

SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Parent Handbook

This handbook has been updated to reflect State and Federal Funding Term requirements and includes NCO Governing Board Policies that were approved on 11/13/03, 7/8/04, 11/30/06, 10/24/12, 3/25/15, 12/6/17, 1/23/19 and 12/7/2022.

Rural Communities Child Care (RCCC) is a program of North Coast Opportunities (NCO), Inc. and administers a variety of Subsidized Child Care Programs that help eligible families pay for childcare in Lake and Mendocino Counties.

NCO/RCCC also administers the Resource and Referral Program and the Child Care Food Program. NCO/RCCC's goal is to promote and encourage the healthy growth, development, care and education of children and families.

The purpose of this handbook is to explain the program rules that parents need to follow and the paperwork that must be completed for authorized childcare services through NCO/RCCC Subsidized Child Care Programs.

NCO/RCCC OFFICES:

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Ukiah, CA 95482
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707-467-3216 FAX

COAST

111A Boatyard Drive
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
707-964-3080 Phone
707-964-5594 FAX

LAKEPORT

401 Martin Street
Lakeport, CA 95453
707-263-4688 Phone
707-312-8218 FAX

CLEARLAKE

14290 Olympic Dr Suite A
Clearlake, CA 95422
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GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS

ABANDONMENT OF SERVICES

When a family has not been in communication with their provider for seven (7) consecutive days and has not notified the provider of the reason they are not using services.

ATTENDANCE SHEETS

Attendance sheets document the hours of childcare provided. They are used to calculate payment to the independent contractor of the parent's choice. Blank attendance sheets are available to be picked up at each NCO/RCCC office or they can be printed directly from the NCO website at ncoinc.org

BROADLY CONSISTENT USE

The hours of childcare reflected on the monthly attendance record is within the parameters of the parent's documented certified need with NCO/RCCC.

CALENDAR YEAR

January 1st through December 31st

CHILD CARE CERTIFICATES

The childcare certificate consists of the dates childcare services are scheduled to begin and end, the childcare hours authorized, and the maximum allowable benefit level for each child based on the certified schedule of the parent.

CHILD CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CCFP)

NCO/RCCC's Child Care Food Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services and administered by the California Department of Social Services. The purpose of the program is to improve the health and eating habits of children in family childcare homes at no cost to the parents. The program also helps offset the rising cost of food served by the provider with meal reimbursements, subsequently reducing the cost of childcare to parents.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY CASE MANAGERS

Child Care Subsidy Case Managers maintain documentation for families enrolled in the various Subsidized Child Care Programs and the providers the families have chosen. In this handbook, when parents and providers are instructed to contact their local NCO/RCCC office, they should speak directly to their Child Care Subsidy Case Managers. Phone numbers of local NCO/RCCC offices can be found on the front page of this handbook.

CO-PAYMENT

If a parent chooses a provider whose rates exceed the maximum benefit level NCO/RCCC is allowed to pay per state and federal reimbursement ceilings, the provider may charge the parent a co-payment. The co-payment would be the difference between the provider's rate and the maximum NCO/RCCC can pay based upon the current Regional Market Rate Survey. Any co-payment is between the parent and the provider and is not accounted for by NCO/RCCC.

ELIGIBILITY PERIODS: 12-MONTH/24-MONTH

This is the period you are Approved for Services. Previous Eligibility Periods for all families were 12-month Eligibility Periods. Effective January 1, 2023, California Department of Social Services will be transitioning, over time, to 24-month Eligibility Periods for *some funding sources*.

For those families *who's funding source allows* a 24-month Eligibility Period, the following process will occur:

- Families enrolled or recertified prior to January 1, 2023, will remain under 12-month eligibility until their next recertification period.
- Families enrolled or recertified after December 31, 2022, will have a 24-month Eligibility Period

Families will be notified by a Notice of Action if and when their 12-month eligibility period will transition to a 24-month eligibility period.

FACILITY

A facility is a licensed Family Child Care Home, Center, or License-Exempt Provider, unless otherwise specified.

FAMILY FEES

A family fee is calculated by the agency and is the portion of the childcare cost paid by the parent based on their income and family size. Not all families will have a fee.

FISCAL YEAR

For the purposes of the NCO/RCCC Subsidized Child Care Programs, the fiscal year is July 1st through June 30th

FRAUD

Definition of child care fraud includes but is not limited to: increased earnings not reported within thirty (30) calendar days that exceed the 85% SMI, cash aid fraud, parent/employer collusion to falsify eligibility, false statements that affect eligibility or payment, child is not a dependent of parent, parent receives more than one subsidy for same service, provider receives payment for services rendered by another, provider claims hours of care not provided, signature on attendance sheet doesn't match parent's or provider's, provider receives in-home supportive services from parent, and falsifying relationship to child to avoid TrustLine.

LICENSE-EXEMPT PROVIDER

A License-Exempt Provider is a person who is not required to be licensed. License-Exempt Providers may care for their relatives along with one non-related family. However, NCO/RCCC policy shall only allow payment for one family's children regardless of their relationship and the days and times the childcare is being provided. The definition of "one family" for NCO/RCCC subsidy purposes is one "client family".

