

Welcome to Early Education

A.C.C.E.S.S.

A Child Care and Education Services System

Standards of Participation for Families and Child Care Providers

Child Care Subsidy Programs:
CalWORKs Stages 1, 2 and 3
Alternative Payment (CAPP) and Bridge

Administered by:
Merced County Office of Education
Early Education Department

Revised August 2021

**EMPOWER, SUPPORT
& BUILD CAPACITY**
For All Our Families



Steve M. Tietjen, Ed.D. | County Superintendent of Schools



BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE
MERCED COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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WELCOME

Welcome to the Early Education Department (EE). EE is committed to providing information, support, expertise and leadership to families, child care providers and stakeholders to ensure quality early education services and informed child care choices resulting in able families and an invested community.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) is a public agency, which has provided services to children and families in Merced County for more than 150 years. Services have been of the highest quality and have strived to Nurture, Serve, and Lead.

A.C.C.E.S.S. is the program established by MCOE to administer State and Federal supported child care programs. The central purpose of the child care subsidy programs (CalWORKs Stages 1, 2 and 3 and Alternative Payments) is to provide subsidized child care and education services to eligible families in order to assist them in achieving their self-sufficiency goals. Child care is approved for reimbursement according to the need and eligibility of the family. Families may choose licensed care in centers or family child care homes or exempt care (eligible relatives, friends, and neighbors).

PROGRAM MISSION

The Early Education Special Programs mission is to Empower, Support and Build Capacity for all.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

A.C.C.E.S.S. offers its programs and services to eligible families on a non-discriminatory basis. It provides equal access without regard to age, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, and mental or physical ability.

UNIFORM COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A.C.C.E.S.S. is committed to develop and maintain professional and supportive relationships with all families and childcare providers. We are committed to resolving all complaints and provider/agency disagreements in a courteous and professional manner. A step-by-step procedure can be found starting on page 40 of this handbook. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the Program Manager at A.C.C.E.S.S.'s main office at 209 381-6790.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In accordance with federal laws, regulations, and orders relating to confidentiality, the Early Education Department shall keep all records and information confidential. All A.C.C.E.S.S. staff are held to the highest level of confidentiality. The use or disclosure of any information pertaining to family eligibility is confidential and is restricted to purposes directly related to the administration of the program. (CalWORKs client information will be shared with Merced County Human Services Agency.) Access to confidential information is restricted to authorized personnel, auditors, other subsidy programs, and government officials for program administrative purposes.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

A.C.C.E.S.S. staff treats all program participants with respect. Likewise, we expect participants to treat customers and A.C.C.E.S.S. staff in the same manner. A.C.C.E.S.S. does not allow threats of any nature or abusive language directed against another parent, provider, or staff. You cannot be under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs. Smoking is prohibited in the Early Education

campus or within 25 feet. Bringing weapons or what is considered to be a weapon on the premises is prohibited. Use of unacceptable behavior will result in discontinuance from the program.

PURPOSE OF *STANDARDS OF PARTICIPATION FOR FAMILIES AND CHILD CARE PROVIDERS*

The purpose of the *Standards of Participation for Families and Child Care Providers* is to help participants understand the subsidized child care programs and the “rules of participation” governed by Federal and State regulations in concert with local policies. The *Standards of Participation* explains the responsibilities of the participants in child care subsidy programs. It is the responsibility of each participant to be fully familiar with the program regulations and policies.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

There are two office locations in Merced and Los Banos. The hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (except when the office is closed for legal holidays, mandatory trainings, or in cases of emergency). Each location has a labeled mailbox outside for your convenience; feel free to drop off your forms and/or paperwork at that location if the office is closed.

A.C.C.E.S.S. - MERCED OFFICE

1850 Wardrobe Avenue, Merced, CA 95341
(209) 381-6790
(209) 381-6799 FAX

A.C.C.E.S.S. - LOS BANOS OFFICE

110 West G Street, Suite C, Los Banos, 93635
(209) 827-5694
(209) 827-5693 FAX

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL – MERCED

1850 Wardrobe Avenue, Merced, CA 95341
(209) 381-4585
(209) 381-6764 FAX

EARLY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

1850 Wardrobe Avenue, Merced, CA 95341
(209) 381-6794

MERCED COUNTY OFFICE EDUCATION (MCOE)

632 West 13th Street Merced, CA 95341
(209) 381-6600



PARENTAL CHOICE

Families should select the child care options that best meets the needs of their children and families. Families should choose care that is of the highest quality that meets the developmental, social, emotional and academic needs of the child. A.C.C.E.S.S. will assist families in understanding the many child care options available to them and will facilitate a referral to Child Care Resource and Referral.

Parents enrolled in a subsidized child care program have parental choice regarding the child care provider they select. Options include:

A. Licensed Child Care Providers

These programs are licensed and monitored by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Community Care Licensing Division to ensure health and safety requirements. The advantage of meeting these requirements is that children are supervised at all times and hazards in the environment are minimized. Some of these programs may also implement an educational component.

It is the parent's responsibility to evaluate and consider the value of the educational services provided to the children in their care. Types of child care providers listed in this category include:

- Licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH) - Care takes place in provider's home.
- Licensed Child Care Center – This is a facility whose building, grounds, director, teachers and other staff meet requirements of Community Care Licensing (CCL).

B. License-Exempt Child Care Providers – (not subject to educational or licensing standards)

There are providers who are considered exempt from licensing including: some relative caregivers, cooperative child care programs, some after school programs, public recreation programs, and others. While license-exempt providers do not have to adhere to licensing regulations, in order to receive reimbursement from state or federal child care subsidy programs, if they are not a close relative (grandma/grandpa, aunt/uncle) of the children in their care, the caregivers must register with TrustLine and complete a Health and Safety Self-Certification. License-exempt providers are selected because of the flexibility they provide the parent, they have a family environment with the same values and culture as the parents, and/or the ability to accommodate non-traditional work schedules. Types of providers listed in this category include:

- License-Exempt Center (Afterschool Programs)
 - A center that provides child care for school-age children before and after school and during other times when school is not in session, such as summer, school holidays or off-track weeks, may be license-exempt. Example: When a school district runs the program and employs the staff, the program usually does not need to have a license.
- License-Exempt Provider (Family, Friend, or Neighbor Care)
 - A license-exempt provider is an individual who is exempt from licensing. This means that he/she is not required to be licensed by Community Care Licensing. The child care provider can be a relative, friend or neighbor.
- Related License-Exempt Provider cares for children of relatives. A related license-exempt provider may also care for children of one non-related family.

- CDSS defines relative to be aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Siblings, great aunts/uncles, great grandparents and cousins are considered non-relative providers and must go through the TrustLine Registry process using the Guardian Background Check System.
- Falsifying the nature of the provider's relationship to the child is considered fraud and will result in the termination of child care services with the provider.
- If you are a related license-exempt provider and also care for children of a non-related family, you must be registered with TrustLine Registry.
- Non-Related License-Exempt Provider cares for children who are not related to him/her.
 - If you are a non-related license-exempt provider, you may care for children of one non-related family, you must be registered with the TrustLine Registry using the Guardian Background Check System.
 - You are required to clear a background screening and to be placed on the TrustLine Registry before being approved as an eligible provider. A.C.C.E.S.S. may not reimburse for child care services provided before your TrustLine screening has been cleared. Care provided for families on CalWORKS Stage 1 may be eligible for retro-active reimbursements up to 120 days from the date of TrustLine clearance.
 - If at any time TrustLine Registry is denied, closed, or revoked A.C.C.E.S.S. will terminate its services with you.
- In-home License-Exempt Child Care Provider:
 - When child care is provided in the child's home, the **parent** is the employer of the provider. A.C.C.E.S.S. will issue the subsidy reimbursement to the parent who is then responsible for paying the provider.
 - The **parent** must provide proof to A.C.C.E.S.S. that the parent is paying minimum wage to the provider, paying social security taxes, unemployment taxes, and maintains current state workers' compensation insurance (See Publication 926 - Household Employer's Tax Guide).
 - The above requirement does not apply to CalWORKs Stage 1 child care subsidy recipients, but will at the time the family transitions to any other child care subsidy program. The Family Specialist will work closely with the family to assist in making suitable child care arrangements prior to transition.

