Solano Family & Children's Services

Your Child Care & Resource Connection

Since 1978

Subsidized Child Care Program Handbook

Solano Family & Children's Services
Your Child Care & Resource Connection

For Parents & Child Care Providers

Revised January 2023

Solano Family & Children's Services

Your Child Care and Resource Connection

Resources for Parents and Child Care Providers

Car Seat Connection	(707) 553-5543
Community Care Licensing:	
Parents: to check for complaints	(844) 538-8766
All other calls	(707) 588-5026
Child Support	(866) 901-3212
Child Protective Services	(800) 544-8696
Crisis Line (Psychiatric Emergencies)	(707) 784-2140
D.O.J. *(To Check Status of Fingerprints)*	(916) 227-4557
Health & Social Services	(800) 400-6001
Live Scan (For Appointments)	(800) 315-4507
TrustLine Questions	(800) 822-8490

Or visit guardian@dss.ca.gov.

SFCS Resource #s (707) 863-3950 or Direct Line

Child Care Referral Line *(For Parents)*	*(707) 864-4646*
To Join the Child Care Food Program *(For Licensed or TrustLine Cleared Providers)*	Ext. 133
Licensing Orientation *(To Become Licensed)*	Ext. 752
Help Me Grow Solano	*(844) 501-KIDS (5437)*

Family Resource Centers

Benicia	(707) 746-4352
Dixon	(707) 678-0442
Fairfield (On Dover Avenue)	(707) 421-3961
Fairfield (On Kidder Avenue)	(707) 421-3224
Rio Vista	(707) 374-5243
Suisun	(707) 421-4398
Vacaville	(707) 469-6608
Vallejo (Greater Vallejo)	(707) 648-5230
Vallejo (East)	(707) 556-5700, ext. 51125
Vallejo (South)	(707) 556-8580, ext. 58638

If you are a Provider, call your Provider Services Specialist (PSS) when you need to . . .

- Discuss a reimbursement you have received.
- Request CCAFs for more than one family.
- Discuss rates.

If you are a Provider, call the Parent's Family Services Specialist (FSS) when you need to . . .

- Check on the eligibility of a parent who would like you to care for their child.
- Request CCAFs (Child Care Attendance Forms) for the children of one family.

Would you like to submit paperwork on:

- **Tuesday mornings (when we are closed to the public)?**
- **The first Friday of the month (when we are closed to the public)?**
- **Evenings?**
- **Weekends?**
- **Holidays?**

There is a Brown mailbox located just outside our front door. You can drop your forms in the mailbox, and we will retrieve them when we open our doors to the public.

This can be especially helpful when you are trying to meet a Tuesday Child Care Attendance Form (CCAF) deadline.

Reminder: We do NOT extend Tuesday CCAF deadline days, when a holiday falls on a Tuesday!

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INTRODUCTION

SOLANO FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (SFCS) is a private, non-profit agency which provides a wide variety of services to children and families in Solano County. Our mission is to promote and advocate for the well-being of children, their families, and child care *providers* by offering access to a variety of child care resources.

The Subsidized Child Care Program is designed to provide full or partial reimbursement of child care services on behalf of eligible families. The goal of this program is to assist and promote the health, growth, care, development, and education of children in Solano County by providing child care, while their *parents* continue their employment, education, or training. Some programs serve children receiving Child Protective Services (CPS) and other children at risk of abuse or neglect, as well as families experiencing homelessness.

SFCS does not provide direct child care services. We help *parents* choose the child care *provider* who best meets the needs of their family & child. We have a Resource & Referral Program that can help *parents* in our community find licensed child care *providers*. It is the *parent's* responsibility to select the child care *provider* who best meets their family's needs. However, all *providers* must meet certain requirements per Federal, State and Local laws, regulations, and guidelines. SFCS can make reimbursements to Licensed Family Child Care *Providers*, Licensed Centers and Pre-Schools, License-Exempt/ TrustLine Registered *Providers* (including before/after school programs) and In-Home Child Care *Providers* who meet all requirements.

SFCS staff are available to give information to *parents & providers* about program requirements/policies, and to help complete forms.

SFCS staff are **mandated** to report suspected child abuse. Suspected violations of a child's health and safety rights will be reported to Child Protective Services or the local authorities.

Parents and *providers* are encouraged to attend workshops on Child Development, Parenting Skills, Health & Safety, and other child care related topics offered by us and other partnering agencies. Most workshops/trainings are also open to the general public.

For more information about the variety of services we offer, please refer to our agency brochure; visit our website at www.solanofamily.org; or call us at (707) 863-3950.

NOTE: The following services are <u>not</u> considered "child care".

As such, SFCS is not able to reimburse for these services:

- ✓ Transportation Fees (when provided alone, and <u>not</u> as part of a package that covers the approved child care hours);
- ✓ Private School Tuition K-12 (we only reimburse for extended child care services);
- ✓ Days/hours that public schools are open & available to school-age children;
- ✓ Tutoring Services.

DEFINITIONS

NOTE: Throughout this handbook you will see words which are *italicized*. For your reference, we have included the definitions below as <u>we</u> use them.

CalWORKs: California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids. This is a public assistance program that provides cash aid and services to low-income families.

Certificate for Child Care Services (Certificate): The Certificate is also known as a NOC (Notice of Communication – *Provider* Copy). This is the document that is issued to both the *Parent* and the *Provider* to inform them of the approved child care hours, time frame of services for which SFCS will reimburse the *Provider*, as well as the *RMR Ceiling*. A NOC is also issued to inform the *Parent* & *Provider* of a *Family Fee*, when one is assigned to be collected by the *Provider*.

Child Care Authorization (CCAUTHO): The document issued by the *parent's County Worker* which authorizes SFCS to approve child care services for a particular family. This authorization includes the date services will begin, and if child care is approved part-time (less than 30 hours per week) full time or full time Plus (more than 52 hours per week, which is based on the *parent's* need for child care).

Child Care Fraud: When a *parent* or *provider* provides false information, or acts in a fraudulent manner with the intention of receiving subsidized child care services or reimbursement for subsidized care. SFCS partners with the Solano County Special Investigations Bureau in some cases.

Co-payments: The difference between what the *provider* charges for his/her services and the amount SFCS can reimburse (based on the *Regional Market Rate Ceilings* (*RMRCs*/regulations). The enrolled *parent* is responsible for paying this difference directly to the *provider*. A *parent* MAY have to pay a co-payment and, at the same time, have to pay *family fees*. One does not offset the other.

County Worker: The Worker at the *Solano County Health and Social Services Department* (Welfare Department) assigned to a person's case, who approves their Welfare-to-Work plan, and authorizes their child care services.

Days: Calendar days unless otherwise noted.

Days of Non-Operation (DNOs): Days that a *provider* would normally be open for business, but due to the *provider's* holiday, vacation, or staff development *day*, the facility is closed for business.

Delinquent Fees: *Family fees* are considered *delinquent* (late) if they are not paid before the Child Care Attendance Form (CCAF) is submitted to SFCS. *Providers* will receive a *Delinquent Fee* Notice if this is the case.

Exceptional Needs Children: Children who have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), and are receiving early intervention services or appropriate special education and services, **and** require the special attention of an adult in a child care setting.

Family Fee: A family fee chart is prepared by the State Department of Finance to have *parents* share in the cost of child care. They also allow us to offer services to other families in need of subsidized child care. The amount of the fee the family is expected to pay is based on the countable gross monthly income of the family, the size of the family, and the certified hours of care. Not all families are required to pay a family fee. These fees are paid by the *parent*, directly to his/her *provider*. A *parent* MAY have to pay a family fee and, at the same time, have to pay the *provider* a *co-payment*. One does not offset the other. CalWORKs cash aided families do not pay family fees. CPS and At-Risk families may have their family fee waived for up to 12 months.

Fiscal Year: SFCS operates on the State's *Fiscal Year* calendar which starts on July 1st and ends on June 30th of the following year.

FSS: Family Services Specialist is the enrolled *parent's* case manager at SFCS. This is the person responsible for determining the family's eligibility for child care services.

