method of transportation. Travel time for employment cannot exceed half of the daily authorized hours for employment, **or** four (4) hours per day (whichever is less).

Sleep Time:

Parents who work between 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM may request childcare to cover sleep time. Approved sleep time cannot exceed the number of hours authorized for employment and travel within that period. Sleep time will not be approved if another parent is available and capable of caring for the child(ren) during the requested time, **or** the child(ren) are already being supervised by a public or private school or other early learning and care program.

Educational Program

When a parent is enrolled in an educational program to earn a high school diploma, General Education Degree (GED), High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate, or in an English Language Learner (ELL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) program, child care services are limited to six years from the initiation of services based on the need for educational programs. Parents must provide documentation of the days and hours of the educational program, which must include:

- The name of the institution providing the instruction.
- A current class schedule, which may be:
 - An electronic printout from the educational program; or
 - If unavailable, a Vocational Training and Educational Program Verification Form signed or stamped by the educational program in which the parent is currently enrolled; or
 - Another official document that includes all of the following:
 - The classes in which the parent is currently enrolled
 - The days of the week and times of day of the classes
 - Registration confirmation from the educational program

All documentation must clearly reflect the parent's current enrollment and class schedule.

Online or televised instructional classes that are unit-bearing and provided by an accredited institution will count as one hour per week for each unit. The parent must also provide a copy of the syllabus or other class documentation, as applicable. The accrediting body of the training institution must be recognized by the United States Department of Education.

At the time of recertification, in order to continue receiving childcare services while enrolled in the educational program, the parent must demonstrate adequate progress. To do so, the parent must meet the following requirements:

- If in a graded program: Earn a minimum of a 2.0 GPA for the last enrolled quarter, semester, or academic enrollment period, **or**
- If in a non-graded program: Pass the program's requirements in at least 50% of the classes or meet the institution's standard for making adequate progress.

At the next recertification, if the parent does not make adequate progress, they must have another need for service, the family will be dis-enrolled due to inadequate progress. The need for educational programs will not be available for that parent for six (6) months.

Vocational Training

When a parent is enrolled in vocational training, childcare services are limited to six years from the initiation of services based on the need for vocational training or twenty-four semester units (or its equivalent) after attaining a bachelor's degree, whichever occurs first. Parents must provide documentation of the days and hours of vocational training, which must include:

- The name of the training institution providing vocational training.
- A current class schedule, which can be:
 - An electronic print-out from the training institution, **or**
 - If unavailable, a Vocational Training and Educational Program Verification Form **or** another document containing the following information:
 - The classes the parent is currently enrolled in.
 - The days of the week and times of day for each class.
 - The signature or stamp of the training institution's registrar.

Online or televised instructional classes that are unit-bearing and provided by an accredited institution will count as class time at one hour per week for each unit. The parent must also provide a copy of the syllabus or other class documentation as applicable. The accrediting body of the training institution must be recognized by the United States Department of Education.

To continue receiving childcare services while enrolled in vocational training, parents must make adequate progress. To meet this requirement, a parent must:

- If in a graded program: Earn a minimum of a 2.0 GPA for the last enrolled quarter, semester, or academic enrollment period, **or**
- If in a non-graded program: Pass the program's requirements in at least 50% of the classes or meet the training institution's standard for making adequate progress.

At the next recertification, if the parent does not make adequate progress, they must have another need for service, or the family will be dis-enrolled due to inadequate progress. The need for vocational training will not be available for that parent for six (6) months.

Study Time

Additional childcare for study time may be granted and is determined as follows:

- When the educational or vocational training program (including online or televised instructional classes) is based on academic units, study time is calculated at two hours per week for each academic unit in which the parent is enrolled.
- When the program is not based on academic units, study time cannot exceed the number of class hours per week.

Travel Time

Parents may request childcare for travel time between the location where childcare services are provided and the location of their educational or vocational program. Travel time is based on the actual time needed but may not exceed four (4) hours per day.

Once a parent reaches the six-year limit for Education or Vocational Training programs or completes 24 semester units after the parent has earned their Bachelor's Degree (whichever comes first), childcare services may continue until the next recertification.

Seeking Employment

When childcare is requested for seeking employment, childcare services are limited to no more than five (5) days per week and less than 30 hours per week. The parent must provide the following:

- A written declaration, signed under penalty of perjury, stating that the parent is seeking employment.
- The parents plan to secure, change, or increase employment.
- The specific days and hours for which childcare is being requested, while the parent engages in seeking employment activities.