Guardian Background Check System for TrustLine Registry

Guardian is an electronic data system, designed to streamline the background check process for all licensed care, including the TrustLine Registry, Home Care Aide Registry and Community Care Licensing staff. Guardian will provide new self-service options to applicants, registrants, agencies (facilities) and Regional Offices without intervention by the Care Provider Management Bureau (CPMB). The term "agencies" is inclusive of all licensed facilities, Foster Family Agencies, Home Care Organizations and TrustLine agencies.

The TrustLine Registry is made up of child care providers who have submitted an application to CDSS and their fingerprints to the DOJ background clearance process. Individuals listed on TrustLine do not have: 1) disqualifying criminal convictions listed on the California Criminal History System; 2) substantiated reports of child abuse listed on the CACI; and 3) disqualifying criminal convictions listed on the FBI Criminal History system.

SUBSIDY CHILD CARE PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

BRIDGE CHILD CARE

Bridge is a resource for relatives and non-related extended family members, resource parents and parenting foster youth. Bridge Child Care is a short-term resource to assist resource parents and

parenting foster youth with children under 13 years of age, or those who are older with exceptional needs, pay for child care services. Resource parents are able to select the child care setting that best meets their needs.

Resource parents and parenting foster youth are not only provided with a child care voucher, but also a child care navigator to assist them with finding child care and linking them to long-term child care and other community resources. Bridge also offers in-person trauma-informed training to our resource parents and providers.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To establish eligibility for Bridge child care, you must request a Bridge referral from your social worker from the Merced County Department of Human Services Agency.

Eligibility

- You are a resource parent/parenting foster youth.
- You have an eligible child under 13 years or a child under 22 years with an approved exceptional need.
- You were referred directly from the local CPS (Child Protective Services)

QUALIFYING NEED

Your social worker states that you have a need for child care for the following:

- Employment
- Vocational education
- Other supportive service (needs of other children, etc.)

APPROVED CHILD CARE SCHEDULE

Approved Child Care Schedule

- The Notice of Action authorizes child care services for at least 6 months which may be extended to an additional 6 months, totaling 12 months. The approved child care schedule is based upon the approved need per your social worker, including the travel time needed to and from your approved activity and your child care provider's physical address. Hours when child(ren) attends school are deducted from hours approved. You may be approved for a set/predictable schedule or a variable schedule.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. reimburses child care when the child attends care during the days and hours authorized for services according to your approved schedule.
- You are responsible for the cost of care during non-authorized hours, when you use child care for something other than your approved activity, or when your child care provider charges more than A.C.C.E.S.S. can reimburse.

CALWORKS STAGE 1

The Merced County Department of Human Services Agency (HSA) funds CalWORKs Stage 1 subsidized child care and sets the eligibility criteria. It is available as a supportive service for clients on CalWORKs. The Stage 1 subsidized child care program may serve families on cash aid who demonstrate a need for child care. Parents are able to select the child care setting that best meets their needs.

To establish eligibility for subsidized child care, you request child care through the County Human Services Agency or A.C.C.E.S.S. You must complete a CCP7 and CCP8 which indicates you need child care services and are entitled to full time care unless otherwise indicated. Once presented to the A.C.C.E.S.S. program you will be scheduled for a parent orientation and an A.C.C.E.S.S. representative will review your request to determine eligibility for child care services using the following criteria:

- Parent/guardian is receiving cash aid/TANF/CalWORKs.
- Parent/guardian has a declared need for services.
- There is at least one eligible child under 13 years or a child with exceptional needs under 22 years living in the home.

NEED CRITERIA STAGE 1

If eligibility for child care services is established, A.C.C.E.S.S. will mail or email a Participant Packet with date and time of appointment. Included with the packet will be a list of the paperwork required for enrollment.

A.C.C.E.S.S. must receive all required paperwork listed on the checklist at the time of appointment. If accurate and complete paperwork is returned and enrollment is completed, a Notice of Action will be issued authorizing child care for a minimum of 12 months.

A.C.C.E.S.S. may authorize child care if you are working or participating in any of the following:

- Vocational education
- Remedial education
- Supportive service activities (behavioral health services, court ordered activities)
- Job Club/Search/Readiness
- Incapacity
- Homelessness

APPROVED SCHEDULE STAGE 1

The Notice of Action authorizes child care for an approved schedule based upon the declared activity and the travel time to and from the activity. Hours when your child(ren) attends school are deducted from hours approved. You may be approved for a set/predictable schedule or a variable schedule. A.C.C.E.S.S. pays for child care costs only during hours authorized for care according to your approved schedule.

RECERTIFICATION PROCESS STAGE 1

A.C.C.E.S.S. must recertify your case annually. The recertification procedure is as follows:

- Prior to your authorized child care end date, A.C.C.E.S.S. will mail or email your recertification paperwork based on your preference. The paperwork includes an appointment letter with date and time of your appointment as well as a zoom link (if applicable) with a checklist and other documents required to complete your recertification.
- Required documents must be received prior to your appointment
- If you attend your recertification appointment with complete and accurate paperwork

A.C.C.E.S.S. will reauthorize your case for at least 12 months. A Notice of Action approving your care will be issued at the time of your recertification.

- If you do not recertify and your case terminates, you will need to reapply for child care and A.C.C.E.S.S. must redetermine your eligibility.

CALWORKS STAGES 2 (C2AP) AND 3 (C3AP) AND ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT (CAPP) PROGRAMS

Participation in California Department of Social Services (CDSS) programs are based on available funding and qualifications for the program. The information that follows explains how you establish eligibility for a CDSS subsidized child care program (C2AP, C3AP and CAPP).

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR C2AP, C3AP AND CAPP

In order to receive subsidized child care services, families must meet eligibility and need requirements as described below.

C2AP - You must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- You are a current cash aid/TANF recipient deemed stable or have been terminated from cash aid within the last 24 months.
- Your family's adjusted monthly income, based upon family size, meets program requirements.
- Your family includes a child under the age of 13 years or a child under the age of 22 with an approved exceptional need.

C3AP – You must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- You are a former cash aid/TANF recipient who has not received cash aid within the last 24 months, and you are transferring from CalWORKs Stage 1 or 2.
- Your family's adjusted monthly income, based upon family size, meets program requirements.
- Your family includes a child under the age of 13 years or a child under the age of 22 with an approved exceptional need.

CAPP - You must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Your family's adjusted monthly income, based upon family size, meets program requirements.
- Child Protective Services (CPS) or At-Risk Services refer your family.
- Your family is homeless.
- You have a child under the 13 years or a child under 22 with an approved exceptional need.

Proof of Family Size

Definition of Family Biological/Adoptive Parent:

- "Family" shall be considered the parents and the children for whom the parents are responsible; who comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living.
- Guardian/Foster Parent: "Family" shall be considered the child and related siblings who

comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living. The parent shall provide supporting documentation regarding the number of children and parents as listed on the application for services.



- Birth Certificate
- Child Custody Court order
- Adoption documents
- Foster Care placement records
- School or Medical records
- County welfare department records
- Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent

If only one parent has signed the application, they shall self-certify the presence or absence of the other parent under penalty of perjury. No other documentation is required.

CHILDREN WITH EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS

If a participant requests that a child(ren) remain on the program after the child's 13th birthday due to special needs, the participant must submit a copy of the child's active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that contains:

- The name of the child,
- Information that the child qualifies as a child with special needs,
- What services are provided via the IEP, and
- Active period of the IEP.

A participant must also submit a statement signed by a legally qualified professional that states the child requires the special attention of adults in a childcare setting. This statement must include the name, address, license number, and telephone number of the legally qualified professional who is rendering the opinion.

PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY

Participants must provide documentation of eligibility in one or more of these categories:

- Child protective services (Referral letter from CPS unit)
- The child is identified as being abused, neglected or exploited or at risk thereof (Referral Letter)
- The family is experiencing homelessness (Referral Letter or Self-Declaration)
- The parent is receiving CalWORKs cash aid
- The family is income eligible (Documentation of all income)

Income Eligible

Income determines program eligibility and whether you will need to pay family fees. The parent is responsible to provide documentation of the family's total countable income. Documentation of income guidelines follow:



- You must report all sources of income, including but not limited to employment wages, child support, Social Security, cash aid/TANF and pensions.
- You must report regular assistance for expenses, such as rent, utilities, child care fees, car payments. These may count towards your countable income.
- If A.C.C.E.S.S. determines the documentation provided is insufficient, we will request additional documentation to verify your total countable income.