Notice of Action (**NOA**): A written notification issued by SFCS that informs *parents* of SFCS's decision to approve or deny child care and development services. *NOAs* are also issued to inform *parents* that they no longer meet our program's "need" or "eligibility" requirements, or that the level of services will change, or to inform the *parent* of a *family fee*.

Notice to Provider (**NTP**): A written notification issued by SFCS that informs *providers* and *parents* of an action being taken by SFCS which may affect reimbursements to the *provider*.

Parent: A person living with a child who is responsible for the care and welfare of that child.

Provider: A person (other than the *parent*) who takes care of a child for part of the day, for a fee.

Provider's Notice Period: The *provider's* required **advance** notice when an enrolled child will no longer be attending that *provider's* child care facility. This period of time is based on the *provider's* business practices as applicable to all families/children whether subsidized or private-pay. The notice period may be waived at the *provider's* request or with the *provider's* consent.

PSS: *Provider* Services Specialist is the *provider's* case manager at SFCS. This is the person responsible for determining the *provider's* eligibility to participate in the Subsidy Program, and for processing *provider* reimbursements.

RMCs (Regional Market Rate Ceilings): The maximum we can reimburse *provider*s for child care services based on the county they provide care in.

SCHSSD: Solano County Health and Social Services Department – commonly known as the Welfare Department.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

SFCS administers all existing voucher-based child care services in Solano County. A brief description of these programs can be found below. For more detailed information, please call SFCS.

***CalWORKs* CHILD CARE PROGRAMS –**
There is no waiting list to be enrolled onto Stage 1 or Stage 2, when the family meets certain requirements.

The *CalWORKs* programs start by serving families when the *parents* are currently receiving *CalWORKs* cash aid or have received it within 24 months **before** completing the initial application process for child care services with SFCS. There are three (3) stages to the *CalWORKs* programs. We move families through these stages of child care as smoothly as possible. Each of these stages has different eligibility requirements; however, the *CalWORKs* Child Care System is designed to continue services to eligible families without interruption. For more information about these programs, please see our Subsidized Child Care Program brochure.

Families with a child who has been abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect, may be eligible to receive child care services as part of the family's plan to reduce the child's risk. In these cases, SFCS needs a written referral for Child Protective Services/At-Risk child care from a legal, medical, or social service agency which includes the name of the child needing services; specific child care hours being requested; and the date range these services will be needed.

INITIAL APPLICATION PROCESS

SFCS staff will provide an overview about our agency and the Subsidized Child Care Program Rules and Regulations. We will also help *parents* become familiar with program forms and participation expectations.

FSSs will interview *parents* on an individual basis. The application process includes many required documents that help us determine the *parent's* Need & Eligibility for our services. Documents will be requested from the *parent* before their appointment date. Each *parent* will be issued a list of required documents based on their individual case. The application process is considered incomplete if we do not receive the required documents.

The application must be signed by the *parent* before the application process will be considered complete (except for families in the Stage 1 (CDSS) program.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS & EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

All *parents* with non-school-age children are required to submit immunization records for all enrolled children. Personal/Religious Belief Exemptions for Immunizations are not allowed.

Children are exempt from immunization requirements only if a *parent* or guardian submits a written statement from a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) which states:

- ✓ That the physical condition or medical circumstances of the child are such that the required immunization(s) is/are not indicated;
- ✓ Which vaccines are being exempted;
- ✓ Whether the medical exemption is permanent or temporary;
- ✓ The expiration date, if the exemption is temporary.

Emergency contact information for all enrolled children must be on file with SFCS before enrollment onto our program. An Emergency and Identification Information Form will be issued to the *parent* before, or at the time of, their initial interview with an *FSS, and at recertifications*.

RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

Recertification is the process of determining a family's continued need and eligibility for child care services. Failure to complete the Recertification process within the timeframe given will result in termination or non-reimbursement of child care services by SFCS.

For families enrolled in the Stage 2, Stage 3, or CAPP Programs, SFCS requires a face-to-face Recertification interview shortly after every 12-month approval period. The *parent* will receive a Recertification Notice with all the details specific to their case, including a list of documents/information required to determine continued eligibility. If there are changes SFCS was not aware of, we may request more documentation at the time of the interview.

NOTE ABOUT RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS

Under *CalWORKs* Stage 1, SFCS cannot reimburse for child care services provided for more than 30 *days* BEFORE the *parent's* **initial** request for reimbursement of these services through his/her *County Worker* or an *FSS* at SFCS. This also applies when changing child care *provider*s.

Under all other programs administered by SFCS (other than Stage 1 (CDSS)), we cannot reimburse for child care services provided for ANY AMOUNT OF TIME BEFORE the application process is COMPLETE and SFCS has EVERYTHING we need to determine the family's eligibility for services. It is important that the *parent* QUICKLY submit ALL required documents and information to SFCS so that the approval process is not delayed.

Please remember SFCS is closed to the public on Tuesday mornings — our office opens at 12:00 noon. And we are closed to the public the first Friday of each month.

CALIFORNIA ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CAPP)

SFCS also administers the CAPP Subsidized Child Care Program. This is the only SFCS subsidized program that serves families in which the *parent* is **not** eligible for the *CalWORKs* Child Care Programs. CAPP covers child care services while *parents* work, go to school, or look for work. A family may also be eligible for services if the child is receiving Child Protective Services; the child is at risk of abuse or neglect; the *parent* is incapacitated; or the family is homeless.

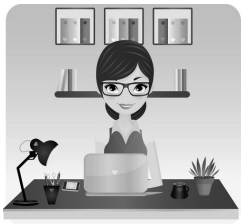
SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY LIST

SFCS maintains an eligibility list (waiting list) for the CAPP program. Enrollment from this list is based on the admission priorities set by the California State Department of Education/Early Learning and Care Division. Families wait on the list until they are served or until they stop updating their eligibility information. For more information, or to refer a family in need, please call SFCS during our regular hours of operation and ask for our eligibility list representative.

NOTE: There is no waiting list for enrollment onto a *CalWORKs* program.

ELIGIBILITY FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES

Eligibility and need for child care services is determined by guidelines established by the funding source (State Department of Social Services, Child Care and Development Division and the *Solano County Health and Social Services Department*; etc.)



To receive subsidized child care services, families must meet at least **one (1)** criterion (the conditions described after each letter) in each of the **"Eligibility"** and "**Need**" areas that follow:

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (Eligibility will be established by A, B, C, D, E, or F)

Families eligible due to criteria **B, C, or F** must also be income eligible in order to receive our services.

A. The *parent* is currently receiving *CalWORKs* cash aid.
B. The *parent* has received *CalWORKs* cash aid within 24 months of the time he/she completes an application for subsidized child care services; or he/she received a lump sum diversion payment or diversion services.
C. The family is income eligible. Income is based on the size of the family and the amount of countable gross monthly income earned or received by all family members counted in the family unit.
D. The family is experiencing homelessness.
E. The child is in need of, or at risk of needing protective services and has been referred to SFCS by a legally qualified professional.
F. The parent has fully exhausted his/her 24 months of eligibility for transitional child care services in CalWORKs Stages 1 and 2.

NEED CRITERIA (Need will be established by A, B, C, D, E, F, or G)

A. The *parent* is employed.
B. The *parent* is seeking employment.
C. The *parent* is participating in an approved vocational training/ school or educational program leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession or profession.
D. The *parent* is seeking permanent housing for family stability.
E. The *parent* is incapacitated, including a medical or mental special need, to the extent that the *parent's* ability to provide normal care for the child is significantly limited. SFCS will supply a Statement of Incapacity Form to be completed by a legally qualified health professional. (See 'One Adult Household Rule'/'Two Adult Household Rule' on page 8 for more details)
F. The *parent* is receiving CalWORKs cash aid and meets the eligibility criteria to receive child care services.
G. The *parent* is participating in job retention services.

Child Care Providers: One way to support the parents you serve, is to help them find a back-up child care provider, by calling the SFCS Resource & Referral Program at (707) 863-3950, #709.