Parental Incapacity

When childcare is requested because a parent is unable to care for their child(ren) due to a physical or mental condition, services are limited to a maximum of 50 hours per week. The eligibility period for receiving childcare services due to incapacity is no less than 24 months. Documentation from a legally qualified health professional must be provided and must include all of the following:

- Confirmation that the parent/guardian is incapacitated.
- The recommended days and hours per week of childcare needed, taking into account the child(ren)'s age and level of need.
- The health professional's full name, business address, telephone number, professional license number, signature, and, if applicable, the name of the health organization with which the professional is affiliated.

Homelessness

When a family requests childcare services due to experiencing homelessness, services are limited to no more than five (5) days per week and less than 30 hours per week. Eligibility may be established in one of two ways:

- A written referral dated within three months from one of the following entities:
 - A legal, medical, or social services agency
 - A local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth
 - A Head Start program
 - An emergency or transitional shelter,

The referral must include the name, physical address, phone number, title, and signature of the person identifying the family as experiencing homelessness.

OR

- A written statement from the parent, signed under penalty of perjury, declaring that the family is experiencing homelessness. If eligibility is based solely on the parental declaration, the parent must also provide additional documentation to establish a separate need for services, other than experiencing homelessness.

Seeking Permanent Housing

When childcare is requested to seek permanent housing, childcare services are limited to no more than five (5) days per week and less than 30 hours per week. The parent must submit:

- A written parental declaration signed under penalty of perjury that the family is seeking permanent housing,
- A declaration of the parent's plan to secure a fixed, regular and adequate residence; and
- The days and hours of childcare that are being requested.

Child Protective Services

When a family's eligibility for childcare services is based on a child receiving child protective services (CPS) or being at risk of abuse or neglect, a written referral must be provided to document both eligibility and need. This referral must be dated within the six (6) months and come from a licensed medical professional, social service agency, or emergency shelter.

The referral must include the following:

- A statement from the local county welfare department's CPS unit certifying that the child is receiving child protective services and that childcare and development services are a necessary part of the CPS plan; **or**
- A statement from a legally qualified professional indicating that the child is at risk of abuse or neglect and that childcare and development services are required to reduce or eliminate that risk;
- The specific days and hours of childcare needed for each child;
- The probable duration of the CPS plan or at-risk situation;
- The name, address, telephone number, and signature of the legally qualified professional making the referral.

Income

Parents must provide documentation of all income for every adult and child included in their family size. Gross monthly income and family size are used to determine income eligibility for enrollment and family fees.

- Examples of total countable income include, but are not limited to, gross wages, salaries, overtime, tips, cash aid, child support, disability benefits, etc.
- A family is considered income eligible when their gross monthly income is at or below 85% of the state median income for their specific family size.

| Family Size | 1 to 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Income | \$6,860 | \$7,785 | \$9,020 | \$10,463 | \$11,906 | \$12,177 | \$12,447 | \$12,718 | \$12,988 |

To calculate a family’s gross monthly income, an income calculation worksheet will be used, and the calculation will be done as follows:

- For families with regular and steady income, one month of check stubs from either of the two months immediately preceding the enrollment and/or recertification period will be used.
- When a family’s income fluctuates due to agricultural or seasonal work, inconsistent or unstable employment, self-employment, or intermittent income, the monthly income will be determined by averaging the total countable income from at least two months. A family may choose to provide income information for up to the twelve months preceding the certification.

All parents will receive a copy of their income calculation worksheet that verifies the family is income eligible and a copy of the most recent Schedule of Income Ceiling eligibility table.

Current CalWORKs cash aid recipient

If a family’s eligibility is based on current CalWORKs cash aid, the parent must provide documentation of the family’s public cash assistance.

Means-Tested Government Programs

If a family’s eligibility is based on anyone in the family size being certified to receive benefits from a means-tested government program, the family must provide documentation of current enrollment and eligible in one of the following means-tested government programs:

- Medi-Cal
- CalFresh
- CalWORKs
- WIC
- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- The Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- California Food Assistance Program

Families may provide income documentation by submitting:

- The approved means-tested government program application, which shows the income declared at the time of enrollment; or
- If the parent does not have access to the means-tested government program application, they may submit a self-declaration stating that they do not have access to the application and, to the best of their recollection, the income declared on the application.