NORTH COAST OPPORTUNITIES, INC. (NCO)

NCO is a private, non-profit corporation serving the needs of communities and families throughout Mendocino and Lake Counties with program offices in Sonoma, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties.

PARENT

Parent means a biological parent, stepparent, adoptive parent, foster parent, caretaker relative, or any other adult living with a child who has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child.

REGIONAL MARKET RATE SURVEY

The Regional Market Rate Survey is conducted by the state to provide information about current market rates for various types of childcare available in each county in the state. NCO/RCCC is required to use the Regional Market Rate Survey to determine the state/federal maximum benefit level for each child enrolled on the subsidy program.

RESOURCE AND REFERRAL (R&R)

NCO/RCCC's Resource and Referral Program is funded by the California Department of Social Services. This program provides parents with referrals to licensed childcare facilities and assists them to understand the importance of choosing quality childcare. The Resource and Referral Program also provides ongoing training and assistance to childcare facilities in Lake and Mendocino Counties. NCO/RCCC offices have resource libraries available.

RURAL COMMUNITIES CHILD CARE (RCCC)

The goal of NCO/RCCC is to promote and encourage the healthy growth, development, care and education of children and families. NCO/RCCC administers Subsidized Child Care Programs, the Resource and Referral Program, and the Child Care Food Program.

SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Subsidized Child Care Programs (also known as Alternative Payment Programs) are funded by the California Department of Social Services. These programs assist income-eligible families with their childcare expenses by providing either a full or partial payment to provider(s) of their choice.

SUBSIDIZED PAYMENT COORDINATORS

Subsidized Payment Coordinators are responsible for the monthly calculation and disbursement of provider payments, maintaining provider files along with billing and collecting family fees for the Subsidized Child Care Program.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF SERVICES

A parent who would like to temporarily suspend services and does not have a need for care, may submit a request to do so in writing anytime during their 12-month/24-month eligibility period, once enrolled. This does not preclude the parent from accessing their full certified childcare schedule at any time within their 12-month/24-month eligibility period.

TRUSTLINE

A License-Exempt Provider who is not the grandparent, aunt or uncle of the child must be TrustLine registered. TrustLine is a background check which includes data from the California Criminal History System, the California Child Abuse Central Index at the California Department of Justice (DOJ), and a check of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) records. Exempt providers who are required to be TrustLine registered and who are not, cannot be reimbursed for services.

NCO/RCCC will not contract with an unlicensed provider if any person residing in the home has been denied TrustLine and/or is known to be a registered sex offender. For the CalWORKS Stage One and Foster Bridge Program childcare funds, License-Exempt childcare providers must clear the TrustLine registry through the Department of Justice and the Health and Safety self-certification requirements before payments will be made and may be backdated up to 120 days.

If the License-Exempt TrustLine Provider (with the exception of CalWORKS Stage One and the Foster Bridge Program) does not clear the TrustLine Registry within the first 30 days of the first day of childcare services, payment will not be made for that time period.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES / NON-USE OF CERTIFIED SERVICES

Unexplained absences are determined to be days that are consistently not used that do not have an explanation noted on the attendance sheet showing the absence is temporary in nature and not ongoing. NCO/RCCC will work with families and providers to inform parents of the importance of consistent attendance for their child in order to maximize the benefits of their early learning and care experience.

VOLUNTARY REQUEST TO CHANGE SERVICE LEVELS

A family may, at any time, voluntarily request to change their service level and shall provide applicable supporting documentation for the requested change.

INTRODUCTION

Briefly, the Subsidized Child Care Programs work as follows:

1. Parents interested in receiving subsidized childcare should call or visit their local NCO/RCCC office to find out how to receive childcare services, at which time they are required to fill out an application and are placed on the eligibility list.
2. As funding becomes available, parents are contacted by an NCO/RCCC Child Care Subsidy Case Manager regarding an interview appointment to determine eligibility. Parents will be required to provide documentation confirming eligibility and need during their interview appointment.
3. If the parent meets all of the requirements, the family is enrolled in the appropriate program.
4. Providers eligible for payment through the Subsidized Child Care Programs include:
 - Child Care Centers, including Parks & Recreation and After-School Programs
 - Licensed Family Child Care Providers
 - License-Exempt Providers
5. Final selection of the placement of children in a childcare facility is parental choice. NCO/RCCC is not involved in the placement of children. A parent may choose from a variety of childcare settings; however, the care must be appropriate to the parent's needs.
6. If the parent is unable to find a childcare provider or finish their enrollment process within 30 days from the date of enrollment, they will be denied services and placed back on the eligibility list.
7. Program Rules are explained to the parent(s) and the chosen provider(s). Instructions are given regarding individual responsibilities and completion of paperwork, including how to properly complete attendance sheets.

FAMILY ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Families enrolled on any of the NCO/RCCC Subsidized Child Care Programs are required to verify both their need and eligibility for childcare subsidies.

- Upon establishing initial eligibility or ongoing eligibility for services, a family shall be considered to meet all eligibility and need requirements for those services for not less than twelve (12) months.
- At the end of a family's Eligibility Period, whether a 12-month or a 24-month Eligibility Period, a recertification must be completed with all requested documents/verification to re-determine your need and eligibility. Families will receive prior notification of the timeline for this re-certification.
- The family shall not be required to report changes to income except when families are certified as income eligible, and their adjusted monthly income exceeds 85% of State Median Income (SMI).
- NCO/RCCC will work with families and providers to inform parents of the importance of consistent attendance for their child in order to maximize the benefits of their early learning and care experience.
- Follow program rules.