DESCRIPTION OF NEED STATUS

CalWORKs Stage 1 (CDSS) Families: Most CalWORKs cash aided families are eligible for 12-months of continuous child care. Exceptions to this include, but are not limited to: when there is no CalWORKs cash aided adult; recently approved welfare-to-work exempt applicants who indicate no desire to voluntarily participate in activities; or for two-parent households when one parent is able to care for the child(ren). Once a family is determined eligible for CalWORKs, SFCS will receive a 12-Month Stage One Child Care Authorization from *SCHHSD*.

EMPLOYMENT

When the *parent* is approved to use child care services while he/she is working, the hours of care may cover the *parent's* work hours (including the lunch break) and the amount of time it takes the *parent* to travel between the work site and the child care facility. Travel time is limited, and in some cases, may require additional documentation.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

All self-employed persons must meet city, county, state and federal licensing regulations and ordinances. As such, SFCS will require the *parent* to submit a copy of his/her business license or permit, as applicable. A Self-Employment Declaration (supplied by SFCS) must be completed in order for child care services to be approved for self-employed *parents*. One or more of the following documents may be required, to determine eligibility:

- ✓ A letter from the source of employment/income;
- ✓ Receipts of earnings and expenses;
- ✓ A copy of the Profit and Loss Statements used to file income taxes;
- ✓ A copy of the income tax return that has been filed with the IRS and the California State Franchise Tax Board;
- ✓ Other documents as applicable.

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT (Non-Aided Clients)

Child care services for *parents* who are seeking employment may be provided for up to five (5) *days* per week, less than 30 hours per week.

STUDENT PARENTS

Vocational training is limited to six (6) years from the first day of approved child care services, or 24 semester units if the *parent* already has a bachelor's degree, whichever comes first. SFCS will require proof of progress of classes. Student *parents* must also maintain at least a "C" (2.0) Grade Point Average— failure to do so may result in termination of child care services while the *parent* participates in a school/ training program. When *parents* are enrolled in classes that do not use letter grades, they must pass at least 50% of their classes or meet the training institution's standards for making adequate progress.

If adequate progress is not made within the time limits provided, child care services for school/training will terminate. However, services may continue if the *parent* has another qualifying need for child care.

PARENTAL INCAPACITY

In some cases, SFCS can approve up to 50 hours of child care per week, for a *parent* who is not able to care for his/her child, without assistance, due to a medical/mental condition. In such cases, a legally qualified health professional must complete a form (supplied by SFCS).

One-Adult Household Rule

If there is only one (1) adult counted in the family size, and that adult is or becomes incapacitated (as described in the previous paragraph), the family MAY be eligible for services under all programs except *CalWORKs* Stage 1 (CDSS)—as long as all other eligibility and need criteria are met.

Under this need status, the *provider* chosen by the *parent* cannot be reimbursed by SFCS if he/she is a sectarian provider, which is a provider who includes religious activities/practices in their daily routine while caring for children.

Two-Adult Household Rule

If there are two (2) or more adults counted in the family size, and one (1) adult is or becomes incapacitated (as described previously described), while the other adult is able to participate in an approvable activity, the family may be served in any of our programs, as long as all other eligibility and need criteria are met. If both/all adults counted in the family size are incapacitated (as previously described), the same *provider* restrictions apply as stated under the One-Adult Household Rule.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES/AT-RISK CHILDREN

The greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of character and faith. ~ ***Billy Graham*** *~*

UPDATE PROCESS

The purpose of the update is to bring the *parent's* services in line with their need.

An update can be done face-to-face or over the phone by providing the *FSS* with information regarding changes as stated on page 11.

An update may be brought on by the *parent* or their *County Worker*. If the *parent* does not complete the update process within the timeframe given, his/her child care services will remain as previously approved, until the 12-month Recertification timeline has been met.

Stage 1 (CDSS) cases are updated based on *CCAUTHOs* received from the *County Worker*.

CHILD CARE HOURS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Approved child care hours are based on the *parent's* authorized activity, which depends on the *parent*/child's eligibility and need criteria (see page 7). These hours include lunch & transportation time, study time (for student *parents*), and in some cases, sleep time for *parents* who work the graveyard shift, as allowed by the program in which the *parent* is enrolled.

CalWORKs cash aided families enrolled in Stage 1(CDSS), will be authorized for full-time child care unless the parent specifically requests part time care. If the parent needs more than 52.5 hours per week, this must be approved by the County Worker with a CCAUTHO.

NOTE: The following services are not considered "child care". As such, SFCS is not able to reimburse for these services:

- ✓ Transportation Fees (when provided alone, and not as part of a package that covers the approved child care hours);
- ✓ Private School Tuition K-12 (we only reimburse for extended child care services);
- ✓ *Days*/hours that public schools are open & available to school-age children;
- ✓ Tutoring Services.

VERIFICATION OF STATUS

The *parent* will be required to complete an Authorization for the Release of Information form, which will be used by program staff to obtain and verify the family's income, need status, grant status, and any other necessary information in order to determine eligibility for child care services. Program staff will contact employers, school administrators, social service agencies, doctors, etc. as needed.

It is the responsibility of the *parent* to pay the *provider* directly for any extra hours of care that are not listed on the *Certificate*—until those additional/new hours are approved by the *FSS*.

If the *parent* works overtime, and needs SFCS to reimburse the *provider* for the extra hours of child care used, he/she must turn in proof (from the employer) of the dates and times worked. This does not require a new *Certificate*.

SHARED CUSTODY

When the care of a child is shared by separated/divorced *parents*, SFCS will only reimburse for child care while the child is in **custody** of the **enrolled *parent***. The *provider* will only be reimbursed for actual services, and not to hold a spot until the child returns to the *provider's* care. The enrolled *parent* will be required to give written information to SFCS, and to the *provider*, as to when the child will be in the other *parent's* custody.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF SERVICES (TSS)

If the enrolled *parent* will temporarily not need subsidized child care services, the *parent* may continue to take the child to the *provider* during the days/hours listed on the *Certificate*. However, if the child will STOP going to their *provider*, we ask that the *parent* immediately report this to their *FSS*. If the child stops attending, SFCS will not make reimbursements to the *provider* during this period, and the *provider* may choose to discontinue services to the family. If this happens, the family will remain enrolled in the subsidy program during their 12-Month Eligibility Period, until they are recertified. When the *parent* is ready to resume their child care services, we can help them find a new *provider.*

CHOOSING A PROVIDER

It is the responsibility of the *parent* to choose the *provider* who best meets the needs of the family. We have a Resource & Referral Program that can help *parents* find licensed *providers* in our community.

The *provider* must be located within a 20-mile radius of the enrolled *parent's* home or work/approved activity; or located along the travel route between the home and work/approved activity.

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

BACK-UP PROVIDERS/MULTIPLE PROVIDERS

Because many of our *parents* need child care services during weekends/ evenings, not all *providers* are available to meet the needs of all children. Therefore, *parents* (in some cases) may need to have more than one (1) *provider*. When this is the case, please keep the following in mind:

- ✓ According to state regulations, SFCS will reimburse only one (1) *provider* per child when the first *provider* selected by the *parent* is open for business during the hours the child is approved to receive services. However, when the first *provider* is not a Licensed Center, the *parent* may also choose to use a Licensed Center to help prepare the child for school (Kindergarten Readiness);
- ✓ SFCS can only reimburse for one (1) *provider* during any period of time (except for *DNOs*/Child Absences due to illness);
- ✓ If a *parent* chooses to have their child picked up by another *provider*—before the primary *provider* closes for business—the second *provider* will only be reimbursed from the time the first *provider* closes (even though the first *provider* did not provide the care), as SFCS cannot reimburse two (2) or more *providers* for the same time period (except for *DNOs*/Child Absences due to illness);
- ✓ Back-up *providers* will only be reimbursed by SFCS when the primary *provider* is unable or unwilling to provide the care.