Fluctuating Income

When income or wages change from pay period to pay period due to agricultural or seasonal work, inconsistent and/or unstable employment or intermittent income, your adjusted monthly income will be determined by averaging the total countable income from the preceding 12 months.

- Intermittent (occasional, sporadic or infrequent) income includes but is not limited to bonuses, commissions, lottery winnings, inheritance, back child support payments, overtime or net proceeds from the sale of real property or stock.



FAMILY FEES

1. Some families enrolled in the A.C.C.E.S.S. program may have a family fee based on their gross monthly income, family size and certified hours of care. You will be issued a Notice of Action if you are responsible for paying a family fee.
2. Family fees are based upon the child who is enrolled in the program with the greatest number of hours.

3. Fees are assessed based upon the Family Fee Schedule set by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).
4. Fees can be a full time fee, part time fee or both depending on the monthly total of certified hours of care. Full-time care is 130 hours or more per month and part-time care is less than 130 hours per month.



5. Family fees are only assessed at:
 - Initial Certification - Effective date is when care is approved to start.
 - Recertification – Effective date is on the 1st of the month following the 14 days' notice required at recertification.
6. Participants may voluntarily request to have fees re-assessed. If there is a:
 - Decrease: New fees will be effective on the first day of the month that follows the issue date of the NOA.
 - Increase: There will be no increase to fees during your 12-month certification period.
7. When Both Full and Part Time Fees are Assessed
 - When a family's child is assigned both a School and Vacation schedule, families will be assessed monthly part-time and full-time fees. If applicable, the months part-time and full-time fees will be indicated within the family fee note section of the Application for Services (Form EESD 9600).
 - If a family voluntarily requests zero service hours for a time period during their 12-month eligibility, no fee will be due during the gap in services. A Notice of Action approving the change in services will be issued. Family fees will resume if and when the services restart.

Note: If a provider is closed during any month, the fee remain the same as the fee is based on the participants need as stated on the COS, not actual attendance.

8. Exempt from Family Fees:
 - The following are exemptions to the fee schedule:
 - No fee for families receiving CalWORKs cash aid/TANF.
 - At-risk children and children in the CPS system may be exempt from paying fees for up to 12 months if the referral determines the fee waiver to be necessary.
9. Credit for Fees Paid:
 - If our agency cannot meet all of a family's needs for child care, we can grant a fee credit equal to the amount paid to your other provider who is providing child care and development services.
 - Copies of receipts or cancelled checks must be submitted in order to receive a credit for fees paid to another provider.
 - We will apply the fee credit to the family's subsequent billing period (Example: Submit

receipt for May and a credit for June will be applied).

- We do not allow carry-over of any fee credits beyond the subsequent billing period.

10. Due Date for Fees

- Fees are due and payable in advance of the child care provided. Fees are due on the last working day of the month for the following month (e.g. by the last working day in July for August child care).
- Fees are considered delinquent after seven (7) calendar days from the date the fees were due. If fees are not paid in full or in a timely manner a termination notice will be issued. A.C.C.E.S.S. staff will attempt to contact (phone call and/or email) the family as a courtesy to inform them of the outstanding fees.
- Family Fees may be paid online through PayPal using the following link: <https://www.mcoe.org/deptprog/earlyed/ACCESSCCSP/Pages/ParentFees.aspx> . Fees can also be paid with a money order or cashier's check. They can be paid in person, through the drop box or mailed with a date stamp on or before the deadline
- **Cash and personal checks will NOT be accepted.**
- A.C.C.E.S.S. mails a family fee billing statement for the next month between the 11th and 15th of each month. If you do not receive it, call your Specialist.
- You must pay the fee even if your child is absent or on vacation.
- If you are unable to pay your family fees on time or in full, you must contact your Specialist immediately to arrange a payment plan.
- Once a payment plan has been arranged, you are responsible for paying the agreed upon plan amount plus your regular monthly fee.
- Existing payment plans may not be changed or added to and no additional payment plans may be made until the current plan reaches a zero balance.
- When you do not pay family fees in full and on time, A.C.C.E.S.S. will issue a termination NOA for delinquent family fees.



NEED CRITERIA FOR C2AP, C3AP AND CAPP

In addition to meeting eligibility requirements, you must have at least one qualifying need. Your authorization includes a schedule of approved childcare for the time that you spend in an approved activity. The activity that qualifies as a need must prevent you from caring for your child. The following activities qualify as a need for services:

1. Employment

Set /Predictable Schedule:

- o When you work a set schedule (i.e., Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) or when the schedule for your approved activity can be predicted (i.e., the total amount of hours each week are the same, but days

off are different). The approval Notice of Action (NOA) and Certificate of Services (COS) will state that you are on a set or predictable schedule.

Variable Schedule:

- When you work unpredictable days and/or hours, or when the schedule of an approved activity shows unpredictable days and/or hours, the Notice of Action (NOA) and Certificate of Services (COS) will state that you are on a variable schedule.

Employment in the Family's Home or a Licensed Family Child Care Home

If employment is in the family's home:

- You must provide justification for requesting subsidized child care. Child care will be approved based on the type of work being done.
- If you are a licensed family child care home or individual license exempt provider, you are not eligible for services during business hours because the employment does not preclude the supervision of your children.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. shall determine whether the participant's employment and the identified child care needs preclude the supervision of the family's children.

If employed in a licensed family child care home you will be required to:

- Submit a copy of the family child care home license indicating it is licensed as a large family child care home.
- A signed statement from the licensee stating that you are the assistant.
- Proof that your fingerprints are associated with that licensed family child care home as the assistant, which may verify with the local Community Care Licensing office. Verification the licensee withholds payroll deductions for you, which may be a pay stub.

Note: You are not eligible for child care services if you are employed by a small licensed family child care home.

2. Self-Employment Guidelines

You are self-employed when you are an independent contractor. You may be self-employed in a leased space or constant space (i.e., barber, cosmetologist, nail technician) or self-employed in variable locations (i.e., landscaper, domestic worker, day-laborer). The following documents are required:

- **Self-Employment Declaration Form:** On this form, you indicate the name or nature of your business, business address, hours of work, expected gross monthly income, and either an independent statement from the owner or lessor or an independent verification of clients.

- Work Schedule and Income Received Log: On this log, you track your monthly work hours and income. You must also provide copies of business appointment logs, a list of clients, client receipts, or other documentation to verify your work hours and income.
- Self-Employment Income Report: On this report you track your monthly income and business expenses. You must attach copies of business expense receipts to the income report.



Travel Time

- Travel time may be requested for travel to and from your child care provider and your place of employment.
- Travel time cannot exceed half of the daily hours of your employment or a maximum of four hours per day.

Sleep Time for Employment

- Sleep time may be requested if your employment work hours are anytime between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Sleep time cannot exceed the number of hours of your employment and travel time.
- Sleep time is not automatic and must be requested in writing by the participant.

3. Education and Training

- A.C.C.E.S.S. may authorize child care if you are in a vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofessional or professional career.
- Time Limits for Education and Training - Your child care services for education and/or training will expire once either of the following conditions are met:
 - A maximum of six (6) years from the initiation of services for training or educational services. The six (6) year period begins with the first approved Notice of Action (NOA).
 - Twenty-four (24) semester units, or its equivalent, after the attainment of a bachelor's degree.
 - Adequate Progress of Educational or Training Goal. You must make adequate progress each quarter, semester, or training period in your education or training for which child care services are provided.
 - In a graded program you must earn a 2.0 grade point average or above.
 - In a non-graded program, you must pass the program's requirements in at least 50% of the classes or meet the training institution's standards.
- Failure to Meet Adequate Progress
 - The first time you fail to meet adequate progress, you will be placed on Academic Probation. You may continue to receive child care services for one additional 12 month certification period. At the conclusion of this period you

must demonstrate that adequate progress has been made.

