2024 Alternative Payment Handbook

For Parents

Shasta County Office of Education (SCOE) welcomes your family to our Alternative Payment Program (AP Program).

SCOE Early Childhood Services (ECS) serves families in the AP Program in Shasta County and Child Care Referral and Education (CCRE) in Tehama County. SCOE also supports families and providers by offering early childhood education, high-quality child care professional development and best practices, assistance with licensing through Community Care Licensing (CCL), and consumer information about various services and resources available, like food, housing, mental health, and medical services.

This Alternative Payment Handbook was designed to assist families with understanding the requirements to participate in the Alternative Payment Program operated by SCOE. We look forward to serving you! This handbook is subject to change as new guidance is provided and/or regulations change. When changes in guidance or regulations occur, letters are sent to families to inform them of the updates until the Handbook can be updated. The most current handbook can be found at https://bit.ly/AP_ParentHandbook or on our website at www.shastacoe.org.

SCOE is a county office of education (COE) and lead educational agency (LEA) funded by federal, state, and local government agencies.

SCOE is committed to including everyone and works hard to find and create ways for children with disabilities to learn and be cared for in the same programs as children without disabilities. Though children with disabilities may use different equipment sometimes, their disabilities do not prevent them from enjoying the same settings, programs, and learning materials as children without disabilities. That's why we work closely with providers to ensure that all children are included in care and receive the support they need to fully participate with their peers.

Unique Needs of Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities require special care, making it critical that providers work with specialists and coordinate with families to offer the necessary support.

Some child care **facility** needs include:

- Accommodating adaptive equipment such as wheelchairs and walkers
- Toys and play materials within the child's reach
- Enough adults available to support individual children's needs

It's also important that individual **caregivers** can meet unique needs, including:

- Training, skills, or experience with children with special needs
- Working in partnership with family and specialists
- Providing medication, special diets, or other procedures

According to the California Department of Education: "Children ages birth to three who qualify for early intervention services receive an individualized family service plan (IFSP). The IFSP **identifies the special services and who will provide them.** Once your child turns three, if they are eligible for special services, such as speech therapy, those services are provided by the school district through an individualized education program (IEP), [which] describes the goals for your child and the services to help meet them."

It is recommended that child care providers be invited to IFSP and IEP meetings and that the provider's consultation should be included in the process.

We hope this handbook equips families with the information they need to secure high-quality care for their children, who are welcomed and celebrated in Shasta County regardless of their needs.

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Contact Information

We are here to serve you.

Phone messages and emails will be returned within 2 business days.

Both office location have onsite dropboxes.

SCOE Early Childhood Services (ECS)

Hours of Operation:

Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

43 Hilltop Drive Redding, CA 96003

(530)225-2999 (530)225-2970 Fax RandR@shastacoe.org

SCOE Child Care Referral and Education (CCRE)

Hours of Operation:

Monday-Friday 8AM-1PM and 1:30-4:30PM

409 Walnut Street Red Bluff, CA 96080

(530)529-3131 (530)529-6631 Fax RandR@shastacoe.org



Temporary Guidance

The guidance found on this page is temporary and supersedes the related information found in this handbook. Each temporary guidance has an end date indicated.

Hold Harmless Policy

Licensed and license exempt child care providers receiving reimbursement through Stage One, Stage Two, Stage Three, CAPP, and Bridge Program shall continue to be paid based on the parent's or parents' certified need for services regardless of attendance when the provider is open and invoices are submitted. This guarantees the provider will receive payment regardless of attendance, and the provider may hold the child's slot in care regardless of attendance. This is effective through June 30, 2025.

Cost of Care Plus Rate

Licensed and license-exempt child care providers will receive a per child, per month payment intended to supplement subsidized child care reimbursements. This payment is called the Cost of Care Plus Rate (Plus Rate). The Plus Rate varies by region. For the northern region, including Shasta County and Tehama County, the Plus Rate is \$141 for licensed homes and centers and \$99 for license-exempt individuals. Plus Rate payments began on January 1, 2024, for care provided in December 2023. Payments will end June 30, 2025, for care provided in May 2025. This may impact the co-payment parents may owe the child care provider.provided in May 2025. This may impact the co-payment parents may owe the child care provider.

Program Overview –

What Is The Alternative Payment (AP) Program?

The Alternative Payment (AP) Program serves eligible families who need child care services. These parental choice child care programs help families find child care services and reimburses child care providers for a portion or all of their child care fees. A brief description of each AP Program is listed below. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency, and Tehama Department of Social Services contract with SCOE to administer these programs.

Initial enrollment into the AP program is determined by certification of specific family criteria about their eligibility and need for child care services. Enrolled families are eligible to receive services for no less than 12 or 24 months depending on the program with some exceptions.

The eligibility period starts on the date the family is certified to receive services. Families must recertify before the end of their eligibility period. Eligible children may participate in the program from birth through 12 years of age. Children with a documented disability may be served to age 21.

Our programs also support families and providers by offering assistance and consumer information about various services and resources available to them.

Programs Available

SCOE ECS/CCRE has several child care subsidy programs that may serve families. These programs are described below.

CalWORKs Stage One Child Care

This program provides child care to CalWORKs families in Shasta County when they first become employed or engaged in welfare-towork activities. Eligibility and need for Stage One is determined by CalWORKs.

CalWORKs Stage Two Child Care

CalWORKs families move to this program when the county welfare departments (CWD) determines they are stable or are enrolled in this program after an application is submitted indicating a recent cash aid history (within the last two years). The CWDs have the flexibility to determine when a family's situation is stable. Once certified, the family is eligible for at least 12 months. Families remain in Stage Two until they have been off cash aid for two years and then transition to CalWORKs Stage Three Child Care.

CalWORKs Stage Three Child Care

Families that have exhausted two years of CalWORKs Stage Two child care or are two years post cash aid transition to Stage Three. Once certified, the family is eligible for at least 12 months. This program provides care as long as funding is available and the family remains eligible.

California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)

The CAPP helps eligible families arrange child care services and pays for those services directly to the child care provider. Once certified, the family is eligible for at least 24 months.

Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program)

The Bridge Program addresses child care needs as a barrier for families otherwise willing to bring a child in the foster care system into their home. This program also provides child care services to parenting youth in the foster care system. Families enrolled in this program have varying eligibility periods and do not have 12-month eligibility appeal rights. Eligibility and need for this program is determined by the referring agency, Shasta County Health and Human Services or Tehama County Department of Social Services.

Program Definitions –

Let's speak the same language! You will hear the same terms used over and over that are industry standard. Below is a full definition of the terms that will be consistently used within our program.

Authorized Care: A child's need for child care services that is authorized to a child care provider for reimbursement.

Care: The care and supervision of children by a licensed child care center; licensed family child care provider; family, friend, or neighbor; or other exempt provider.

Certification: The completed Confidential Application for Child Development Services and Certification of Eligibility form that has been signed by the family and Specialist. A family is certified after the certification is complete.

Child: A child under the age of 18 at certification living in the household part-time or full-time for whom the parent(s) are responsible.

Family: The parents and the children for whom the parents are responsible and who comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living. For purposes of income eligibility and family fee determination, when a child and that child's siblings are living in a family that does not include their biological or adoptive parent, "family" shall be considered the child and related siblings.

Fiscal Year: The fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30. A fiscal year will span a portion of two calendar years, like 2021-2022.

Inclusion: Students with disabilities are placed in regular care environments and provided with equipment and support that enable everyone to participate together. Disabilities do not prevent children from enjoying the same settings, programs, and learning materials as children without disabilities. **Income**: Total countable income minus verified child support payments paid by the parent or adjusted monthly income (self employment), excluding non-countable income.

Need: The parent's or parents' need for child care services.

Parent: Biological parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, foster parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, domestic partner of the parent, or any other adult living with the child who has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child will be referred to as a parent. The parent referenced is the parent enrolling the family in the AP Program.

Predictable Income: Income that is relatively the same from month to month.

Providers: Child care providers will be referred to as providers. Providers need to be approved to participate in the AP Program.

Schedule: The number of hours per day and/or week that a parent is approved/certified to receive subsidized child care with an approved child care provider.

Specialist: Every family is assigned a child care eligibility and enrollment specialist to support the enrollment process and determine the child care schedule.

Subsidy or subsidized: The reimbursement of all or a portion of the family's child care costs is a subsidy or subsidized child care. Parents may still be responsible for a family fee, co-payment, or other care not certified.

Unpredictable income: Income that fluctuates from month to month because of migrant, agricultural, or seasonal work; inconsistent and/or unstable employment or self-employment; or intermittent income.

General Policies:

Our Commitment to Service

The goal is to be of service to families and providers. Please feel free to communicate with us at any time for program support. Program staff work to ensure that you and your family have a positive experience in the program. If you have concerns that are not complaints of unlawful discrimination or alleged violations of laws/regulations and would like to make a complaint, please follow the process below so that concerns can be addressed and resolved in the correct manner.

