



Provider Information

July 2009

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Welcome to River to Coast Children's Services

Dear Provider:

We hope you find this information helpful in relating to RCCS. If you have suggestions, questions or comments regarding the information or programs please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

The Staff at River to Coast Children's Services

Frequently Asked Questions about Family Child Care Programs (CFCC)

1. What are the Family Child Care (CFCC) Programs?

RCCS' Family Child Care Programs assist with payment for child care in licensed Family Child Care homes which are contracted with us. Services are provided for parents who are working, looking for work, in school or training, incapacitated, and for families who are homeless or referred for at risk of child abuse and neglect or referred by Child Protective Services.

2. Where can child care be provided?

Child care must be provided in a licensed Family Child Care home which is contracted with RCCS' Family Child Care program, and is in the West Sonoma County Union High School District, the Sonoma County portion of the Shoreline Unified School District or in the Kashia Rancheria School District, zip codes 95401, 95403, 95407, and 95439 West of Stony Point Road.

3. What are the requirements to be a Provider?

Providers must meet quality standards set in the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale and be licensed by California Community Care Licensing as a Family Child Care home. Homes are licensed for either up to 8 or up to 14 children. A license for 14 children requires that a second child care worker be in attendance whenever there are more than 6 or 8 children (depending on whether or not the provider has fulfilled requirements to care for two additional children 6 years old or older).

4. Does RCCS staff visit the Family Child Care homes?

The Child Development Resource Specialists provide a wide variety of support and assistance with resources and curriculum planning. By observing the children twice a month, the specialists create a developmental profile for each subsidized child and support the provider with planning and activities. A summary of the developmental profile for the child is given or mailed to the parent with a copy to the provider. RCCS would like to schedule a parent conference with the Child Development Resource Specialist and yourself twice per year. Providers are encouraged to discuss each child's development with parents on a regular basis. The resource & Referral Coordinator may also be visiting once every month or two to support quality maintenance and improvements.

5. How much are providers reimbursed?

Provider reimbursements are based on documentation stating the provider's usual and customary rates for private families, capped by ceilings that are set by the State. These ceilings are based on a market rate survey in our county. The maximum reimbursement level ("ceiling") will be determined by the parent's certified need for care, the child's age, and the child care setting. The CDE website to locate current ceilings is as follows:
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/cd/ap/index.aspx>

Certificates are issued to the parent and provider that document the hours of child care services for which the family is certified. Providers have an independent contractual relationship with RCCS, they are not employees. *(Note: providers providing care in the child's home are employees of the parent/guardian.)* Licensed providers may reserve a certain number of spaces for the children of non-subsidized families.

6. Can Providers change their rates?

Rate changes for private families are up to the provider's discretion however RCCS can accept only one rate change per year. Providers must give RCCS at least two weeks notice of any change in rates, by submitting a copy of new usual and customary Provider Rates charged to private paying families. **Rate changes received by the 15th of the month will be effective the first of the following month. Rate changes to RCCS can only be accepted up to March 15 for the current fiscal year. Rate changes received after March 15 will be effective July 1.**

7. How are payments distributed?

Paychecks are distributed **to providers** by mail or picked up at the office on the 18th of every month (or the last working day before the 18th). You may also sign up for direct deposits into your bank account. Reimbursement for care done in the parent's home is made out to the parent and mailed to the provider, to ensure appropriate distribution of funds.

8. How do we get more information about program details once we're enrolled?

Parents receive detailed information regarding their general subsidized child care responsibilities in the RCCS Parent Handbook. Providers receive detailed information regarding RCCS services and Alternative payment bookkeeping procedures in the attached information.

For more information about River to Coast Children's Services and/or Child Care Payment Program, call us at 869-3613 (or from the Sonoma Coast 1-800-994-3613).

Frequently Asked Questions about the Alternative Payment Program

1. What is the Alternative Payment (AP) Program?

RCCS' Alternative Payment Program assists with payment for child care for low-income families who live or work anywhere in California, (including those on TANF), who are working, looking for work, in school or training, or who are referred for risk of abuse and neglect.

2. Where can child care be provided?

Child care must be provided or the parent must live in the West Sonoma County Union High School District (including Sebastopol), in the Sonoma County portion of the Shoreline Unified School District, in the Kashaya Rancheria School District. Care may be provided in the setting of the parent's choice, such as in a licensed or license-exempt center, licensed family child care home or care in the child's home or the provider's home by a relative, neighbor or friend (these license-exempt providers may care for one family only).

3. How does a Provider get signed up?

Parents are responsible to interview and approve providers. Parents may change child care settings, within program constraints. Once the parent has chosen a provider, the agency contacts the provider to obtain documentation of private rates, sign a Provider Agreement, and complete other paperwork as required per the type of care before care can begin.

4. What are the requirements to be a Provider?

Individual providers who are license-exempt must be registered with the State Trustline Registry, unless the provider is the child's aunt, uncle or grandparent. Providers must be **18 years or older**, and must provide their **social security number**. For license-exempt providers other than the above-specified relatives, a valid **State photo I.D. or driver's license or alien registration card** are required. The child care site must have a **smoke alarm** and **fire extinguisher**.

Payment will not be made for services when care is provided by parents, legal guardians or members of the (TANF) assistance unit.

5. How much are Providers paid?

Provider payments are based on documentation of the provider's usual and customary rates charged to private families, capped by ceilings which are set by the State. (These ceilings are based on a market rate survey in our county.) The CDE website to locate current ceilings is as follows: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/cd/ap/index.aspx>

Numbered certificates are issued to the parent and provider, which document the hours of child care services for which the family is certified, and the approved rate of pay. Providers have an independent contractual relationship with RCCS. They are not employees. (Exception: providers doing care in the child's home are employees of the parent/guardian.)

Licensed providers should reserve a certain number of spaces for the children of non-subsidized families.

6. Do parents have to pay anything?

Based on family income and size, parents may have a Family Fee to the agency for child care services. Family fees are charged on a full-time or part-time basis; full-time care is defined as 6 or more hours per day. **In addition, any hours of care used other than those listed on the current AP Certificate, and any costs, which exceed the market rate ceilings or are not reimbursable by RCCS (such as Field Trip fees), are the financial responsibility of the parent (your Co-Pay).**

7. How are payments distributed?

Paychecks are distributed **to providers** by mail or picked up at the office on the 18th of every month (or the last working day before the 18th). You may also sign up for direct deposits into your bank account. Reimbursement for care done in the parent's home is made to the parent by check only.

8. Can Providers change their rates?

Rate changes for private families are up to the provider's discretion however RCCS can accept only one rate change per year. Providers must give RCCS at least two weeks notice of any change in rates, by submitting a copy of new usual and customary Provider Rates charged to private paying families. **Rate changes received by the 15th of the month will be effective the first of the following month. Rate changes to RCCS can only be accepted up to March 15 for the current fiscal year. Rate changes received after March 15 will be effective July 1.**

9. Can parents change AP Providers?

Yes, parents may change Providers, however, the agency will contract with a new AP Provider only if care will be used for at least four consecutive weeks in the fiscal year. Otherwise this is considered "Temporary Care", and parents will need to choose an already contracted provider.

10. How do we get more information about program details once we're enrolled?

Parents receive detailed information regarding their general subsidized child care responsibilities in the RCCS Parent Handbook. Providers receive detailed information regarding RCCS services and AP program bookkeeping procedures in the AP Provider Manual.