- If at the conclusion of this 12-month certification period, you fail to meet adequate progress you will be dis-enrolled and not eligible for child care services for Vocational Training until after six (6) months from the date of disenrollment.
- On-line or Televised Classes
 - Must be from an accredited training institution recognized by the United States Department of Education.
 - Must be unit-bearing classes and shall be counted as class time at one (1) hour a week for each unit.
 - You must provide documentation including, but not limited to, the syllabus or other class documentation and/or the web address of the on-line program.
- Travel Time for Education or Training
 - Travel time may be requested and authorized for travel to and from your child care provider and your educational or training institution.
 - Travel time cannot exceed half of the weekly hours of your education or training hours or a maximum of four (4) hours per day.
- Study Time
 - May be requested and authorized as follows:
 - Two (2) hours per week per academic unit in which you are enrolled.
 - On a case-by-case basis, you may request additional study time upon confirmation from your class instructor, additional time may not exceed one (1) hour per week per academic unit in which you are enrolled.

4. Educational Programs

- A.C.C.E.S.S. may authorize child care if you are enrolled in classes or courses for English language learner or English as a second language (ELL/ESL) or a program to attain a high school diploma or General Education Degree or High School Equivalency (GED/HSE).
- Name of the Institution, an electronic printout of the participant's current class schedule, or if unavailable, a completed Vocational Training form provided by A.C.C.E.S.S.
- You must make adequate progress each certification period in your education for which child care services are provided.
- Your child care services for education will expire once a maximum of six (6) years from the initiation of educational services has been met. The six (6) year period begins with the first approved Notice of Action (NOA).

5. Seeking Employment/Job Search

- You may qualify for subsidized child care while you are seeking employment as requested and authorized as follows:
 - Written parental declaration stating the participant is seeking employment
 - Include general plan to secure, change, or increase employment
 - Authorized services will be no more than 5 days per week and less than 30 hours a week.

6. Incapacity

- If the primary basis of your need is incapacity, you may be able to receive subsidized child care services. You must provide the following:
- A Medical Statement (Incapacitated Parent) form must be completed by a legally qualified and licensed professional.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. may contact the legally qualified health professional for verification, clarification, or completion of the medical statement.
- The Medical Statement (Incapacitated Parent) form must include:
 - A description of the nature of incapacity.
 - Statement that the incapacity prevents you from caring for your child(ren) for some part of the day.
 - The probable length of the incapacity.
 - Time and days child care is needed due to the incapacity.
 - The professional's name, address, license number and telephone number.
 - Approved child care hours cannot exceed 50 hours per week.

7. Homelessness

- You may qualify for subsidized child care for homelessness as requested and authorized as follows:
 - A written referral dated three months prior to the application for services from one of the qualifying agencies:
 - A legal medical or social services agency.
 - A local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth.
 - An emergency or transitional shelter.
 - A written parental declaration under penalty of perjury that your family is homeless and a statement describing your family's current living situation
 - Authorized services will be no more than 5 days per week and not exceed 30 hours per week.

8. Seeking Permanent Housing

- You may qualify for subsidized child care while you are seeking permanent housing as requested and authorized as follows:
 - A written parental declaration under penalty of perjury that your family is seeking permanent housing.
 - Include general search plan to secure a fixed, regular, and adequate residence.
 - If the family is residing in a shelter, services shall also be provided while the participant attends appointments or activities necessary to comply with the shelter participation requirements.
- Authorized services will be no more than five (5) days per week and not exceed 30 hours per week.

DETERMINING A CHILD'S CERTIFIED SCHEDULE

Services are only available if:

- The participant meets a need criterion that prevents them from caring and supervising their child for some of the day.
- There is no parent in the family that is capable of providing care during time care is requested.
- Child is not in school or a public school is not available.
- Two (2) parent family – Care is approved for overlapping time, when neither parent is available to care for the child.
- Services will be approved based on verified need documentation and/or the program limitations, whichever is less.
- A predictable schedule includes parents with either a set or variable schedule with a pattern.
- A variable/unpredictable schedule will be based on the maximum number of hours of need based on the week with the greatest number of hours within the preceding four (4) weeks.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTING CHANGES

Right to Voluntarily Report Changes:

- Once eligibility and need have been established, a participant may keep their current service level, no matter if there are changes in their family. The only exception is if a participant's income exceeds the maximum income threshold for ongoing eligibility.
- If a participant needs to change their service level during their certification period, a Voluntary Request to Change Services Form (A.C.C.E.S.S. Form 45) and documentation to support the request must be submitted.
- After receipt of this form and documentation to support the requested change, our office will issue a NOA within ten (10) business days indicating the outcome of your request, if approved.
- No other changes will be made to your service agreement, other than the requested change(s).



Note: You must notify your Specialist if your address, email or telephone number changes at any time to ensure we are able to contact you.

RECERTIFICATION PROCESS C2AP, C3AP AND CAPP

A.C.C.E.S.S. must recertify you at no less than 12 months. The recertification procedure follows:

- 30 days prior to your authorized child care end date, A.C.C.E.S.S. will mail or email your recertification paperwork based on your preference. The paperwork includes an appointment letter with date and time of your appointment as well as a zoom link (if applicable) with a checklist and other documents required to complete your certification



- If you show for your recertification appointment with complete and accurate paperwork A.C.C.E.S.S. may reauthorize your case for a minimum of 12-months. A.C.C.E.S.S. will issue a Notice of Action approving care.
- If you do not recertify and your case terminates, you will need to reapply for child care and A.C.C.E.S.S. will have to re-determine your eligibility.



Attend today, achieve tomorrow

Your child's regular attendance matters...



Infant/Toddler

Time to develop stable, nurturing relationships. A healthy attachment base is the cornerstone for life long learning.



Preschooler

Time for building the social, emotional, cognitive & language skills necessary for school readiness.



Elementary

Time to develop reading skills needed to transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn"



Middle or High Schooler

Time to develop strategies to become independent, build future dreams & habits for college and/or the workforce.



Adult

Time to land a great job. Good attendance, dependability & work ethic are valued above all other soft skills.

Absent 2 days per month = Absent 24 days per year
= Your child's learning is 1 month behind their peers!

Don't let your child miss-out on the skills needed to be successful in school & life

BROADLY CONSISTENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

All children are expected to have consistent attendance, in order to maximize the benefits of their early learning and care experience according to the approved Child Care Certificate of Service (COS).

1. Participants are expected to:

- Know their currently approved/certified days and hours of care.
- Notify Specialist in advance if family needs to request a change in their service level or will have a gap in services during their certification period.
- Use care that is broadly consistent with certified days and hours of care
 - Broadly consistent attendance is defined as care that reflects a pattern that is consistent with the participants certified level of services.
 - Inconsistent attendance that is temporary in nature, such as when a child has an excused absence is not considered broadly inconsistent.

2. Absence Policy

For the purpose of verifying that a child's attendance is broadly consistent with the COS, when a child is absent from regularly scheduled care at any time during the month the participant or provider must record the absence type on the attendance record. Absence types are as follows:

Excused Absence

- Illness of child or parent/guardian, communicable disease, injury, hospitalization or quarantine.
- Appointment of child or parent/guardian, which includes doctor, dentist, mental health, social service, welfare, education, special education services, counseling or therapy.
- Court ordered visitation for time spent with a parent or relative as required by law. (Court order must be on file).
- Family emergency for unplanned situations of a temporary nature including court appearance, death, accident, hospitalization of a family member, no transportation or illness of sibling.

Best Interest Days (10 maximum per fiscal year)

When a parent/guardian determines that, another activity is better for the child to attend, such as:

- Visiting relative or close friend
- Vacation time with family
- Child attending a party
- Family moving
- Religious observance, holiday or ceremony
- Personal or family business

Note: Must be requested in advance



Unexcused Absence

- Child did not feel like coming to school
- Parent or child overslept
- Any absence not falling in the excused absence category
- Absences exceeding ten (10) “best interest” day limit
- Abandoned care (No show or contact with provider or A.C.C.E.S.S. for 30 consecutive days)

3. Documenting Reasons for Non-Attendance

When your child does not attend child care on a specific day(s) that have been approved per your child care schedule you must document on the attendance log the name of the child, the dates of absence and the specific reason for the absence.

4. Consequences for Non-Attendance

When attendance is not broadly consistent with the approved COS, A.C.C.E.S.S. will take the following actions:

- Specialist will contact the participant via phone to encourage the attendance of the child when attendance is not consistent with the authorized COS.
- If in the following month, the use of child care is still not consistent with the authorized COS, Specialist will call and send a letter to the participant confirming the second violation of the broadly consistent attendance policy. Along with the second violation letter, Specialist will provide information for the participant to voluntarily request a change and reduction to the approved hours of child care.
- On the third consecutive month, if the same pattern of non-attendance of authorized child care occurs, Specialist will call the participant and send a letter

stating that the participant has fourteen (14) days to either voluntarily reduce the hours of child care or the child will be terminated for a third violation of the broadly consistent attendance policy.