Requirement to Report when Income exceeds 85% of State Median Income

Families are required to notify Choices for Children within 30 calendar days if their gross family income increases and exceeds the 85% of the State Median Income for their family size (use chart on page 16).

Family Fees

Families enrolled in the programs may be required to pay a monthly fee, which is based on a sliding fee scale known as the Family Fee Schedule. This schedule is issued by the California Department of Social Services. The amount of the family fee is determined by factors such as family size, income, and the childcare schedule.

Families with a certified need of fewer than 130 hours per month will be charged a part-time fee. Those with a certified need of 130 hours or more per month will be charged a full-time fee. Family fees are fixed and cannot be recalculated based on actual attendance.

Family fees are assessed only during a family's initial certification, recertification, or if voluntarily requested by the parent. The fees are determined on a per-family basis. If multiple children are receiving subsidized childcare services, the family fee will be applied to the child enrolled for the most hours.

Family Fee Effective Dates

- **Upon enrollment:** The family fee will be applied starting on the first day of authorized services.
- **When reporting a decrease:** If a family voluntarily reports a change that lowers their family fee, the new fee will take effect on the first day of the following month.
- **After recertification (fee decrease):** If a family's fee decreases upon recertification, the new fee will take effect on the first day of the following month.
- **After recertification (fee increase):** If a family's fee increases upon recertification, the new fee will take effect on the first day of the month following a 19-day notice period.

Family Fee Invoice Process

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

Families with delinquent fees will receive a 19-day termination Notice of Action. If payment is not made by the last day indicated on the notice, subsidized childcare services will be terminated, as required by the California Department of Social Services Child Development Division.

Families are responsible for contacting the Family Fee Coordinator before the due date to request a payment plan. No adjustments will be made to the monthly fee billing for childcare absences, and fees will continue to be billed while the parent is selecting a new provider.

Families who leave the program with an outstanding balance will not be eligible for reenrollment until all fees are paid. Choices for Children will attempt to recover the outstanding fees by working out a repayment plan with the parent. If the parent fails to make a payment as outlined in the plan, the family may be referred to a collection agency.

Payment Options for Family Fees

Family fees can be paid through the following methods:

- **Online:** Pay securely through the Family Portal at <https://ptpcfscsc.nohosoftware.com/>
- **By Mail:** Make checks or money orders payable to *Choices for Children* and send them to 20 Great Oaks Blvd., Ste 200, San Jose, CA 95119. Please include your Family ID in the memo.
- **In-Person:** Drop off your check or money order at our office, Monday through Friday, between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM. Please note that cash payments are not accepted.

IMPORTANT: If a check is returned due to insufficient funds, payment must be made by money order. All subsequent payments will need to be made by money order only. For any questions regarding family fees, please contact us at familyportalsupport@cfccsc.org

Notice of Action

After reviewing a family's eligibility and need documentation during initial enrollment or recertification, parents will receive a notification of their enrollment status through a Notice of Action (NOA). A Notice of Action is also issued whenever a formal decision is made regarding a family's childcare services, including changes to need, family fees, or eligibility. It is the parents' responsibility to review the information on the NOA and contact their Family Childcare Counselor if they have any questions.

NOA Appeal Process

Parents have the right to request a fair hearing if they disagree with an action taken regarding their childcare services. If a parent decides to appeal the action, childcare services may continue, and the appealed decision will be placed on hold until the appeal's outcome is determined.

To request an appeal hearing, parents must complete the appeal information on the back of the Notice of Action that was issued. The request should include:

- The parent's full name and contact information.
- Information on which specific action is being appealed
- The reason for appeal

- The reason must be specific and explain why the action taken is not justified.
- An interpreter will be provided if needed at the hearing.
- Parent's signature and date.

Additional written pages or documentation may be attached to support the appeal request.

Recertification

Recertification is a formal process to collect updated information and documentation to determine if a family continues to meet the program requirements for childcare services. Parents must complete the recertification no later than 50 calendar days after the last day of their certification period. Choices for Children staff will notify parents in writing within the final 30 days of their certification period, providing all necessary information to complete the recertification, including the deadline, required documentation, and the assigned family counselor.