For more information about River to Coast Children's Services and/or Child Care Payment Program, call us at 869-3613 (or from the Sonoma Coast 1-800-994-3613).

Provider Reimbursement Procedures

RCCS' funding and your child care reimbursement are based on the parent's certified need for care detailed on the attendance sheets and the contracts. Attendance sheets, together with the provider's itemized bill, serve as the provider's invoice to RCCS. The accuracy and completeness of the attendance sheets, together with the provider's itemized bill, are essential to ensure timely payment.

You are responsible for making sure that the forms are completed accurately and for submitting them on time.

Parents are responsible to fill in and sign both when they drop their children off and when they pick up their children.

Attendance sheets must be completed in ink and **must be legible**. Trainings are provided on completing attendance sheets correctly.

RCCS will give you an initial orientation, but it is your responsibility to make sure that:

- 1) attendance sheets are easily available to parents
- 2) parents sign in and out on a twice daily basis
- 3) all attendance sheets are filled out accurately, completely and legibly.

Please review the forms carefully before your turn them in.

RCCS requires that all licensed family child care homes and centers attach a bill or statement to each attendance sheet submitted to us for reimbursement.

If you ever have any questions or are unclear about anything, or need more information or training, please contact RCCS for assistance.

- For each subsidized child you will receive a copy of the Child Care Certificate, documenting approved hours (contracts.)

Parents receive subsidized child care based on certain eligibilities and needs such as working or going to school. Care used for purposes other than the parent's certified eligibility and need will not be paid.

RCCS will notify you of any changes to these Provider Payment Procedures.

Providers Must Notify RCCS Staff When the Following Circumstances Exist

- 1) A child is absent for more than three consecutive days and the parent has not contacted the provider with a reason for the absence. If RCCS is not notified on the third day, reimbursement will not be made for absences that occur after the child's last day of attendance.
- 2) A parent withdraws from care without advance notice required by the provider per their contract or prior to the end date authorized on the Child Care Certificate.
- 3) The provider has knowledge of a change of parental or family status including: change of address, income, employment and/or marital status of which RCCWS is unaware.

Reimbursement Rates

Determination of Applicable Ceilings.

RCCS payments are based on the parent's certified need for care and the usual and customary rate you charge for services to non-subsidized, full-cost families as documented on your private published Provider Rate sheet and your Rate Confirmation Statement. Providers must submit these documents verifying usual and customary fees to private-paying families. The State regulations define which types of ceilings. After reviewing the parent's certified need for care, RCCS will apply the applicable and/or corresponding ceiling. When your rate exceeds the market rate ceiling as set by State regulations, RCCS will use the applicable ceiling amount for that type of care. The applicable ceiling is based on the parent's need for child care.

Definitions.

The State requires that the following definitions be used:

Full-time care = An average of 30 or more hours per week in every week of the month or 30 or more hours of child care per week, or 6 or more hours per day.

Part-time care = An average of less than 30 hours per week in every week of the month, or less than 30 hours per week and less than 6 hours per day.

Under 2 = children under two years old.

2-5 = children ages 2 through 5 (except 5 year olds as below.)

6+ = children 6 years and older (and 5 year olds in centers who are counted as "school-age" for licensing purposes.)

Evening/Weekend Ceiling Adjustment = for licensed providers only, may apply when more than 10% of the total care is provided between 6:00pm and 6:00am, or on the weekends (not applicable with hourly rates.)

Special Needs = children with an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) or IFSP (Individual Family Services Plan), and who require special accommodations with ongoing financial impact to the provider in order to be provided with basic child care.

Co-Payment.

If your rate exceeds the market rate ceilings, the difference between the applicable rate and your rate shall be negotiated directly between you and the parent and will not be the responsibility of RCCS.

Provider Rate Changes.

Rate changes for private families are up to the provider's discretion however RCCS can accept only one rate change per year. Providers must give RCCS at least two weeks notice of any change in rates, by submitting a copy of new usual and customary Provider Rates charged to private paying families. **Rate changes received by the 15th of the month will be effective the first of the following month. Rate changes to RCCS can only be accepted up to March 15 for the current fiscal year. Rate changes received after March 15 will be effective July 1.**

Registration, Insurance and Materials Fees.

If it is your private policy to charge parents a registration, insurance and/or materials fee, RCCS will pay it (or a portion of it, if necessary), once per fiscal year, if:

1. Your current written Parent Policy/Contract on file at the RCCS office indicates that it is your usual and customary policy to charge all parents for any of the above; and
2. You submit a clear written bill for registration, insurance and/or materials, with the appropriate attendance sheet(s), indicating the name of the child/children, the type of fee, the amount of fee and the period of time covered by the fee; and
3. The total does not exceed the applicable market rate ceiling when the fee is averaged out over the applicable period and included with your rates,

The market rate survey is generally updated in July every other year. RCCS will notify you of any applicable ceiling changes and will adjust reimbursement agreements/certificates accordingly, if applicable.

Attendance Sheet Due Dates and Late Attendance Sheets

Attendance sheets are due in the office by the fifth of the month. If the fifth of the month falls on a day the office is closed, they are due **by 5:00pm on the first working day following the closure.**

If you leave your attendance sheets in the drop box by the gate while the office is closed, they will be considered as being received on the next day that the office is open.

If you mail your attendance sheets, we recommend that you make a copy of each one to protect yourself against loss in the mail. **If receipt of your attendance sheets is delayed beyond the due date because of insufficient postage or incorrect address, they will be considered late.** Please see updated policy on back of current attendance sheet.

Our mailing address is:

River to Coast Children's Services
P.O. Box 16
Guerneville, CA 95446.

Attendance sheets received after the due date will be paid the following pay period. (This is only meant to apply to an occasional late attendance sheet, not to a situation where a provider is frequently or consistently late turning them in. Providers who consistently turn in late attendance sheets may be subject to probation or termination of RCCS' contract.)

Attendance sheets received more than one month late may not be paid. Attendance sheets received after July 5th may not be paid. However, there are occasional times when circumstances deem it financially necessary for the agency to waive this rule.

Provider Paydays / Mailed Checks

Provider payday is the eighteenth (18th) of the month and checks will be available for pickup **after 10:00 a.m. and up to 5:00pm on that day**. If the eighteenth falls on a day the office is closed, payday will be the last business day **after** the closed day. Checks will not be available for pickup before these dates. Payments on these regularly scheduled paydays is contingent upon the agency's receipt of State funds.

Paychecks will be mailed unless you inform us that you will be picking them up, or you have selected and filled out paperwork to have your check direct deposited into your bank account.

Delay in Payment or Non-Payment of Child Care Services

In the event that we do not receive our funds from the State in a timely manner, we may have to delay payments to providers. Should such a delay occur, providers will be notified as soon as possible.

Schedules

Maximum Amount of Care. 14 hours is the maximum amount of care that RCCS will pay for in one (1) day.

For each subsidized child you will receive a Certificate documenting the amount of care and the maximum reimbursable level approved. **Keep all your current Certificates on file**, and always refer to them when completing your attendance sheets. You are responsible to sign and return any documents that require your signature.