FAMILY DISENROLLMENT/ TERMINATION POLICY

When a family chooses to dis-enroll from A.C.C.E.S.S. they are required to notify both the program and provider in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance of the last day of attendance. If a two (2) week notice is not given, A.C.C.E.S.S. is not liable for reimbursement to the provider if the child does not attend.

Families will be mailed a Notice of Action at least 19 days or hand delivered a Notice of Action at least 14 days prior to disenrollment from the program. A.C.C.E.S.S. **may deny services or dis-enroll** a family for any of the following reasons, which include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Knowingly misrepresenting or falsifying eligibility using incorrect or inaccurate information/documentation to obtain a benefit that the participant would otherwise not be entitled to receive.
- 2) Failure to certify or re-certify their child care services.
- 3) Abandonment of Care
- 4) Failure to use certified care based on Broadly Consistent Policy.
- 5) Delinquency in the payment of family fees.
- 6) Falsification of or refusal to sign attendance claims.
- 7) Family income exceeds the maximum income threshold.
- 8) Threatening, yelling, the use of profanity or acting unethically towards any staff member.
- 9) Unavailability of program funds. If it is necessary to displace families due to funding, families will be displaced in reverse order of admission priority.

PARENT APPEAL RIGHTS AND RE-ENROLLMENT

If you do not follow A.C.C.E.S.S. or California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) rules and regulations, A.C.C.E.S.S. may terminate your child care services. A Notice of Action (NOA) will be issued for any action on your case.

APPEAL

A. Appeal Rights

If A.C.C.E.S.S. terminates your child care services or you disagree with any action taken by A.C.C.E.S.S. staff, you have the right to file a local appeal by the appeal date on the Notice of Action (NOA).

B. Local Appeal Hearing Procedure

- You may appeal the intended action and request an appeal hearing in writing, in person, by telephone, email or fax by the appeal date on the NOA.

- Once your appeal request is received, the intended action as stated on the appealed NOA will be suspended until the appeal process has been completed. Please note that while in appeal you are expected to remain compliant and continue to follow A.C.C.E.S.S. and CDSS program rules and regulations.
- Within ten (10) calendar days following A.C.C.E.S.S.'s receipt of your appeal request, the agency will notify you of the time and place of the hearing.
- You may also request in writing to have an authorized representative attend the hearing with you or in your place.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. does allow you to reschedule one (1) appeal appointment. If you do not attend the rescheduled appeal appointment, A.C.C.E.S.S. will consider your appeal abandoned.
- If you or your authorized representative do not attend the hearing, A.C.C.E.S.S. will consider your appeal abandoned.

C. Appeal Hearing

- You must bring evidence that supports your claim that care was inappropriately terminated or incorrectly changed.
- Within ten (10) calendar days following the appeal hearing, you will receive a decision letter from A.C.C.E.S.S. that either denies your appeal (upholds A.C.C.E.S.S.'s decision) or grants your appeal (rules in your favor).
- Appeal Procedure for California Department Education (CDE) or California Department of Social Services (CDSS)
If you disagree with A.C.C.E.S.S.'s written decision, you have 14 calendar days in which to appeal to CDE/CDSS by following the instructions on the back of the Notice of Action (NOA). Your appeal must include:
 1. A written statement specifying the reasons you believe A.C.C.E.S.S. decision was incorrect,
 2. A copy of the agency's decision letter, and
 3. A copy of both sides of the NOA.

Within 30 calendar days after the receipt of your appeal, CDE or CDSS will issue a written decision to you and A.C.C.E.S.S. If your appeal is denied, A.C.C.E.S.S. will stop the authorization of child care services immediately upon receipt of the decision letter.

PROCEDURE FOR RE-ENROLLMENT

If A.C.C.E.S.S. terminated you from C2AP because you did not comply with CDSS or A.C.C.E.S.S. regulations and you no longer receive CalWORKs (cash assistance), you may be eligible to reapply and be re-enrolled for services. To be considered for reenrollment:

1. You must take steps to correct the issue that resulted in termination.
2. You must meet the eligibility and need requirements at the time of reapplication.
3. You must be within the 24-month time period after you were terminated from CalWORKs cash aid.
4. You may be required to pay all delinquent family fees in full before re-enrolling into a subsidized program.

If A.C.C.E.S.S. terminated you from C3AP or CAPP because you did not comply with CDSS or A.C.C.E.S.S. regulations:

- You may contact A.C.C.E.S.S. and ask to be added to the Eligibility List or complete the application online.
- You may be required to pay all delinquent family fees in full before re-enrolling into a subsidized program.

PROVIDER RELATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

PROVIDER/PARTICIPANT RELATIONSHIPS

- A child care contract is between the participant and provider.
- Any disputes arising or liability resulting from the participant-provider contract shall not involve A.C.C.E.S.S. in any way.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. assumes no responsibility for injury or damages arising from the participant or child care provider's performance. The participant and provider agree to hold harmless A.C.C.E.S.S. and its employees, from costs, lawsuits, or liabilities arising from child care services.

PARTICIPANT/PROVIDER COMMUNICATION

This section of the handbook will help you with day-to-day provider operations as you develop your program and routines.

- A.C.C.E.S.S. strongly recommends participants and providers to discuss the following topics before providing child care services:
 - Authorized pick-up and emergency contact persons
 - Medical authorization
 - Allergies
 - Meals and snacks
 - Naps/rest periods
 - Required forms that need to be completed to enroll the child in your care
 - Provider Policies – discuss your policies on:
 - Fees
 - Days and hours of operation
 - Expected pick-up time and late pick-up consequences
 - Provider closed/dates you do not operate (vacation, holiday, sick, etc.)
 - Termination (Initiated by participant or provider)
 - Any policies related to A.C.C.E.S.S.'s operations and how they affect your services.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

The California State Penal Code 11164-11174.3 requires mandated reporters to report all cases of suspected child abuse.

- All A.C.C.E.S.S. employees are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse.
- Child Care Provider Reporting Requirements for Suspected Child Abuse.
 - Child care providers are mandated reporters of child abuse. This means that you are required by law to report any knowledge or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to authorities. If you do not file a suspected child abuse report with the proper reporting agency, you are violating California law (Penal Code Section 11166). Providers who violate this criminal and civil law may be subject to termination or suspension from receiving A.C.C.E.S.S. referrals or from providing care for families subsidized through A.C.C.E.S.S.



Reporting Procedure – How to Report Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

If you know of or suspect child abuse or neglect, have questions, or need a reporting form:

- Call the Merced County Children Services Branch at (209) 385-3104.
- Complete and file a written report within 36 hours.
- Call the local police department for urgent or emergency situations.

A.C.C.E.S.S. GENERAL POLICES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE PROVIDER DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY (CCR Title 5 18221)

All Providers

All child care providers that participate in the subsidy programs must document their eligibility to participate in the program. All documentation must be submitted by due, and will be reviewed and verified by agency staff. The following documents & requirements must be in place for providers choosing to participate in the AP programs:

- Must be 18 years of age or over
- A valid California Driver's License or ID card with current address or DMV printout
- Copy of Provider's current fee schedule, policies and parent/provider contract
- Social Security Card or Tax Identification (EIN #)
- A W-9 form attesting to your business tax payer identification number
- Receipt of AP Standards for Participation (Forms are included in packet)
- Completed Electronic Payment Selection Form
- Statement declaring that provider will allow parents unlimited access to enter and inspect their home without notice whenever children are in care.
- Providers are required to attend Mandatory meeting/training at least once a year.
- As a child care provider, you must select one of the following two options to receive child care payments :
 - Payment Option #1: Direct Deposit (ACH)
 - Payment Option #2: Check by mail

Licensed Center or Family Child Care Home	License-Exempt Center (School setting)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of your current facility license (Note: License is linked to provider and home/facility. If a provider moves or transfer ownership, new provider documentation, including a current license must be completed • Provider agrees to remain in compliance with applicable licensing regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider agrees to remain in compliance with applicable regulations • Written declaration that the program is located on school grounds and is staffed by "qualified teachers" that are school personnel.
License-Exempt Family Child Care Home (Child's Aunt, Uncle or Grandparent) Trustline is not required	License-Exempt Family Child Care Home Trustline (Family, Friend or Neighbor) Trustline REQUIRED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider agrees to remain in compliance with applicable registry laws and regulations • Health and Safety Self-Certification form • Declaration of Exemption from TrustLine form • TrustLine Registry, if applicable • Note: If the relationship to the child receiving services is not clear, we will require the provider to be TrustLine Registered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered and cleared through TrustLine prior to caring for the family's child(ren) • Health and Safety Self-Certification form • Provider agrees to remain in compliance with applicable registry laws and regulations • Providers will not be reimbursed for services until cleared by the TrustLine process.(Only Stage 1 participants will be reimbursed up to 120days retroactive child care from the date TrustLine clears)

When A.C.C.E.S.S. receives the requested completed documents in a timely manner, agency staff will finalize your process to determine if you are an eligible subsidized child care provider. You may begin providing services as a subsidized provider after A.C.C.E.S.S. has approved you as an eligible child care provider.