Level 1: Complaint is brought to the attention of the provider, if applicable

Level 2: If unresolved or does not apply to the provider, complaint is brought to the attention of the Specialist or Process Technician

Level 3: If unresolved, complaint is brought to the attention of the Program Supervisor

Program Supervisor ECS: (530) 225-0353 CCRE: (530) 529-3131 SCOEAP@shastacoe.org

Level 4: If unresolved, complaint is brought to the attention of the Program Director

Program Director ECS: (530) 225-2999 SCOEAP@shastacoe.org

Level 5: If unresolved, complaint may be brought to the CDSS at the address below:

California Department of Social Services, Civil Rights 744 P Steet, M.S. 9-7-041 Sacramento, CA 95814

Our Commitment to Improvement

To continuously improve our programs and best serve our families, a program self-evaluation is conducted annually. We encourage parents to participate in this process by sending a survey to share experiences about participating in the AP Program. Feedback may be provided at any time via phone, email, or mail and is best sent to a supervisor or director. This information is used to identify barriers, change systems, advocate for families and providers, and staff training. Thank you in advance for your participation in this process.

Misrepresentation of Information (Fraud)

Indicators of fraud will be investigated and verified. If there are verified indicators of fraud during the investigation, the parent will recieve a Notice of Findings with an explanation of the findings and outcome. Verified indicators of fraud include intentional misrepresentation of information about eligibility, falsification of attendance documents, or failure to notify of income that exceeds the program guidelines. Parents may be disenrolled from the program and/or have to pay back to the agency the cost of services if there is evidence of fraud. Child care services may continue with a signed monthly repayment plan with the balance paid in full within 12 months. Failure to follow the repayment plan will result in disenrollment.



Confidentiality

The use or disclosure of any information concerning children, families, and providers is limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program, child safety, and California law.

California law requires certain persons, including child care providers and SCOE staff, to report known or suspected child abuse and child neglect. The mandated reporter must only have reasonable suspicion that a child has been mistreated; no evidence or proof is required prior to making a report. The case will be further investigated by law enforcement and/or child welfare services.

SCOE will share pertinent information with authorities who are tasked with investigating fraud and/or protecting children's health and safety, including but not limited to the District Attorney, law enforcement, Child and Family Services, and Community Care Licensing. This does not pertain to individuals requesting information for personal gain, such as court hearings or custody arrangements.

Documentation shared with the provider regarding the child, family, and care, including but not limited to the Child Care Certificate and Attendance Record, are confidential records. Only the family, the family designees, and the child care provider should have access to these documents. The provider may not use or share the information provided by SCOE without prior written consent from the parent(s) or through a subpoena.

Parental Rights

Parents must be allowed unlimited access to enter and inspect the child care setting without notice whenever children are in care.

Code of Ethical Conduct

All families must commit to demonstrate the following core standards/values during all interactions while enrolled in our program:

- Communicate effectively in a calm manner
- Be courteous
- Maintain order
- Show respect of others
- Take responsibility for own actions
- Be punctual
- Respect diversity

Equal Access/Non-Discrimination Statement

No person will be subjected to discrimination or any other form of bias, including harassment. We give equal access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender identification, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability.



Safe Office and Harassment Policy

The following behaviors will not be tolerated and are prohibited on our sites and through all methods of communication:

- Behavior which threatens the safety, welfare, or morale of others
- Exhibiting impaired behavior due to alcohol, marijuana, or illicit drugs
- Possession of alcohol, marijuana, or illicit drugs
- Possession of any weapon, look alike weapon (toy), or any object which ejects an object whether functional or not
- Behavior which would cause, attempt, threaten, or conspire to cause damage to personal or real property or person through arson, burglary, extortion, larceny (stealing), criminal mischief, battery (hitting people), assault (making a person fearful of hitting), harassment (threat to commit an illegal act), sexual harassment, sexual intimidation, or hazing (actions intended to endanger or embarrass others)
- Use of obscene or profane language

Contract Between Parents and Provider

Child care is a contract between the parent and provider. Parental choice allows the parent to choose a provider that best suits their child care needs. Any disputes arising or liability resulting from the parent-provider contract shall not involve SCOE in any way. The AP Program assumes no responsibility for injury or damages arising from the parent or provider's performance. The parent and provider agree to hold harmless SCOE, the AP Program, and its employees from costs, lawsuits, or liabilities arising from child care services.

Child Abuse Mandated Reporter

California law requires certain persons, including all child care providers and SCOE staff, to report known or suspected child abuse and child neglect. The mandated reporter must only have reasonable suspicion that a child has been mistreated; no evidence or proof is required prior to making a report. The case will be further investigated by law enforcement and/or child welfare services.

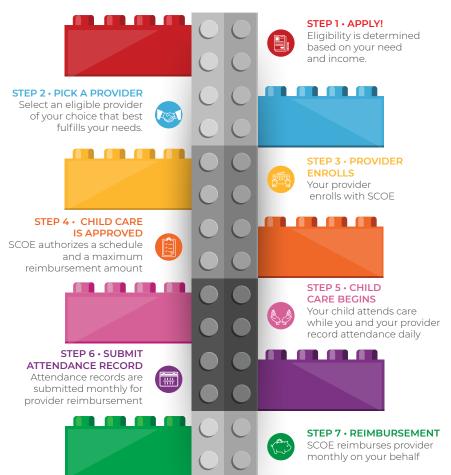
Completion of mandated reporter training is required for licensees, applicants, administrators, or employees of a licensed child care facility, including family child care homes and centers. Additional information and resources, including where to find free training, can be found on the CDSS website at <u>https://www.cdss.ca.gov/</u>inforesources/ocap/mrt

Selection and Enrollment

We understand that this process can leave you with a lot of questions. The following information details selection and enrollment. If you do not find the answer to your questions below, we are always happy to help you. We are just a phone call away!

SCOE'S ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT PROGRAM

Helps you pay for child care so you can get a job, keep a job or go to school!



HOW IT WORKS

How Do I Apply?

The first step to access AP services is to be placed on the waitlist. Children with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Online:	https://carewait2-family.carecloud.io/SCOE
Call:	SCOE ECS (530) 225-2999
	SCOE CCRE (530) 529-3131
In-Person:	SCOE ECS 43 Hilltop Drive, Redding, CA 96003
	SCOE CCRE 409 Walnut Street, Red Bluff, CA 96080
Email:	SCOEAP@shastacoe.org

We're On The List. How Do I Get Selected?

There are two components to participation, application and enrollment. The waitlist is the application component. When an opening is available, we review the waitlist and contact families based on the program admission priorities. Keeping your information current on the waitlist is essential so you can be contacted for the enrollment component. Families on the waitlist will be interviewed to verify eligibility and need for child care services. If you do not contact us within five business days of being contacted for an interview, you will not be eligible for enrollment and the application will be closed.

Enrollment is offered to families based on enrollment priorities and cash aid history. Families who have received cash aid in the last 24 months will not remain on the waitlist and will be offered enrollment.

The first enrollment priority is assigned to families with children receiving protective services or at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Families with at-risk children are typically referred to the AP Program by community partners. Families may self-identify as at risk on the waitlist application, and SCOE ECS staff will contact families to offer community-based referrals. Second enrollment priority is based on rank. Families on the waitlist are assigned a rank based on their family size and income. The lowest rank is offered enrollment first. Families assigned the same rank are offered enrollment in the following order:

- 1. Family that has a child with exceptional needs
- 2. Family with a home language other than English
- 3. Family that has been on the waiting list the longest

Below is a portion of the Income Ranking Table for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The ranking table is subject to change after June 30, 2025. The full table can be found at the following site: <u>https://bit.ly/IncomeRanking24-25</u>

INCOME RANKING TABLE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022-23

Rank	Family Size 1-2	Family Size 3	Family Size 4	Family Size 5	Family Size 6
1	\$78	\$88	\$102	\$119	\$135
2	\$155	\$176	\$205	\$238	\$271
3	\$233	\$264	\$307	\$357	\$406
4	\$310	\$352	\$410	\$476	\$541
5	\$388	\$440	\$512	\$594	\$676
6	\$466	\$527	\$615	\$713	\$812
7	\$543	\$615	\$717	\$832	\$947
8	\$621	\$703	\$820	\$951	\$1,082
9	\$698	\$791	\$921	\$1,070	\$1,218
10	\$776	\$879	\$1,025	\$1,189	\$1,353
11	\$854	\$967	\$1,127	\$1,308	\$1,488
12	\$931	\$1,055	\$1,230	\$1,427	\$1,624
13	\$1,009	\$1,143	\$1,332	\$1,546	\$1,759
14	\$1,086	\$1,231	\$1,435	\$1,665	\$1,894
15	\$1,164	\$1,319	\$1,537	\$1,783	\$2,029

Families selected for potential enrollment need to complete an enrollment packet. Parents who are eligible and complete the enrollment process will be certified. The entire certification process can take six weeks or more. A denial will be sent if the parent does not complete the enrollment packet and submit documentation within the designated timeframe, is not eligible, or does not meet a need criteria.

Contact SCOE ECS or CCRE for a child care referral if a provider has not been selected. Enrollment cannot be complete without a child care provider. If the provider selected is not enrolled with the AP Program, they will need to be enrolled. Provider information is also available at My Child Care Plan (mychildcareplan.org).