CERTIFICATE FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES

When the *parent* and the *provider* have completed all the requirements, an *FSS* will contact the *provider* to go over the details of the *Certificate*. The *Certificate* states the approved child care schedule and includes the maximum reimbursement rate for each child, and has a reimbursement rate sheet attached to it, which explains how reimbursements to the *provider* are made.
When there are changes in the child care schedule or when an extension of services is approved, the *parent* and *provider* will be notified in writing of those changes through a new *Certificate*.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION REGARDING CERTIFICATES

The *parent* is responsible for paying for care before the family is approved by SFCS, and for care that is not covered by the schedule on the *Certificate*.

Providers are responsible for quickly notifying SFCS when a child on our subsidized program stops using their services altogether.

Occasional/sporadic absences only need to be reported to us on the CCAFs by writing "Absent" where the in/out times would normally go, and explained on the back of the attendance form. Child vacation *days* of two weeks or less per year, only need to be reported on the CCAFs, as well.

Parents are to write "N/C" on *days* when No Care is used. This helps us determine the actual need for child care, and it may lower the family fee, if there is one.

Occasionally, special one-time or limited-time changes happen in a child's care schedule due to things like the *parent* having to work overtime. These limited-time changes do not require a new *Certificate*. In some cases, documentation may be required.

CHILD CARE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Once certified, families are eligible for no less than 12 months of child care in most cases. This is intended to provide continuity of services to a child for stability, as families encounter changes. Therefore, regular attendance with a child care provider is important. The child's regular attendance is also key in being able to efficiently administer the Subsidized Programs, as accurate projections of Provider Reimbursements are essential in ensuring that we do not overspend our Maximum Reimbursable Amounts (MRA). Therefore, the child care attendance policy is as follows:

- ✓ After 90 days of non-claiming of child care, enrolled parents and their providers will be contacted to find out why no child care is being claimed.
- ✓ If it is discovered that the parent no longer has an eligible provider, other child care options will be discussed with them so that they may resume child care.

- ✓ Families will be given 30 days to either report a new provider or services will be terminated for the children who are not being claimed. If the parent cannot be contacted and does not respond to SFCS, we will end the child care certificate(s)/terminate services.
- ✓ Child care services for the family will not be terminated, unless **all** enrolled children are **not** using care or care is not being claimed.
- ✓ Termination of child care will not take place if at least one child in the family is being claimed and the child care provider is receiving reimbursement from SFCS.

Child Care Providers: Improve your knowledge and skills in providing quality child care. Attend one of our ongoing workshops. Call the SFCS Resource & Referral Program at (707) 863-3950, extension #752, for more information.

FAMILY FEES, DELINQUENT FEES, & CO-PAYMENTS

FAMILY FEES

A *family fee* chart is prepared by the State Department of Finance, in order to have *parents* share in the cost of child care. They also allow us to offer services to other families in need of subsidized child care. However, not all families pay *family fees*. A *family fee* may be charged to the family based on their countable gross monthly income, family size, and certified hours of care. This fee is a flat monthly amount that the *parent* pays their *provider* directly. As changes happen in either the family's income, family size, or the certified hours of care, the *family fee* may change.

NOTE: Child Support & Spousal Support received by the enrolled *parent* are counted in the family's income. The *family fee* may decrease when these benefits are reduced, if the *parent* reports this to their *FSS*.

DELINQUENT FEES

Family fees are considered *delinquent* (late) if they are not paid before the Child Care Attendance Form (CCAF) is submitted to SFCS. *Providers* will receive a *Delinquent Fee* Notice if this is the case.

When a family is terminated from the program while owing *family fees*, they must pay their *delinquent family fees* **in full**, before they can be eligible for re-enrollment into our program.

For more detailed information, please refer to the document titled *Family Fee Process*. If you do not have a copy, please request one from your *FSS* or *PSS*.

CO-PAYMENTS

If a *parent* chooses a *provider* who charges more than the State allows SFCS to reimburse (based on the *RMRCs* issued by the State of California), the *parent* can use that *provider,* only if the *parent* agrees to pay the difference between the *provider's* rate and the amount SFCS can reimburse the *provider*. This difference is called a *co-payment,* and it is the responsibility of the *parent* to make this payment directly to the *provider*. A *parent* MAY have to pay a *co-payment* and, at the same time, have to pay *family fees.* One does not offset the other.

REPORTING CHANGES

It is very important that *parents* keep us informed of their current address and phone number, as this is our primary way of communicating.

It is also important that *parents* report to us when they want to change their *provider*. Keep in mind that we are here to help *parents* find quality child care. Once the *parent* chooses the *provider*, we need to make sure the *provider* is eligible to participate in our program. The *provider's* payment is the reason *parents* are on our program, so we need to know who we are expected to reimburse. We will only go back as much as 30 *days* from the day the *parent* reports a new *provider*, but in some cases, the *provider* may not be eligible to receive reimbursements from us until they complete the eligibility process, which may take a while. Therefore, we suggest the *provider* start their eligibility process before they start caring for any children on our program.

Parents must report to us when their family's gross monthly income exceeds the income ceilings, in relation to their family size, according to the ceilings given to them at the time of enrollment and recertification. When a *parent* reports income above the ceiling, we will request current income documentation to officially calculate their income and determine on-going eligibility.

Parents may at any time voluntarily report other changes, but that information will only be used by us if it:

- ✓ Reduces the f*amily fee*;
- ✓ Increases the family's services; **OR**
- ✓ Extends the period of the family's eligibility before their next scheduled recertification.

If a *parent* reports a change to us that is not mandatory, and one that does NOT benefit the family, we will document the change, but we will not act on it at that time. The family's services will continue as previously approved, through their full 12-Month Eligibility Period, as stated on their approval *NOA*. As we prepare to recertify their case, we will get their updated information at that time.

More Child Care Hours Needed:

Reported Within 30 *Days*: If the *parent* needs more child care hours for an approvable activity, the change may be approved to start on the date of the change **if** the *parent* makes the request to their assigned *FSS* within 30 *days* of the change,

Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring, and integrity, they think of you.
~ H. Jackson Brown, Jr. ~

and we receive verification of the change by the due date.

Reported After 30 *Days*: If the request is made more than 30 *days* after the change, the increase in child care hours may start the date it is reported, if we receive verification of the change by the due date.

NOTE: If we do not receive verification of the change, services will continue as previously authorized, through the family's 12-Month Eligibility period, or until we receive the verification.

For *CalWORKs* cash aided families, services will be approved according to the *CCAUTHO*, when one is required.

Decrease In Income:

When the parent reports a decrease in income, the *family fee* will be looked at to see if a change is applicable. Any reduction in the *family fee* will start the first day of the following month. If the decrease is reported late, we will NOT decrease the *family fee* retroactively, so it is beneficial to report income decreases right away.

CHANGING PROVIDERS

As an agency that promotes Quality Child Care, SFCS suggests that *parents* change *providers* only when necessary, or when it is in the best interest of the child.

SFCS asks for at least a 2-week **written** notice from BOTH the *parent* and the *provider* when their child care arrangement will end pre-maturely (before the end date of the *Certificate*). A Change of *Provider* Form will be supplied by SFCS for this purpose. SFCS may accept a written statement from the *parent*/*provider* with both parties' signatures, if the statement contains all the necessary information to process the change as listed below:

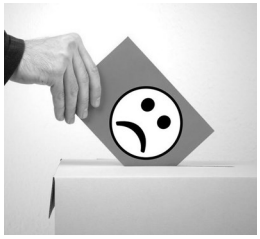
- ✓ The name, address, and telephone number of the *provider* who had been caring for the child;
- ✓ The name of the *parent* and child;
- ✓ The last date that actual care was provided or will be provided;
- ✓ The signature of the *parent* and date signed;
- ✓ The signature of the *provider* and date signed;
- ✓ A statement that all *family fees* owed by the *parent* were paid to the *provider*, or that the *parent* and *provider* have a payment arrangement in place.

If a *parent* starts using a new *provider* WITHOUT reporting the change within 30 *days*, SFCS will begin reimbursing the *provider* on the date the change is reported—not the date the change took place, **AND** only if the *parent* & *provider* are eligible to receive services/reimbursements from SFCS.