Once approved, new child care providers will be required to attend an Attendance Log (AL) Training where Certificate of Service (COS) and Attendance Logs (AL's) will be issued, one per child. The COS will indicate the names of the family and children authorized to receive child care including the start and end date of care and the days and hours of authorized care. Child care providers will be sent a link via email or text message to enroll in CareConnect, a portal designed for child care providers. Once enrolled, you will be able to access AL's, COS's, submit signed AL's, submit requested documents, submit changes to your contract and/or closed dates and communicate with your specialist. Existing child care providers can be mailed COS and AL's upon request.

The program will NOT pay for child care services if your facility's license is suspended, revoked or invalid. If child care payments were made under these conditions, A.C.C.E.S.S. may seek reimbursement from you.

In Home Care

If care is provided in the child's home the participant assumes the responsibilities of being the provider's employer and must follow legal, tax reporting and other employer-related requirements. A face-to-face orientation for both participant and provider is required prior to completing the agreement process. Updated documentation for legal, tax and other employee related requirements will be required every year. ***Child care payments will be made directly to the participant and the participant will be responsible for paying the provider. This rule does not apply to Stage 1.***

Even though A.C.C.E.S.S. does not deduct taxes from payments issued for authorized child care services provided, A.C.C.E.S.S. does report earnings to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Provisional License-Exempt Provider Requirements

A license-exempt child care provider who is not the aunt, uncle or grandparent of the child must be TrustLine registered.

- Providers who are required to be TrustLine Registered cannot be reimbursed for child care services, until the TrustLine is cleared.
- In situations where there is an "immediate need," a participant is allowed to select a Provisional Child Care Provider. The Provisional Child Care Provider must complete a TrustLine Registry Form and be TrustLine Registered within 30 days in order to be eligible for reimbursement.
- If a Provisional Child Care Provider fails to be TrustLine registered within the 30-day period, the agency will not reimburse for any child care services prior to the TrustLine Registration date.
- Child care services will only be approved for the Provisional Child Care Provider if no other licensed child care provider is able to provide services for the participants' child care needs.

Facility License Capacity (CCR Title 22, Article 6, Section 102416)

Providers will remain in compliance with applicable licensing requirements, laws and regulations at all times. Please refer to the regulations of Community Care Licensing (CCL) to ensure that you are meeting all requirements.

The license capacity specified on your facility license shall be the maximum number of children for whom care can be provided at any one time.

- Providers must ensure that additional child enrollments will not violate the overall capacity indicated on their facility license.
- It is always the provider's responsibility to monitor the total number of children enrolled and present in their facility during posted hours of operation.

A.C.C.E.S.S. may report all allegations of licensing violations to Community Care Licensing (CCL) for follow-up. Serious allegations may result in your facility license being suspended, revoked and/or placed on a probationary status. The revocation of your facility license will result in the termination of your affiliation with the subsidized child care program, A.C.C.E.S.S.

Changes to Provider Child Care Agreements (CCR Title 5 18221(f))

Notify the Specialist if your Child Care Contract information or program has changed.

Notification is required within five (5) business days for:

- Change in contact telephone number(s)
- Change in license status
- Change in facility policies
- Change in operating days/hours
- Changes that will affect your direct deposit

Note: Please make sure to inform A.C.C.E.S.S. of any changes that may affect your direct deposit or PPC (i.e., close bank account, change banks, change in TAX ID, change in address).

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Giving your change of address only to the post office, County, or CalWORKs office is not sufficient. You are required to give your address change and new contact telephone number directly to your Specialist.

A.C.C.E.S.S. assumes you receive mail at the address you have on file with us. If you do not notify us about an address change, A.C.C.E.S.S. is not responsible for mail that is lost, returned or not received. Mail sent to your previous address will not be forwarded to the new address and will be returned to A.C.C.E.S.S. If A.C.C.E.S.S. receives returned mail, child care may be terminated immediately. It is imperative that all address changes be reported, and all required documents are submitted timely to update your address in order to prevent a delay in your child care reimbursement by mail or direct deposit.

MOVING LICENSE CHILD CARE FACILITY TO A NEW LOCATION

You become an eligible child care provider with A.C.C.E.S.S. based on information you provided when enrolled. This information included the address of your services. Therefore, if you plan to move your services or to open another site you must notify A.C.C.E.S.S. immediately.

You must call A.C.C.E.S.S. before you move:

- If you plan to continue providing child care, you must update your paperwork
- A.C.C.E.S.S. will provide you with all required documents to complete.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. will not pay you until you have turned in updated paperwork.



- If you are a licensed provider, you must also:
 - Notify Community Care Licensing,
 - Complete FFN documentation, as you are no longer a licensed child care provider,
 - Apply for a new license, if you plan to continue child care,
 - Submit a copy of your new license as soon as you receive it.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. may reimburse you according to the new effective date on your license, if you have submit all required documents on a timely manner.
- If you do not plan to continue child care at the new location, you must provide your new address and a W-9 so A.C.C.E.S.S. can mail your income tax forms.

CHANGING CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

A participant who wishes to change child care providers is encouraged to give at least two (2) weeks written notice to you and to the participant's Specialist. If the participant does not provide notice of a change, the participant is responsible for adhering to the termination policy in your contract. Any fees arising from non-compliance with a provider/parent contract may be charged to the participant by the provider. Parents enrolled in your facility must follow all the rules and requirements of a private-pay family.

MULTIPLE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

If a child's certified hours of care can be accommodated by one provider, then multiple providers cannot be used. Participant's may use multiple providers when they elect to enroll their child in a licensed early education program (center) for a portion of the day or week and use a different provider for the remaining hours.

PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

REIMBURSEMENT FOR SERVICES (CCR Title 5 18221)

Child care providers must document rates/fees charged for child care and development services to the public. A.C.C.E.S.S. reimburses child care services using the California Code of Regulation Title 5 Utilization of Regional Market Rate Survey regulations. These regulations are subject to change and are available online at the CDSS website (<https://rcscc.adm.dss.ca.gov/>).

- Reimbursement is limited based on the applicable ceiling limit per the current market rate survey. The child's age, provider type and need for services will be used to determine the applicable ceiling.
- Reimbursement will not exceed the fees charged to the public.
- If the rate/fee a provider charges the public is above the Regional Market Rate Ceiling, the participant maybe required to pay the difference directly to you.
- Your rates will remain in effect for a minimum of 12 months and you notify us of a change.
- For centers or private schools operating an extended child care (before/ after school care), your rates must be separate from school tuition and other school-related fees.

You may request a rate change/addition once a year that will be effective the first day of the month following the required 30 day notice after the documentation was submitted to A.C.C.E.S.S. (i.e., if A.C.C.E.S.S. receives the new rates on November 5th, the new rates are effective January 1st if approved).

- If you are a licensed provider, you will need to submit an updated contract/rate sheet.
- License-exempt providers are required to submit an updated contract.

Note: Provider reimbursement is limited to the applicable ceiling or the providers' requested rate, whichever is less.

REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Each case is reviewed individually to meet the family's need for child care. A.C.C.E.S.S. will take into consideration the participant's need (work, school, training, etc.), age of the child, hours of child care, provider rates, and the RMR when determining the authorized schedule and rates. Child care hours and rates are subject to change based on the needs of the participant. A.C.C.E.S.S. will notify you, in writing (issued COS), of any changes to the authorized schedule and authorized payment rates.