How Am I Eligible?

Enrollment into the AP Program is determined by specific family and/or child eligibility. Families must meet at least one eligibility criteria and at least one need criteria (see below for more information). After a family is determined to be eligible, the enrollment process will continue to certify the family.

Determining Eligibility

Eligibility is based on either child or family eligibility. Determination of eligibility for services shall be without regard to the immigration status of the child or the child's family. Families must provide documentation of eligibility in one or more of these categories:

Child Eligibility

- Statement from the local child protective services unit certifying child care and development services are a necessary component of the child protective services plan
- At risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation by a referral letter from legally qualified professional

Family Eligibility

- Family experiencing homelessness by referral or selfdeclaration
- Current cash aid recipient and proof of current cash aid
- A member included in the family size is currently certified to receive benefits from one of the following means-tested government programs and proof of current certification:
 - Medi-cal CalWORKs Head Start
 - CalFresh WIC Early Head Start
 - ° California Food Assistance Program
 - ° The Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Income eligible and proof of income (see Family Income for more information)

In addition to meeting an eligibility criteria, the child must live with the enrolling parent. Parents living in different households must apply for services independently. When a child's residence alternates between the parents' homes, eligibility may need to be determined separately for each household in which the child is residing during the time services are needed.

How do I get enrolled?

After eligibility is determined, the following information is required to complete enrollment and certify the family.

Need for Child Care Criteria

Parents must provide documentation at least one need criteria for child care services and can be based on either child or family need.

Child Need

- Statement from the local child protective services unit certifying child care and development services are a necessary component of the child protective services plan
- Child is identified as at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation by a referral letter from a legally qualified professional

Family Need

Based on the need criteria, see the applicable Enrollment Form for further guidance for required documentation.

Family Need Criteria	Enrollment Form
Employment	Employment Verification or Self Employment Declaration
Seeking employment*	Seeking Employment Declaration
Enrolled in vocational training**	Education Vocational Training Declaration
Enrolled in educational program**	Education Vocational Training Declaration
Parental incapacitation***	Medical Statement of Parental Incapacity
Family experiencing homelessness*	Referral from agency or Homelessness/Seeking Permanent Housing Declaration
Seeking permanent housing*	Homelessness/Seeking Permanent Housing Declaration

*Child care services are limited to no more than five days per week and less than 30 hours per week.

**In most cases limited in total to six years with adequate progress or until the parent reaches 24 units after the attainment of a bachelor's degree. Adequate progress is defined as a GPA of at least 2.0 or passing at least 50% of the classes.

***Child care services cannot exceed 50 hours per week.

Proof of Residency

Families must provide proof of residence in California.

Health and Emergency Information

Families must provide child health and current emergency information. Immunization records and a well-child visit or Physician's Report are required for children using a license-exempt child care provider and not enrolled in school.

Court Orders

Court orders that include child custody orders may impact the hours needed for child care services.

Exceptional Needs/Child

This may include an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or an individualized education plan (IEP). It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide up-to-date copies of the IFSP or the IEP.

Exceptional Needs/Teen

A child who has exceptional needs from 13 years of age to 21 years of age may be eligible. A copy of the active IEP and a statement signed by a legally qualified professional indicating that the child requires the special attention of adults in a child care setting. The statement shall include the name, address, license number, and telephone number of the legally qualified professional. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide these documents.

Proof of Family Size

Parents shall obtain and provide the documentation for all children and adults in the household. The documentation for children is referred to as birth proof and must include the enrolling parent's name, relationship to child, child's name, and child's date of birth. Other adults living in the child's home may be counted in the family size if they have responsibility for the care and welfare of the child(ren). If they are counted in the family size, the adult needs to provide income and need documentation. Refer to family and parent definitions in Program Definitions.

Birth proof documents may include the following:

- Birth Certificate or other live birth records
- Child custody court order
- Adoption documents
- Foster care placement records
- School or medical records
- County welfare department records
- Other reliable documentation indicating child's date of birth and the relationship of the child to the parent

Family Income

The parent shall obtain and provide documentation of the family's income for the purposes of determining eligibility based on income and/or assessing the appropriate family fee.

The table below indicates the maximum total countable income a family can earn and still be eligible. Eligibility is different and is based on the family size.

State Fiscal Year 2024-25 Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent of SMI)

Family Size	Monthly Income	Yearly Income
1-2	\$6,595	\$79,143
3	\$7,472	\$89,660
4	\$8,712	\$104,544
5	\$10,106	\$121,271
6	\$11,500	\$137,998
7	\$11,761	\$141,134
8	\$12,023	\$144,270
9	\$12,284	\$147,407
10	\$12,545	\$150,543
11	\$12,807	\$153,679
12	\$13,068	\$156,816

Families exempt from paying a family fee may not be required to provide documentation of total countable income. Income eligibility is determined based on income and family size as indicated in the Income Ceiling chart. Countable and non-countable income can be found on the next page.

COUNTABLE/NON-COUNTABLE INCOME REFERENCE SHEET

Countable income is income of individuals counted in the family size that shall be included when calculating the adjusted monthly income for purposes of determining income eligibility and family fees.

- 1. Gross wage or salary, commissions, overtime, tips, bonuses, gambling or lottery winnings
- 2. Wages for migrant, agricultural, or seasonal work
- 3. CalWORKs cash aid
- 4. Gross income from self-employment less business expenses with the exception of wage draws
- 5. Disability or unemployment compensation
- 6. Worker's compensation
- 7. Spousal support, child support from the former spouse or absent parent, or financial assistance for housing costs or car payments paid as part of or in addition to spousal or child support
- 8. Survivor (i.e., SSA) and retirement benefits
- 9. Dividends, interest on bonds, income from estates or trusts, net rental income or royalties
- 10. Rent for room within the family's residence
- 11. Financial assistance received for the care of a child living with an adult who is not the child's biological or adoptive parent
- 12. Veteran's pension
- 13. Pension for annuities
- 14. Inheritance
- 15. Allowances for housing or automobiles provided as part of compensation
- 16. Insurance or court settlements for lost wages or punitive damages
- 17. Net proceeds from the sale of real property, stocks or inherited property
- 18. Other enterprise for gain

Non-Countable income is income of individuals counted in the family size that shall be excluded when calculating the adjusted monthly income for purposes of determining income eligibility and family fees.

- 1. Earnings of child under eighteen (18) years
- 2. Loans
- 3. Grants or scholarships to students for educational purposes
- 4. Federal Supplemental Assistance Program (CalFRESH/SNAP) or Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits or other food assistance
- 5. Earned Income Tax Credit or tax refund
- 6. Foster care grants, payment or clothing allowances for children placed through child welfare services
- 7. Relative Caregiver Funding Program
- 8. California Guaranteed Income Pilot Program
- 9. GI Bill entitlements, hardship or hazardous duty, hostile fire or immediate danger pay
- 10. Adoption assistance payments
- 11. Non-cash assistance or gifts
- 12. All income of any individual counted in the family size who is collecting federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or State Supplemental Program (SSP) benefits
- 13. Insurance or court settlements including pain and suffering and excluding lost wages and punitive damages
- 14. Reimbursements for work-required expenses that include uniforms, mileage, or per diem expenses for food and lodging
- 15. Business expenses for self-employed family members
- 16. When there is no cash value to the employee, the portion of medical and/or dental insurance documented as paid by the employer and included in gross pay
- 17. Disaster relief grants or payments, except any portion for rental assistance or unemployment
- 18. AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stipends, room and board, and grants

Note: Verified child support payments paid by the parent whose child is receiving child development service may be subtracted from family's countable income.

Parents with **predictable income** need to provide four weeks of income from either month of the two-month window immediately preceding certification (weeks do not need to be consecutive). Parents with **unpredictable income** need to provide income from at least two of the preceding 12 consecutive months. Guardian or foster parents only need to provide countable income associated with the foster child(ren) or child(ren) under their guardianship.

If family eligibility is based on means-tested government programs, the parent must provide the income associated with the approved application for the program. If the parent does not have access to the application, the parent may submit a self-declaration indicating they do not have access to the application and, to the best of their recollection, the income that was declared on the application for the government program.

How do I transfer my AP services to or from another county in California?

Families transferring from Stage One to Stage Two programs do not need to provide documentation for eligibility or need for child care services. For health and safety reasons, we do ask families to complete and submit Child's Health and Emergency Information, Additional Supports, and Child Care Payment Assistance Agreement. Immunization records and a well-child visit may be required depending on the child care setting.

