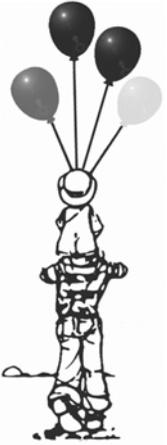


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INTRODUCTION



SOLANO FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES (SFCS) is a private, non-profit agency which provides a wide variety of services to children and families in Solano County. Our mission is to promote and advocate for the well-being of children and families in Solano County by providing Subsidized Child Care; Resources and Referrals; *Provider/Parent* Training and Education; the Child Care Food Program; and Community Outreach to address the community's diverse and ever-changing needs.

The Subsidized Child Care Program is designed to provide full or partial payment of child care services on behalf of eligible families. The goal of this program is to assist and promote the health,

growth, care, development, and education of children in Solano County by providing child care, while the children's *parents* continue their employment, education, or training. Some programs serve children receiving Child Protective Services (CPS) and other children at risk of abuse or neglect.

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

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

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

Parents, providers and the general public are encouraged to attend workshops on Child Development, Parenting Skills, Health & Safety, and other child care related topics offered by us.

For more information about the variety of services we offer, please refer to our agency brochure; visit our website at www.solanofamily.org; or call (707) 863-3950, or toll free at (888) 861-1594.

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

- Transportation Fees (when provided alone, and not as part of a package that covers the approved child care hours)
- Private School Tuition K-12 (we only pay for extended child care services)
- Tutoring Services

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DEFINITIONS

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

CalWORKs: California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids. This is California's version of welfare reform.

CalWORKs Worker: The Employment Resource Specialist (ERS) at the Solano County Health and Social Services Department (Welfare Department) assigned to a person's case.

Child Care Fraud: Is the crime of obtaining money or child care services by deliberate deception.

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

Days: Calendar days unless otherwise noted.

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

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

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

Family Fee (also called Parent Fee): A *family fee* chart is prepared by the State to have *parents* share in the cost of child care and to expand services to other families in need of subsidized child care services. The amount of the fee the family is expected to pay is based on the countable gross monthly income of the family and the size of the family. These fees are paid by the *parent*, directly to his/her *provider*. A *parent* MAY have to pay a *family fee* and, at the same time, have to pay the *provider* a *co-payment*. One does not offset the other.

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

"Making the decision to have a child — it's momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart walking around outside your body" ~ Elizabeth Stone

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



Misuse of Services: *Days* & hours of child care (claimed on the Child Care Attendance Form and paid by SFCS to the *provider*) during which the *parent* did not participate in his/her SFCS **approved** activity, as listed on the application for child care services.

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

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

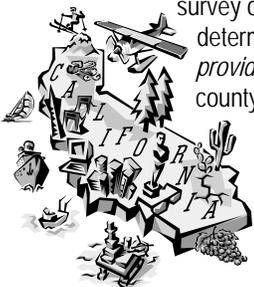
Parent: A person living with a child who is responsible for the care and welfare of that child.

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

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

PSS: Provider Services Specialist is the *provider's* case manager at SFCS. This is the person responsible for assuring the *provider's* eligibility to be paid by SFCS, and for processing the *provider's* payment.

RMR (Regional Market Rates): The average rates charged for various types of child care services as determined by a statewide survey of *providers*. The results of this survey determine the maximum we are allowed to pay *providers* for child care services based on the county they provide care in.



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

Sectarian Provider: *Providers* who include religious activities/ practices in their daily routine while caring for children.

Stable: When the *parent* has actively participated in a Welfare-to-Work activity for a minimum of six (6) consecutive months; or when the *parent* is no longer receiving *TANF* cash aid.

TANF: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Formerly AFDC.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

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

CalWORKs CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

The *CalWORKs* program serves families who are currently receiving *TANF* cash aid or who have received it within 24 months **before** completing the application process for child care services. These families may receive child care services while they participate in an approved Welfare-to-Work activity. There are three (3) stages to the *CalWORKs* program. We try to move families through these stages of child care as smoothly as possible. Each of these stages has different eligibility requirements; however, the *CalWORKs* Child Care System is designed to continue services to eligible families without interruption. For more information about these programs, please see our Subsidized Child Care Program brochure.

- **Funding Sources:** *Solano County Health & Social Services Department* & State Department of Education, Child Development Division
- **Funding Codes:** CDSS/C2AP/C3AP
- **Child's Age Limit:** Under age 13 (under age 22 if the child has exceptional needs or is severely disabled)
- **Service Delivery Area:** Receiving *TANF* in Solano County; or a former *TANF* recipient now living or participating in an approved activity in Solano County or using a child care provider located in Solano County.

CALIFORNIA ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT PROGRAM (CAPP)

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

Subsidized Parents: Please remember to report to us (within 5 days) any changes in your approved child care activity, provider, family size, marital status, job, etc.