If a *parent* stops using a *provider* without giving proper notification, (such as, but not limited to, disagreements between the *parent* and the *provider*), SFCS will only reimburse the provider up to the day the provider was notified that care has stopped. In cases where the *parent* starts with the new child care provider, SFCS can only approve a new provider to begin the day AFTER the **previous** provider's reimbursement has ended.

Ending child care services without giving proper notification to the existing child care provider is a violation of agency policy, therefore, when this happens the parent will be issued a warning letter for the first and second occurrence in a 12-month period. If the parent changes providers without giving proper notification to the existing provider, a third time in the same 12-month period, the family will be issued a termination Notice of Action.

PARENTAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE



LICENSE-EXEMPT CHILD CARE SETTINGS

Parents with a child in license-exempt care may file a complaint against the license-exempt *provider* using the following process:

- ✓ The complaint must be written and must include the nature of the complaint, the date and approximate time of the occurrence, the name and address of the *provider* being complained about, and it must be signed by the *parent*. Only complaints received about health and safety noncompliance will be accepted. These complaints will be deemed substantiated solely by the *parent's* written declaration;
- ✓ Upon receipt of a complaint, SFCS will inform the license-exempt *provider* of the *parent's* complaint, and inform the *provider* of his/her right to submit a written rebuttal. SFCS will also notify the *parent* and the *provider* that reimbursements will cease in 14 *days* unless a written declaration signed by both parties has been received by SFCS stating that the health and safety deficiency has been corrected. In any case, reimbursement to the *provider* will not continue past the last day of child care provided. SFCS may also notify the Child Protective Services unit of the county welfare department, and the police;
- ✓ SFCS must maintain a record of parental complaints concerning a license-exempt *provider's* failure to meet the health and safety standards as specified in the Health and Safety Self-Certification;

Attention Licensed and TrustLine Registered Child Care Providers: You may be eligible to receive a monthly reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks you serve to the children in your care. Call SFCS' Food Program at (707) 864-4631 today!

- ✓ Upon receiving an inquiry about a specific license-exempt *provider*, SFCS Staff will inform the person who made the inquiry of the general nature of the complaint and whether or not the *provider* submitted a rebuttal.

LICENSED CHILD CARE SETTINGS

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

- ✓ Their assigned *FSS;*
- ✓ The Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, at (844) 538-8766;
- ✓ The Child Protective Services unit, at (800) 544-8696;
- ✓ The local police department.

Parents may contact The Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, to ask about any complaints already filed against licensed *providers* at:

- (707) 588-5026: Covers Benicia, Fairfield & Vallejo, or
- (530) 895-5033: Covers Dixon, Rio Vista & Vacaville

PARENT TERMINATION POLICY

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

If subsidized child care funding becomes limited or unavailable, SFCS will disenroll families as directed by the State Department of Social Services, Child Care and Development Division and the *Solano County Health and Social Services Department*.

Other Reasons for Termination — <u>including, but not limited to</u>:

- ✓ When the *Parent* does not meet the eligibility and need criteria based on the program they are enrolled in at recertification;
- ✓ When the child reaches the age limit set by the program rules & regulations;
- ✓ When the *parent* submits falsified documentation or information to SFCS (see page 19 '*Child Care Fraud Policy*');
- ✓ When the *parent* fails to pay *family fee*s or defaults on a *Family Fee* Payment Plan;
- ✓ When the *parent* fails to abide by program rules & regulations;
- ✓ When a student *parent* fails to complete their enrolled classes, or fails to maintain a grade point average of "C" (2.0) or better at recertification;
- ✓ When the *parent* fails to complete, sign, or submit required documentation;
- ✓ When the *parent* fails to complete the Recertification process.

SFCS will not tolerate threatening, violent, or harassing behavior from anyone. SFCS may refuse to serve anybody during the time they exhibit these behaviors. Therefore, services to the *parent* or *provider* may be delayed or terminated.

NOTICE OF ACTION (NOA)

Whenever SFCS takes an action (approving, denying, or terminating services); or intends to change (reduce or increase) a family's child care services; or when the *parent* must pay a *family fee*—the action is communicated through a *Notice of Action* (*NOA*). The main message to the *parent* appears at the bottom of the *NOA* under "Reason for Action". **The *parent* must read this section carefully.**

NOTE: Pay close attention to the Effective Date on the *NOA,* as this is the date that the action will take effect, unless the *parent* files an appeal by the due date. Both the Effective Date and the Appeal Date appear on the upper right-hand corner of the *NOA*.

When a *NOA* is sent informing the *parent* that their services will be terminated, an *NTP* is also sent to notify the *provider* of the termination of reimbursements for child care services.

If a *parent* has any questions or does not agree with the decision being made, the *parent* must first contact the agency representative who issued the *NOA* right away.

PARENTAL APPEAL RIGHTS

If the *parent* does not agree with an action taken by SFCS, the *parent* has the right to appeal the agency's decision and request a hearing. SFCS must have the *parent's* appeal/request for hearing no later than the Appeal Date on the *NOA*. If the appeal request is received on time, services will continue until a final decision is rendered. If the appeal request is not received on time, services will end as stated on that *NOA*. The appeal process is described on the back of the *NOA*.

If the appeal is received by the due date, SFCS will issue reimbursement to the *provider* for child care services rendered during the appeal process. **In *child care fraud* cases**, the *parent* will be billed for reimbursements made to the *provider* during this period, if our decision to terminate services is upheld.

The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.
~ Denis Waitley ~

PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Any *parent* who does not agree with an action taken (an action that is not appealable through a Notice of Action), may use the grievance procedure as described in this section. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a way of discussing and settling differences involving **only** the interpretation or application of the policy or any alleged violation thereof. It is the intent of this procedure to settle grievances fairly and in a timely manner. The person filing a grievance will be free from restraint, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal. When grievances arise, they are not to be considered as reflecting unfavorably on either SFCS or the *parent*, but are to be considered their right. All grievances must be presented in writing to the Appeal Officer as soon as possible, after the occurrence that caused the disagreement.

The *parent* will be contacted by the Appeal Officer within five (5) business *days* upon receipt of the written grievance to discuss the matter at hand. After discussing the grievance with the *parent*, the Appeal Officer will send the *provider* a written response within ten (10) business *days*.

Within ten (10) business *days* after receiving the written notification of the Appeal Officer's decision, a *parent* who is dissatisfied with the outcome may submit a written request to have the action reviewed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director will contact the *parent* within five (5) business *days* to arrange a hearing. This hearing is limited to whether or not the action/decision made is valid, and the Executive Director will render a final decision within ten (10)business *days*.

During the hearing, the *parent* may speak for him/herself, or may be represented by another party of his/her choice. If needed, an interpreter will be made available by SFCS.

PROVIDER PARTICIPATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Providers must meet the *provider* requirements as stated in this handbook and as described in any *NTP* issued by SFCS, in order to receive reimbursements from us.

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

Reimbursements cannot be made for services when child care is provided by *parents* (biological/adoptive/foster), legal guardians, or members of the *parent's* assistance unit (other people included/ counted in the public assistance grant).

When a *provider's* policies conflict with ours, our policies override the *provider's*. In some cases, the *provider* may hold the *parent* responsible for any additional requirements, if the *parent* is made fully aware of them in writing.

Provider information given to SFCS may be shared with different departments in the agency: Subsidized Child Care Program, Resource and Referral Program, and the Child Care Food Program. As required or as appropriate, this information may also be shared with the *SCHSSD*, Special Investigations Unit, Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing, Workforce Development Board, and the Employment Development Department.

All *providers* must give SFCS the physical address where care is being provided and a current telephone number. Changes in the location of care must be reported to SFCS PRIOR to the change. It must be followed up in writing to SFCS within five (5) *days* of the change and must include the signature of the *provider* and *parent*.

License-Exempt *Providers* must submit proof of their physical address to SFCS.

A *Certificate* must be on file for every child receiving subsidized services in order for a *provider* to be reimbursed. A phone conversation does not mean child care services are approved, nor is it a promise of reimbursements from SFCS.