Every time a child enters or has a schedule change you will receive a new or revised Certificate. **If the most recent Certificate you have does not accurately reflect each child's hours of care and you do not receive a new Certificate, the provider is responsible to call the Family Case Manager within five (5) days. Be sure to call even if the parent tells you they have changed their contract with the office.**

It may be that the family has not been approved for the care used, which would result in non-payment. If we receive an attendance sheet with hours that do not match the child's contract, we will pay only up to the contract. We will later research discrepancies in contracts and hours used, and will make any necessary contract changes **effective the following month**.

Any time a child drops from RCCS or transfers from your child care to another provider you should also receive written notice in a timely fashion.

If a consistent discrepancy between the contracted hours and the actual hours is noticed on the attendance sheets, we will contact the parent to get the information we need to see if there should be a contract change.

If you receive a Certificate that contains incorrect information, please call the office immediately. We need to see if there should be a contract change. Do not make changes on the certificate.

Types of Contracts

1. Enrolled attendance ("Set" Schedule.) This is a fixed contract, and FCC or center providers will be paid for the amount of time contracted. The amount of time in the contract is determined by the parent's eligibility and need for care. For example, if a parent works from 9:00 to 5:00 and needs care from 8:30 to 5:30 Monday through Thursday, you will be paid for 4 full-time days per week.
2. Enrolled attendance ("Variable" Schedule.) This is used when parent has set number of days but days vary.
3. Actual attendance ("As Needed"). These are flexible contracts to accommodate parents with irregular schedules and/or or using license-exempt providers. Payments are made for only the actual hours of care. Absences, days of non-operation and termination notice are not paid.

Vacation Days.

Children who are in school, or whose parents are in school, may have different contracted hours during vacations. Parents in school are not eligible for care between semesters unless another need for care is approved, i.e., employment.

Provider Slots.

RCCS is only able to purchase a minimum or slot of hours if it is a reasonable match with the family's certified need for care. Any difference (co-pay) between what RCCS can pay and what you charge would be the parent's responsibility.

Co-payment.

Co-pay to provider shall be negotiated directly between you and the parent, and is not the responsibility of RCCS.

Changes in Child Care Contracts.

Changes in parents' eligibility and contracts are effective when the change takes place. RCCS does not guarantee that you will receive advance notice of contract changes.

Temporary Changes in Contracts.

Payment for any additional hours needs prior approval by Case Management Staff. If payment is disallowed, the parent is responsible for paying for any care that is not approved.

RCCS may pay for more time than the parent's contracted care, if:

1. the care is used for an eligible reason, and
2. the hours are claimed correctly on the attendance sheet; and
3. the reason for the extra time is explained on the attendance sheet.

Substituting for Another Provider.

When substituting for another provider you will be paid on an "as needed" basis, that is, for the actual hours the child was at your child care, not the child's contracted hours at the regular

provider. It is the parent's responsibility to inform their Case Manager of their needed change.

Children in Two Subsidized Families.

There are children whose parents are subsidized individually, as two separate families. In this case, the parents would have separate contracts, you would receive two contracts, and you would use one attendance sheet for each parent.

Backup Providers/Multiple Providers

Because many of our parents need child care services during weekends and 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. Please keep the following in mind:

According to State regulations, RCCS will reimburse only one (1) provider per child except if,

- the primary provider's hours of operation cannot accommodate parent's non-traditional schedule, or
- the primary provider is not a licensed center and the parent chooses a second provider that is a center for large group school readiness

Back-up providers can only be paid by RCCS when the primary provider is unable to provide the care.

Double Payments (To Two Providers for the Same Time Period).

Payments may be paid to an alternate provider, even if the primary provider is being paid for the contracted day, for:

1. up to ten (10) days per fiscal year for the primary provider's paid days of non-operation, and in addition
2. up to ten (10) days per fiscal year when the child is ill.

If a parent is using more than one provider for the same child, providers should be aware of the entire child care arrangement. If there are double claims for days other than above, the Family Case Manager will hear the claims of the parent and the providers, and make a final decision on who will be paid for the overlapping times/days.

Licensed and center providers may be paid for absences, days of non-operation and/or termination notice per the following requirements.

Note: License-exempt providers are paid for actual hours of care only, and are not eligible for paid absences, closures or termination notice.

Documentation of Policies.

Licensed/center providers must submit a copy of policies. Licensed providers may be required to also submit a copy of a signed agreement with a private-paying family.

License-exempt providers must submit both a copy of policies and a copy of a signed agreement by a previous or alternate-time-slot private-paying parent.

Absences Policy.

In order for providers to receive payment for an enrolled child's absence from child care, there must be a contracted schedule, and the provider must charge all families in their program for absences (indicated on the Certificate for Child Care Services.) **The reason for the absence must be written on the attendance sheet and must have a full legal signature of the parent or authorized representative of the parent.**

Excused absences include:

- Illness or quarantine of your child
- Illness or quarantine of the parent
- Court-ordered visitations. (The family date file must contain a copy of the Court Order.)
- Family crisis or emergency such as death in the family, hospitalization, auto accident, transportation emergency, etc.
- A reason which is in the best interest of the child, such as a special day with parent, family or friends, vacation days, or special field trips or events, etc., limited to ten (10) days per fiscal year.

All other absences are unexcused. A contracted day of attendance that is unsigned or unexplained is an unexcused absence (limited to 10 per fiscal year) based on the enrolled parent's contracted child care schedule and the provider's own policy. However, unexcused absences will only be paid if there is a reasonable expectation that the child was going to attend.

RCCS will only pay up to 10 consecutive days absent from child care at a time. If a child has a planned absence for longer than two weeks in a row, the parent should consider taking a Limited Term Service Leave (LTSL) from child care services.

Un-enrolled Days.

RCCS will not pay for un-enrolled days that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Parent's regular day(s) off, or non-work days
- No school for student parents – including spring, summer and winter breaks
- Parent out of work with no other certified need
- Child is no longer with provider for miscellaneous reasons – including days during the Provider's Termination Notice Period when the child no longer attends the child care

facility.

Provider Closed. If you are not available (because of illness, emergency, day off, etc.) to provide child care on a day or days when your facility is normally open, you cannot claim any absences during this period.

Days of Non-Operation.

Licensed/center providers may be paid for up to ten (10) days of non-operation total per fiscal year, if you have provided documentation verifying that you customarily charge your private parents for these closures. You will be paid for all children with fixed contracts on that day.

It is very important to note on each child's attendance sheet exactly which days your child care was closed, the reason, and the amount of care you are claiming. This is so you can be paid accurately and so parents who have fees will not be charged for days you were not available.

Attendance Sheets and Provider Bills

A. Attendance Sheets

A separate attendance sheet must be used for each child who attends your child care facility during a calendar month. An itemized bill must be attached to each attendance sheet submitted by licensed family child care providers and centers. If bill is omitted, payment for that child will be delayed until bill is received.

You are responsible for ensuring that the parent or person dropping off or picking up the child fills in the actual in and out times and signs with their full signatures on a twice-daily basis. Parents are informed of this requirement when they are certified. Child care departures and returns on the same day must have times and provider initials. Older children who arrive by themselves after school may fill in and initial their own arrival times, or you can do it for them if they aren't responsible enough to be consistent about it. Under no circumstances is a child allowed to sign themselves out of care.

In addition, at the end of each month of care, both the parent and the provider must review and verify the hours used by signing the monthly declaration. Never sign a blank attendance sheet. Your signatures declare that the child care hours stated are true and correct, under penalty of perjury, and that you have used the child care only for the reasons for which you have been certified.