ATTENDANCE SHEET INSTRUCTIONS

Please use this as a reference when maintaining attendance sheets. In order for payment of authorized childcare to be made, program rules must be followed, including proper completion of attendance sheets.

- Attendance sheets are available at any NCO/RCCC office and are also located on the NCO website and may be accessed by following the below steps:
 1. Log on to www.ncoinc.org.
 2. In the drop-down box for Children & Families select the tab childcare
 3. Select the blue box under Rural Communities Child Care
 4. Select the Providers tab.
 5. Scroll down to forms.
- Both parent and provider must maintain the attendance sheets in permanent ink.
- Do not use whiteout on the attendance sheets. If an error is made, please line through the error and change it. Both parent and provider must initial the change.
- There must be one attendance sheet per child, per month.
- The exact time the child arrives and leaves each day must be entered onto the attendance sheet. **The EXACT times the child is arriving and leaving must be completed on a daily basis.**
- For school age children, the time of entry to the facility cannot be prior to the end of the school day unless they leave school early for a specific reason that must be listed on the attendance sheet.
- Reason for absence must be indicated on the appropriate date on the attendance sheet. Absences will not be paid if the childcare certificate states "pay actual attendance only" regardless of any facility policies.
- **On the last day of care each month**, both the parent and provider must sign the statement on the left side of the attendance sheet verifying that the information is true and correct.
- Original attendance sheets must be completed and returned to the Ukiah NCO/RCCC office by 5:00 p.m. on or before the due date listed on the Provider Payment Schedule (usually the 5th day of the month following childcare).
- Prior to mailing your original attendance sheets you may choose to scan them to providerpayments@ncoinc.org for NCO/RCCC staff to begin to calculate your monthly payment; however the originals MUST be received by the due date on the Provider Payment Schedule or payment cannot be released as required by the California Department of Social Services.
- Attendance sheets not received by the due date may result in a delayed or denied payment.
- If overnight care is authorized, please fill out the attendance sheet properly. For example, if the child is in attendance from 6:02 p.m. to 2:37 a.m., the attendance sheet would reflect the time in at 6:02 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. The next day would be 12:00 a.m. to 2:37 a.m. The new day begins at 12:00 midnight and ends at 11:59 p.m.
- Providers are encouraged to turn in a monthly bill to NCO/RCCC. NCO/RCCC will pay up to the maximum allowable benefit for the certified schedule of each child. The maximum benefit level paid is either the provider's usual and customary charges or the state established ceiling, whichever is less. Any amount that is not paid by NCO/RCCC for families being paid through Alternative Payment funding is the sole responsibility of the parent to pay the childcare provider privately. This is the parent's co-payment. NCO/RCCC does not monitor the parent's co-payment. It is between the parent and the provider.

CHILD CARE CERTIFICATE

The childcare certificate is issued to families with eligible children and contains the following information:

- The dates childcare services are scheduled to begin and end,
- The childcare schedule (i.e., days of the week and number of hours per day) for which payment is authorized, and
- The maximum allowable benefit based on the certified schedule of each eligible child in the family. The maximum benefit level paid is either the provider's usual and customary charges or the state established ceiling, whichever is less.

In order to receive payment for eligible childcare services:

1. The named provider's paperwork must be on file at the NCO/RCCC office.
2. The childcare certificate must be properly completed and signed by:
 - a) An authorized NCO/RCCC staff member, and
 - b) The parent named on the childcare certificate, and
 - c) The provider named on the childcare certificate.
3. The childcare certificate must be returned to the NCO/RCCC office with required signatures by the requested due date or payment may be delayed.
4. Attendance sheets must be properly completed and returned to the Ukiah NCO/RCCC office.
5. Childcare certificates are null and void:
 - a) Upon parent's or child's loss of eligibility
 - b) Upon child's last day of service
 - c) When subsequent childcare certificates are issued to modify previous childcare certificates
 - d) When canceled by NCO/RCCC representative
 - e) If a licensed provider ceases operation or loses his/her license
 - f) Upon reaching the termination date stated on the childcare certificate
6. NCO/RCCC will not be responsible for payment of hours beyond those specified on the childcare certificate unless prior authorization is obtained. It is the parent's responsibility to pay the provider any charges that the NCO/RCCC program is unable to pay (i.e., co-payment, 2-week end-of-care notice, late charges, hours not listed on the childcare certificate, etc.).

PARENT PROGRAM RULES AND POLICIES

ENROLLMENT STATUS:

1. Upon establishing initial eligibility or ongoing eligibility for services, a family shall be considered to meet all eligibility and need requirements for those services for not less than twelve (12) months. The family shall receive those services for not less than twelve (12) months before having their eligibility or need recertified.
2. The family shall not be required to report changes to income; except when families are certified as income eligible, and their adjusted monthly income exceeds 85% of State Median Income (SMI).
3. A family may at any time voluntarily request a change to their service level in writing, which includes days and hours per day requested and effective date of proposed change of service level, acknowledging in writing that they understand that they may retain their current service level.
4. Voluntarily reporting changes may only result in reducing the family fee, increasing the family services or extending the period of eligibility. No other changes to the service agreement will be applied during the 12-month/24-month eligibility.
5. NCO/RCCC will work with families and providers to inform parents of the importance of consistent attendance for their child in order to maximize the benefits of their early learning and care experience.