***Providers* are not employees of SFCS; they are considered Independent Contractors.** They are responsible for reporting income and paying applicable federal and state income taxes. SFCS does not withhold taxes from reimbursements. Every January, SFCS will issue a 1099-MISC Form to the *provider*, which includes the total income earned in the prior calendar year. This income is reported to the IRS, the California State Franchise Tax Board, the Employment Development Department, and *SCHSSD*.

NOTE: For further tax information, please see a tax professional.

Providers are expected to offer activities for children that nurture their growth and development. *Providers* are encouraged to attend workshops related to Child Development, Health and Safety, Nutrition, etc. These workshops are offered by SFCS and other training sites.

SFCS reserves the right to terminate *Certificates* for Child Care Services or refuse to issue a *Certificate* to any *provider* if SFCS has reason to believe that care by that *provider* would not be in the best interest of the child—including but not limited to placing the child at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Child Care Providers: Reminder to inform SFCS AND Community Care Licensing if you permanently change your business hours or days of operation. Also report if you take an extended leave of absence, as well as any change you'd like to make to your license, such as a name change, a larger capacity, or if a family member turns 18.

Providers must allow the *parent* and SFCS Subsidized Child Care Program Staff unlimited access to the child care facility (licensed or license-exempt) while the enrolled child is in care.

PROVIDER AVAILABILITY

Providers are expected to provide care during their hours of operation and during their authorized period as specified on the *Certificate*. If they do not, for any reason (i.e. *provider* is unable, unwilling or unavailable), their reimbursement may be adjusted to allow reimbursement to the back-up *provider.*

Supervision by the certified *provider* (or their registered adult assistant) MUST be maintained at all times when a child is in attendance.

Providers who are employed or go to school, will be required to submit verification of their work/school hours, and SFCS will verify that information.

BACK-UP PROVIDERS/MULTIPLE PROVIDERS — please see page 10.

PROVIDER ABSENCES

When the certified *provider* is not able to provide care due to his/her illness or other types of absences, the *parent* must report to SFCS the name of the substitute *provider* who will be caring for the subsidized child. This information MUST BE REPORTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE—to ensure reimbursement can be issued for those services to the appropriate *provider*.

Anyone substituting for the *provider* must meet all *provider* requirements as stated in this handbook BEFORE SFCS can issue a *Certificate* and reimbursements.

SFCS will not issue reimbursements to *providers* for *days* he/she is unable or unwilling to provide child care services (except for *Provider Days of Non-Operation* as described in the next paragraph).

PROVIDER DAYS OF NON-OPERATION

Many *providers* have identified *days* when their business is closed for holidays, vacations, staff development *days*, or other various reasons. These *days* are called *Provider Days of Non-Operation (DNOs*). SFCS can reimburse *providers* up to 10 *DNOs* per *fiscal year*. In order to be reimbursed for *DNOs*, the *provider* must submit a copy of their Business Practices (contract) stating what the expectations are. In addition, reimbursement for *DNOs* will be made only if the *DNO* falls on one of the child's certified *days*.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS WHO ARE EXEMPT FROM NEEDING A CHILD CARE LICENSE

License-Exempt Child Care Centers

License-Exempt Centers must submit documentation that supports their license-exempt status. They must also complete a License-Exempt Center Questionnaire (provided by SFCS).

TrustLine Registry Providers

In California, *providers* who are not licensed to do child care, and do not fall under the category of "TrustLine-Exempt" as defined in the next section, are required to go through the TrustLine process. This process includes completing and turning in a TrustLine application; fingerprinting of the *provider* using the Live Scan process (by appointment only at SFCS); a criminal background investigation, including a Child Abuse Index Check through the Department of Justice. These providers must also show proof of having a negative TB test result.

TrustLine required *providers* must be cleared and registered before we can reimburse for any child care services provided to a child on our program. If the *provider's* TrustLine application status is closed or denied, SFCS CANNOT reimburse for any care provided, and the *parent* will be responsible for paying the *provider all fees owed.*

In Stage 1 (CDSS) ONLY, once the *provider* is registered, SFCS can only reimburse up to the first 120 *days* of child care provided. If the *provider's* application status is closed or denied, SFCS CANNOT reimburse for any care provided, and the *parent* will be responsible for paying the *provider all fees owed.*

If the *provider's* TrustLine status is later revoked, SFCS MUST stop reimbursements to the *provider*.

TrustLine *providers* can only care for the children of one (1) family at a time, who are not related to the *provider* by blood, marriage or court decree.

TrustLine-Exempt Providers

Providers who are Aunts, Uncles, or Grandparents to the enrolled children, do not need to be TrustLined. However, the child's older brothers/sisters, great-grandparents and great aunts/uncles **DO** need to be TrustLined.

The relationship between the *provider* and the child must be by blood, marriage, or court decree. Once this relationship is dissolved, the *provider* MUST be TrustLined in order to continue to receive reimbursements from SFCS for an eligible child.

Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do. Grandparents sort of sprinkle stardust over the lives of little children. ~ ***Alex Haley*** *~*

TrustLine-exempt ***providers*** are not eligible to receive child care reimbursements from SFCS until they turn in a complete Health & Safety Self-Certification packet, as well as all other required paperwork, and attend an orientation at SFCS.

PROVIDER RATES

Licensed *providers* must display their child care rates in a public area, next to their facility license.

SFCS will reimburse the *provider's* rates as long as:

- ✓ They are the usual and customary charges made to every family, whether or not the family receives subsidized child care; **and**
- ✓ They are not higher than the *RMRCs* for the area in which child care is being provided, according to the *RMR* regulations. If the *provider's* usual rate exceeds the rate ceiling, the *parent* is responsible for paying the difference directly to the *provider* (*co-payment*).

CHILD CARE ATTENDANCE FORMS

The Child Care Attendance Form (CCAF) is the document that is processed in order to generate reimbursement to the *provider.* Its completeness and accuracy is extremely important—because it verifies the **actual** times the child was with the *provider* each day—therefore, they must be completed daily. They are required by SFCS and our State, Federal and County funding sources. They are reviewed yearly by auditors and are used in *child care fraud* investigations.

CCAFs are released to the *provider* when the *Certificate* is issued. Until then, the *parent* & *provider* must keep track of the in/out times on a calendar or Temporary CCAF.

If the *provider* does not have a CCAF at least one (1) week before the first day of the month of service, he/she must request a replacement right away. Until the *provider* receives the replacement, all times and signatures must be kept on a calendar or Temporary CCAF, and attached to the official CCAF when received, in order for SFCS to process the reimbursement.

Note to *Parents* & *Providers*: Before signing a CCAF, make sure the front and back of the form are complete and accurate. **Never sign a blank CCAF, and do not sign or submit CCAFs before the last day of care in that month.**

If the *parent* used child care, but was not approved for those services, the *parent* will be responsible for paying the *provider* directly.

If a *provider* or *parent* includes hours of care on the CCAF that were not actually provided, they will be responsible for paying SFCS back for those hours. This is considered *child care fraud*, and therefore, services/participation in our program will end immediately (see page 19 — '*Child Care Fraud Policy').*

SFCS will not reimburse for private education (Kindergarten and beyond). Our reimbursements will be limited to the extended child care services (before and after school hours) only.

Providers will only be reimbursed for services they provide as a *Provider,* and only when that care is provided in accordance with the *parent's* approved services. If a *provider* is a relative or friend of the *parent*/ child and chooses to care for the child in that capacity, those hours of care are NOT to be claimed on the CCAF.

NOTE: For full instructions on completing CCAFs, please refer to your copy of the "Child Care Attendance Forms and Reimbursement Guidelines".

SUBMITTING THE CCAF FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Original CCAFs issued by SFCS are required for reimbursement. Please read the back of the CCAF for more detailed information about completing it and when to submit it. SFCS staff are available to answer questions as well—please call our office for assistance.

Completed CCAFs are to be mailed or hand delivered to:

Solano Family & Children's Services
421 Executive Court North — Fairfield, CA 94534-4019

CCAF DEADLINES

CCAFs submitted 30 or more *days* after the end of the month of service, may not be processed for reimbursement. Instead, they will be held until the end of the *fiscal year*, and if funds are available, they will be processed for reimbursement at that time.