... CAPP continued

- **Funding Source:** State Department of Education, Child Development Division
- **Funding Code:** CAPP
- **Child's Age Limit:** Under age 13 (under age 22 if the child has exceptional needs or is severely disabled)
- **Service Delivery Area:** Living or participating in an approved activity in Solano County

SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY LIST

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

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

ELIGIBILITY & NEED FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES

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

Each program has different **Eligibility and Need Criteria**. In the parenthesis () after each criterion, we have listed the funding code of the program(s) these criteria apply to.

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

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

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



- A. The family receives public assistance. (**All Programs**)
- B. The *parent* is currently receiving *CalWORKs* Cash Aid or has received *CalWORKs* Cash Aid within 24 months of the time he/she completes an application for subsidized child care services; or he/she received a lump sum diversion payment or diversion services. (***CalWORKs* Stages 1 and 2 only**)
- C. The family is income eligible. Income is based on the size of the family and the amount of countable gross monthly income earned or received by all family members counted in the family unit. (**All Programs**)
- D. The family is homeless and needs child care services to find permanent housing. (**All Programs**)
- E. The child is in need of, or at risk of needing protective services and has been referred to SFCS by a legally qualified professional. (**All Programs**)
- F. The *parent* has fully exhausted his/her 24 months of eligibility for transitional child care services in *CalWORKs* Stages 1 and 2. (***CalWORKs* Stage 3, CAPP**)

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

- A. The *parent* is employed; seeking employment; participating in an approved vocational training/school leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession or profession. (**All programs except *CalWORKs* Cash-Aided Clients unless authorized by SCHSSD**)
- B. The *parent* is homeless and seeking permanent housing for family stability. (**All Programs**)
- C. The *parent* is incapacitated, including a medical or mental special need, to the extent that the *parent's* ability to provide normal care for the child is significantly limited. SFCS will supply a Statement of Incapacity Form to be completed by a legally qualified health professional. (**All Programs** – See 'One Adult Household Rule'/'Two Adult Household Rule' on page 5 for more details)
- D. The *parent* is participating in an activity that has been approved by SCHSSD. (***CalWORKs* Cash-Aided Clients**)
- E. The *parent* is participating in job retention services approved by SCHSSD. (**All Programs**)

DESCRIPTION OF NEED STATUS

Note to *CalWORKs* Stage 1 (CDSS) Families: While you are receiving TANF cash assistance, SFCS must have a child care authorization from your *CalWORKs* Worker in order to approve your child care services.

EMPLOYMENT

When the *parent* is approved to use child care services while he/she is working, the hours of care may cover the *parent's* work hours

(including the lunch break) and the amount of time it takes the *parent* to travel between the work site and the child care facility. In some cases, the *parent* may be required to turn in proof of the hours worked on a monthly basis. Travel time is limited and in some cases may require additional documentation.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

All self-employed persons must meet city, county, state and federal licensing regulations and ordinances. As such, SFCS will require the *parent* to submit a copy of his/her business license or permit as applicable. A Self-Employment Declaration (supplied by SFCS) must be completed in order for child care services to be approved for self-employed *parents*. The *parent* will be required to submit receipts of earnings and expenses, a copy of the Profit and Loss Statement(s) used to file income taxes, as well as a copy of the income tax return that has been filed with the IRS and Franchise Tax Board. A Self-Employment Log must be maintained by the *parent* on a daily basis (including a list of clients and their contact information), and submitted with the Child Care Attendance Forms (CCAFs) for that month in order for the *provider* to be paid by SFCS.

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT (Non-Aided Clients)

Child care services for *parents* who are seeking employment is provided for up to 60 consecutive working days, per parent, per *fiscal year*, up to five (5) days per week, less than 30 hours per week. Use of child care for job search activities during the evening or on weekends requires additional documentation.

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT (Aided Clients)

Clients who are receiving *TANF* cash-aid must notify their worker at *SCHSSD* if they need child care services in order to look for work. SFCS will not be able to provide child care services for seeking employment to Cash-Aided clients without an authorization for child care services from their worker at *SCHSSD*.

STUDENT PARENTS

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



Parents will be given an extra term/semester to successfully complete their courses. If successful completion is not achieved within this timeframe, child care services will terminate. However, services may continue if the *parent* has another qualifying need for child care.



SFCS will not pay for child care services during the *parent's* school breaks (i.e. spring, winter, summer vacation; semester breaks; etc.) unless the *parent* is participating in another SFCS approved activity.

PARENTAL INCAPACITY

In some cases, SFCS can approve child care for a *parent* who is not able to care for his/her child, without assistance, due to a medical/mental condition. In such cases, a legally qualified health professional must complete a form (supplied by SFCS) describing why services are needed and for how long.

One-Adult Household Rule

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

Under this need status, the *provider* chosen by the *parent* cannot be paid if he/she is a *sectarian provider*.