The required parent and provider signatures must be present on all attendance sheets when you turn them in. Attendance sheets missing the final monthly signature from a parent verifying that month's child care will not be paid until the pay period following submission of the completed sheet, unless the Family Case Manager approves payment without parental signature (e.g., family has moved out of the area, etc.)

Care After Midnight.

For care provided after midnight, the child must be clocked out the first day at 12:00 a.m., and clocked back in the next day at 12:01 a.m.

Requirements

Daily Sign-in/Sign-out Attendance Sheet must include:

1. Full legal signature of parent or other adult authorized by the parent to drop off/pick up child, signed at the time of drop off/pick up.
2. Actual time of drop-off/pick-up.
3. Initials of the designated staff person who enters arrival and departure time when there is an interruption in care during the day (i.e., school age children) if the child is not dropped of/picked up by a parent or other authorized adult.

Early morning or late evening hours.

All care before 6:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. must be clarified with "a.m." or "p.m." to ensure proper payment.

Signature/Reason for Absence/Comments

The "Signature/Reason for Absence/Comments" column should contain parent's signature and a reason for absence.

It is important to note any days that your child care was closed. There may also be times when your child care is closed to one or more specific children even though others are in attendance and this again, with the reason, should be explained. This is the only way we have to ensure that fee-paying parents are not charged for days when their regular provider was closed.

Please do not write in the two far right columns, "Office Use".

Attendance Sheet Checklist

- _____ Completed legibly and in ink.
- _____ Provider Name.
- _____ Child's Full Name (same as on the certificate.)
- _____ Parent's Full Name.
- _____ Month/Year.
- _____ Days of week (at least the days the child attended and/or when an absence is claimed.)
- _____ "Time and Signature In" and "Time and Signature Out" filled in twice daily by parent, for each day the child actually attended.
- _____ Early/late hours indicated by a.m. or p.m.
- _____ Reason for each absence signed by parent.
- _____ Parent signature (original) at bottom of sheet to verify child care used that month.
- _____ Provider original signature at bottom of sheet to verify child care used that month.
- _____ Provider bill attached to each child's Attendance Sheet.

B. Provider Bills (Licensed Child Care Providers and All Centers)

A bill for each child is now required. Each provider's rates are unique and varied. Our new system needs clear information to calculate correctly.

This bill must clearly describe the breakdown of the total amount you would charge privately for each child. We will then compare your bill to the usual and customary rates that we have on file for you, and reimburse up to the billed amount, or the applicable ceiling that reflects the parent's need for care, whichever is less, as required by the State. Each bill must include the following:

- Name of provider and child
- Date of service (e.g., July 1 – July 31, 2008)
- Number of hours, days, weeks, used
- Description of other fees as applicable (e.g., registration fees)

If we do not receive a bill for every child, the Attendance Sheet will be considered incomplete and will cause a delay in reimbursement.

Services to Providers

Are you aware of all our services provided to assist child care providers in their jobs?

River to Coast Children's Services....

- 1) Gives referrals to families needing child care.
- 2) Maintains a resource lending library which includes educational materials, toys, videos; issue-oriented books for children; books on curriculum, behavior, child development, and the business of child care; cookbooks, health books.
- 3) Gives technical assistance on how to start, organize and run a child care home or center. Information is available on all aspects of child care, children's issues and advocacy, and activities.
- 4) Offers and/or provides information for workshops on child-related topics. Family Case Managers and CDRSs can give support and assistance with child care contracts and parent related issues.
- 5) Publishes a list of people interested in working as aides or substitutes in licensed centers and child care homes.
- 6) Publishes a newsletter with information of interest to providers, as well as activities to do with children.
- 7) Offers special activities for children, such as Kindergym, and special events.
- 8) Assists providers in purchasing toys and equipment from catalogues available at our agency.
- 9) Provides a low-cost Car Seat Program.

The following services are available only to those providers who apply, are accepted into, and sign an agreement to become RCCS Family Child Care providers in the FCCHEN program (CFCC Network providers):

- 1) Provide visits to Family Child Care program contracted homes from CDRSs, who provide developmental profiles of each subsidized child on a regular basis and work with providers to plan activities to meet the individual child's needs as well as assistance for providers.
- 2) Offers counseling services to assist providers in their work with children and families.
- 3) Offers Accident/Special Risk Insurance to Providers at a low cost.
- 4) Lends providers equipment such as cubbies, tables, chairs, cribs, and other infant furniture, easels, and large play equipment as items become available, as well as a large variety of curriculum kits.

River to Coast Children's Services Programs

1. Subsidized Child Care Programs

A. Family Child Care Programs

These direct service programs provide subsidized child care for eligible families. Funding comes through the State Department of Education and Federal Block Grant. All care happens at licensed family child care homes that are currently in the RCCS Family Child Care Network. Parent enrollments and certifications are provided by the Family Case Management Team staff. Family must use care within our service area.

Licensed family child care providers apply to the Network and are interviewed by the Resource & Referral Coordinator to assess for quality standards as listed in the RCCS checklist. If the Family Child Care Provider signs an agreement to take subsidized children, the Child Development Resource Specialist and/or the Resource & Referral Coordinator will visit each home at least monthly to observe the children receiving subsidy from this program, and assure the home remains in compliance and to offer assistance when appropriate. Parents must be allowed into the home at any time.

B. Alternative Payment Programs

These programs are funded through the Federal Child Care & Development Block Grant and the State Department of Education. They provide direct service subsidized child care to eligible families at the child care setting of the parent's choice. Care may be funded at a licensed family child care home, a center or preschool, a license-exempt center or provider, with a neighbor, friend or relative, or in some cases in-home care. Family must either live or use care within our service area.

The Family Case Management Team staff enrolls and certifies families and the Resource and Referral Coordinator contracts with parent-chosen providers. Parents must be allowed into the home at any time.

2. Child Development Resource Specialist Program

This program is funded by the State and Federal Family Child Care contracts. Qualified staff is scheduled to visit the Family Child Care program contracted homes on a regular basis when subsidized children are enrolled. These staff members create a profile of the developmental growth of infants, toddlers, preschool and school-aged subsidized children and assist the provider with individual curriculum planning. They may also offer enriching activities for all of the children in the home.

3. Resource and Referral Program

This program gathers child care and child related information and disseminates it to the community. The major emphasis of this program is referring families to child care. The program includes a toy, book and video lending library; a monthly newsletter; provider training; and other services as appropriate. This is funded by the State Department of Education, Child Development Division.

4. Activities Program

This program provides ongoing scheduled activities and special events that can be attended by child care providers and community members. Curriculum activities include Kindergym and provider workshops. Special events have been seasonal parties and carnivals. The program is funded with State Department of Education contracts.

5. Family Services Programs

A. Family Counseling Program

This program provides child therapy and counseling to children and parents on a sliding scale. It also provides support and training for child care providers regarding child care concerns and issues with families "at risk." Counseling is funded by Sonoma County Human Services Commission Child Abuse Prevention funding.

Resource and Referral and Provider Complaint Policies

I. Resource and Referral Services to Parents/Guardians

A. Child Care Referrals

Resource and Referral services are available to all persons seeking child care in our service area in western Sonoma County. The referral staff is generally available by phone and in the office 40 hours per week. RCCS offers parent callers the full range of child care choices possible for the type of child care and geographic area requested. The following information is available regarding each referral to a licensed child care facility or license-exempt center: type of program, hours of service, ages of children served, fees/eligibility for services and significant program information. Referrals to license-exempt individual providers include times and locations available, and whether or not the individual has been registered with Trustline. Parents receive information about subsidized child care when appropriate. Referrals are also given to other RCCS and community services: activities for children, parenting education and support services, programs and resources for children with special needs and to other family and child related health and welfare agencies.