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

1. You must report within thirty (30) calendar days changes in your income that exceed the 85% State Median Income (SMI); which can be found on your signed copy of the Income Exit Threshold form for your family size.
2. You must report within five (5) calendar days any changes to your address and/or phone numbers.
3. Providing NCO/RCCC with any false information regarding eligibility will result in disenrollment from the program and will be cause for NCO/RCCC to recover funds paid to your childcare provider during that time frame.
4. NCO/RCCC reserves the right to update information or request additional information at their discretion, if necessary, to document eligibility and/or need.
5. If a parent chooses to change their current provider and/or no longer needs childcare, the parent is responsible to their current provider for any end-of-care policy payments and/or notice their provider may require. The provider's end-of-care policy is not monitored or reimbursed by NCO/RCCC at any time, it is solely between the parent and the childcare provider.
6. If a monthly family fee is assessed, non-payment of the family fee may result in disenrollment from the program. Your family fee is due prior to the beginning of each month's childcare usage.
7. Parents who are disenrolled from the program for failure to comply with any NCO/RCCC rule or policy will be ineligible to reapply for NCO/RCCC services for a period of one year.
8. Parents disenrolled for fraud will be permanently ineligible to receive childcare services through NCO/RCCC.
9. Parents have the right to a fair hearing if they are not satisfied with any judgment made by NCO/RCCC.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS:

1. Attendance sheets must be maintained on a daily basis. The hours of attendance must accurately reflect the time childcare was provided. Falsification of information on the attendance sheets will be grounds for disenrollment from the program and the file may be forwarded to the District Attorney.
2. NCO/RCCC will not be responsible for payment of hours beyond those specified on the childcare certificate unless prior authorization is obtained from NCO/RCCC.
3. When a child is absent because of illness or any other reason, the specific reason must be noted on the attendance sheet for that specific day.
4. Abandonment of care is when the actual attendance of the child reflects 7 consecutive days of absence with no reason noted and with no communication with the provider from the parent. This could be considered abandonment of care and may result in disenrollment from the program.

PARENT PROGRAM RULES AND POLICES (Continued)

Qualifying needs

- Employment/Self-Employment
- Homelessness
- Child Protective Services
- Education and Training
- Vocational Training
- Seeking Employment
- Seeking Permanent Housing
- Parent Incapacity

STUDENT PARENTS:

1. When the need for services is Vocational and/or educational goals, the parent's period of eligibility for services shall not be less than twelve (12) months. The family is eligible to receive services for these needs with the following limitations for:
 - a) six years from the initiation of services for vocational goals and/or
 - b) six years from the initiation of services and/or twenty-four semester units, or its equivalent, after the attainment of a bachelor's degree for educational goals.
2. Continuation of services based on training is contingent upon making adequate progress. To make adequate progress the parent shall obtain, in the college classes, technical school, or apprenticeship for which subsidized care is provided:
 - a) In a graded program, achievement of a minimum 2.0 grade point average for the last enrolled quarter, semester, or academic enrollment period; or
 - b) In a non-graded program, pass the program's requirements in at least 50% of the classes or meet the training institution's standard for making adequate progress.

The first time the parent does not meet the above requirements the parent may be recertified and continue to receive ongoing services for not less than twelve (12) months. At the conclusion of this second eligibility period, the parent shall have made adequate progress. If the parent has not made adequate progress, the family shall be disenrolled and services based on vocational and/or educational training are no longer available.

3. NCO/RCCC requires an education plan for all student parents. The education plan may come from your counselor, teacher, faculty member, etc.
4. Study time, including study time for on-line and televised instructional classes is authorized according to the following:
 - a) Two hours per week per academic unit in which the parent is enrolled,
 - b) On a case-by-case basis and as may be confirmed with the class instructor, additional time not to exceed one hour per week per academic unit in which the parent is enrolled; and
 - c) On a case-by-case basis, no more than the number of class hours per week for non-academic or non-unit training.
5. On-line or televised instructional classes that are unit-bearing classes from an accredited training institution shall be counted as class time at one hour per week for each unit. The parent shall provide a copy of the syllabus or other class documentation and, as applicable, the web address of the on-line program. The accrediting body of the training institution shall be among those recognized by the United States Department of Education.
6. Travel time shall be limited to no more than four hours per day depending on the total amount of training hours authorized.

SELF-EMPLOYED PARENTS:

NCO/RCCC reserves the right to limit the number of days and hours of childcare allotted for self-employed parents based on the documented need the parent supplies our agency. Self-employed parents will have to provide documentation of their need. To demonstrate the days and hours worked, a copy of one or more of the following may be required: appointment logs, client receipts, job logs, mileage logs, a copy of monthly profit and loss statements, a list of clients with contact information, or similar records such as a copy of a business license, a workspace lease, or a workspace rental agreement. For example, if you are a housekeeper, you must supply NCO/RCCC with a list of your clients along with receipts/dates of payments. The nature of the work must preclude the supervision of the family's child(ren). Self-employed parents must provide income tax returns to verify income (or quarterly Profit and Loss Statements until the first year's tax return is filed).