Families relocating out of Shasta or Tehama County to another county in California may be eligible to continue services with SCOE through the duration of the eligibility period if:

- The family is on the waitlist for AP services with the the AP agency in the new county;
- Documentation is provided indicating the new AP Agency cannot accept the family as a transfer; **and**
- The child care provider gets enrolled in SCOE's AP Program.and the relationship of the child to the parent

Transfers cannot be completed for families relocating out of California. Families not residing in Shasta or Tehama County will not be eligible for recertification. Families relocating to Shasta or Tehama County may transfer the AP services to SCOE with the proper documentation and available program funding. Necessary documentation will include the following:

AP Agency Documentation

- Most current CCD 26 (or CDE 9600)
 Most current NOA other than
- disenrollment NOA
- Disenrollment NOA if issued
- Most current Child Care Certificate
- Income Calculation Worksheet
- Birth proof of all children*
- Adoption or foster placement documents*
- Court orders regarding child custody*
- IEP or IFSP*

* As applicable ** SCOE forms

What hours of care are covered?

Determining a Child Care Schedule

Schedules are determined based on the parent's need for child care. Child care services are **only** available when:

- Parent(s) unable to provide care and supervision of their child for any part of the day
- No parent in family available and capable of providing care during time care is requested
- Supervision is not being provided by scheduled time in a public education program available to school-age children
- Supervision is not being provided by scheduled time in a private school in which the children are enrolled and attending
- Child is not receiving any other child care services (e.g., Head Start or State Preschool)

Family Documentation

- Current contact information
- Health and Emergency
 Information*
- Additional Supports*
- AP Agreement*
- Immunization records**
- Well-child visit**

In cases where a family has split custody or resides in separate households, the care will only be reimbursed for the parent(s) enrolled in the AP Program. The unenrolled parent(s) must apply for the AP Program in order for the child care to be reimbursed for the unenrolled parents.

For school-age children, care may be available for the days/hours that a school-age child is unable to attend scheduled instructional minutes of a public or private educational program that the child is enrolled and attending. This only applies when the child's school/ classroom is closed, in-person instruction is not available, or the child is ill.

Child care can only be reimbursed for what is indicated as the parental need in the family file. If there are changes to the hours needed for child care, notify the Specialist in advance to ensure child care will be reimbursed.

Travel time may be added to the child care schedule for parents who are working or attending in-person school or vocational training. Travel time will be calculated based how long it takes to travel from the child care setting to the place of employment or education/vocation. Travel time cannot exceed half of the daily hours authorized for care. Travel time must be requested in writing.

For parents whose need is education or vocation, **study time** may be added to the schedule. The hours of study time depend on the education/vocation program. Study time must be requested in writing.

Sleep time is available for parents who work late evening and overnight hours. The allowed sleep time can be equal to the authorized work and travel time between 10 PM and 6 AM. Sleep time must be requested in writing.

Types of Child Care Schedules

There are two types of schedules, set and variable. A **set schedule** is predictable, fixed, or variable with a pattern based on the need for child care. Providers are reimbursed based on the child care provider rates on file (or the reimbursement rate that most

closely aligns with the provider rates) regardless of attendance. A **variable schedule** is not fixed or predictable and is determined using the maximum number of weekly hours of care needed from either month of the two-month window immediately preceding certification. Providers are reimbursed for the hours of attendance on a variable schedule.

School-age children may have differing schedules between when school is in session and school breaks (**school schedule**). Children not attending school or other educational program will only have a **normal schedule**.

Schedules with Multiple Providers

One primary provider per child will be reimbursed when the provider's hours of operation can accommodate the entire need of the child. A second primary provider may be selected if not all hours of care can be covered. An alternate provider may be needed when the primary or secondary provider is closed or unavailable. The alternate provider will only be reimbursed if the primary provider notified our office of the closure. If this cannot meet the child care need of the family, talk with your Specialist. Parents may use multiple providers when they elect to enroll their child in a center-based environment (preschool) and use a different provider for the remaining hours. Parents selecting license-exempt providers may be limited to one provider if the provider does not have a contract on file limiting their availability.

How are family fees determined?

The Family Fee Schedule is issued annually by the State of California Department of Finance. Some families enrolled in the AP Program may have a family fee based on their income, family size, and certified hours of child care. Monthly family fees cannot exceed the actual cost for services. To estimate your family fee, a family fee calculator can be found at https://ccffrc.ccdd.dss.ca.gov/. You will be notified if and when you are responsible for paying a family fee. Family fees can be found on the NOA, Child Care Certificate, and Attendance Record.

Fee Assessment

Family fees are assessed or reassessed as described below.

- 1. Initial Certification
- 2. Recertification
 - Decrease: Effective on the first day of the month that follows the NOA issue date
 - Increase: Effective on the first day of the month that follows the 14-day NOA in-person notification (or 19-day NOA notification if sent by mail)
- 3. Voluntarily request to have fees reassessed
 - Decrease: Effective on the first day of the month that follows the NOA issue date
 - Increase: No increase may occur during 12-month certification period

Family fees will always be assessed according to the child who uses the most monthly hours of care (typically the youngest child) regardless of the number of children enrolled in the program. Similarly, family fees are paid to the child care provider who provides the most monthly hours of care. Families enrolled in more than one subsidized program, like Head Start and the AP Program, will only pay one family fee.

Fees for set schedules are assessed using the total monthly certified hours of care. Fees for unpredictable or variable schedules are assessed using the average hours of a parent's verified work schedule for the 4 weeks immediately preceding the certification/ recertification. Fees for families without a work history are based on the verified hours the parent is expected to work.

Fees are designated as part-time or full-time. Full-time fees are applied when the certified need for care is over 130 hours per month. Part-time fees are applied when the certified need for care is under 130 hours per month. At initial certification, families starting care mid-month may pay a part time fee if care is less than 130 hours and then a full-time fee the following month if care is 130 hours or more. No adjustments will be made based on excused or unexcused absences. When a family's child is assigned both a normal schedule and school schedule, families will be assessed both a monthly part-time and full-time fee. The family fee due each month may be part time or full time depending on the approved hours of care during that month (part time need or full time need).

Paying Family Fees

Family fees are due to the provider in advance of receiving services. Fees are due by the 5th of the month unless the family begins care after the beginning of the month. In this case, the fee is due five calendar days after the services begin. Family fees are paid to the provider. Fees not paid within five calendar days are considered delinquent.

The provider must supply the family a receipt indicating family fees paid. The attendance sheet may act as the receipt and must be completed and signed by both the parent and provider. SCOE ECS/CCRE does not provide records documenting fees paid to the provider. The receipt must show who received the services, the amount paid, the date of payment, the rate of payment, and the service period (dates and times care provided). Parents are responsible for maintaining records of family fee payments/ receipts.

Family Fee Exemptions

Families may be exempt from paying family fees as below.

- Families receiving CalWORKs cash aid
- Families with children that have been identified as being at risk or who are receiving child protective services may be exempt from paying fees for up to 12 months if the referral determines the fee waiver to be necessary
- Families with children that have a referral or plan from the county child welfare agency (may be exempt from paying fees for up to 12 months if the referral or plan determines the fee waiver to be necessary)

Delinquent Fees

Fees are considered **delinquent after five calendar days** from

the date the fees were due. The parent and provider may develop a reasonable repayment plan for delinquent or unpaid fees. The repayment plan needs to be provided to the Specialist and included in the family file. Child care services will continue to be paid by SCOE during the repayment plan. The family may be disenrolled if they do not comply with the provisions of the repayment plan. Upon disenrollment for nonpayment of delinquent fees, the family is ineligible for future child care services until all fees are paid.

In addition to family fees, parents may be responsible to pay a copayment. See the Co-Payment section for more information.

Credit for Fees Paid

If our agency cannot meet all of a family's needs for child care, the family can be granted a fee credit equal to the amount paid to another provider. Copies of receipts or canceled checks must be submitted in order to receive a credit for fees paid to another provider. Fee credit will be applied to the subsequent billing period. Carryover of fee credits beyond the subsequent billing period is not allowed.

How do I know when enrollment is complete?

Enrollment is complete and the family is certified after a SCOE representative(s), typically the Specialist, signs the Confidential Application for Child Development Services (CCD 26). The certification period is 12 or 24 months, depending on the program.

There are several steps that must be completed before and after this document is signed. Families experiencing homelessness are an exception and may receive services immediately upon the parent signing the application for services when the basis for eligibility is family experiencing homelessness. The parent shall provide all required documentation, including immunization records, within 30 days from the date the application for services is signed. If all documentation is not received within 30 days, the parent will receive a Denial Notice of Action to end services.

The enrolling parent(s) must complete an AP Program orientation. This is a program requirement. An **Agency Income Calculation Worksheet** is sent to the parent to be reviewed, signed, and returned. This worksheet serves to ensure the income type is accurate and to certify the income. The worksheet provides notice to the parent of the requirement to report income that exceeds the income noted on the eligibility table for the family's size. Income eligible families whose income exceeds the indicated income ceiling are required to report the new income to the Specialist within 30 calendar days.

The **CCD 26** is completed and provided to the parent for certification. This document contains the family eligibility, need, and certified child care schedule as well as the child care provider(s). The parent is responsible to sign and return the CCD 26 certifying the information received is accurate. The Specialist has up to 30 days to sign the CCD 26 after the parent has signed. Certification is not complete until both the family and the Specialist have signed the CCD 26. Reimbursement for child care may begin the day certification is complete. Families may be disenrolled during the certification period. Refer to the Disenrollment section for more information.