Two-Adult Household Rule

If there are two (2) or more adults counted in the family size, and one (1) adult is or becomes incapacitated (as described above), while the other adult is able to participate in an approvable activity, the family may be served in any of our programs, as long as all other eligibility and need criteria are met.

If both/all adults counted in the family size are incapacitated (as described above), the same restrictions apply as stated under the One-Adult Household Rule.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES/AT-RISK CHILDREN

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

*Please remember SFCS is closed on Tuesday mornings—our office opens at 12:00 noon.
And we are closed on the first and third Friday of every month.*

INITIAL APPLICATION PROCESS



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

FSSs will interview *parents* on an individual basis. The application process includes many required documents which will be requested from the *parent* before the application date. Each *parent* will be mailed or given a list of required documents based on their individual case.

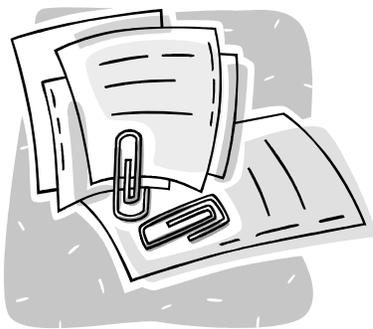
The application must be signed by the *parent* before the application process will be considered complete.

Before the application can be approved, the parent must choose an eligible provider, and give their *FSS* the name, address, and telephone number of the provider. Otherwise their application may be denied.

It is the *parent's* responsibility to report any changes to their *CalWORKs Worker* at the *SCHSSD* (cash-aided *parents* only) and their assigned *FSS* (at SFCS) within **five (5) days** of the change.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS & EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

SFCS must have immunization records for all non-school-age children, and emergency contact information for all enrolled children, on file before enrollment into our program. An Emergency and Identification Information Form will be issued to the *parent* before or at the time of their initial interview with an *FSS*.



NOTE ABOUT RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS:

Under *CalWORKs* Stage 1, SFCS cannot pay for child care services provided for more than **30 days BEFORE** the *parent's* **initial** request for payment of these services through his/her Employment Resource Specialist (ERS) at *SCHSSD* or an *FSS* at SFCS. This also applies when changing child care providers.

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

RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

Recertification is the process of determining a family's continued need and eligibility for child care services. Failure to complete the Recertification process within the timeframe given will result in termination or non-payment of child care services by SFCS. The Recertification Process applies to **all** *parents* enrolled in our Subsidized Child Care Program.

SFCS requires a face-to-face Recertification interview at least once within an 11-month period (or more often, depending on the family's need status). The *parent* will receive a Recertification Notice with all the details specific to their case including a list of documents/information required to determine continued eligibility. If there are changes SFCS is unaware of, we may require more documentation at the time of the interview.

Student *parents* are required to recertify more often – depending on their school term/semester dates.

UPDATE PROCESS

The purpose of the update is to bring the *parent's* application up-to-date in between Recertifications. An update can be done face-to-face or over the phone by providing the *FSS* with information regarding changes in a family's need or eligibility status.

An update to the application may be brought on by the *parent* or by SFCS. The *parent* will receive an Update Letter if this process is started by SFCS. **If the *parent* does not complete the update process within the timeframe given, his/her child care services will be affected by: termination, reduction in child care hours, or non payment of child care services by SFCS.** The update process applies to all *parents* enrolled in a Subsidized Child Care Program.

CDSS cases are updated based on Child Care Authorizations received from the *CalWORKs Worker*.

CHILD CARE HOURS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Approved child care hours are based on the *parent's* authorized activity which depends on the *parent/child's* eligibility and need criteria (see page 4). These hours include lunch & transportation time, and sometimes study time (for student *parents*), as allowed by the program in which the *parent* is enrolled.

VERIFICATION OF STATUS

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

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

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

SHARED CUSTODY

When the care of a child is shared by separated *parents*, SFCS will only pay for child care while the child is in **custody** of the **enrolled *parent***. The *provider* will only be paid for actual services, and not to hold a spot until the child returns to the *provider's* care. The enrolled *parent* will be required to give written information to SFCS, and to the *provider*, as to when the child will be in the other *parent's* custody. These are considered non-contracted *days* and the Certificate for

Child Care Services will be written to cover only the *days* the enrolled *parent* has custody.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LIMITED TERM SERVICE LEAVE)

If the family will not need subsidized child care services for a short period of time, SFCS may allow the family a Leave of Absence (LOA). An LOA is a limited period of time during which child care will not be provided, and SFCS will not make payment to the *provider*. During this period, the *provider* can choose to discontinue services to the family.

An LOA may be approved for a maximum of 16 weeks per *fiscal year* when the leave is due to medical reasons and the *parent* has documentation from a medical professional; or in-between school semesters. Otherwise, we can only approve a leave for up to 12 weeks.