SFCS' *fiscal year* closes on June 30th. CCAFs for services provided up through June 30th must be received by SFCS by July 31st in order to be processed for reimbursement. All child care provided in the *fiscal year* (July 1st — June 30th) must be claimed by July 31st. Any

Attention Licensed Child Care Providers: If you move to a new home, you are no longer licensed, and SFCS cannot continue reimbursing you. Please call Community Care Licensing at (707) 588-5026, to inform them BEFORE you move.

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

CONSEQUENCES OF NOT FOLLOWING PROPER CCAF PROCEDURES

Parents and *providers* who do not follow proper CCAF procedures as stated in this handbook or in the Child Care Attendance Forms and Reimbursement Guidelines, may be terminated from our program.

HOW PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENTS ARE MADE

State regulations require that child care reimbursements be issued to *providers* directly. Reimbursement to *parents* is not permitted.

Correct & complete CCAFs received by SFCS before 5:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, will be processed, and reimbursements will be issued by the third Wednesday after, if everything is complete and correct. The cut-off date **will not be extended** when SFCS-observed holidays fall on Tuesday. Regardless of when CCAFs are received by SFCS, they will not be processed until the month **after** the services are provided.

Reimbursements are directly deposited into the *provider's* bank account, or mailed to their address on file. We do not allow them to be picked up at our office.

SFCS DOES NOT issue reimbursements to *providers* BEFORE the applicable reimbursement date (according to when Correct and Complete CCAFs are received in our office), upon the *provider's* request. We will not make exceptions to this policy, even if the *provider* has an immediate financial need.

DELAY IN REIMBURSEMENTS OR NON-REIMBURSEMENT OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

Provider reimbursements will be held or reduced:

- ✓ CCAFs received by us more than 30 *days* after the close of the month of service, may not be processed for reimbursement. Instead, they may be held until the end of the *fiscal year*, and if we have available funds, we will process them at that time. This does not apply to Stage 1 (CDSS) CCAFs;
- ✓ When the *parent's* or *provider's* Certification Signature is missing on the CCAF;
- ✓ When the *provider* exceeds the allowable 10 *DNOs;*
- ✓ When the *provider* is not available to provide care.

If we do not receive our funds from the State in a timely manner, we may have to delay reimbursements to *providers*. Should such a delay occur, *providers* will be notified as early as possible.

CHILD ABSENCES

Absences happen on *days* when a *parent* would normally attend work/ school/other approved activity, but the child did not attend the child care facility due to illness, family emergency, court ordered visitation rights, etc. Reimbursements can be made for absences per regulations, and as described in this handbook.

NOTE: *Provider DNOs*, and *provider* sick *days* are not absences, and are not to be considered as such.

Providers may be reimbursed for a child's absence per their own business practices, and only as described in this handbook.

If SFCS does not have a copy of the *provider's* business practices on file, reimbursements for child absences WILL NOT be made.

Parents should notify their *provider*(s) of any planned absences before they occur. When a child is absent or leaves early, please write "absent" on the CCAF for that day, where the hours normally go.

For families who are certified services based on a **variable schedule** (No More Than "X" Hours Per Week), we will reimburse *providers* for **actual usage** only, up to the maximum hours listed on their *certificate*. The only exception to this is when a provider's Day of Non-Operation (DNO) falls within the certified schedule.

Therefore, we cannot reimburse providers for child absences when they are approved based on a variable schedule.

License-Exempt Providers who have part-time, set-schedule *certificates* (children who need less than 30 hours of care per week, based on a set schedule), can only be reimbursed for the hours they actually provide care.

TERMINATION OF CERTIFICATES FOR CHILD CARE & DISCONTINUANCE OF PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENTS

Providers are asked to give a written notice of at least two (2) weeks, to *parents* and SFCS if they are going to end services to a subsidized child.

Reimbursement for the *provider's notice period* is made only for the certified *days* within that *notice period,* and only if the child continues to attend that child care facility/home.

Licensed Family Child Care *Providers* must give SFCS at least a two-week notice when they plan to move out of the home they are licensed for. Because moving invalidates their child care license, SFCS will only reimburse for services rendered up to the last day that care was provided in the licensed home. Reimbursements from SFCS will not resume until the date the new license is issued. If the *provider* chooses to continue to provide child care services while he/she does not have a valid child care license, the *parent* must pay the *provider* directly—not SFCS.

SFCS reserves the right to terminate *Certificates* for Child Care Services or refuse to issue a *Certificate* to any *provider* who exhibits threatening or violent behavior; uses abusive language or profanity; harasses SFCS staff; or is non-cooperative with SFCS staff.

SFCS reserves the right to terminate *Certificates* for Child Care Services or refuse to issue a *Certificate* to any *provider*, if SFCS has reason to believe that the arrangement **would not** be in the best interest of the child, including but not limited to placing the child at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

SFCS reserves the right to terminate *Certificates* for Child Care Services **immediately**—without giving advance notice—when the child is at risk of abuse or neglect in the child care facility, or in the *provider's* care; or when the *provider* is non-compliant with licensing regulations.

ALL *Certificates* for Child Care Services issued to the *provider* will be terminated and ALL reimbursements will be discontinued for reasons including, but not limited to those listed below:

- ✓ When the *provider* does not meet all State/County/Agency requirements;
- ✓ When the *provider* forges or falsifies any information/ documentation used to determine his/her eligibility for reimbursements from SFCS;
- ✓ When the *provider* interferes with the *parent's* ability to complete the CCAF on a daily basis;
- ✓ When the *provider* records hours of care on the CCAF (and accepts reimbursement for those hours) but that care was NOT provided;
- ✓ When the *provider* uses corporal or unusual punishment defined as infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of punitive nature, including, but not limited to: interference with eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding shelter, clothing, medications, or aids to physical functioning;
- ✓ When complaints received from SFCS staff, the general public, or enrolled *parents* are substantiated (please see 'Parental Complaint Procedure' on page 12);
- ✓ When the *provider* violates the Health & Safety Self-Certification Agreement;
- ✓ When we are aware of the criminal history of any person in the child care setting which may place the child in harm's way.

Additional Reason for termination of Licensed *Provider*s:

- ✓ Denial, Temporary Suspension, or Revocation of the *provider's* child care license.

Additional Reason for Termination of TrustLine Registry *Providers*:

- ✓ Closure, Denial, or Revocation of the *provider's* eligibility for TrustLine Registry.

Providers in situations listed above (that do not involve *child care fraud*) may be placed on suspension for a minimum of one (1) year. During the suspension period, the *provider* will NOT be eligible for reimbursements from SFCS, and no new *Certificates* for Child Care Services will be issued. After a one-year period, consideration for reinstatement of the *provider* will be reviewed by SFCS, at the *provider's* request.

When a *provider* is terminated due to *child care fraud*, the termination is immediate and permanent.

Parents and Providers: Please remember, any corrections made to the in/out times on CCAFs must be initialed by both the Parent and the Provider.

PROVIDER GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any *provider* who does not agree with any action or termination may use the grievance procedure as described in this section. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a way of discussing and settling differences involving **only** the interpretation or application of the policy or any alleged violation thereof. It is the intent of this procedure to settle grievances fairly and in a timely manner. The person filing a grievance will be free from restraint, coercion, discrimination or reprisal. When grievances arise, they are not to be considered as reflecting unfavorably on either SFCS or the *provider*, but are to be considered their right. All grievances must be presented in writing to the Subsidy Program Assistant Manager within 14 *days* after the occurrence that caused the disagreement.

The *provider* will be contacted by the Family Services Manager within five (5) business *days* upon receipt of the written grievance to discuss the matter at hand. After discussing the grievance with the *provider*, the Family Services Manager will send the *provider* a written response within ten (10) business *days*.

Within ten (10) business *days* after receiving the written notification of the Family Services Manager's decision, a *provider* who is dissatisfied with the outcome may submit a written request to have the action reviewed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director will contact the *provider* within five (5) business *days* to arrange a hearing. This hearing is limited to whether or not the action/decision made is valid, and the Executive Director will render a final decision within ten (10) business *days*.