Parents are required to sign and date an updated application for childcare services, certifying that their family's information is accurate and current. If a family has not yet completed their recertification by their deadline or a family no longer meets the program requirements, a termination notice will be issued. The recertification deadline will be strictly enforced.

Duration of Services

Upon initial certification or recertification, a family is considered to meet all eligibility and need requirements for the entire 24-month eligibility period. A child will remain eligible for services regardless of any temporary changes to the parent's status. Temporary changes may include, but are not limited to, a temporary leave from work to care for a family member or due to illness, a work break for a seasonal worker during the off-season, or a holiday or school break for a student. Choices for Children encourages families to continue using their approved childcare services to maintain a stable childcare environment for their child(ren).

Children who are 12 years old at certification or recertification will be certified for no more than 12 months. No 50-day recertification period will be applied to 12-year-olds, except for children with exceptional needs. A child will not continue to receive services beyond their 14th birthday. The family eligibility period may be extended if a new child is added to the family during the 24-month period, ensuring the new child receives at least 12 months of eligibility.

If Choices for Children has available funding, a family who voluntarily disenrolls from the program before their 24-month eligibility period ends may be reinstated and use the remaining eligible months without needing to submit new documentation or reapply for services.

Continuity of Care

To promote continuity of childcare services, a family that no longer meets a particular program's income, eligibility, or need criteria may continue receiving services if the agency is able to transfer the family's enrollment to another program for which they remain eligible, before the disenrollment date. The transfer can be made to another program within the same contracting agency or to another agency that administers State or Federally funded childcare programs.

Family's Right to Voluntarily Request Changes

Families are encouraged to use the childcare services they are approved for at certification or recertification. However, if a change in services could benefit the family, parents may voluntarily report changes to reduce their family fee, increase their certified schedule, or decrease their certified schedule. Before any changes can be made, parents must submit the required documentation to support the change. Once the documentation is received and verified, the change will be processed within ten (10) business days. Choices for Children will issue a Notice of Action and replace any previously approved schedule. No other changes will be made to the family service agreement, other than the requested change.

Disenrollment

Families should not be disenrolled from the program before recertification, unless:

- The family's income exceeds 85% SMI when reported by the parent.
- The parent/child changes residency outside of the program counties (Santa Clara/Stanislaus).
- There is substantiated evidence of fraud that invalidates the initial certification or recertification.
- When the family has abandoned care.
- Non-payment of delinquent fees

Communication with Parents

Choices for Children will contact parents using various communication methods, including telephone, mail, email, and/or SMS text messaging. All mail, emails, and/or SMS text messages are considered deliverable based on the most current home address, email address, and/or mobile phone number provided by the parents to Choices for Children. Parents are responsible for ensuring that Choices for Children has the most up-to-date contact information and are encouraged to voluntarily report any changes to their assigned Family Childcare Counselor to avoid any disruptions to their childcare services.

Regional Market Rate Ceiling

The Regional Market Rate (RMR) Ceiling is the maximum amount that Choices for Children can reimburse providers, as set by the State of California. The RMR for each child is determined by taking into account the following factors:

- County where the child is receiving services
- Age of the child
- Provider type
- Total number of certified hours of childcare
- Adjustments due to child's exceptional needs or certified need for evening/weekend hours

The reimbursement amount will be either the RMR ceiling, or the rate charged by the provider, whichever is less.

Provider Reimbursement Based on Maximum Certified Need

Reimbursement for childcare services is issued directly to the childcare provider. Under the guidelines authorized by Senate Bill (SB) 140, childcare is reimbursed based on the child's maximum certified hours of care, regardless of attendance. Choices for Children will reimburse all provider types and child schedule types (set or variable) according to each child's certified need, regardless of actual attendance.

Types of Childcare Providers

To complete enrollment in the program, parents have ten (10) business days to select an eligible childcare provider. Choosing the right childcare is an important decision, and Choices for Children encourages parents to research their options thoroughly. This includes considering the different types of childcare providers available to families. Below are the childcare provider types available:

- License-Exempt Relative (grandparent, aunt, or uncle to the child). Choices for Children reserves the right to request additional documentation for proof of relationship.
- License-Exempt Non-Relative (any other individual who does not fall into the relative category). Requires provider to be cleared and registered with TrustLine.
- Family Child Care Homes (licensed)
- Child Care Centers (licensed and license-exempt)

To find the environment that best suits their children, parents are encouraged to visit various childcare settings, ask potential providers detailed questions about their programs, and even request references. Choices for Children does not evaluate the safety of childcare sites or the quality of care provided. If parents wish to report a concern, they must directly contact the licensing office of the designated county. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that the childcare environment is safe and meets their standards for quality care. Additionally, parents must have unrestricted access to their child(ren) in all childcare arrangements.