A **Notice of Action (NOA)** is issued to parents for notice of an approval, denial, or change in child care reimbursement services. Families enrolled in more than one program may receive more than one NOA. The NOA may be issued in person, by mail, or by email. A NOA will be issued at least 14 days prior to the action taking place if given in person and 19 days prior to the action if sent by mail. An action that increases the benefit to the family may occur immediately. The effective date on the NOA is the date the action takes effect. If you do not agree with the action that will take place, file a fair hearing before the appeal date indicated on the NOA. Please refer to the Appeal Process for more information.

A **Child Care Certificate** serves as a communication tool between SCOE, the family, and the provider. Both the provider and parent will receive a copy of the certificate.

An **Attendance Record** may be sent to the provider or be available in the CareConnect portal. The Attendance Record is used to record child attendance, acts as a receipt for family fees paid, and may be submitted by the provider as an invoice for services.

How Do I Report Changes?

To report changes, contact your Specialist. Families are required to provide changes to their address or telephone number to ensure we are able to contact you. Inability to contact families can result in unintentional consequences, including disenrollment at recertification or disenrollment due to abandonment of care.

What changes do I report?

- 1. Changes in contact information
- 2. Changes in need for child care
 - Increase number of hours for care
 - Decrease number of hours for care (voluntary)
 - Change in child care provider
 - Child enters school or attends another subsidy program (like Head Start or State Preschool)
- 3. Decrease in income to decrease the family fee
- 4. Family income exceeds the SMI for ongoing eligibility

What if I change providers?

Parents may contact their Specialist to change child care providers. Notice of provider changes must be given in advance and can take up to 10 business days to process. Documentation may need to be provided for the family file before the schedule with the new provider may begin.

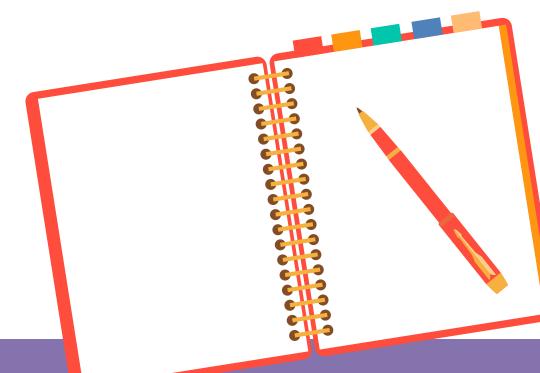
If the provider is not participating with AP, the request may take longer than 10 business days. Reimbursement cannot begin until the provider is approved. See the Provider Participation Process for more information.

The provider may require advance notice when ending services, often a two-week notice, which can be found in the contract with the provider. If the schedule stops before the notice period ends, the parent is responsible to pay the provider the remainder of the notice period. SCOE cannot reimburse a provider when care is not authorized.

Right to Voluntarily Report Changes

Once the family has been certified, a parent may keep their certified service level, no matter if there are changes in family eligibility and need. Families may increase or decrease the level of service being received or change the hours needed for child care, such as increasing the child care hours or decreasing the family fee. You may be asked to complete a Voluntary Change form and provide necessary documentation to support the request. The Specialist has up to 10 business days to process changes.

Parents are required to report to the Specialist when the family income exceeds the State Median Income (SMI) threshold for ongoing eligibility within 30 days. The SMI threshold is indicated on the Agency Income Calculation Worksheet signed by the parent at certification. Documentation will be requested for income recalculation to determine ongoing eligibility. The family may provide documentation of another eligibility type at this time. The Specialist has 10 business days to process the documentation. The family will be notified in writing of continued eligibility. If the family is no longer eligible or has no other basis for eligibility, the family will be disenrolled and a NOA issued.



What is Authorized Care?

The authorized care is the family's documented need for child care services for reimbursement to a child care provider.

Child Care Certificate

A **Child Care Certificate** includes the authorized care, maximum reimbursement rate, and family fee. The provider will not be reimbursed without a certificate being issued. An updated certificate will be issued when changes occur. See the example below.



Comments

R

Agency Signature

The Maximum allowable reimbursement is based on the certified need of each eligible child in the family. However, the maximum benefit level paid is either the provider's usual and customary charges or the state established ceiling, whichever is less.

		O TYPE OF	ACTION	
		Start of Child Care Services		Disenrollment from Service
		Change in Reimbursement Amounts		Change in Family Fee
		Change in Hours of Care		Change in Provider
		Change in Provider Rates		
PC	Comme	nts:		

	nth)
Effective Date: NA NA	

- B SCOE provider ID, provider license status, and provider child care setting • Licd-Center - Licensed Center
 - ·Lic-Exp-School License-Exempt Center
 - · Licd-Small-Family Small Licensed Family Child Care
 - ·Licd-Large-Family Large Licensed Family Child Care
 - Exp-Out-Non-Rel License-Exempt Non-Relative providing services out of the child's home
 - Exp-In-Non-Rel License-Exempt Non-Relative providing services in the child's home
 - Exp-Out-Rel License-Exempt Relative providing services out of the child's home
 - Exp-In-Rel License-Exempt Relative providing services in the child's home
- C Primary parent name
- D SCOE child care specialist name and phone
- E Program and county in which the family resides
- F Date certified schedule begins and ends
- G Child name and date of birth
- H Scehdule type, set or variable
- I If marked, Indicates care is authorized for the sub/alternate (backup) provider or primary provider
- J Authorized days and hours of care when the child is not attending school (normal schedule)
- K Date rate begins

Regional Market Rate (RMR) category selected by specialist to determine maximum reimbursement and aligns with provider rates and/or California law

- PTM: Part time monthly, typically set schedule
- FTM: Full time monthly, typically set schedule
- FTW: Full time weekly, typically variable schedule
- PTW: Part time weekly, typically variable schedule
- Daily: Typically variable schedule
- Hourly: Typically variable schedule

Age group of child during this certified schedule (may be more than one if the child's age changes during the certified schedule period) RMR amount based on RMR category selected

- L Comments from the specialists about child's schedule
- M- Child's school of attendance
- N Authorized days and hours of care when the child is attending school (school schedule)
- O Indicates start, change, or end of services with provider
- P Comments from the specialist about the type of action
- Q Date family fee is effective and part-time/full-time family fee amount
- R Date and signature of specialist who authorized care

Date

Attendance Record

A record of attendance is a program requirement and may be maintained on the Attendance Record given to the provider, a temporary attendance record created by the provider, or a digital record (like CareConnect). The record is to be kept at the provider's home or child care center and available for families to record attendance. The Attendance Record may be used as an invoice to reimburse the provider for services rendered and also as a receipt for family fees paid.

Each day, parents are responsible for recording the exact time care has been provided by indicating the arrival time and departure time. Child care providers may sign children in and out of care due to school schedules. If a mistake is made on the attendance record, like writing on the wrong date, cross out the error, initial it, and fill in the correct information. Do not use white out.

Parents are responsible for signing the attendance record or other record at the end of the service period to verify the services received and family fees paid (if applicable) for the provider to invoice SCOE for reimbursement. Report any discrepancies in services on the attendance record to the Specialist within 24 hours and do not sign sign the attendance record. SCOE staff will work to fix any discrepancies. If the parent does not sign the attendance record, reimbursement to the provider may be delayed or SCOE may not be able to reimburse the provider for care. In cases where SCOE cannot reimburse the provider, the parent is ultimately responsible to pay for the care received. Parents should not sign a blank attendance record or before the end of the service period.

A sample Attendance Record is on page 42.

Exact arrival and departure times must be recorded for each day care is authorized. Times cannot be rounded up by the hour (ex. 8am-5pm), which is referred to as "blocking" and is an indicator of fraud. Always include "AM" and "PM" so payment can be made accurately.

Overnight care should be recorded according to the days care is being provided. If a child arrives on a Tuesday and departs on Wednesday, the times would carryover using this example:

Date	Day	-	Time Out (AM/PM)	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Absence Reason
Aug :	Sun			6:32pm	11:59pm	
Aug	2 Mon	12:00am	6:46am			

Absence Policy

For the purpose of verifying that a child's attendance is broadly consistent with certified need for care, an absence reason must be recorded on the Attendance Record for each day the child does not attend an authorized day of care. There are two absence types, excused absences and unexcused absences. SCOE will not disenroll families based on excessive absences. Excused absence types and reasons are described below. If the absence does not meet any of the reasons below, the parent or provider shall indicate the reason for the absence. Indicating "absent" is not an absence reason.

Excused Absence

- **Child illness** to include ailment, communicable disease, injury, hospitalization, isolation, or quarantine
- **Parent illness** to include ailment, communicable disease, injury, hospitalization, isolation, or quarantine
- **Court-ordered visitation** for time spent with a parent or relative as required by law (court order must be in family file)
- **Family emergency** for unplanned situations of a temporary nature and may include but are not limited to no transportation, evacuation due to natural disaster, quarantine/isolation of sibling, court appearance, restraint by law enforcement, death, accident, hospitalization, or illness of immediate family member
- **Best Interest of the Child*** (BIOC) days may include but are not limited to visiting relative or close friend, vacation time with family, enrichment opportunities or extracurricular activities, child attending a party, family moving, religious observance, holiday, or ceremony, personal or family business

*Maximum of 10 days BIOC days are allowed per fiscal year (July 1-June 30) unless the child is identified as at risk or receiving protective services.