It is the policy of RCCS to support parents in making decisions about child care by providing accurate, objective information about available care, not personal opinions and evaluations. RCCS offers parents opportunities to become acquainted with issues involved in the selection of a child care setting including written consumer education materials regarding making child care choices. RCCS does not make recommendations. Each parent has the responsibility to evaluate the child care facilities and make the choice most appropriate for her/his child.

B. Child Care Complaint History/Background Check

1. Licensed Care

Parents seeking a complaint history of a licensed family child care facility or a licensed child care center may call Community Care Licensing at 588-5026. Parents also have the right to examine the provider's licensing information, which is required to be maintained at the facility. To register a complaint, call the licensing department. You may also call RCCS for assistance or support in making a licensing complaint. Community Care Licensing will also accept reports about child care which should be licensed (for example, a person caring for children for more than one family at a time).

2. License Exempt Care

For license-exempt child care, (i.e. a center affiliated with a public school or operating as a recreational program, or a provider caring for only the children of one family), you may call law enforcement or Child Protective Services if you have concerns regarding child abuse.

All California parents can check the backgrounds of license-exempt child care providers (nannies, babysitters, etc.) through a State program called the Trustline Registry. For a one-time fee, paid by the parent or the provider, child care providers can be checked for criminal convictions or child abuse history.

To see if a prospective license-exempt provider is already listed on the Trustline Registry as not having any disqualifying criminal convictions or child abuse records, anyone can call 1-800-822-8490, at no cost. You will need the full name and driver's license number or State

ID of the prospective provider.

C. Non-Discrimination

RCCS does not refer or refuse to refer on the basis of race, income, religion, sex, age, marital status, creed, ancestry, national origin, citizenship, sexual orientation, color, physical or mental disability, medical condition, pregnancy, disabled or veteran status, political affiliation or any other protected criteria. Information obtained from parents in the course of the resource and referral process may be used for the compilation of statistical information about the population served, but the confidentiality of the individuals will be maintained. We do not charge parents for any of our referral services.

D. Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual harassment is prohibited by RCCS and is against the law. Every independent contractor should be aware of what steps to take if harassment occurs.

How to Stop Sexual Harassment

1. When possible, confront the harasser and ask him/her to stop. The harasser may not realize the advances or behavior are offensive. When it is appropriate and sensible, you may want to tell the harasser the behavior or advances are unwelcome and must stop. Sometimes a simple confrontation will end the situation.
2. You are strongly encouraged to report sexual harassment. Contact RCCS. Sexual harassment or retaliation should be reported in writing or verbally. You may report such activities even though you were not the subject of the harassment.
3. An investigation will be conducted. RCCS will investigate, in a discreet manner, all reported incidents of sexual harassment and retaliation.
4. Appropriate action will be taken. Where evidence of sexual harassment or retaliation is found, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may result.

II. Resource and Referral Services to Licensed Providers

A. RCCS' referral services are available to all licensed providers in the service area, on a voluntary basis. For each provider who chooses to be included, RCCS maintains a resource file. All licensed childcare providers in our referral database must have a current license on file at RCCS. The information is updated monthly regarding openings, ages of children accepted, etc. If a family childcare provider is contracted to care for RCCS subsidized children in the Family Child Care Program, the home is visited periodically.

RCCS gives referrals to providers on an equitable basis. We do not recommend one type of care or one provider over another. It is not RCCS' responsibility to fill the openings of any licensed facility. We fully recognize the provider's right to confidentiality.

B. Any violation of state licensing or county regulations or any situation, which may be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of children, shall be considered a complaint and the appropriate agency notified.

C. Removal from Referral List

Providers will be removed from the referral list when:

1. The provider requests that no referrals be given to the facility temporarily, due to inactivity or lack of child care openings in the facility.
2. Provider goes out of business or moves from the area.
3. The facility's license expires.
4. Facilities that have their license suspended, revoked or placed on probation will be removed from the referral list within two business days of notification from Community Care Licensing. When DSS, CCL notifies RCCS that a facility's license has been removed from probationary status or that the suspension has been lifted, RCCS will return that facility to its referral list as of the date of the removal from probation or suspension and resume referrals to that facility.

III. Resource and Referral Services to License-Exempt Providers

RCCS has a "Substitutes and Aides/License-Exempt Providers" referral list. Approval for inclusion on this list is via submission of a written application, including three (3) references.

The list is distributed to families and child care providers in the RCCS service area. RCCS does not recommend particular individuals. We encourage positive and negative feedback on individuals' performance. If a complaint concerning a situation detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of children is substantiated, or if two serious unsubstantiated complaints are received, the individual will be removed from the list.

IV. Agency Procedures for Complaints Regarding Providers

While River to Coast Children's Services is not a licensing agency, periodically calls are received from parents with complaints about child care providers. When a caller wishes to make a formal complaint about a provider's services, RCCS will handle the complaints in the following manner:

A. Who handles the call?

The Resource and Referral Coordinator is responsible for handling complaints for all providers. (Back-up: Executive Director).

B. How are calls handled?

1. Resource and Referral Counselors, and others receiving phone calls, may elicit general information regarding the nature of the complaint, but will refrain from getting involved in discussion about the provider. If the appropriate staff member is not available, and the complaint is about a possible licensing violation, the complainant is referred to Community Care Licensing. All complaints about providers are considered confidential, and will be discussed only by appropriate staff members, when pertinent, and in a confidential manner.

2. Types of Complaints/Follow-Up Procedures

- a. Differences over Fees, Services, Policies, Care giving styles or Personality factors

When the complaint involves differences over fees, services, policies, care giving

styles or personality factors, parents are urged to discuss these issues with the provider. RCCS may offer suggestions about how the parent and the provider can communicate more effectively, helping parents clarify their concerns and choices of action. If the parent allows her/his name to be used and gives permission, RCCS may contact the provider to express concerns and, if appropriate, offer technical assistance. RCCS staff will maintain confidentiality, assist providers in responding to complaints, and will document the complaints.

b. Matters Subject to Licensing Regulations

When the complaint involves a matter that is subject to licensing regulations (e.g. unsafe conditions, too many children), RCCS will ask the caller to report the situation by telephone to the local district office of Community Care Licensing. RCCS will also contact the licensing office to verify filing of the complaint and will document the nature of all alleged serious violations, including the agencies notified and the progress and results of the investigation.

c. Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

When the complaint involves suspected child abuse or neglect, RCCS will document the nature of the complaint, and refer the caller to Child Protective Services, local law enforcement and Community Care Licensing. All complaints which allege child abuse or neglect will be documented in RCCS' Complaint file.

3. If Family Child Care Program subsidized children are enrolled in the site, the agency will, in addition to the steps above, conduct follow-ups to see that any necessary corrective measures are taken, utilizing the Family Child Care checklist and procedures delineated therein.