VARIABLE SCHEDULE INFORMATION (USAGE ONLY – NO SET HOURS)

A.C.C.E.S.S. reimburses child care hours up to the maximum authorized for children whose approved care is a variable (no set hours) schedule and the child attends care.

You will not be reimbursed if a child on a variable schedule does not attend child care even if the absence is due to illness or vacation. In addition, you will not be paid for days the facility is closed.

Note: For fiscal year 2021-2022, variable schedules will be reimbursed at the maximum certified hours of care regardless of attendance. This policy is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is set to expire June 30, 2022.

All Programs:

- If the COS on file indicates the child is approved for a variable schedule, A.C.C.E.S.S. will reimburse only for the hours of care provided up to the maximum hours approved for the child. Any child care hours used beyond the maximum approved is the responsibility of the participant.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. reimburses services based on the certified care indicated on the COS. This may include transportation time to/from the activity.
- The participant is responsible for child care that exceeds authorized rates and hours.

EXEMPT PROVIDERS

Part-Time All Schedule Types (less than 30 hours per week or less than 130 per month)

- A.C.C.E.S.S. pays exempt providers for actual days and child care hours.
- When a child is absent from your care, you will not be paid.

Full-Time Set/Predictable Schedule (30 hours or more per week)

- A.C.C.E.S.S. pays exempt providers who are authorized with full-time set/predictable hours based on the COS.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. may reimburse a day of absence if the absence falls on a day the child was scheduled to attend unless:
 - You do not charge for days of absence.
 - You have not followed the Absence Policy regarding cases of abandonment of care.

Note: For fiscal year 2021-2022, variable schedules and exempt providers with part time schedules will be reimbursed at the maximum certified hours of care regardless of attendance. This policy is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

LICENSED PROVIDERS

- A.C.C.E.S.S. pays licensed providers who are authorized with full-time or part-time set/predictable hours based on the COS.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. may reimburse a day of absence if the absence falls on a day the child was scheduled to attend unless:
 - You do not charge private reimburse families for days of absence.
 - You have not followed the Absence Policy regarding cases of abandonment of care.

TEMPORARY SCHEDULE CHANGES FOR MILDLY ILL OR SUSPENDED CHILDREN

Mildly Ill/Sick Child

If a school-age child attends child care for a full day because he/she is sick and is not able to attend school, please make sure that this is documented on the attendance sheet.

Suspended Child

If a child is suspended from school and attends child care for a full day rather than part day, please make sure that this is documented on the attendance sheet. If the suspension lasts more than one (1) day, a copy of the suspension notice must be attached to the attendance log.

FEE-RELATED PAYMENT POLICIES

Please discuss the following fee-related policies with each participant/guardian before you begin to provide child care services to his/her child(ren).

- Deposits and Registration Fees
 - Deposits: A.C.C.E.S.S. does not reimburse deposits or any other type of advance payment to reserve a slot for a child.
 - Registration Fees: A.C.C.E.S.S. may reimburse registration fees to licensed family child care homes, child care centers, and license-exempt centers if they are within the RMR limits and are not higher than the fees for non-subsidized families.
- Late Fees
 - A.C.C.E.S.S. does not reimburse late fees for participants whose child is not picked up by his/her scheduled time, or by close of your business day. The participant is responsible for late fees.
- Academic and Other School Fees
 - A.C.C.E.S.S. does not reimburse private or public school-related fees for kindergarten and primary grades, tuition, books, uniforms, etc.
 - If your center offers a school age program, you must have a separate fee schedule for tuition and other school-related fees (before/after school care).
- A.C.C.E.S.S. does not reimburse meals, transportation, field trips, or activities that are not included in your basic child care rate.
- Two-Week Notice
 - State law does not allow payment of two (2) providers for the same time period.
 - If a participant chooses to end care or remove their child immediately, payment will end the last day child care was used.
 - If a provider (by contract) requires a two-week notice and the participant fails to give proper notice, the participant will be responsible for payment not covered by A.C.C.E.S.S.

DAILY ATTENDANCE (CCR TITLE 5 18224)

All children are expected to have consistent attendance, in order to maximize the benefits of their early learning and care experience, according to the approved COS. Broadly inconsistent is defined as a deviation from approved hours of care as listed on the COS.

A.C.C.E.S.S. is not responsible for reimbursement of child care hours that are not authorized. Please refer to the COS.

ABSENCE POLICY

All providers agree to notify their A.C.C.E.S.S. Specialist when a child is absent, for unknown reasons and no communication from the parent, for seven (7) consecutive days or more.

- You must call no later than one (1) business day following the 7th day of consecutive absences.
- Failure to report absences by the 8th day may result in non-payment.

- If you cannot determine if the child will be returning to your care, A.C.C.E.S.S. will attempt to contact the participant to determine why the child has not been in care.
- If A.C.C.E.S.S. determines that the child will not be returning, A.C.C.E.S.S. will notify you of the last day of payment and dis-enroll the family based on abandonment of care.(18066.5).

DOCUMENTING ABSENCES ON ATTENDANCE LOGS

It is important for A.C.C.E.S.S. to know the reason for a child's absence.

- Participant or child care provider must write the specific reason on the attendance sheet (i.e., child sick, vacation, child best interest).
- Do not include times on the attendance logs if the child was not in your care. Indicating child care hours that were not provided or forging a participant's signature is considered fraud and will result in A.C.C.E.S.S. terminating its business relationship with the provider

CHILD CARE PROVIDER Closed Dates (LICENSED ONLY)

In order to participate in the child care subsidy program, the child care providers must submit their current contract and rate schedule to A.C.C.E.S.S.

All documents, including emails submitted must include full name, name of business (if different from name), address, phone number, email and License number.

Non-operational dates are days in which a child care facility is closed for business for holidays, vacations, or other various reasons. A child care provider may **request reimbursement** for a maximum of ten (10) closed dates in a fiscal year (July 1st through June 30th). In order for a child care provider to be reimbursed for the ten (10) days, the following must occur:

- A child care provider must specify the closed days (using exact dates) in their contract
- All planned closed dates must be submitted in writing to A.C.C.E.S.S. by May 31st of each year for the upcoming fiscal year. Closed dates must be the exact dates (mm/dd/yyyy) that the facility will be closed.



Note: Providers should submit an updated list of their specific ten (10) non-operation days to their Specialist each fiscal year.

- A child care provider that is closed for more than the ten (10) days must specify all the dates in which the facility will be closed. The ten (10) dates that have been noted as “paid”, will be reimbursed by A.C.C.E.S.S. When the child care provider exceeds their ten (10) dates, the agency will prorate the reimbursement to account for the additional closed days.
- Reimbursements will only occur for days and hours in which the children would normally be scheduled to attend, as authorized on the Certificate of Service (COS).
- Closed dates must be recorded on the Attendance log as “Provider Closed”.
- Exchanges in specified paid closed dates are allowed, if requested in writing at least 24 hours in advance, and will be approved at the discretion of A.C.C.E.S.S., with a limit of no more than three changes per year.

- Emergency closed dates will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of A.C.C.E.S.S.

Note: When a provider must close for a COVID-19 related reason, they may be reimbursed for up to an additional 16 closed days. This policy is in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is set to expire on June 30, 2022.

PROVIDER INVOICING FOR REIMBURSEMENT

A.C.C.E.S.S. provides you with pre-printed attendance logs that are required to be completed each day for each child throughout the month.

- Contact the office immediately if you have issues obtaining an AL.
- Do not alter the pre-printed information listed on the Attendance Log.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. will not process altered attendance logs, photocopies or faxes.