Choices for Children will not issue a certificate for childcare services until the childcare provider is eligible to receive reimbursement. New providers have thirty (30) days to complete the eligibility process. No payments will be authorized until the provider's eligibility has been completed and approved by Choices for Children. Once the provider enrollment process is finalized, both the parent and provider will receive written notification of the approved start date and each child's certified childcare schedule. If a family begins using care before receiving Choices for Children authorization, the parent will be responsible for payment directly to the childcare provider.

Childcare Certificate

After the initial approval of childcare services, a signed Childcare Certificate will be provided to both the family and the approved provider. This certificate acts as an "Addendum to Parent's Notice of Action" and outlines each child's certified schedule, full-time and part-time monthly family fees, if applicable, and the maximum reimbursement amount the parent qualifies for. Both the parent and provider must review, sign, and return the certificate within ten (10) business days of receiving it. The certificate will detail the authorized hours of care and the reimbursement amount, with the childcare need being either set or variable.

- **Set schedule:** A set childcare schedule will be approved when the days and hours of the parents' need activity are consistent week to week. An example of a set childcare schedule is Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm.
- **Variable schedule:** A variable childcare schedule will be approved when the total number of hours of the parent's need is inconsistent and/or unstable from week to week. Variable schedules are authorized up to a maximum number of days and hours per week. An example of a variable childcare schedule varies up to 35 hours per week, Monday through Saturday, up to a maximum of 5 days per week, between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm.

A child is not eligible for childcare services during the times they should be attending public or private school, or other early learning and care services. Childcare may be provided for school-age children before and/or after school, as well as during school holidays, vacations, and in-service days, based on the documented need of the family. Childcare may also be provided during school hours if a child is unable to attend school due to illness or other reasons.

The preferred placement for children aged eleven (11) and twelve (12) for childcare and development services is in After School Education and Safety (ASES) Programs or 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st Century CLC).

A new Childcare Certificate will be issued whenever the family selects a new childcare provider, voluntarily requests a change in childcare services, experiences a change in the maximum reimbursement amount, completes recertification, child aging, or when the provider's rate changes.

The end date noted on the Childcare Certificate is the last day of the family's current eligibility. Childcare services may end or change before the end date on the Certificate; such changes will be communicated to the parent with a Notice of Action (NOA) and to the childcare provider with a separate notice. If a child's schedule changes, parents are encouraged to proactively contact their assigned family counselor to inform them of the change.

Registration Fees

Registration fees may be reimbursed if the current reimbursement amount does not exceed the RMR ceiling. Reimbursement is limited to one fee per child, per fiscal year.

Deposit

Choices for Children may not reimburse providers for deposits to hold a space. This is the responsibility of the parent if it applies.

Co-payments

Parents may choose any provider, regardless of the provider's rates. However, if the provider's rate and other allowable charges exceed the maximum amount Choices for Children can reimburse, the parent is responsible for paying the difference. This difference, known as the co-payment, must be paid directly to the childcare provider. Choices for Children does not track co-payment payments, and any issues regarding co-payments must be resolved directly between the parent and the provider.

Prorated Payments

When childcare services begin or end during the middle of a month, Choices for Children will pay the provider only for the days care was authorized and provided during that month. Payment is prorated based on the certificate start date, end date, or the effective date listed on a termination notice.

Some providers require payment for a full month, even if care does not cover the entire month. In those cases, any amount not covered by Choices for Children's prorated reimbursement will be the parent's responsibility.

We encourage parents to speak with their provider in advance to understand their payment policies and any potential out-of-pocket costs.

Provider Non-Operational Days

Choices for Children may reimburse up to 10 non-operational (closure) days per fiscal year for the following provider types, when the provider requires payment from the parent:

- Family Day Care Homes (licensed)
- Childcare Centers (licensed and license-exempt)

In order for these closure days to be reimbursed, the provider must submit their list of up to 10 closure dates to Choices for Children in advance.