In order to have an LOA approved, the *parent* must complete and turn in a "Request for a Limited Term Service Leave" form to their assigned *FSS*.

Student *parents* who do not plan to take classes for a term (including the summer semester), and are not working (or in another approved activity), must complete and turn in a "Request for a Limited Term Service Leave" form in order to hold their slot in the program.

LOAs must be pre-approved by SFCS. If the *parent* decides to take one without being pre-approved, their child care services may be terminated.

Children attending an After School Education and Safety (ASES) or 21st Century Community Learning Center Program may be granted a LOA for any part of the fiscal year.



CHOOSING A PROVIDER

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

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

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

*Parents and Providers: Replacement CCAFs can be picked up in the SFCS office only through the 20th of the month; after that date, they will be **mailed** to the provider.*

BACK-UP PROVIDERS/ MULTIPLE PROVIDERS

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



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

CERTIFICATE FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES (ORIGINAL)

When the *parent* and the *provider* have completed all of the requirements, an *FSS* will contact the *provider* to go over the details of the Certificate for Child Care Services. The certificate states the approved child care schedule for each child.

CERTIFICATE FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES (AMENDMENT)

When there are changes in the child care schedule or when an extension of services is approved, the *parent* and *provider* will be notified in writing of those changes through a Certificate for Child Care Services Amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION REGARDING CERTIFICATES

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

The *provider* has the responsibility of reporting (to SFCS) changes in a subsidized child's attendance within **three (3) business days** of the

change, such as an increase or decrease in hours of care. Failure to report these changes may result in non-payment of services provided.

Occasionally, special one-time or limited-time changes happen in a child's care schedule due to things like the *parent* having to work overtime or switch days at work. These limited-time changes do not require a new Certificate for Child Care Services Amendment. In these cases, the *parent* must report this to their *FSS* and the change must be fully explained on the back of the Child Care Attendance Form under 'Absence Clarifications' and the *parent* must sign in the space provided.

FAMILY FEES, DELINQUENT FEES, & CO-PAYMENTS

FAMILY FEES

A *family fee* is a fee charged to the family based on their income and family size. A *family fee* chart is prepared by the State in order to have *parents* share in the cost of child care and to increase services to other families in need of subsidized child care services. As changes happen in either the family's income or family size, the *family fee* may change. Therefore, it is important that families report changes as soon as they happen – and not past five (5) *days* of the change.

NOTE: *TANF* Cash-Aid and Child Support received are counted in the family's income. The *family fee* may change when these payments are reduced, increased or stopped.

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

When a family is terminated from the program while owing *family fees*, they must pay their *delinquent family fees in full*, before they can be eligible for re-enrollment into any Child Care & Development Program funded by the State of California.

CO-PAYMENTS

If a *parent* chooses a *provider* who charges more than the State allows SFCS to pay (based on the *RMR* issued by the State of California), the *parent* can use that *provider*, only if the *parent* agrees to pay the difference between the *provider's* rate and the amount SFCS can pay. This difference is called a *co-payment* and it is the responsibility of the *parent* to make this payment directly to the *provider*.



REPORTING CHANGES

All changes in the *parent's* name, address, employer/school, employment/school schedule, income (decrease/increase), discontinuance of cash aid from *TANF* (formerly *AFDC*), family size, and/or marital status must be reported to their *FSS* within 5 *days* of the change. Changes in phone numbers must also be reported. Many of these changes will require an update or Recertification of eligibility. Failure to report any changes in the "need" or "eligibility" status may result in termination of services or non-payment of services used. Cash-aided *parents* must also report these changes to their *CalWORKs Worker*.

To report changes, *parents* must contact their assigned *FSS* directly, either by phone, in person, or in writing. When leaving a voice message or writing a note to the *FSS*, the *parent* needs to be specific about the changes being reported. *Parents* need to make every effort to follow up with their *FSS* to make sure that any messages or written notes/letters have been received, and that the *FSS* has all of the necessary information in order to take action – as applicable.

If the *parent* does not report changes within five (5) *days* of the change, one or more of the following may happen:

- Termination of child care services
- We may not pay the *provider*
- The *parent* may have to pay the *provider* directly
- The *parent* may have to reimburse SFCS for *misuse of child care services*. (NOTE: If the *parent* is billed and does not pay SFCS, their services will be terminated.)

More Child Care Hours Needed:

Reported on Time: If the *parent* needs more child care hours for an approvable activity, the change may be approved to start on the date of the change **as long as** the *parent* reports the information to their assigned *FSS* within five (5) *days* of the change.

Reported Late: If the information is reported more than five (5) *days* after the change, the increase in child care hours may start the date it is reported (or on the date authorized by *SCHSSD*) as long as we receive verification of the information by the due date.

Increase in Income:

Reported on Time: If the *parent* reports an increase in income within five (5) *days* of the change, the income will be recalculated to see if the family continues to be eligible for services, and also to see if a *family fee* is applicable. If the *parent* has new or higher *family fees*, the fees will begin two (2) weeks from the date the change was reported.