	Â	Tikes				Sta County Mar Attendance R CHILD NA	ch leco	202 ord No	4 5. 123	8456	on			
Pro City Prir	r, State nt date te: Ple	Address e Zip ase do r	kept where d	care is prov	ided and chi ences. Provi	cument.	COI	Program Pro Sche Norma Schoo MPLET in and ou pr non-op	Pa speci vider T edule T I Scheo I Scheo ED DA t of care erational	rent: alist: ype: Lic ype: Se dule: Ma dule: Ma ALY including A l days or "C	t ax 45.00 H ax 10.00 H	Sub/A Hours Ma Hours Ma	Iternate P x 5.00 Da x 5.00 Da	ys ys d for each
Date	Day	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Absence Reason		Date	Day	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Absence Reason
Mar 1	Fri					N		Mar 17	Sun					
Mar 2	Sat		0					Mar 18	Mon					
Mar 3	Sun							Mar 19	Tue					
Mar 4	Mon							Mar 20	Wed					
Mar 5	Tue							Mar 21	Thu					
Mar 6	Wed							Mar 22	Fri					
Mar 7	Thu							Mar 23	Sat					
Mar 8	Fri							Mar 24	Sun					
Mar 9	Sat							Mar 25	Mon					
Mar 10	Sun							Mar 26	Tue					
Mar 11	Mon							Mar 27	Wed					
Mar 12	Tue							Mar 28	Thu					
		1						Mar 29	Fri					
Mar 13	Wed							IVIAI 23						
Mar 13 Mar 14	Wed Thu							Mar 30	Sat					

	FAMILY FEE CERTI	FICATION & RECEIPT				
PROVIDER: Enter amount of family fees	\$	1 1				
P PROVIDER INVOICE						
PROVIDER: All Providers must attach an inve	pice or complete this section (b	efore family fees are deducted). Month	ly Invoice:	\$		
Enter total registration and/or materials fee an			\$			
	SELF-CEF	TIFICATION				
Parent Self-Certification I declare under penalty of perjury that by signing the the information provided is true and correct. I certify	the family fees that I am required	Provider Self-Certification I declare under penalty of perjury that by s information provided is true and correct. above. reflect the fees I received from the	certify that the fa			
to pay have been documented above and reflect provider.	what I have paid my child care	above, reflect the fees I received from the	parent.			

- A Month and year for record of attendance
- B Child name, date of birth, and age (years, months)
- C Child care provider name, address and date attendace record printed

- **D** Note from process technician
- E Program and county in which the family resides
- F Part time or full time family fee amount based on authorized care for the month
- G Primary parent name
- H SCOE child care specialist name
- I Provider setting type
 - Licd-Center Licensed Center
 - · Lic-Exp-School License-Exempt Center
 - · Licd-Small-Family Small Licensed Family Child Care
 - · Licd-Large-Family Large Licensed Family Child Care
 - Exp-Out-Non-Rel License-Exempt Non-Relative providing services out of the child's home
 - Exp-In-Non-Rel License-Exempt Non-Relative providing services in the child's home
 - Exp-Out-Rel License-Exempt Relative providing services out of the child's home
 - Exp-In-Rel License-Exempt Relative providing services in the child's home
- J Indicates care is authorized for the sub/alternate (backup) provider or primary provider
- K Schedule type, set or variable
- L Authorized number of days and hours of care when the child is not attending (normal schedule) or is attending school (school schedule)
- M- Parent or authorized representative enters time in/out when the child enters or leaves care with the child care provider/program
- N Parent or authorized representative indicates the reason for child's absence
- O Provider indicates family fee amount paid by the parent to the child care provider and date paid
- P Provider indicates the invoice amount and allowable fees
- Q Primary parent signs and dates to self-certify all information is true and correct
- R Child care provider signs and dates to self-certify all information is true and correct

How does my provider get paid?

Providers must charge parents enrolled in AP the usual and customary rates charged for services to non-subsidized children. AP will reimburse providers up to a maximum of the Regional Market Rate (RMR) for the type of care provided as determined by the CDSS and CDE. The provider's approved reimbursement rate(s) are located on the Child Care Certificate. This information is available online at https://rcscc.adm.dss.ca.gov.

Registration and other special charges may be reimbursed if the costs are in the provider contract and the provider contract is on file with SCOE and the reimbursement does not exceed the RMR.

Providers may be eligible to receive an additional reimbursement or differential. Differentials only apply for care authorized on the Child Care Certificate. Differentials include evening/weekend care for licensed providers and care for children with exceptional needs (documentation required).

Provider Days of Non-Operation (Licensed and Centers Only)

Many providers have identified days when their business is closed for holidays, vacations, or other reasons. These are Provider Days of Non-Operation, known as non-op days. AP can reimburse providers up to 10 non-op days per fiscal year. In addition, reimbursement for non-op days will be made only if the non-op days fall on one of the child's certified days for set schedules. Families can use an alternate provider when their primary provider is closed with advanced notice to the Specialist.

Child Care Costs NOT Reimbursed

Parents are response to pay the provider if care is not authorized outside the definition of broadly consistent. Some examples may include but not limited to:

- Unauthorized child care
- Incurred charges due to late pick-up of children
- Increase in provider rates without adequate written notice as required
- Provider registration or other fees (diaper, formula, meals, or field trip fees) that exceed the current RMR
- Inadequate notice to provider when ending child care
- Child care provided if the attendance record is not signed
- Child care provided and the provider does not invoice for care
- Child care provided for when in-person school or other subsidized care is available
- Child care provided by a alternative provider when the primary provider is open

Co-Payment

A co-payment is not a family fee and is the difference between the provider rate, including fees, and what the program can pay. For example, if a provider rate is \$500 per month and AP can only reimburse the provider \$450, the \$50 difference is between the parent and the provider. Some providers require parents to pay the difference and some providers waive the difference.

Can 12-month eligibility end early?

Families may lose services by being disenrolled, which results in a termination of services. If families are to be disenrolled, a NOA will be issued at least 19-days if mailed or 14-days if hand delivered prior to loss of services. If it is necessary to disenroll families due to funding, families will be disenrolled in reverse order of admission priority. The program may deny services or disenroll a family for any of the following reasons, which include but are not limited to:

Over Income - Adjusted monthly income exceeds the income eligibility threshold for the family size as indicated on the NOA and the Agency Income Calculation Worksheet

- Family does not meet another eligibility criteria
- Must be reported within 30 calendar days

Residence outside California

Abandonment of Care - Families may be disenrolled when all of the following conditions apply:

- No communication with the provider for 7 consecutive calendar days
- No notification to the provider about the absences
- No communication with SCOE or provider after 30 consecutive calendar days

Evidence of Fraud

Non-compliance with AP Program policies as outlined in this handbook

Unavailability of funds due to a decrease in funding or over enrollment

Failure to follow repayment plan for delinquent family fees or cost of services after verified evidence of fraud

Nonpayment of delinquent fees after a payment plan has been developed

Family choice when the family no longer needs child care services

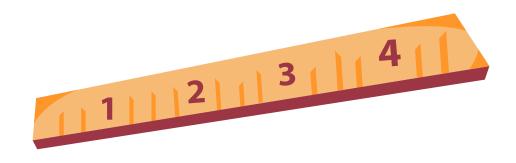
What happens after my eligibility period ends?

The recertification process occurs during the 50 days immediately following the end of the eligibility period. The family will be notified of the recertification in writing during the final 30 days of the eligibility period. The notification will include the following:

- Date the recertification must be completed by
- Recertification appointment date
- Information on the recertification process
- Required information/documentation needed for the ecertification appointment
- A telephone contact number and an optional email address for questions and support

Families who complete the process and continue to be eligible will be recertified for 12 or 24 months, depending on the progam. Documentation will be issued to the family and the provider(s) as described in the enrollment process.

Families who do not complete the recertification process within the 50-day recertification period are no longer eligible and will be disenrolled from the program. A NOA will be issued to the family at least 14 days (or 19 days by mail) prior to disenrollment. Certification in the program will end as indicated on the NOA.



Do I have appeal rights?

Parents enrolled in state subsidized programs have the right to a fair and unbiased hearing if they disagree with a proposed action. Upon receipt of an on-time request for an appeal hearing, the intended action will be suspended, and child care services will continue until the appeal process has been completed. The review process is complete when the appeal process has been exhausted or when the parent abandons the appeal process.

The Appeal Hearing process is as follows:

Step 1: Request for Appeal Hearing

A request for an appeal hearing must be filed within 14 calendar days after the parent receives the Notice of Action (NOA). A request must include the effective date of the NOA, parent name, phone number, full address, explanation why the parent disagrees with the agency's action, and date the request is signed. Submit the appeal request, typically the NOA, to your Specialist.