PARENT PROGRAM RULES AND POLICES (Continued)

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT:

If the basis of need for services is seeking employment, the parent's period of eligibility for childcare and development services is for not less than twelve (12) months. Childcare for school age children may not be allowed if a parent can seek work during the time the child attends school.

Services shall occur on no more than five (5) days per week and for less than thirty (30) hours per week.

Documentation of seeking employment shall include a written parental declaration signed under penalty of perjury stating that the parent is seeking employment. The declaration shall include the parent's plan to secure, change, or increase employment and shall identify a general description of when services will be necessary.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION:

NCO/RCCC is authorized to discuss and exchange information regarding the family's childcare services and eligibility with other agencies/entities as appropriate (i.e., DSS/HHSA, CPS, employers, schools, childcare providers, colleges, physicians, etc.). Information about the parent's eligibility may be reviewed by representatives of the State of California, the Federal Government, independent auditors, or others as necessary for the administration of the program.

INDEPENDENT STUDY/HOME SCHOOLING:

Children who are **expelled** from school are not eligible for childcare during normal district operating hours. However, a school aged child who is enrolled in an independent study program may be eligible under the following conditions: provide proof of the educational curriculum and hours of operation of the program the child is enrolled in, along with a Private School Affidavit which states that the schooling is accredited. Eligibility of the school age child would be the hours of certified need before and after the educational curriculum and hours of operation of the alternative program.

RIGHT TO DENY SERVICES:

If a parent has been found guilty of committing fraud on any other subsidized program(s), NCO/RCCC reserves the right to deny services.

IN-HOME CHILD CARE POLICY:

1. The Internal Revenue Service considers in-home childcare to be similar to in-home domestic help in that the parent who uses an in-home childcare provider is seen as the *employer* of the childcare provider.
 - If you choose to have childcare provided in your home by a provider who is License-Exempt, you are legally considered the employer of the childcare provider. You are responsible for paying your childcare provider at least the state minimum wage, social security tax, Medicare, and state worker's compensation insurance for your provider. You may also be responsible for unemployment taxes.
 - You may be required to withhold federal or state income taxes from the childcare provider's earnings. The provider is responsible for reporting income and payment of any federal or state income taxes.
 - For more information about your responsibilities as an employer, contact your local office of the Employment Development Department at (888-745-3886).
 - If the parent chooses in-home childcare, they must sign a self-attestation form with NCO/RCCC acknowledging that they are assuming employer responsibilities for the in-home License-Exempt Provider and acknowledge they are responsible for complying with any applicable federal and state employment laws.

AUTHORIZED SLEEP HOURS:

Authorized sleep hours are considered to be if the parent is employed anytime between 10:00pm and 6:00am, not to exceed the number of hours authorized for employment and travel between those hours.

REIMBURSEMENT TO PROVIDERS

Only one provider of childcare services per child will be reimbursed when the provider's hours of operation can accommodate the certified schedule for childcare. **(Some exceptions may apply)**

FAMILY FEE POLICY

The state requires that certain families pay fees to NCO/RCCC on a sliding scale basis.

1. The family fee is based on:
 - a. gross income, including all wages, salaries, commissions, tips, overtime and bonuses, alimony, child support, social security income, lottery winnings, settlements, inheritances, unemployment compensation, disability insurance, public cash assistance, revenue sharing (per capita) etc.
 - b. number of family members; and,
 - c. number of hours scheduled for childcare.
2. Families will be assessed with either a flat monthly full-time fee or part-time fee, based on hours of care certified for the month, income, and family size based on their 12-month/24-month eligibility. Families with a certified schedule of less than 130 hours per month will be assessed a part-time fee while families with a certified schedule of 130 hours or more per month will be assessed a full-time fee. NCO/RCCC cannot under any circumstances, recalculate fees based on a child's actual attendance. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep in close contact with their case manager if they have a change in need; more work hours or less work hours as this may result in a reduced family fee.
3. The family fee is charged on one child per family -- the child who is certified for greatest number of hours of care per month.
4. If your child(ren) attends more than one NCO Subsidized Child Care Program or any other CDE subsidized program, you will only be assessed a family fee through one program. The parent would have to submit a copy of their bill from the other subsidy program, along with a receipt that it was paid or a copy of the canceled check.
5. The fee assessed and collected shall be the least of the fee indicated on the Child Development Division fee schedule, or the actual costs of services, but not to exceed the applicable regional market rate ceiling for the type of care provided.