Reported Late: If the increase in income is reported more than five (5) *days* after the change, any new or increased *family fee* will start the date the change took place.

Decrease in Income:

Reported on Time: If the *parent* reports a decrease in income within five (5) *days* of the change, the *family fee* will be looked at to see if a change is applicable. Any reduction in the *family fee* will start the date of the income change.

Reported Late: If the decrease in income is reported more than five (5) *days* after the change, any reduction in *family fees* will start the date the change is reported.

It is to the *parent's* benefit to report income changes immediately.

CHANGING PROVIDERS

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

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

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

If a *parent* starts using a new *provider* WITHOUT reporting the change within five (5) *days*, SFCS will begin paying the *provider* on the date the change is reported—not the date the change took place, **AND** only if the *parent* & *provider* are eligible to receive services/payment from SFCS.

SFCS **will not** contract with a new *provider* until all *family fees* due are paid, or until both the *parent* and the *provider* agree to a payment arrangement, and submit a copy of the arrangement to SFCS. If a



parent begins to use another *provider* before the *family fees* are paid (or there is a payment arrangement in place), the *parent* will be responsible for paying the new *provider* – **without SFCS reimbursement**.

If a *parent* stops using a *provider* without giving proper notification, (such as, but not limited to, cases of disagreements between the *parent* and the *provider*), SFCS will not pay for services beyond the last day of actual care by the *provider* – the *parent* will be responsible for paying the *provider*. In these cases, SFCS will NOT approve a new *provider* to begin services until the day AFTER the **previous provider's notice period** has ended.

PARENTAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

LICENSE-EXEMPT CHILD CARE SETTINGS

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

- The complaint must be written and must include the nature of the complaint, the date and approximate time of the occurrence, the name and address of the *provider* being complained about, and it must be signed by the *parent*. Only complaints received about health and safety noncompliance will be accepted. These complaints will be deemed substantiated solely by the *parent's* written declaration;
- Upon receipt of a complaint, SFCS will inform the license-exempt *provider* of the *parent's* complaint and inform the *provider* of his/her right to submit a written rebuttal. SFCS will also notify the *parent* and the *provider* that payments will cease in 14 *days* unless a written declaration signed by both parties has been received by SFCS stating that the health and safety deficiency has been corrected. SFCS will also notify the Child Protective Services unit of the county welfare department;
- SFCS must maintain a record of parental complaints concerning a license-exempt *provider's* failure to meet the health and safety standards as specified in the Health and Safety Self-Certification. Upon receiving an inquiry about a specific license-exempt *provider*, SFCS Staff will inform the person who made the inquiry of the general nature of the complaint and whether or not the *provider* submitted a rebuttal.



LICENSED CHILD CARE SETTINGS

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

- Their assigned *FSS*
- The Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, at (707) 588-5026
- The Child Protective Services unit, at (800) 544-8696
- The local police department

Parents may contact The Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, at (707) 588-5026 to ask about any complaints already filed against licensed *providers*.

PARENT TERMINATION POLICY

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

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

Other Reasons for Termination — including, but not limited to:

- When the *Parent* does not meet the eligibility and need criteria based on the program they are currently enrolled in;
- When the child reaches the age limit set by the program rules & regulations;
- When the *parent* submits falsified documentation or information to SFCS (see page 16 'Fraud Policy & Misuse of Services');
- When the *parent* fails to pay *family fees* or defaults on a *Family Fee Payment Plan*;
- When the *parent* fails to pay SFCS back for *misuse of services*;
- When the *parent* fails to abide by program rules & regulations;
- When the *parent* fails to complete enrolled classes or fails to maintain a grade point average of "C" (2.0) or better;
- When the *parent* fails to complete, sign, or submit required documentation;
- When the *parent* fails to complete the Recertification or Update process.

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

"How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these" ~ George Washington Carver

NOTICE OF ACTION (NOA)

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



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

When a *NOA* is sent informing the *parent* of termination, an *NTP* is also sent to notify the *provider* of termination of payment for child care services.

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

PARENTAL APPEAL RIGHTS

If the *parent* does not agree with an action taken by SFCS, the *parent* has the right to appeal the agency's decision and request a hearing. SFCS must have the *parent's* appeal/request for hearing no later than the Appeal Date on the *NOA*. The appeal process is described on the back of the *NOA*.

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

PROVIDER PARTICIPATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

All *providers* must attend a Subsidy Provider Orientation at the SFCS office.