Step 2: Schedule Hearing

Within 10 days of receiving a parent's hearing request, the parent will be notified by the Appeal Hearing Coordinator of the time and place of the hearing. To the extent possible, the hearing date and time will be convenient for the parent(s). The hearing shall not be scheduled more than 14 calendar days from the date the Appeal Hearing Coordinator contacts the parent to schedule the hearing. Contact the Appeal Hearing Coordinator 24 hours prior to the appeal hearing if you need to reschedule or will be more than 15 minutes late.

Step 3: Conduct Hearing

The hearing will be conducted by an administrative staff person who shall be referred to as a Hearing Officer. In the event that a parent is unable to attend the hearing at the designated location, accommodations will be arranged and agreed upon between the parent and Appeal Hearing Coordinator. For any hearing not conducted in person, verification of parent identity will be required, along with prior submission of documentation. During the hearing, the parent or authorized representative will have an opportunity to provide documentation and explain the reasons that they disagree with the proposed action on the NOA.

This will be a formal hearing, and the parent must comply with the directions of the Hearing Officer during the course of the hearing. Failure to comply with directions will result in the hearing being ended and the contested action being taken. A parent designating an Authorized Representative to be present must inform the agency in writing prior to the hearing. Please do not bring people to the hearing unless they are a designated Authorized Representative. No children are allowed to be present during the hearing.

If the parent or Authorized Representative fail to appear, it will be deemed that the parent has abandoned the appeal.

Step 4: Hearing Decision

The Hearing Officer will send notification in writing of the decision within 10 calendar days after the hearing. If a parent disagrees with the written decision, they have 14 days from the date of the written decision to file an appeal with the appropriate agency indicted on the NOA:

California Department of Social Services Child Care and Development Division Attn: Appeals Coordinator 744 P Street, MS 9-8-354 Sacramento, CA 95814 Phone: (833)559-2417 Fax: (916)654-1048 <u>CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov</u>

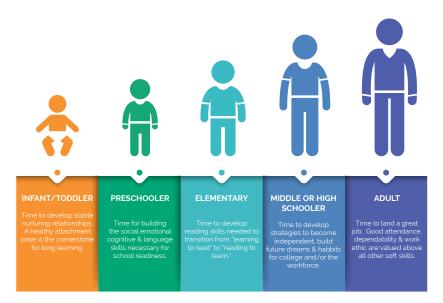
The appeal to CDSS must include a written statement specifying the reasons the parent believes the agency decision was incorrect, a copy of the decision letter, and a copy of both sides of the NOA. Within 30 calendar days after the receipt of the appeal, the appropriate agency will issue a written decision to the parent and SCOE. Once CDSS has rendered a decision, the decision is final.

Does my child need to attend?

Young children thrive on routine. It helps them know what to expect and what they can look forward to; routine gives them a sense of stability and security. When your child attends consistently, they become more comfortable with their setting and their peers and can better build healthy habits and social relationships. Regular attendance and interaction strengthen their sense of belonging, so feeling included and including others will come more easily to them.

Importance of Attendance

Attend today, achieve tomorrow Your child's regular attendance matters...



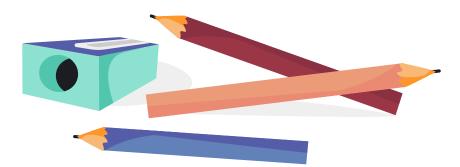
Abandonment of Care

The provider is required to promptly notify the Specialist if the parent has not been in communication with the provider for 7 consecutive calendar days and has not notified the provider of the reason for not using services. The Specialist shall attempt to contact the parent. Failure to communicate with the Specialist or provider within 30 days may result in disenrollment.

Broadly Consistent Care

Family's needs for care may change suddenly without time to adequately notify their Specialist, like when a child is unable to attend school due to an illness or the parent is called in to work unexpectedly. To accommodate for these needs, the AP Program will reimburse an authorized provider up to three days per calendar month of care not authorized on the Child Care Certificate as long as there is a documented need on file. Children with a certified need of less than 25 hours will not exceed part time reimbursement. This provision will not exceed 10 days per fiscal year unless there is a physician verification of an extended child illness. The AR will need to include the sign in and out times as well as the reason the child needed to attend care, like "child ill" or "parent called to work" in the absence reason section. Any day over the three days in the month will not be covered. The parent will need to contact the Specialist in advance for any child care needs beyond the three days per month or 10 days per fiscal year.

Families not using care may be contacted to support their need for child care services and community resources.



How Do I Choose The Right Provider For Our Family?

Choosing the right provider is an important decision and one that is very personal. We hope the provided information will guide you through the process of choosing the best possible provider for your family.

Choosing special needs care

Families selecting care for a child with special needs should plan to interview caregivers and request and check their references.

In the interview process, ask caregivers if they have training and experience with children with disabilities and, if so, to what extent. References should be asked if they observed special needs children being cared for and if they felt it was inclusive, high-quality care. Understand that, to protect other families' privacy, there will be some details providers and references cannot share.

It is a good idea to visit the setting to make sure it can accommodate your child's needs. Go without your child the first time - you'll be observing if you are comfortable with the care being offered. Ask yourself if the environment:

- Feels safe for your child
- Suits your child's energy level and play style
- Staff are capable of responding to your child's special needs

If it meets your standards, set up a time to bring your child with you and see how they react to the environment, staff, materials, and the other children.

If you are interested in a trial-run, start with short sessions, only an hour or two at a time, gradually increasing the length as your child becomes familiar with the environment. This also gives the provider time to learn how to meet your child's individual needs. Once you choose a care provider, it will be your responsibility to provide them adequate training for any special diets or procedures. Plan to provide copies of information about your child's needs and establish guidelines around communication between yourself and the provider, like what will need to be recorded and shared with you at pick-up, what behaviors do you want to be notified about and how, etc. An inclusive provider should be willing and able to meet these conditions.

Parental Choice

It is the parent's right and responsibility to choose an eligible provider that meets their family's need for child care and development services. Parents are encouraged to choose a clean, healthy, and safe environment for their child(ren). SCOE does not evaluate child care programs, facilities, or make recommendations to specific providers or programs. Instead, we promote and encourage free parental choice by providing child care referrals and parent education.

For more information about choosing a provider, contact our office.

Choosing Quality Care

Step 1: Think About Your Child Care Options

Take into consideration how well the provider or program fit your child's needs, your family's schedule, location & language.

License-Exempt Child Care

- Providers include relatives (grandparents, aunts, uncles), other relatives, friends and neighbors
- Other family, friends & neighbors must be fingerprinted
- Care is provided in the provider's home or center, like afterschool care
- No licensing requirements

Child Care Center

- Facilities that provide care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and/or school-age children
- Care is provided in non-home facilities such as churches, schools and/or buildings
- Group sizes are large allowing for children to have rich social and academic experiences
- Primary caregivers in a licensed center are required to have (or be in the process of completing) 12 units of Early Childhood Education
- Licensed centers are regulated by the state
- License-exempt centers are not regulated by the state (such as recreational programs and cooperatives)

Licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH)

- Providers are in a home setting for children of mixed ages
- Large FCCH cares for up to 14 children and requires an assistant
- Capacity of 14 children with no more than 3 infants when at least 2 children are 6 years of age or older
- Small FCCH cares for up to 8 children
- An assistant is required when more than 6 to 8 children are present
- Group sizes are smaller allowing for individualized care
- Staff are CPR/First Aid and Health and Safety certified
- Often are able to provide a flexible schedule, including evening, weekend or overnight care
- FCCH's not located on tribal land are licensed and regulated by the state

Step 2: Begin Your Search

- Call SCOE ECS/CCRE to get a list of licensed child care options
- Obtain information on the elements of quality care

Step 3: Visit, Observe & Ask Questions

- Visit the child care while other children are present
- Use a checklist to help you decide what things about a child care arrangement are most important to your family

Step 4: Make a Choice & Stay Involved

- Watch carefully and visit unannounced
- Meet with your provider regularly
- Monitor changes in how your child acts at drop-off/pick-up
- If you are not comfortable with your choice, it is okay to change

Choosing quality child care is important; it promotes brain development, school readiness, and reduces family stress.

Parents have the right to get information about any substantiated or inconclusive complaints about licensed child care providers. Information is public and can be obtained by calling or visiting Community Care Licensing.

Community Care Licensing 520 Cohasset Road, Suite 170 Chico, CA 95926 (530)895-5033 www.ccld.ca.gov

Children and/or families referred for subsidized child care based on an at-risk status are encouraged to choose a licensed provider to ensure the family has stable child care (unless otherwise indicated by the referring agency).



How does my provider get started?

Child care provider participation in the AP Program is the choice of the provider. Providers must remain eligible to participate in the AP Program to receive reimbursement for child care. Providers are eligible to receive reimbursement for care the day after provider enrollment is complete. For families enrolled in Stage One and Bridge Program, reimbursement to license exempt providers may occur for up to 120 days between when care was approved in Stage One and care was provided. SCOE may visit the provider to monitor for compliance with the AP Program. The parent is ultimately responsible to pay the provider in situations in which SCOE does not issue a reimbursement.