If Choices for Children does not have the provider's closure dates on file for the fiscal year, and the provider charges families for those closure days, any unpaid amount will be the responsibility of the parent.

Multiple Providers

When a parent selects a provider whose operating hours can accommodate all of the family's authorized childcare hours, Choices for Children will reimburse only one provider per child. However, Choices for Children may reimburse multiple providers per child if the first provider's hours do not meet the full certified childcare need. Two providers may also be approved if the selected provider is not a licensed center, and the parent chooses a licensed center to provide the child with a large-group school readiness experience.

Alternative or Back-up Provider

Families are eligible to use an alternative provider when their primary provider is closed due to a non-operational day or when a child is ill. The use of an alternative provider is limited to a maximum of 10 days per fiscal year. An additional 10 days may be approved if the child's illness is verified with documentation by a physician.

Each time a family needs to use an alternative provider, the parent must notify their assigned Family Childcare Counselor before care is provided. Childcare reimbursements will not be made retroactively for alternative care providers.

Changing Childcare Provider

Parents have the right to change childcare settings at any time. If a parent decides to change their childcare provider, they must inform Choices for Children in advance and be mindful of any notice period required by the current provider.

A minimum of two (2) weeks' notice must be given to both the current provider and Choices for Children. If a two-week notice is not given to the provider, the parent will be responsible for payment to the new provider. Families and providers may mutually agree to end contracted care before the two-week notice, but both parties must contact Choices for Children to confirm the agreement. Any issues regarding the notice period must be resolved between the parent and the provider.

Reimbursement to the new provider will not occur until the provider has been enrolled by Choices for Children and approved to begin services. **If a license-exempt, non-relative provider is chosen, they will need to be cleared and registered with TrustLine before care can be approved. If the parent does not have a childcare provider, they will be allowed ten (10) business days to select an eligible provider.**

Attendance Logs Guidelines

The California Department of Social Services requires a daily log entry in order for Choices for Children to reimburse childcare providers. Families must comply with the hours and days specified on the Child Care Certificate.

Attendance Logs

Attendance logs are considered legal documents and must be completed accurately by both the parent and the provider. Parents are responsible for reporting the child's actual time in and out of care recorded each day. For school-age children, the provider is responsible for documenting the actual school hours. Parents are also responsible for paying their childcare provider directly for any services provided that are not approved by Choices for Children.

Parents and providers must ensure that attendance logs are completed accurately and promptly. Failure to properly complete the attendance logs may result in delays in reimbursement. It is the provider's responsibility to submit the completed monthly attendance logs to Choices for Children for reimbursement. Before submitting the attendance log, both the parent and provider should verify the following information on the last service day of the month:

- Actual times in and out of care are accurately recorded for each day.
- Reasons for absences (example: holiday, vacations, illness, and school breaks for the child) are noted daily.
- Parent and provider signatures are at the bottom of the attendance record.
Note: A provider cannot sign for the parent, only the authorized parent or guardian can review and sign the attendance log at the end of the month. Attendance Logs cannot be signed prior to the last day of the service month.
- Please avoid using white-out or highlighting on the logs. If you make an error when recording child's time, simply draw a single line through the incorrect entry, write the correct time next to it, and place your initials beside the correction.
- The original attendance logs must be submitted to Choices for Children by 5:00 PM on the fifth business day of the month following the month of care. Reimbursements will be processed and either electronically transmitted to the provider's financial institution or mailed as a check on the 10th business day of the month. Please note that reimbursements are not available for pick-up at Choices for Children offices. If attendance logs are submitted after the fifth business day, logs will be reimbursed by the last Wednesday of the month.

Choices for Children recommends that providers make a copy of all attendance records for their own records before submitting them to Choices for Children for reimbursement.

Attendance logs may be mailed directly to Choices for Children's office or dropped off at our San Jose or Modesto offices. For your convenience, a drop box is located at the front of the building. Choices for Children is not responsible for late mail delivery or attendance logs lost in the mail.

When attendance logs are received by Choices for Children, they are date-stamped, carefully reviewed for completeness and accuracy, and then processed for reimbursement.

Attendance Logs Review

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

- **Broadly consistent:** The days and hours of care used by the parents are in line with the approved schedule on the childcare certificate, and no adjustments to the authorized hours of care or rate are required.