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

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

Payments cannot be made for services when child care is provided by *parents* (biological/adoptive/foster) or legal guardians. In *CalWORKS* Stage 1, payment cannot be made to members of the *parent's* assistance unit (other people included in the grant).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Providers caring for children in the child's home will only be contracted if care is being provided for a minimum of five (5) subsidized children at the same time. If at any time, the *provider* cares for fewer than five (5) children, services cannot continue in the child's home and care must then be provided in the *provider's* home. This also applies in situations when one or more children leave for school and fewer than



Parents and Providers: Please remember, any corrections made to the in/out times on CCAFs, must be initialed by both the Parent and the Provider, and White-Out cannot be used on these forms.

five (5) children are left with the *provider*. When the *parent* and the *provider* live together the home is considered the child's home and this rule applies. **This rule does NOT apply to families enrolled in Stage 1; however, when the family is transferred to a different program/stage, this rule WILL apply.**

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

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



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

PROVIDER AVAILABILITY

Providers are expected to provide care during their hours of operation and during their contracted period as specified on the Certificate for Child Care Services. If they do not, for any reason (i.e. *provider* is unable, unwilling or unavailable), their payment will be pro-rated to allow payment to the back-up *provider*.

Supervision by the contracted *provider* or their registered adult assistant **MUST** be maintained at all times when children are in attendance.

BACK-UP PROVIDERS/MULTIPLE PROVIDERS — please see page 8.

PROVIDER ABSENCES

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

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

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

PROVIDER DAYS OF NON-OPERATION

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

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

License-Exempt Child Care Centers

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

TrustLine Registry Providers

In California, *providers* who are not licensed to do child care, and do not fall under the category of "TrustLine-Exempt" as defined in the next section, are required to go through the TrustLine process. This process includes completing and turning in a TrustLine application; fingerprinting of the *provider* using the LiveScan process (by appointment only at SFCS); and a criminal background investigation, including a Child Abuse Index check through the Department of Justice.

In the CalWORKs Stage 1 Program, TrustLine required *providers* must be **cleared and registered** before we can pay for any child care services provided to children on our program. Once the *provider* is registered, SFCS can only pay up to the first 120 days of child care provided. If the *provider's* application status is closed or denied, SFCS **CANNOT** pay for any care provided, and the *parent* will be responsible for paying the *provider all fees owed*.

In the CAPP and CalWORKs Stages 2 & 3 Programs, if the *provider's* TrustLine status is closed, denied, or revoked, SFCS **MUST** stop payments to the *provider*.

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

"To understand your parents' love, you must raise children yourself" ~ Chinese Proverb

TrustLine-Exempt Providers

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

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

TrustLine-exempt *providers* are not eligible to receive child care payments from SFCS until they turn in a complete Health & Safety Self-Certification packet.

PROVIDER RATES

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

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

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

PROVIDER RATE INCREASES

SFCS will only accept *provider* rate increases **ONCE** per *fiscal year* (July 1 through June 30 of the following year). If the *provider* raises their child care rates more than once per *fiscal year*, the *parent* will be responsible for paying the difference between the rate we are paying and the *provider's* new rate. If the rate (old or new) is above the applicable *Regional Market Rate Ceiling*, the *parent* is responsible for paying the difference (*co-payment*) as well.



NOTE: *Providers* must give SFCS and *parents* a minimum of two-weeks notice when increasing their child care rates. **If the increase is approved by SFCS:** new weekly rates will start on the Sunday **AFTER** the two-week notice is received by SFCS; new monthly rates will start the first of the month **AFTER** the two-week notice is received. Because of this delay, it is important that the *provider* inform us **IMMEDIATELY** when they plan to increase their rates.

Child Care Attendance Forms

The Child Care Attendance Form (CCAF) is the document that generates payment to the *provider*. Its completeness and accuracy is extremely important – because it verifies the **actual** times the child was with the *provider* each day. They are required by SFCS and our State, Federal and County funding sources. They are reviewed yearly by auditors and are used in *child care fraud* investigations.

CCAFs are released to the *provider* **AFTER** we receive a signed Certificate for Child Care Services. All others will be mailed to the *provider* around the 20th of each month.

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

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

If the *parent* used child care, but was ineligible for those services, the *parent* will be responsible for paying the *provider* directly or reimbursing SFCS for payments made to the *provider* for this period of time.

If a *provider* or *parent* includes hours of care on the CCAF that were not actually provided, they will be responsible for paying SFCS back for those hours (see page 16 - '*Fraud Policy and Misuse of Services*').

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

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

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

SUBMITTING THE CCAF FOR PAYMENT

Only original CCAF issued by SFCS are accepted. Faxes or copies are not acceptable and will not be processed for payment.

Child Care Providers: Please remember to report changes in a child's attendance to the Family Services Specialist assigned to that family within three (3) days of the change.

Please read the back of the CCAF for more detailed information about completing it and when to submit it. SFCS staff are available to answer questions as well – please call our office for assistance.

Completed CCAFs are to be mailed or hand delivered to:

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

If the *parent* is required to submit verification (of their approved activity) with the CCAF, but does not do so, SFCS will bill the *parent* for the period of time that we do not have the required verification.