RCCS has the right to deny or terminate participation in RCCS subsidized child care programs to any client or provider in the following circumstances:

1. False, fraudulent or withholding information, or misrepresentation in any RCCS paperwork or in the child care situation (including, but not limited to, claiming care for a child when in fact the child was not present, parental failure to report changes in eligibility, etc.)

a. Parent Ineligible Services

If it is determined that a parent provided fraudulent or false information, or withheld information, in order to receive child care services for which he/she was not eligible, the parent will be notified that services are being terminated or reduced. The parent will be billed for all child care services for which he/she was ineligible, including those provided during the termination and/or appeal process.

A family who has been dropped for fraud, withholding information or providing false information will be ineligible to be on the Centralized Eligibility List for 90 days, unless there has been complete restitution and/or extenuating circumstances approved by the Executive Director.

b. Parent Fees

If it is determined that a lower parent fee for child care services was charged based on incorrect information which a parent provided, or on information which a parent failed to provide, but the parent was otherwise eligible for services, the parent must reimburse River to Coast Children's Services for any fees owed.

If the parent cannot pay the amount due upon receipt of the notice, a repayment plan can be worked out with River to Coast Children's Services. However, the full amount must be repaid within one year.

c. Provider Issues

RCCS may initiate administrative action regarding child care contracts, including, but not limited to: denial, probation and or termination of contracts.

d. Legal Consequences

All reasonable efforts will be made to recover amounts owed by parents and/or providers, which may include filing a claim through Small Claims Court and/or a collection agency. Additionally the agency may pursue civil litigation or a referral to law enforcement, the SonomaWORKS Fraud Investigation Unit and/or the District Attorney's office for criminal prosecution.

2. Failure to complete program requirements according to established deadlines (including, but not limited to: 1. provider repeatedly submitting attendance sheets late and/or incorrectly completed, failure to maintain daily time-in and time-out on attendance sheets, failure to obtain parent signature to verify monthly child care hours used, and 2. parent failure to provide required documentation, recertify or pay family fees within

program deadlines, etc.)

A family who has been dropped for non-compliance is not eligible for services for a thirty (90) day period.

A family who has been dropped for non-payment of fees is eligible to be on the Centralized Eligibility List, but may not be re-enrolled for a thirty (30) day period, and until all delinquent fees are paid in full, including 1.5% per month interest charges.

A family who has dropped care for any reason while still owing fees is not eligible for services until all delinquent fees are paid in full, including 1.5% per month interest charges.

3. Inappropriate or abusive behavior (including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, physical assault, threats of physical violence, swearing, obscene words/phrases, gestures, implied threats, intoxication) with an RCCS staff member and/or when at the RCCS premises and/or when providing contracted services.

RCCS also has the right to deny or terminate participation in RCCS subsidized child care programs to any provider in the following circumstance:

- The child or children are at risk of abuse or neglect or endangerment in the particular child care setting, as identified by an RCCS staff member.
- Provider has persistent quality issues. Quality concerns will be addressed at the Child Development Resource Specialist visits and during the annual Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale, where each CFCC Network provider must maintain a minimum score of 5 on all environmental sub-scale ratings. A provider will first be placed on a Corrective Action Plan and will be given support and many resources to improve quality concerns before termination. RCCS has the right to not re-contract with a Network provider after the CFCC Network Agreement has expired.

Notice

RCCS will give the parent and/or provider two weeks notice in writing prior to termination, outlining the reasons for termination. However, if there are urgent concerns regarding the health or safety of children, termination may be effective immediately.

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES NOTICE

River to Coast Children's Services

Anyone, has the right to file a complaint regarding the River to Coast Children's Services Child Development Program's alleged violation of a statute or regulation that the California Department of Education is authorized to enforce. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination [*Education Code*, sections 200 and 220 and *Government Code*, Section 11135] in any program or activity funded directly by the State or receiving federal or state financial assistance.

Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with:

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

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. A person filing a written complaint alleging unlawful discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies.

Legal Reference Non-LEA: 5 CCR, 4650. Uniform Complaint Procedures

PARENT RIGHT TO APPEAL AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

FAIR HEARING/APPEAL PROCEDURES

*(Education Code 8200 and Title 5 Section 4620)
(for parents, child care providers and community members)*

Section 1. Parents enrolled in River to Coast Children's Services (RCCS) state and federally funded subsidized child care programs have the right to appeal decisions about their child care services.

Section 2. Parents, child care providers and community members have the right to utilize this Parental Appeal and Provider Grievance procedure when they have a complaint against the agency, agency policies or decisions, employees of RCCS, or individuals contracted for services by RCCS.

The Board of Directors of RCCS has primary responsibility for insuring that it complies with state and federal laws and regulations governing our funded child care and development programs. The Executive Director or designee shall investigate and seek to resolve complaints at the local level, in accordance with applicable laws and administrative regulations. The Executive Director shall follow Parent Right to Appeal and Grievance Process pursuant to state regulations when addressing complaints alleging unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex, race/color, national origin or ancestry, religion, age, mental or physical disability, veteran status, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or any other protected criteria or failure to comply with the mandates of programs which provide funding to RCCS.

The Board of Directors prohibits retaliation in any form for the filing of a complaint, the reporting of instances of alleged discrimination, or for participation in complaint procedures.

The Board of Directors acknowledges and respects client and employee rights to privacy. Complaints shall be investigated in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts to the extent possible. The identity of any complainant alleging discrimination shall be kept confidential to the extent possible to carry out the investigation.

The Executive Director shall ensure that employees or board members designated to receive and investigate complaints are knowledgeable about the laws that are applicable.

Notice.

RCCS will give the parent and/or provider two weeks notice in writing prior to termination, outlining the reasons for termination. However, if there are urgent concerns regarding the health or safety of children, termination may be effective immediately.

Right to Appeal/Fair Hearing.

Subsidized parents have the right to appeal a decision the parent believes is incorrect. Appeal procedures are on the back of each Notice of Action and in RCCS' Parent Right to Appeal and Grievance Process. If a parent does appeal, the proposed action will not become effective until the appeal rights process is exhausted.

Providers may request a fair hearing also using the RCCS' Parent Right to Appeal and Grievance Process.

The Board of Directors and the Executive Director recognize that there are a variety of strategies, which may assist all parties in a complaint dispute to reach an agreeable resolution. These may include, but are not limited to: review of appropriate records, informal and formal meetings, and mediation with a neutral mediator prior to initiating a formal compliance investigation.