There may be instances when a parent requires childcare outside of their regular schedule due to a documented need, such as employment, seeking employment, or other circumstances (e.g., working overtime or needing an additional day of care). To have the additional childcare approved and to be eligible for reimbursement, the parent must contact their assigned family childcare counselor and submit the necessary documentation.

While additional childcare hours may be eligible for reimbursement, the total reimbursement to the provider may not increase if the provider is already receiving the maximum allowable reimbursement amount.

If childcare is required for personal reasons outside of the child's certified schedule, the parent will be responsible for paying the provider directly for the additional hours.

Non-reimbursement of Attendance Logs

All or part of an attendance log may not be eligible for reimbursement under the following circumstances:

- The attendance log is faxed, or a copy is submitted without a valid reason.
- Unauthorized childcare services were used.
- White-out or similar corrections are made on the attendance log.
- Incomplete attendance logs (i.e. missing a time in or time out, reasons for child absences or provider closure dates).
- The attendance log is missing either the provider's or the parent's signature.
- A license-exempt non-relative childcare provider has not received TrustLine clearance within 30 days.
- The provider has not completed the required eligibility process.
- A provider's childcare license has been suspended, revoked or pending revocation.
- The child has been suspended from childcare by the provider.
- There is evidence of fraud committed by the provider or parent regarding eligibility or childcare services.
- A licensed childcare provider fails to report a timely change of address and is not licensed at the new address or has not cleared TrustLine at the new location.

Excused Absence Policy

Choices for Children will reimburse childcare providers for excused absences noted on the attendance log. Excuse absences include:

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

If excused absence is not noted on the attendance log, the Family Childcare Counselor can confirm the excused absence either in writing or by telephone. The reason for the excused absence will be documented with the processed attendance log.

If an excused absence is due to time spent with a parent or other relative as required by a court order, the file must include a copy of the court order. Except for children who are recipients of protective services or at risk of abuse or neglect, excused absences in the best interest of the child shall be limited to 10 days during the contract period.

Choices for Children will not disenroll a family due to excessive absences, except in circumstances when it is considered abandonment of care.

Abandonment of Care

The provider must promptly notify Choices for Children if the family has not used care for 7 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 Choices for Children Family Childcare Counselor for a total of 30 consecutive calendar days.

Date Received

Choices for Children



Child Development Incorporated

Attendance Log

20 Great Oaks Blvd., Suite 200, San Jose, CA 95119 (408) 297-3295

Counselor's Name (if known)

MONTH April YEAR 2024 CHILD'S BIRTHDAY XX-XX-XXXX

CHILD'S NAME John Doe CHILD'S ID: 00000 PARENT'S NAME Jane Doe PARENT'S ID: 00000

- 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: Full Business Name Payee Name: Full Payee Name Address: Full Address Phone #: 408-XXX-XXXX

Attendance log table with columns: DAY OF MONTH, PARENT TIME IN THIS COLUMN ONLY, PROVIDER MUST TIME IN & OUT IF CHILD HAS A SPLIT SCHEDULE, PARENT TIME OUT THIS COLUMN ONLY, ABSENCE REASON, OFFICE USE TOTAL HOURS. Includes handwritten entries for days 1-14 and 17-28, and a red box stating 'Times must reflect actual in and out times daily.'

OFFICE USE ONLY section with fields for Total Hours of Care, Day of Care, Weeks of Care, Months of Care, and Last Month's Payment Week Pro-rated (Hourly, Daily, Weekly, Monthly) with Yes/No checkboxes.

Counselor [Signature Box]

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.

Both provider and parent must sign on the last day of the service month - certifying all times and days are correct, including absences. Cannot sign ahead of time or blank copies.

**SIGNATURE OF PROVIDER (Required) [Signature] **SIGNATURE OF PARENT (Required) [Signature]

Date Received

Choices for Children



Counselor's Name (if known)

Attendance Log

20 Great Oaks Blvd., Suite 200, San Jose, CA 95119 (408) 297-3295

MONTH April YEAR 2024 CHILD'S BIRTHDAY XX-XX-XXXX

CHILD'S NAME John Doe CHILD'S ID: 00000 PARENT'S NAME Jane Doe PARENT'S ID: 00000

- 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: Full Business Name Payee Name: Full Payee Name Address: Full Address Phone #: 408-XXX-XXXX

Table with columns: DAY OF MONTH, PARENT TIME IN THIS COLUMN ONLY, PROVIDER MUST TIME IN & OUT IF CHILD HAS A SPLIT SCHEDULE, PARENT TIME OUT THIS COLUMN ONLY, ABSENCE REASON, OFFICE USE TOTAL HOURS. Includes handwritten entries for days 1-12 and 17-28, with annotations like 'Correct', 'Incorrect', and 'School Age Example'.