The provider is considered an independent contractor. The parent understands and agrees that the provider and the provider's employees are not considered officers, employees, or agents of SCOE and are not entitled to benefits of any kind or nature normally provided employees of SCOE and/or to which SCOE employees are normally entitled, including but not limited to State Unemployment Compensation or Worker's Compensation. A 1099 will be issued to the provider(s) based on child care payments issued on behalf of the parent.

SCOE assumes no responsibility for injuries or damages incurred at a provider's facility. The parent and the provider shall indemnify and hold SCOE free and harmless from injuries to person or property in or about the provider's facility.

Providers **licensed** with the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division must follow the enrollment process identified in the AP Provider Guidebook. To be enrolled, the provider must submit a copy of the facility license; child care rates, policies, and/or contracts; and information to receive payment. There are two types of license exempt care, **license exempt relative** and **license exempt nonrelative**. License exempt care can be provided in homes, before- and after-school programs, public recreation programs, child care centers and is not monitored or required to meet Community Care Licensing requirements. Family members who qualify for license-exempt relative include the child's grandparent, aunt, or uncle. Families choosing this type of care must provide current health information for children not attending school, including vaccination records and current well-child visit.

All providers must follow the enrollment process identified in the AP Provider Guidebook and submit the appropriate paperwork. License exempt nonrelatives and Bridge Program providers in a home setting must be registered with TrustLine. Specific relative providers (aunt, uncle, and grandparents) are considered license exempt relatives and are exempt from TrustLine.

Providers who care for children in the child's home become an employee of the parent (in-home care). Parents are required to sign an In-Home Care Attestation to acknowledge they are the provider's employer and are responsible to comply with any applicable federal and state employment laws.



Parental Complaints In Child Care Settings

Licensed Child Care Setting

SCOE encourages parents to report health and safety concerns to state licensing or other appropriate authorities as these concerns arise. SCOE is also required by law to inform every parent receiving child care referrals of their right to call the CDSS Community Care Licensing to check a provider's license and history. Health and safety issues for the children fall under the jurisdiction of Licensing. Community Care Licensing has a web page to provide consumers an additional method for filing a complaint and can be found at https://cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/ccld-complaint-hotline. After Licensing has conducted an investigation and made a determination of the complaint, AP will follow Licensing recommendations. Concerns can also be reported to Licensing.

Community Care Licensing 520 Cohasset Road, Suite 170 Chico, CA 95926 (530)895-5033 www.ccld.ca.gov

License-Exempt Child Care Settings

Parents with complaints about may make a verbal or written complaint to the SCOE ECS/CCRE. Only complaints about health and safety will be considered. A written complaint shall include the nature of the complaint, the date and time of the occurrence, and the name and address of the provider. SCOE ECS/CCRE will inform the provider of the parent's complaint and inform the provider of their right to submit a rebuttal.

Parental choice allows the parent to choose a provider that best suits their child care needs. Additionally, SCOE reserves the right to end the child child care schedule and reimbursement to the provider if the environment is unsafe for the child. In this case, ECS will notify the parent and the provider prior to ending reimbursement.

Uniform Complaint Procedure

County Board Policy 1312.3 Revised 6/23/21

The County Board of Education recognizes that the County Office of Education (COE) has the primary responsibility to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. The County Board encourages early resolution of complaints whenever possible. To resolve complaints which may require a more formal process, the County Board adopts the uniform system of complaint processes specified in 5 CCR 4600-4670 and the accompanying administrative regulation.

Complaints Subject to UCP

The COE's uniform complaint procedures (UCP) shall be used to investigate and resolve complaints regarding the following programs and activities:

- 1. Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students (Education Code 46015)
- 2. Adult education programs (Education Code 8500-8538, 52334.7, 52500-52617)
- 3. After School Education and Safety programs (Education Code 8482-8484.65)
- 4. Agricultural career technical education (Education Code 52460-52462)
- 5. Career technical and technical education and career technical and technical training programs (Education Code 52300-52462)
- Child care and development programs (Education Code 8200 8498)
- 7. Compensatory education (Education Code 54400)

- Consolidated categorical aid programs (Education Code 33315; 34 CFR 299.10-299.12)
- 9. Course periods without educational content, when students in grades 9-12 are assigned to such courses more than one week in any semester or in a course the student has previously satisfactorily completed, unless specified conditions are met (Education Code 51228.1-51228.3)
- 10. Discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying in COE programs and activities, including in those programs or activities funded directly by or that receive or benefit from any state financial assistance, based on the person's actual or perceived characteristics of race or ethnicity, color, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, physical or mental disability, medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or genetic information, or any other characteristic identified in Education Code 200 or 220, Government Code 11135, or Penal Code 422.55, or based on the person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics (5 CCR 4610)
- 11. Educational and graduation requirements for students in foster care, homeless students, students from military families, students formerly in a juvenile court school, migrant students, and immigrant students participating in a newcomer program (Education Code 48645.7, 48853, 48853.5, 49069.5, 51225.1, 51225.2)
- 12. Every Student Succeeds Act (Education Code 52059; 20 USC 6301 et seq.)
- 13. Local control and accountability plan (Education Code 52075)
- 14. Migrant education (Education Code 54440-54445)
- 15. Physical education instructional minutes (Education Code 51210, 51222, 51223)
- 16. Student fees (Education Code 49010-49013)

- 17. Reasonable accommodations to a lactating student (Education Code 222)
- Regional occupational centers and programs (Education Code 52300-52334.7)
- 19. School plans for student achievement as required for the consolidated application for specified federal and/or state categorical funding (Education Code 64001)
- 20. School safety plans (Education Code 32280-32289)
- 21. School site councils as required for the consolidated application for specified federal and/or state categorical funding (Education Code 65000)
- 22. State preschool programs (Education Code 8235-8239.1)
- 23. State preschool health and safety issues in license-exempt programs (Education Code 8235.5)
- 24. Any complaint alleging retaliation against a complainant or other participant in the complaint process or anyone who has acted to uncover or report a violation subject to this policy
- 25. Any other state or federal educational program the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee deems appropriate

The County Board recognizes that alternative dispute resolution (ADR) can, depending on the nature of the allegations, offer a process for resolving a complaint in a manner that is acceptable to all parties. An ADR process such as mediation may be offered to resolve complaints that involve more than one student and no adult. However, mediation shall not be offered or used to resolve any complaint involving sexual assault or where there is a reasonable risk that a party to the mediation would feel compelled to participate. The County Superintendent of Schools or designee shall ensure that the use of ADR is consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.

The COE shall protect all complainants from retaliation. In investigating complaints, the confidentiality of the parties involved shall be protected as required by law. For any complaint alleging retaliation or unlawful discrimination (such as discriminatory harassment, intimidation, or bullying), the County Superintendent or designee shall keep the identity of the complainant, and/or the subject of the complaint if different from the complainant, confidential when appropriate and as long as the integrity of the complaint process is maintained.

When an allegation that is not subject to UCP is included in a UCP complaint, the COE shall refer the non-UCP allegation to the appropriate staff or agency and shall investigate and, if appropriate, resolve the UCP-related allegation(s) through the COE's UCP.

The County Superintendent or designee shall provide training to COE staff to ensure awareness and knowledge of current law and requirements related to UCP, including the steps and timelines specified in this policy and the accompanying administrative regulation.

The County Superintendent or designee shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions, including steps taken during the investigation and all information required for compliance with 5 CCR 4631 and 4633.

Non-UCP Complaints

The following complaints shall not be subject to the COE's UCP but shall be investigated and resolved by the specified agency or through an alternative process:

- Any complaint alleging child abuse or neglect shall be referred to the County Department of Social Services Protective Services Division or the appropriate law enforcement agency. (5 CCR 4611)
- 2. Any complaint alleging health and safety violations by a child development program shall, for licensed facilities, be referred to Department of Social Services. (5 CCR 4611)

- 3. Any complaint alleging employment discrimination or harassment shall be investigated and resolved by the COE in accordance with the procedures specified in AR 4030 -Nondiscrimination in Employment, including the right to file the complaint with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing.
- 4. Any complaint alleging a violation of a state or federal law or regulation related to special education, a settlement agreement related to the provision of a free appropriate public education, or a due process hearing order shall be submitted to the California Department of Education (CDE) in accordance with AR 6159.1 - Procedural Safeguards and Complaints for Special Education. (5 CCR 3200-3205)
- 5. Any complaint alleging noncompliance of the COE's food service program with laws regarding meal counting and claiming, reimbursable meals, eligibility of children or adults, or use of cafeteria funds and allowable expenses shall be filed with or referred to CDE in accordance with BP 3555 -Nutrition Program Compliance. (5 CCR 15580-15584)
- 6. Any allegation of discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in the COE's food service program shall be filed with or referred to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in accordance with BP 3555 Nutrition Program Compliance. (5 CCR 15582)
- Any complaint related to sufficiency of textbooks or instructional materials, emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to the health or safety of students or staff, or teacher vacancies and misassignments shall be investigated and resolved in accordance with AR 1312.4 - Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures. (Education Code 35186)