During the hearing, the *provider* may speak for him/herself, or may be represented by another party of his/her choice. If needed, an interpreter will be made available by SFCS.

Child care FRAUD POLICY

Any *parent* or *provider* who provides false information or acts in a fraudulent manner is jeopardizing their participation on this program.

Federal and state regulations require SFCS to collect child care reimbursements which have been made to *providers* for services/ reimbursements the *parent* or *provider* was not eligible to receive, due to *child care fraud* on the part of the *parent or provider.* **Therefore, we do bill for services obtained under fraudulent circumstances.**

Once SFCS suspects *child care fraud* has occurred, the *parent/ provider* records and CCAFs are open for review by our funding sources, the Solano County Special Investigations Bureau, and the District Attorney's Office.

If it is determined that a *parent* or *provider* has provided fraudulent information, or failed to disclose a fact in order to benefit from the program, services may be terminated. *Parents* and *providers* will be notified in writing of any action SFCS will take, based on the findings of the investigation.

When a *parent's* child care services are terminated due to *child care fraud*, they will not be eligible for re-enrollment onto our program, unless it is into an entitlement program (Stage 1 – CDSS).

When a *provider* is terminated due to *child care fraud*, the termination is immediate and permanent.

SFCS will bill the responsible party/parties for the total costs of all services provided—**including those services which were provided during the appeal process—as applicable.**

SFCS staff will work with *parents*/*providers* to determine a reasonable repayment plan. However, if the *parent/provider* refuses to reimburse SFCS for billed *child care fraud*, SFCS may:

- ✓ Assign the collection to a collection agency;
- ✓ Pursue payment through small claims court;
- ✓ Refer the matter to the District Attorney's Office.

Solano Family & Children's Services (SFCS) operates in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local laws governing non-profit organizations. The agency is governed by a board of directors that establishes policy and provides input from the community. SFCS operates on a non-discriminatory basis, and gives equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, color, ancestry, national origin, actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, age, religion, mental or physical disability, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one (1) or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. SFCS refrains from religious instruction or worship.

For complaints of discrimination for CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care Program (CDSS), please write to:

Civil Rights Coordinator
275 Beck Avenue - Fairfield, CA 94533
Phone: (707) 784-8400

For complaints of discrimination for all other SFCS programs, please write to:

Complaint Coordinator
California State Department of Education
Early Learning and Care Division
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 322-6233

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the enrolled child and his/her family will be restricted to purposes directly connected with the administration of this program. SFCS will permit the review of the basic data file by the enrolled child's parent(s) or parent's authorized representative, upon request and at reasonable times and places. We may also share parent/ provider information, as necessary, with our funding sources, Special Investigations Bureau, the District Attorney's office, etc.

This publication was funded by the State Department of Education and Solano County Health and Social Services Department. Solano Family & Children's Services is solely responsible for its content.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call:

_____

Family Services Specialist *Phone/Extension*

_____

Provider Services Specialist *Phone/Extension*

Notes:

HANDBOOK RECEIPT

After signing, mail or bring to ➡ **Solano Family & Children's Services**
421 Executive Court North
Fairfield, CA 94534-4019

Solano Family & Children's Services has developed this Subsidized Child Care Program Handbook to inform both *parents* & *providers* of some rules and regulations which govern this program. This handbook has been approved by the SFCS Board of Directors. While reading this handbook, please keep in mind that it was developed using State and County regulations. Therefore, the success of this program depends on your cooperation and your willingness to abide by the rules & regulations. As changes take place in rules, regulations & policies, we will inform you. Please keep in mind that everything we send you contains important information which may affect your eligibility on this program—we do not send "junk mail". If you have any questions about any information you receive from us, please contact your Case Manager right away.

Please complete this page and return it to SFCS as soon as possible.

I AM A . . . ❒ ***Parent***
❒ ***Provider***

NOTE: If we cannot read your name, we will not know this belongs to you; your file will be incomplete and your services/reimbursements may be affected.

I, **(PLEASE PRINT NAME)** _____,
have received a copy of the Subsidized Child Care Program Handbook developed by Solano Family & Children's Services for program participants. I agree to abide by the rules & regulations of the program and I understand that these rules & regulations are subject to change.

Parents/Guardians: I am aware that the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook supersede my *provider's* policies. If I sign an agreement with my *provider*, I understand that I, NOT SFCS, am responsible for the contents and requirements as stipulated in that agreement.

Although the second *parent's* signature is not required throughout the entire process for receiving child care services—it is his/her responsibility to be fully aware of the details of the services, and the basis for which those services are being received—as BOTH *parents* are equally responsible for the accuracy of the information being given to SFCS.

Providers: I understand that as a child care *provider*, I am prohibited from engaging in any form of discrimination as described on page 20 of this handbook.

_____

Parent's/Guardian's/Provider's Signature *Date Received*

_____

Second Parent's/Guardian's Signature *Date Received*
(Necessary in Two-Parent Households)

Revised January 2023

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A Success Story . . .

This is a success story from a parent who received subsidized child care services from us. Because of this program, the parent now has a successful career in social services and child advocacy. The names were changed to protect their identity.

Hi! I'm Julissa, a former subsidized child care recipient through Solano Family and Children's Services. When my daughter, Kylie, was born, I knew the best way to be able to provide for her future was to go back to school and earn my Bachelor's Degree, a dream I never would have accomplished if not for the subsidized child care program.

I was confident Kylie was in good hands at a Family Child Care Home while I attended school and worked part time. When I graduated, I went on to work full time, with the help of on-going child care services, which was the next step in my plan for self-sufficiency. Now we live independently, and I am paying for child care out of my own pocket. Even though it has been a while, I still marvel at how far we have come.

Because subsidized child care services played such a pivotal role in helping me achieve my goals, I have joined the parent organization, Parent Voices, to help advocate for services and funding so that more parents like me have access to the high-quality child care they need in order to achieve their own goals.

Through Parent Voices, I have met with other organizers and parents across the state, and participated in planning events such as, Stand for Children Day, an annual rally held at the state capitol. I have spoken with state legislative representatives and shared my story.

Identifying issues, taking a course of action, and seeing social change unfold is an exciting and rewarding process. Just this year, we achieved one of the highest increases in funding in over a decade!

Solano Family & Children's Services would like to hear YOUR success story!

Of course we would change your name to protect your identity. If you would like to share your story with others, please submit your story in writing to your FSS or PSS at:

Solano Family & Children's Services
421 Executive Court North
Fairfield, CA 94534-4019

Please include your name and phone number, so we may contact you to obtain your permission to publish your story.

SOLANO FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Your Child Care & Resource Connection

421 Executive Court North ~ Fairfield, CA 94534-4019

(707) 863-3950 ~ Fax: (707) 863-3975
info@solanofamily.org ~ www.solanofamily.org
Follow us on Twitter at SolanoFamilyCS
Visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/solanofamily

OFFICE HOURS:

Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays*; 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
**Note: We are closed the First Friday of each month*
Tuesdays; Noon to 5:00 P.M.
Some meetings, workshops and services are offered evenings & weekends

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE:

Child Care Food Program ~ Help Me Grow Solano
Resource & Referral Program ~ Subsidized Child Care Program
Workforce Development Board (WDB) Child Care Program
On-site Live Scan Electronic Fingerprinting System available by appointment

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

SFCS participates in community events, such as Vallejo Celebrates Youth, Kid Fest in Vacaville, Job Fairs, Health & Resource Fairs, and the Annual Early Childhood Education Conference at Solano Community College.

MACHINES AVAILABLE:

Button/Key-Chain/Magnet-Making Machine ~ Die-Cut Machine with more than 300 shapes
Laminating Services ~ Note-Pad Making Machine ~ Spiral Binding Machine

LENDING LIBRARY:

The lending library is available to anyone in the community. Items such as educational books, activity boxes, videos, and toddler climbing structures are available to participants after completing a membership form. The lending library is available during normal SFCS hours (see above)—on a first-come, first-served basis.