FISCAL YEAR DEADLINES

SFCS' *fiscal year* closes on June 30th. CCAFs for services provided up through June 30th must be received by SFCS by August 20th in order to be paid. All child care provided in the *fiscal year* (July 1st - June 30th) must be claimed by August 20th. Any discrepancies in payments must also be settled by August 20th. If the 20th falls on a weekend, the due date will be the next business day.

HOW PAYMENT IS MADE

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

Correct & complete CCAFs received by SFCS before 5:00 p.m. on Mondays, will be processed, and the payment will be deposited three Fridays later, as long as everything is complete and correct. The cut-off date will not be extended when SFCS-observed holidays fall on Mondays. Regardless of when CCAFs are received by SFCS, they are not payable until the month after the services are provided.

SFCS DOES NOT issue payments to *providers* BEFORE the applicable pay date according to when Correct and Complete CCAFs are received in our office. We will not make exceptions to this policy even if the *provider* has an immediate financial need.

We do not allow checks to be picked up at our office.

DELAY IN PAYMENT OR NON-PAYMENT OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

In the event that we do not receive our money 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 early as possible.

CHILDREN'S ABSENCES

Absences happen on days when a *parent* would normally attend work/school/other approved activity, but the child did not attend the child care facility due to illness, family emergency, court ordered visitation rights, etc. Payment can be made for absences according to SFCS' Absence Policy as follows.



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

Providers may be paid for children's absences according to their own business practices and only up to the limits as described in this handbook. If SFCS does not have a copy of the *provider's* business practices on file, payment for children's absences WILL NOT be made.

Parents must notify their *provider(s)* of any planned absences before they occur.

When a child is absent or leaves early, the *parent* must clearly state the reason for the absence on the back of the CCAF. The *parent's* full signature is required for each explanation of absences. SFCS staff will determine which category the absence falls under.

When a child is unexpectedly absent from child care for three (3) contracted *days* in a row without notification from the *parent*, the *provider* must call SFCS immediately so that we can contact the *parent* to follow-up on their child care needs.

NOTE: SFCS keeps track of each individual child's absences. Therefore, whenever we address limits, please keep in mind that these limits apply to each enrolled child within the family and that we do not lump all absences for all children together.

BEST INTEREST DAYS (maximum of 10 per *fiscal year*)

Best Interest Days are defined as quality time for the child. Best Interest Days are to be used only at the discretion of the *parent*. These absences are limited to ten *days* per *fiscal year* and are to be recorded and clearly explained on the back of the CCAF. Any Best Interest Days recorded on the CCAF, beyond the limit of ten per *fiscal year*, will not be paid by SFCS; the *parent* must pay the *provider* for these types of absences for the remainder of the *fiscal year*.

Best Interest Days include the following:

- Child on vacation - specify with whom & where the child went
- Out of town - specify with whom & where the child went
- Stayed home with *parents/relatives* (specify why)
- School program/field trip/camp

*“While we try to teach our children all about life,
our children teach us what life is all about” ~ Angela Schwindt*

- Child's birthday
- Child visiting with grandparents or non-enrolled *parent*
- Other reasons which are clearly in the best interest of the child

EXCUSED ABSENCES include, but are not limited to:

- Illness of the child enrolled in the program
- Enrolled *parent's* illness
- Dental, medical appointment (enrolled child or *parent*)
- Quarantine (specify illness) (example: Chicken Pox or other highly contagious disease)
- Family emergency (death, funeral, serious illness)
- Sibling illness when no back-up *provider* is available to the sick child
- Child's occasional visitations with the non-enrolled *parent*. Court ordered visitation with absent *parent* (maximum of 2 consecutive weeks). If visitation is not court ordered, the *parent* must submit (to their *FSS*) a notarized Statement of Fact, signed by both *parents* describing their visitation arrangements. If the visitation is for more than two (2) weeks, the child will be placed on a Leave of Absence. No child care payments are issued during a Leave of Absence. Refer to page 7 - 'Leave of Absence'

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES (maximum of five (5) per *fiscal year*)

If a *parent* fails to record and clearly state the reason for the absence on the back of the CCAF, the absence will be considered Unexcused.

SFCS is able to pay for a maximum of five (5) Unexcused absences per *fiscal year*; all other Unexcused absences (from the sixth one on) will not be paid by SFCS. The *parent* must pay the *provider* for these types of absences for the remainder of the *fiscal year*.

Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Car problems/lack of transportation
- Child stayed with friend/stayed at friend's house
- Child did not feel like getting up/*parent* overslept
- Personal business/family business
- Sibling illness when a back-up *provider* IS available for the sick child
- Four or more absences in a row due to illness (*parent's* or child's) without a doctor's note
- Any absences without the *parent's* signature on the back of the CCAF
- Any absences without specifics on the back of the CCAF



UNENROLLED DAYS

SFCS will not pay for Unenrolled Days which 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
- Child is absent because *parent* is seeking a new *provider*
- Child is no longer with *provider* for miscellaneous reasons – including *days* during the *Provider's Notice Period* when the child no longer attends the child care facility

TERMINATION OF CERTIFICATES FOR CHILD CARE & DISCONTINUANCE OF PAYMENTS

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

Payment during the *provider's notice period* is made only for the *parent's* approved *days* within that *notice period* and only if the child continues to attend that child care facility.