OFFICE USE ONLY Last Month's Payment Week Pro-rated: [] Yes [] No TOTAL HOURS OF CARE X HOURLY PAY \$ = \$ TOTAL DAY 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.

Both provider and parent must sign on the last day of the service month - certifying all times and days are correct, including absences. Cannot sign ahead of time or blank copies.

**SIGNATURE OF PROVIDER (Required)

Jane Doe **SIGNATURE OF PARENT (Required)

Confidentiality of Records

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and his/her family shall be restricted by Choices for Children to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program. Information will not be shared with any outside party without a court order or subpoena. Choices for Children can permit the review of the family data file by the child's parents or parent's authorized representative, upon request and at reasonable times and places.

Information to Share with Parents

Each childcare facility shall permanently post, in a prominent location, information about the registered sex offender database that is available on the Megan's Law website and give families one of the two licensing forms (LIC 995 or 995A, Notification of Parent's Rights) provided by the CDSS, Community Care Licensing Division.

Transfer

When a family relocates out of the County, Choices for Children can provide referral information for subsidized childcare in other California counties. Families transferring from Choices for Children may be eligible to enroll in programs statewide if funding is available and the receiving agency's policy allows for priority transfers at that time.

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 people 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, which 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, towards employees will not be tolerated. Inappropriate or harassing behavior may result in delays of services or disenrollment from the program.

Fraud Prevention

Choices for Children is responsible for managing public funds and making sure only eligible families and providers receive services and reimbursement. Any fraudulent, false, or misleading information provided to Choices for Children regarding residence address, usage of care, income, eligibility or need status will be grounds for termination of services. Parents and providers are liable for repayment of the cost of care provided during the time false information was submitted. Suspected fraud cases may be referred to the District Attorney's Office for further investigation or prosecution. Any parent or provider that is terminated from the program for violating Choices for Children's Fraud Policy will be prohibited from participating in any of Choices for Children's programs.

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 within the 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. Recording false attendance times on attendance logs submitted to Choices for Children and/or forging or falsifying signatures.
7. Harassing conduct towards employees, as defined in Choices for Children's Parent & Provider Handbook
8. Per parent request. Please review the duration of services guidelines.
9. Termination due to abandonment of care and failure to obtain a provider.
10. For cause.

If any of the above applies, the family will receive a 19-day Termination NOA. This NOA is not an extension for any previous terminations.

Uniform Complaint Policy

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 manage 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, if any party is not satisfied with the services rendered and wants to express or file a formal complaint, we will handle such complaints 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 on 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 made 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 to 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 independent in-house 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.

Oliver's Law

Parents have the right to access information about any substantiated or inconclusive complaints concerning the licensed childcare provider that they select for their child. That information is public and can be obtained by calling the local Community Care Licensing (CCL).

Megan's Law

The California Megan's Law web site located at www.meganslaw.ca.gov currently provides the public with certain information on registered sex offenders in accordance with Penal Code section 290.46. This information is provided so that members of our local communities may protect themselves and their children.

Choices for Children



Child Development Incorporated

Termination/Fraud Policy

Choices for Children may terminate a family from the program 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 or any other county in California.
Example: Go Kids or Department of Social Services
- _____ 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. Recording false attendance times on attendance logs submitted to Choices for Children and/or forging/falsifying signatures.
- _____ 7. Harassing conduct towards employees, as defined in CFC's Parent Handbook
- _____ 8. Per parent request. Please review the duration of services guidelines
- _____ 9. Termination due to abandonment of care and failure to obtain provider.
- _____ 10. For Cause

Policies & Procedure, Fraud Policy Receipt and Acknowledgement

My signature below indicates that I have received the Choices for Children "Policies & Procedures" booklet 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 Santa Clara County District Attorney office for investigation and/or prosecution to recover funds as necessary.

Parent Signature

CFC Representative Signature

Date

Date