Section I. RCCS and California Department of Education Appeal Procedure for subsidized families enrolled in RCCS State and Federally funded child care programs:

1. RCCS shall notify a subsidized family in writing with a Notice of Action (CD-7617) of any decision, and the basis for that decision, affecting the level of services given to the family, including termination from the program or an increase or decrease in the family fee, or increase or decrease in hours of care provided.
2. If the family disagrees with the action, they may call the Family Case Manager for further clarification of the decision and reasons for the decision.
3. If the complainant still disagrees with the action, they may call the Executive Director for further clarification of the decision and reasons for the decision. The Executive Director may convene a meeting with the complainant, and any other staff members as appropriate. The Executive Director may uphold or reverse the decision at this step.
4.
 - a. If the complainant still disagrees with the action, the complainant may file a written request with the Executive Director for an appeal hearing with the RCCS Appeal Committee. A subsidized parent must file this written complaint within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of the Notice of Action. Child care services shall continue until a decision is made regarding the parent's appeal.
 - b. Within ten (10) working days following the receipt of the request for an appeal hearing, RCCS's Executive Director shall notify the complainant in writing of the time and place of the appeal hearing, which shall take place within twenty (20) working days of the date of the complainant's letter of request for appeal.
 - c. The appeal hearing shall be conducted by the Executive Director and one case manager.
 - d. Only the complainant or authorized representative is required to attend the appeal hearing. During the hearing, the complainant may speak for her/himself or may be represented by a friend, attorney, or other spokesperson of his/her choice. If needed, an interpreter will be made available by RCCS. If the complainant or representative fails to appear, the complainant forfeits appeal rights.
 - e. During the appeal hearing, the Executive Director shall explain to the complainant the legal, regulatory or policy basis for the action. The complainant shall have an opportunity to explain the reason(s) s/he believes that RCCS' decision was incorrect.
 - f. RCCS shall mail or deliver to the complainant a written decision within ten (10) working days after the appeal hearing.
5.
 - a. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the written decision, the complainant has (14) calendar days from the date of the receipt of the decision made by RCCS in which to file a written appeal to the California Department of Education (CDE), Child Development Division, 1430 N Street, Suite 3410, Sacramento, CA 95814, Attn: Appeals Coordinator.

To ensure that RCCS will not take the intended action on the date specified, RCCS must be advised of the complainant's intent to appeal to the state.

- b. If the complainant does not submit an appeal request to CDE within fourteen (14) working days, the complainant forfeits appeal rights and RCCS may implement the action.
 - c. The family shall specify in the appeal request the reason(s) why s/he believes that RCCS' decision was incorrect.
 - d. A copy of RCCS' Notice of Action and written decision shall be submitted by the family with the appeal request to CDE.
2. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Child Development Division will review the information submitted and give a final decision within thirty (30) calendar days. The decision will be mailed directly to the complainant and a copy will be sent to RCCS.
 3. Child care and development services subsidy will continue to be available during the appeal process. If the CDD upholds the agency's decision, services to the family will cease upon agency's receipt of the decision of CDD.

Section II. RCCS Complaint Procedure for All Other Complainants (for complaints other than appeals of subsidized parents regarding State and Federally funded child care):

1. Parents, child care providers and community members may use the following complaint procedure regarding a staff member or agency action (other than parent appeals regarding state or federally funded subsidized child care services). Any person with a grievance against an individual will be encouraged to work out the problem with that person first or with the staff member's supervisor. Providers may bring a complaint to the Resource and Referral Coordinator or to his/her own Child Development Resource Specialist.
2. If not satisfied, the complainant may bring their complaint, within fourteen (14) calendar days of the action or incident, to the Executive Director, who may convene a meeting with the complainant, and other staff as appropriate. If the complaint is against the Executive Director, the complaint may be addressed to, (and a meeting may be held with), the Board President.
3.
 - a. If the complainant still disagrees with the action, the complainant may file a written request with the Executive Director for a hearing with the RCCS Complaint Committee. The complainant must file this written complaint within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date of the meeting with the Executive Director or Board President (see 2 above).
 - b. Within ten (10) working days following the receipt of the request for a hearing, RCCS' Executive Director shall notify the complainant in writing of the time and place of the hearing, which shall take place within twenty (20) working days of the date of the complainant's letter of request for a hearing.
 - c. The hearing shall be conducted by the RCCS Complaint Committee, which will generally consist of the Executive Director, one (1) additional staff member, and two (2) members from the RCCS Board of Directors.
 - d. Only the complainant or authorized representative is required to attend the hearing. During the hearing, the complainant may speak for her/himself or may be represented by a

friend, attorney, or other spokesperson of his/her choice. If needed, an interpreter will be made available by RCCS. If the complainant or representative fails to appear, the complainant forfeits complaint rights.

e. During the meeting, the complainant shall have an opportunity to explain the reason(s) s/he believes that RCCS' decision was incorrect.

f. RCCS shall mail or deliver to the complainant a written decision within ten (10) working days after the hearing.

g. Parents have the right to appeal to CDE as written on the Notice of Action.
This is the final step in this section of the complaint procedure.

Contagious Disease Policy

REGARDING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH EVIDENCE OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASE, INCLUDING HIV (HUMAN IMMUNE DEFICIENCY VIRUS)

Decisions regarding the placement of a child in a child development setting are based on several factors. For children with contagious diseases, including those who are HIV positive, the factors will include the behavior, neurological development, immune status and physical condition of the child, the expected type of interaction with others in the proposed setting, other individual needs of the child and the wishes of the parent(s) or guardian(s).

The decision regarding enrollment of children with reportable contagious diseases, including evidence of HIV, will be made using the team approach, including the child's parent/guardian and physician, and RCCS staff (if the family chooses to include them). Personnel involved with this team will be sensitive to the needs for confidentiality and the right to privacy at all times. (See No. 3 below).

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

Factors to be considered when deciding how best to provide services for children with reportable contagious conditions, including HIV infection:

1. Any child who lacks control of her/his body fluids or who has non-coverable oozing lesions might need to be excluded from the child care setting. Each child will be assessed on an individual basis.
2. HIV infected children, and any immune-suppressed children, may be at risk for serious complications of routine childhood diseases (such as chicken pox). All parents should be notified as soon as possible of the outbreak of any contagious illness in the facility.
3. The HIV infected child and her/his family's right to privacy and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Child care providers, other parents and third parties will **not** be told information regarding HIV status without express written permission from the parents.
4. Staff, childcare providers and parents will be provided with updated information about reportable contagious conditions and HIV. The Associate Director will continue obtaining community policy and CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines on pediatric HIV infection and reportable contagious diseases.

Originally Approved by RCCS Board of Directors on 02/06/96

Lending Library Policy

The RCCS Lending Library includes toys, games, puzzles, curriculum kits, videotapes and large play equipment. For Family Child Care Program, contracted providers only, long-term loans of easels, cubbies, tables and benches, and infant furniture are available.

1. Providers:

RCCS service area licensed Child Care providers, License-Exempt/In-Home providers who are contracted with a subsidized child care program, and licensed Foster Home providers may borrow any library item.

- A. Licensed providers may borrow a maximum of 8 items total at any time (4 puzzles or puppets or cassette/book sets count as one item). Long-term loan items do not count towards the maximum of 8 items.
- B. License-Exempt/In-Home providers may borrow a maximum of 2 items at a time, for a 3-month probationary period. After 3 months of beginning contracted care, these Providers may borrow a maximum of 8 items (per A above).

For how long can items be borrowed?

The length of time is variable, depending on other requests and/or waiting list.

2. Book and Video loans for other borrowers:

Subsidized parents and other community members in the RCCS service area may borrow up to 2 books (for one month) and 2 videotapes (for 3 days).

3. Can I request an item?

If you would like to borrow an item that is not in, you can request to be put on a waiting list. When the item comes in, RCCS staff will call you to come get the item. You have one week to pick up the item.

4. Responsibilities of Library Use

In order to preserve the materials and ensure that everyone gets a chance to use them:

- A. Be sure the children are properly supervised when playing with the toys and that the children are playing with toys meant for their age level. We have found that damage often occurs when older children play with toys meant for young children and vice versa. Toys meant for older children can be unsafe for younger children.

damage often occurs when older children play with toys meant for young children and vice versa. Toys meant for older children can be unsafe for younger children.