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

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

SFCS reserves the right to terminate Certificates for Child Care Services or refuse to issue a Certificate for Child Care Services to any *provider*, if SFCS has reason to believe that the arrangement **would not** be in the best interest of the child, including but not limited to placing the child at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. SFCS reserves the right to terminate Certificates for Child Care Services **immediately**, without giving advance notice, when the child is at risk of abuse or neglect in the child care facility or in the *provider's* care; or when the *provider* is non-compliant with licensing regulations.

Child Care Providers: Please let your Provider Services Specialist know if you are employed outside of child care.

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

- When the *provider* does not meet all State/County/Agency requirements
- When the *provider* forges or falsifies any information/documentation used to determine his/her eligibility for payment from SFCS
- When the *provider* uses corporal or unusual punishment defined as infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of punitive nature, including, but not limited to: interference with eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding shelter, clothing, medications or aids to physical functioning
- When complaints received from SFCS staff, the general public, or enrolled *parents* are substantiated (please see 'Parental Complaint Procedure' on page 10)
- When the *provider* violates the Health & Safety Self-Certification Agreement
- When we are aware of the criminal history of any person in the child care setting which may place the child in harm's way

Additional Reason for termination of Licensed *Providers*:

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

Additional Reason for Termination of TrustLine Registry *Providers*:

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



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

PROVIDER GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Any *provider* who does not agree with any action or termination, may use the grievance procedure as described in this section. The purpose of this procedure is to provide a way of discussing and settling differences involving **only** the interpretation or application of the policy or any alleged violation thereof. It is the intent of this procedure to settle grievances fairly and in a timely manner. The person filing a grievance will be free from restraint, coercion,

discrimination or reprisal. When grievances arise, they are not to be considered as reflecting unfavorably on either SFCS or the *provider*, but are to be considered their right. All grievances must be presented in writing to the Subsidy Program Director within 14 *days* after the occurrence that caused the disagreement.

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

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

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

FRAUD POLICY & MISUSE OF SERVICES

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

If child care is used for reasons other than those for which a *parent* has been approved, SFCS will bill the *parent* for the amount paid to the *provider(s)* for that period of time. This includes changing jobs/schools/classes, and NOT reporting the change within five (5) *days*.

Federal and state regulations require SFCS to collect child care payments which have been made to *providers* for services the *parent* or *provider* was not eligible to receive, due to *fraud* on the part of the *parent* or *provider*.

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

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

When a *parent's* child care services are terminated due to *child care fraud*, they will not be eligible for re-enrollment onto our program. SFCS will bill the responsible party/parties for the total costs of all services provided—including those services which were provided during the appeal process – as applicable.

SFCS staff will work with *parents/providers* to determine a reasonable repayment plan. However, if the *parent/provider* refuses to reimburse SFCS for *misuse of services*, SFCS may:

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

Stage 1 Child Care Services are subcontracted to SFCS by the Solano County Health and Social Services Department. Because child care is part of the support services for *CalWORKs* recipients, any suspicion of *fraud* under this program will be referred to the Solano County Welfare Fraud Unit for investigation/legal action.

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

(This section is not applicable to *CalWORKs* Stage 1 *parents & providers*)

It is the intent of SFCS to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Individuals, agencies, organizations, and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding SFCS' alleged violation of federal or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (ED 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 the State Department of Education and addressed as follows:

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. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing in this event.

A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including, but not limited to: injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders.

Legal Reference: 5 CCR, Chapter 5.1 Uniform Complaint Procedures

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

For complaints of discrimination, please write to: State Department of Education, Child Development Division, Complaint Coordinator, 1430 N Street, Suite 3410, Sacramento, CA 95814.

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

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

Attention Licensed and TrustLine Certified Providers: You may be eligible to receive a monthly reimbursement for nutritious meals and snacks you serve to the children in your care. Call SFCS' Food Program to find out if you

HANDBOOK RECEIPT

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

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

I AM A ... Parent
 Provider

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

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

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

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

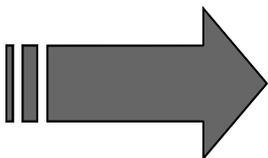
Providers: I understand that as a child care *provider*, I am prohibited from engaging in any form of discrimination as described on page 17 of this handbook.

Parent's/Provider's Signature

Date Received

Second Parent's Signature
(Necessary in Two-Parent Households)

Date Received



After Signing, Mail or Bring To:

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