BILLING:

1. Parents will receive a statement for their family fee each month.
2. Fees must be paid in full by the last day of each month prior to your monthly childcare usage.
3. If a parent who is enrolled on a subsidized childcare program through NCO/RCCC must pay a provider privately for childcare which meets their eligibility and need criteria:
 - NCO/RCCC shall grant a fee credit equal to the amount paid to the other provider if a valid receipt is received by NCO/RCCC. This amount cannot exceed the maximum benefit level allowed by the Regional Market Rate Survey or the actual family fee for that month.
 - The fee credit will be applied to the family's current billing period.
 - The family will not be allowed to carry over the fee credit beyond the family's current billing period.
 - Fee credit shall NOT be given for any costs the parent pays the provider above what NCO/RCCC pays.
4. Parents will be billed for any bank charges incurred by NCO/RCCC as a result of a check that is returned for insufficient funds, stop payment, etc. Parents who have a check returned may be required to pay their family fees with a money order or certified bank check.
5. Family fee payments will **only** be accepted by mail or hand delivered to:
NCO/RCCC
413 North State Street
Ukiah CA 95482
6. NCO/RCCC only accepts the following forms of payments (**NO CASH ACCEPTED**):
 - Personal check
 - Money order
 - Cashier's check

DELINQUENT FEES:

1. Fees become delinquent if not paid by the last day of the month prior to your next month's childcare usage.
2. If fees become delinquent, a disenrollment Notice of Action will be given or mailed to the parent stating that services will be disenrolled 14 days after the date of notice is given, or 19 days after the date of notice if mailed, unless fees are paid in full by the due date listed on the Notice of Action.
3. Upon disenrollment of services for non-payment of delinquent fees, the family shall be ineligible to reapply for childcare services until all delinquent fees are paid in full.

DISENROLLMENT OF SERVICES TO FAMILIES

Childcare subsidies will be disenrolled under the following circumstances:

1. Family eligibility ends.
2. Program funding is reduced or terminated.
3. Nonpayment of fees
4. Failure to follow program rules.
5. Falsification of information or fraud
6. Child reaches the maximum age limit allowed by the funding source in which they are enrolled.
7. Failure to establish need for services at 12-month/24-month eligibility recertification.
8. The recalculation of the families adjusted monthly income exceeds the income eligibility threshold.
9. Lack of cooperation with NCO/RCCC staff
10. Failure to submit required information/documentation.
11. Failing to keep recertification appointments.
12. Criminal conduct or theft of any kind involving NCO/RCCC staff or NCO/RCCC locations.
13. Carrying illegal firearms or any other dangerous weapons on the premises of any NCO/RCCC locations
14. The parent changes their residency outside of California.
15. The family has abandoned care.

Childcare subsidies may be disenrolled under the following circumstances:

1. Any threat or abuse affecting the well-being of an NCO/RCCC employee.
2. Use of or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on the premises of any NCO/RCCC location.

Families who are disenrolled due to failure to follow program rules shall remain ineligible to receive childcare services for a period of one (1) year. Families have the right to request reinstatement to an eligibility list at the end of the period in which they were not allowed to participate.

Families disenrolled due to carrying illegal weapons onto NCO/RCCC premises, threatening staff, theft or fraud including falsification of information will be permanently ineligible to receive subsidized childcare services.

Definition of childcare fraud includes but is not limited to: increased earnings not reported that exceed the 85% SMI (within 30 calendar days), cash aid fraud, parent/employer collusion to falsify eligibility, false statements that affect eligibility or payment, child is not a dependent of parent, parent receives more than one subsidy for same service, provider receives payment for services rendered by another, provider claims hours of care not provided, signature on attendance claim doesn't match parent's or provider's, provider receives in home supportive services from parent, and falsifying relationship to child to avoid TrustLine.

The burden of proof is on the client – not the Agency. If a client cannot prove they are eligible for childcare services, the Agency does not have an obligation to serve them.

ABSENCES/PROVIDER CLOSURE LIMITATIONS/ BROADLY CONSISTENT POLICIES

(Please note: "Pay Actual" childcare certificates are only authorizing payment when the child is in attendance within their approved, certified schedule; no absences are paid.)

The following policy applies to any childcare certificate that is "Pay Enrolled".

ABSENCES

- Absences will not be paid for contracts that specify "pay actual attendance only."
- Absences will not be paid to exempt childcare providers.
- Licensed providers who have a contract which requires payment for absences will be paid in accordance with their usual and customary policies, up to the maximum benefit level NCO/RCCC can pay and based on the child's certified schedule for childcare.
- Reason for absence must be indicated on the appropriate date on the attendance sheet.
- If a child is absent for 7 consecutive days with no communication from the parent, the provider must notify NCO/RCCC.

NCO/RCCC may pay for absences if you are a licensed childcare provider, have a written contract on file with our agency stating you charge for such absences, and have a childcare certificate that has the "pay enrolled attendance only" box selected authorizing specific days and hours. If the child is absent from childcare, the specific reason must be noted on the attendance sheet for that specific day.

PROVIDER CLOSURE DAYS

Licensed Providers are limited to 10 paid closure days per fiscal year (July 1-June 30). However, the closure days must be days of scheduled care for the child, the provider must have a written contract on file stating the specific days they charge for and have a childcare certificate that has the "pay enrolled attendance only" box selected authorizing specific days and hours.

PAYMENT TO AN ALTERNATE PROVIDER

When the primary provider (or any other subsidized care, i.e., Head Start, Preschool, ASES, etc.) is unavailable and/or the child is ill and cannot attend, an alternate provider may be used.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The specific reason for any absence must be indicated on the appropriate date on the attendance sheet. (i.e., child ill, provider closed, parent vacation, etc.)