- B. Store all items indoors or covered from the rain, in a safe place.
- C. Clean toys and equipment before returning them.
- D. Remember to return them on time. Some items may be renewed. If an item is overdue and not renewable, no more items can be borrowed until the overdue item is returned.
- E. We expect materials to show signs of wear and tear with use, and we just ask that the borrower use reasonable care with the equipment.

Child Abuse Reporting Procedure

1. All child care providers and staff are legally mandated to report known or reasonable suspected child abuse.

Local reporting numbers are:

Sonoma County Child Protective Services ("CPS") (24hr.)	565-4304
Sonoma County Sheriff's Dept. - Juvenile Division	565-2511
Santa Rosa Police Department - Juvenile Division	543-3595
Sonoma County Probation Dept. - Juvenile Division	565-2149

If the child is in immediate danger, the police or sheriff should be called. If the case involves abuse within a family, call CPS.

2. Anyone who has concerns or suspicions or needs help with abuse issues should call CPS for assistance.
3. All incidents, statements, injuries, etc., should always be clearly and carefully documented, especially those that seem questionable or concern you.
4. In cases of neglect or borderline abuse cases, take action. Consult with above mentioned agencies or other staff if needed.
5. In cases when you are caring for a child who needs emergency medical attention, seek that help as well as reporting. Doctors are also covered by the reporting law, but you must be clear that someone will be reporting.
6. RCCS resources for help for families in stress include:
 - CPS Referred and At-Risk Child Care
 - Counseling Program
 - Parent Support Group
 - Parenting Classes
7. Remember that all information concerning the families we work with is confidential. At no time are families' personal problems discussed outside the work setting.

Revised 2007

Child Passenger Safety

1. California law requires proper use of a Federally approved child passenger seat restraint system (car seat, booster seat), when any one transports a child under the age of six years and weighing less than 60 pounds. Seat belts must be used for children over six years or over 60 pounds. California law also requires that all passengers be restrained by seat belts.
2. RCCS provides a low cost car seat and booster distribution program for providers and parents.
3. Children should be seated in the safer rear seat, unless all other rear seats are occupied by other children. Children should never ride in the cargo compartment of a station wagon, hatchback, van or pick-up truck. In front of an air bag is especially dangerous for children.
4. Motor vehicle crashes account for nearly 42% of all unintentional childhood injury related deaths (0-14).
5. An average of six US children (0-14) were killed and 732 were injured **each day** in motor vehicle crashes during 2001.
6. Child safety seats are 71% effective in reducing deaths for infants in passenger cars. They are 54% effective in reducing deaths for children ages one to four in passenger cars.
6. Fifty percent of auto accidents occur at speeds of 30 mph or less. In a head-on crash at 30 mph, an unrestrained 40 lb child is hurtled with a force equivalent to 1200 pounds. (A child riding on an adult's lap is in the "child crusher" position).
7. You are four times more likely to be killed if you are thrown from a car in an accident. Ejected occupants are also 14 times as likely to sustain cervical spine injury as those who remain within the vehicle. It is a myth that "people are safer if thrown free of the car."
8. Unrestrained occupants are more likely to be injured as they make and impact with the vehicle's interior and are more likely to be ejected from the vehicle.
9. Use of child restraint devices substantially reduces children's movement and disruptive behavior in cars, which reduces the incidence of motor vehicle accidents.

Family Counseling Program

The River to Coast Children's Services Counseling Program provides short term counseling services to:

- families receiving Respite or subsidized child care from RCCS
- families (not subsidized) receiving care at a RCCS-contracted child care homes, and
- families in the west county community who request counseling or are referred by other community agencies or service providers.

Counseling is provided by trainees, registered MFT (Marriage and Family Therapist) interns working toward licensure and/or licensed MFTs. The clinical supervisor provides guidance and case conferences on clinical and policy issues. Modes of therapy available include individual or couples therapy for parents on issues related to children and family life, play therapy for children 3 years and older, and individual therapy for youth up to 14 years old relating to family relationships. The specific length of the short-term counseling is determined on an individual basis by the counselor and client(s), with input from the clinical supervisor. The focus of the RCCS Counseling Program is on parenting and family relationships, with an emphasis on the prevention and treatment of child abuse.

ELIGIBILITY

Clients may call the counseling staff at the RCCS office for an initial intake and assessment. Referrals may also be made to the counseling staff by other agencies or individuals on their behalf, (e.g. child care provider, child development specialist or other professional working with the family). During the initial intake, a RCCS counseling staff member will gather general information about the family's needs for counseling. If need is determined, and there is an opening in the program, a referral will be made to a therapist in the program. If no openings are available, the counseling staff will give referrals to other therapists and make an effort to secure an appointment for the family.

Families are enrolled in the Counseling Program according to the following priorities:

1. Families currently receiving Respite child care, (e.g. referred for Child Protective Services reasons.)
2. Families currently receiving subsidized child care, (e.g. low income working parent.)
3. Non-subsidized families attending RCCS contracted child care homes.
4. Other families in the West County community.

RCCS has a commitment to referring families to other appropriate agencies if the family's need cannot be sufficiently served by RCCS or if the waiting period is lengthy.

INELIGIBILITY

RCCS staff members, Board members, and their families are ineligible for individual or family counseling services. Volunteers who work in the capacity of a staff member for RCCS on more than a once a week basis, and their families, are ineligible for counseling services. Parents who serve in an advisory capacity to the agency (e.g., Board of Directors committee member) may be eligible for counseling services. However, if an issue comes to the Committee regarding the counseling program or staff, the parent will refrain from participating in any vote regarding that matter. The agency reserves the right to determine ineligibility for counseling services based on any other conflict of interest.

This policy is based on the belief that a clear boundary should be drawn between those employed or contracted by RCCS and those served therapeutically by RCCS. Such a boundary ensures that therapy will not be compromised by a client's need to fulfill a dual role at RCCS (e.g., client and staff member), and that employees'/contractors' relationships will not be complicated by the intense emotional and personal reactions that therapy sometimes evokes. The distinction between client and employee/contractor attempts to protect both the client and the RCCS Counseling Program from bias in decision-making and evaluating, as well. In addition, clients benefit in therapy from having a "neutral" therapeutic environment that is separate from all other personal relationships, roles and responsibilities. It is this neutrality, in part, which makes the counseling office a safe place to share oneself.

REASONS FOR COUNSELING

Families enter the RCCS Counseling Program for a variety of reasons. Children in the family may be experiencing or demonstrating behavior or feelings which are a concern to their parents, teachers, day care providers, medical personnel or to the children themselves. Parents may seek counseling to learn parenting, coping, and/or conflict resolution skills. The family may be facing a difficult transition, trauma or change such as a pending divorce, birth of a child, or disclosure or behavior which suggests abuse or trauma to one of the children in the family.

CONSULTATIONS

Although certain affiliates of RCCS are ineligible for counseling services (see above), workshops, trainings and consultations on child behavior and parenting are available to providers and parents on a time-limited basis. Counselors may also be available to observe and work with children at a child care or preschool site. These consultations and site visits generally do not exceed three sessions. Providers or children requiring more than one to three sessions will be referred to appropriate services.

FEES FOR COUNSELING SERVICES

Fees are on a sliding scale for counseling, based on family income and size. No one will be denied services due to inability to pay.

There is no fee for consultation to RCCS contracted providers. Initial consultations to private providers and centers are provided free of charge; subsequent consultations (generally not exceeding three sessions) are provided on a fee-for-service basis.

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