UNEXCUSED/UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES

Are determined to be days that are consistently not used that do not have an explanation noted on the attendance sheet showing the absence is temporary in nature and not ongoing. NCO/RCCC will work with families to inform them of the importance of consistent attendance for their child in order to maximize the benefits of their early learning and care experience.

BROADLY INCONSISTENT ATTENDANCE

Broadly inconsistent attendance is defined as childcare that is not being used within the certified schedule for care.

NCO/RCCC PROGRAM POLICIES

CONFIDENTIALITY OF SERVICES

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and his/her family shall be restricted to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program. In cases of request for information from the parent(s) of enrolled children, only minimal information pertaining to the child shall be released at a reasonable time and place.

Parents and providers should be aware that the various programs of NCO/RCCC (i.e., Subsidized Child Care, Resource and Referral (R&R), Child Care Food Program (CCFP), etc.) regularly exchange information regarding parents and providers. For example, if a provider lists a different rate with Resource and Referral than they list with the Subsidized Programs, staff will investigate the discrepancy. If Child Care Food Program paperwork shows attendance that differs from attendance that is reported to the Subsidized Programs, the situation will be investigated.

NCO/RCCC also reserves the right to discuss and exchange information regarding a parent's/provider's childcare eligibility and services with other agencies as appropriate (i.e., DSS/HHSA, CPS, employers, schools, childcare providers, colleges, physicians etc.). Information about a parent's eligibility may be reviewed by representatives of the State of California, the Federal Government, independent auditors, or others as necessary for the administration of the program.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES TO FAMILIES

NCO/RCCC Subsidized Programs are parental choice programs and are intended to meet the developmental needs of children and families, and to support quality childcare. A variety of resources are available through each NCO/RCCC area office. Resources include but are not limited to a resource-lending library, information on choosing quality childcare which includes a variety of choices for childcare during the child's developmental stages between birth and twelve years old, discipline, etc. They also have information on other community service agencies. If you would like assistance, call your local Resource and Referral Specialist.

DECLARATION OF OPERATION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

UNIFORM COMPLAINT POLICY

If you feel this facility has violated State or Federal Law, contact:

**Uniform Complaint Policy Officer
California Department of Social Services
Child Care Development Division
744 P Street, MS 9-8-351
Sacramento, CA 95814**

All complaints must be made in writing and the proposed law violated must be cited.

COMPLAINTS CONCERNING FACILITIES

LICENSED FACILITIES (CARE DONE BY FCCH AND CENTERS)

NCO/RCCC reserves the right to notify all parents receiving subsidy of a serious complaint that pertains to the safety of children in a provider's care. In addition, NCO/RCCC may cease payment to the facility. Care may resume at the parent's discretion after the complaint is investigated by licensing and they have made their determination. Please see the NCO/RCCC Referral Policy and Complaint Procedures brochure for further information.

OLIVER'S LAW

As a parent, you have the right to get information about any substantiated or inconclusive complaints about a childcare provider that you select for your child. That information is public, and you can get it by calling the local licensing office.

- The licensing agency for all Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes in **Lake and Mendocino County** is the Department of Social Services Community Care licensing in Santa Rosa. Their number is **(707) 588-5026**.

LICENSE-EXEMPT FACILITIES (CARE DONE BY RELATIVES AND NON-RELATIVES)

Parents with children in License-Exempt care may make a complaint against the License-Exempt Provider using the following process:

1. The complaint must be written and shall include the nature of the complaint, the date and approximate time of occurrence and the name and address of the provider about whom the complaint is made and shall be signed by the parent. Only complaints received about health and safety noncompliance will be accepted. These complaints shall be deemed substantiated solely by the parent's written declaration.
2. Upon receipt of a complaint, NCO/RCCC shall inform the License-Exempt Provider of the parent's complaint and inform the provider of the provider's right to submit a written rebuttal. NCO/RCCC must also notify the parent and the provider that payments will cease in fourteen (14) days unless a written declaration signed by both parties has been received by NCO/RCCC stating that the health and safety deficiency has been corrected. NCO/RCCC will also advise parents that serious health and safety concerns should be referred to the appropriate child protective services unit of the county welfare department.

NCO/RCCC 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. Upon receiving an inquiry from the public about a specific License-Exempt provider, NCO/RCCC will provide information regarding the general nature of the complaint and whether or not the provider submitted a rebuttal.

NCO/RCCC FRAUD POLICIES

NCO/ RCCC RESPONDS TO AND INVESTIGATES ALL COMPLAINTS, ANONYMOUS TIPS AND SUSPICIONS REGARDING CLIENT FRAUD

PARENT FRAUD POLICY:

The California Department of Social Services requires NCO/RCCC to inform all families that if they receive childcare funds or services by providing fraudulent information or incomplete information, NCO/RCCC shall actively pursue recovering the funds paid out for the childcare services. The Fraud Policy statement is included within the Subsidized Child Care Program Rules, which the parent signs at the time of initial enrollment and at each re-certification appointment. The parent's signature verifies that s/he understands the policy.

Definition of childcare fraud includes but is not limited to; increased earnings not reported that exceed the 85% SMI (within 30 calendar days), cash aid fraud, parent/employer collusion to falsify eligibility, false statements that affect eligibility or payment, child is not a dependent of parent, parent receives more than one subsidy for same service, provider receives payment for services rendered by another, provider claims hours of care not provided, signature on attendance claim doesn't match parent's or provider's, provider receives in-home supportive services from parent, and, falsifying relationship to child to avoid TrustLine.

1. Any fraudulent, false, or misleading information provided to NCO/RCCC regarding employment, income, status as a student or enrollment in a training program, or eligibility relating to medical incapacitation will be grounds for disenrollment and will be cause for NCO/RCCC to recover funds.
2. Any of the following could constitute fraud:
 - a. Failure to report accurate information at certification and/or recertification regarding wages (including commissions, tips, overtime, and bonuses, etc.), social security income, lottery winnings, settlements, inheritances, child support, alimony, unemployment compensation, disability insurance, public cash assistance, revenue sharing (per capita) or any other income required to document eligibility and family fees.
 - b. Inaccurate reporting of actual attendance days of childcare on the attendance sheet. If the provider and/or parent signs that care was provided for days when it was not, NCO/RCCC will recover funds from the parent and/or provider.
 - c. Falsified, misleading or inaccurate documentation regarding training programs, schools, medical incapacitation, employment and/or income.
3. If a parent provides fraudulent or incomplete information regarding the eligibility or need for childcare and the family is no longer eligible, the following will happen:
 - a. The parent/family will be disenrolled from the program, **and**
 - b. The parent/family will be billed for the childcare NCO/RCCC has paid for during the period of the family's ineligibility.
4. If a parent fails to disclose changes in income within thirty (30) calendar days that exceed the 85% SMI.
5. Any family disenrolled for **fraud** is entitled to a fair hearing. If they lose their appeal, they are permanently ineligible to receive childcare services through NCO/RCCC.
6. NCO/RCCC will attempt to recover funds by developing a repayment plan with the parent. If the parent does not respond to the repayment plan or misses the payments as outlined in the repayment plan, a claim may be sent to a collection agency. If the parent still refuses to pay the claim, it may be referred to the District Attorney.
7. Families on Stage 1 or Stage 2 childcare subsidy and/or families who are receiving cash aid will be referred to DSS/ Health and Human Services Agency Fraud Investigation Unit and may be referred to the District Attorney for providing fraudulent information.

The burden of proof is on the client – not the Agency. If a client cannot prove they are eligible for childcare services, the agency does not have an obligation to serve them.

PARENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Any subsidized parent has a right to a fair hearing if they are not satisfied with any judgment made by NCO/RCCC. The procedure is as follows:

STEP 1:

If the parent disagrees with an action as described on their Notice of Action, the parent may file a written request for a hearing with NCO/RCCC within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date the Notice of Action was received by the parent. The request should state if the parent needs an interpreter so that NCO/RCCC may make appropriate arrangements. Upon receipt of the request for a hearing, NCO/RCCC shall suspend the intended action until the appeal process has been completed. The appeal process is complete when all steps have been followed or when the parent abandons the appeal process.

STEP 2:

Within ten (10) calendar days following the receipt of the request for a hearing, NCO/RCCC will notify the parent of the time and place of the hearing. The time and place of the hearing shall, to the extent possible, be convenient for the parent. The NCO/RCCC Program Director or his/her designee, provided that the designee is at a staff level higher in authority than the staff person who made the contested decision, shall conduct the hearing. NCO/RCCC reserves the right to use legal counsel as appropriate.

The parent or parent's authorized representative is required to attend the hearing. If the parent or parent's authorized representative fails to appear at the hearing, the parent will be deemed to have abandoned his/her appeal. Only persons directly affected by the hearing shall be allowed to attend.

The NCO/RCCC Program Director or his/her designee shall explain to the parent the legal, regulatory, or policy basis for the intended action. During the hearing, the parent shall have an opportunity to explain the reason(s) he/she believes NCO/RCCC's decision was incorrect. NCO/RCCC staff shall present any material facts omitted by the parent.

STEP 3:

The NCO/RCCC Program Director or his/her designee shall mail or deliver to the parent a written decision within ten (10) calendar days after the hearing. This decision may be to uphold the initial action, place the parent on probationary status, or determine that the action was not warranted.

STEP 4:

If the parent disagrees with the written decision of the NCO/RCCC Program Director or his/her designee, the parent has fourteen (14) calendar days in which to appeal to the Child Development Division of the California Department of Social Services. To ensure that NCO/RCCC will not take the intended action on the date specified on the Notice of Action, the parent must advise NCO/RCCC of his/her intent to appeal to the state. If the parent does not submit an appeal request within fourteen (14) calendar days, including notifying NCO/RCCC, the parent's appeal process shall be deemed abandoned and NCO/RCCC may implement its intended action.

If the parent submits an appeal request, it shall specify the reason(s) why he/she believes NCO/RCCC's decision was incorrect. The parent shall submit a copy of NCO/RCCC's notice of intended action and written decision along with the appeal request. The Child Development Division of the California Department of Social Services will then follow its investigation or other procedures and render a final decision to be mailed or delivered within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the appeal request.