Attendance reporting is very important, as this is the method of verifying services rendered and invoicing A.C.C.E.S.S. for reimbursement. A.C.C.E.S.S. issues an attendance log for each child for each month care is approved. The following steps are instructions on how the attendance log must be completed:

- Attendance logs must be completed **DAILY** by the participant, provider or authorized representative, by using a blue or black ink pen or electronically.
- Participant or authorized representatives are required to record the child's **actual arrival and actual departure times daily** and must indicate AM or PM for each actual time. When appropriate the provider may also enter times.
- The provider or authorized representative must enter the actual time when a school-age child departs for and returns from school during the day.
- Space is provided for the participant, authorized representative or provider to record **specific reasons** for all absences, holidays, vacations/ provider closed date and/or any additional school updates on the attendance log.
- For any absences (ex. child ill, provider closed, etc.) no times should be written on that day, but in the comments column the reason for absence should be documented in detail.
- The participant and provider must sign the bottom of the attendance log statement on or after the last day that child care was rendered.
- It is the provider's responsibility to ensure the attendance logs are signed by both the provider and parent before submitting to A.C.C.E.S.S. for reimbursement.
- It is not the responsibility of A.C.C.E.S.S. to acquire the required signatures for provider reimbursement.
- Provider must complete bill template or attach an invoice before submitting attendance log. ALs may be submitted digitally, by mail or drop-off in person.

Note: White out and/or correction tape cannot be used to correct a mistake.

Submitting Attendance Logs and Invoices for Reimbursement – Complete and accurate attendance logs and **invoices** for reimbursement are due no later than 5:00 pm on the 2nd of each month. Child care providers must submit an invoice for the amount of reimbursement requested.

The invoice must be based on the rates submitted by the child care provider to A.C.C.E.S.S. It is the responsibility of the child care provider to submit ALs each month. Attendance logs may be submitted digitally, by mail or dropped off in-person.



Reimbursement Schedule - Reimbursements are made to the child care provider within 20 working days of submissions. Reimbursements for care will be delayed if attendance logs are submitted after the 2nd of the month and/or are incomplete or inaccurate (e.g. having errors, found not to be signed daily, missing information, reason for absence, having questionable entries, etc.). Timing of reimbursements to child care providers who fail to submit complete and accurate attendance documents by the 2nd of each month will be 20 working days from the submission of the complete and accurate AL.

Reimbursement Amounts and Adjustments - A.C.C.E.S.S. will reimburse at a rate for authorized care based on the lesser of the Regional Market Rate or the child care provider's verified usual and customary fees to non-subsidized families. Child care providers who provide care for a family who has a variable work schedule will be reimbursed for actual care provided. Attendance logs and **invoices** submitted more than sixty (60) days in arrears will not be reimbursed. Over-reimbursements to a child care provider shall be deducted from the following month's reimbursement. A.C.C.E.S.S. is a child care *subsidy* program; therefore, the reimbursement amount may or may not represent full reimbursement for the child care provided.

Alternative Attendance Record Documents

A.C.C.E.S.S. ALs will be available through your CareConnect account for all authorized children. If you do not locate the child's AL, call your Specialist for assistance, and you may record attendance using an alternative time-in/time out document.

If you are submitting an alternative time-in/time-out document, the following information **MUST** be included:

- Provider name; child's name; and participant name;
- Month and year services were provided, including arrival and departure times;
- A signed certification statement by provider and participant, attesting under penalty of perjury, that the information provided on the alternative time-in/time-out document is accurate.
- Once the AL is available, you will begin documenting in/out times, and sign/date yours and the parents signatures at the end of the month. You must submit your alternative document and the AL to receive reimbursement.

Alternative documents that are received without the required elements listed above will be rejected.



MAIL TO:
A.C.C.E.S.S.
1850 Wardrobe Ave.
Merced, CA 95341

SAMPLE

CHILD CARE ATTENDANCE LOG

Vendor # 123456

Provider Type: Licensed Family
Child Care Home

Provider:

Provider Name
1234 Test Street
Merced, CA 9530



Printed 04/10/2019. Return the attendance sheet by 5:00 PM on the 2nd day of the month.

Period: May 1-31	Year: 2019	Program: Stage 1
Child Name:	Tommy Test	
Child DOB:	6/1/2014	
Parent Name:	Mommy Test	
Family Specialist:	Jerry Mill	

- I (parent/recipient) must report any changes in my income or family size within 14 days for Stage 1 & Cal-Learn, for all other programs within 30 days when my income exceeds 85% of the current SMI for my family size.
- The MCOE/A.C.C.E.S.S. does not act as the childcare provider's employer, and does not have an employment relationship with the provider when a childcare payment is paid. If I (parent/recipient) choose childcare in my home, I may be considered the employer and am responsible for complying with any applicable federal and state employment-related laws.

PER CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE:

Vacation M - F 7:30 am - 5:30 pm; School M-F 7:30am-8:20am, 2:10pm-5:30pm

ATTENDANCE MUST BE COMPLETED DAILY

Date	Day	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Comments	Date	Day	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Time In (AM/PM)	Time Out (AM/PM)	Comments
Day 1	Tue	2:35 pm			5:17 pm		May 17	Thu	2:16 pm			5:17 pm	
Day 2	Wed	7:37 am			5:45 pm	Did not go to school	May 18	Fri	2:3				
Day 3	Thu	2:59 pm			5:38 pm		May 19	Sat					
Day 4	Fri					Absent	May 20	Sun					
Day 5	Sat						May 21	Mon	2:3				
Day 6	Sun						May 22	Tue	2:1			5:27 pm	
Day 7	Mon	2:28 pm			5:29 pm		May 23	Wed	1:39 pm			5:29 pm	
Day 8	Tue	2:39 pm			5:19 pm		May 24	Thu	2:49 pm			5:27 pm	
Day 9	Wed	1:45 pm			5:32 pm		May 25	Fri					PARENT OFF
Day 10	Thu	2:31 pm			5:33 pm		May 26	Sat					
Day 11	Fri	2:29 pm			5:17 pm		May 27	Sun					
Day 12	Sat						May 28	Mon					Provider closed
Day 13	Sun						May 29	Tue	7:08 am	7:45 am	2:27 pm	5:29 pm	
Day 14	Mon	2:37 pm			5:12 pm		May 30	Wed	7:07 am	7:59 am	1:37 pm	5:30 pm	
Day 15	Tue	2:47 pm			5:39 pm		May 31	Thu					Tommy had a fever
Day 16	Wed	1:38 pm			5:27 pm								

Parent or authorized representative enters the exact TIME IN/OUT Before/ Afterschool Care Provider will enter exact TIME IN/OUT when the child arrives/leaves

NOTE
When the child is not in attendance/care not utilized or you have closure date, a reason must be entered in this section. Be specific (e.g., Tommy had a fever, provider's closed, Tommy absent)

Split Schedule These columns are to be used when the child has a split schedule. This means the child leaves care for school or other reason and returns to care on the same day.

Use your own billing practice (rates)

You must submit an invoice with every attendance log using your correct rates. You may use the bill template provided.

BILL TEMPLATE - OR ATTACH INVOICE				
\$750.00	X	1 MONTH	=	\$ 750.00
	X		=	\$
	X		=	\$
	X		=	\$
REQUESTED AMOUNT			=	\$ 750.00

Parent/Guardian and Provider MUST sign and date

UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY - THIS IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE REPORT OF ATTENDANCE FOR THIS CHILD FOR THE MONTH INDICATED. THIS IS THE SAME RATE CHARGED TO NON-SUBSIDIZED FAMILIES.

I understand that I may be required to repay any overpayment

UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY I CERTIFY THE ACCURACY OF THE HOURS IN THIS REPORT

SIGNATURE OF PROVIDER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF PARENT

DATE

FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30. You must report and settle payments, including correcting any payment problems, before the fiscal year ends.

- C2AP, C2AP and CAPP: A.C.C.E.S.S. will only reimburse valid attendance sheets for child care during the current fiscal year. Attendance sheets received more than 60 days after the due date are no longer eligible for payment. Exception: June attendance sheets must be received no later than July 31st.
- Stage 1 Programs: A.C.C.E.S.S. will only reimburse valid ALs for child care provided during the current fiscal year.

OVERPAYMENT PROCEDURE

If A.C.C.E.S.S. overpays you for services, A.C.C.E.S.S. expects you to return the full amount overpaid to you. If you notice an overpayment, contact your assigned Specialist immediately to arrange repayment.

- If you are currently participating in any A.C.C.E.S.S. program, the agency will deduct the amount of the overpayment from your next payment(s) until the full amount owed is paid.
- If you are not currently participating in the subsidized child care program, and you do not repay A.C.C.E.S.S. immediately, you must sign an agreement to return the overpayment.
- If you do not return an overpayment, you may not enroll any children who are subsidized by A.C.C.E.S.S. until the overpayment is repaid.

UNDERPAYMENT PROCEDURE

If A.C.C.E.S.S. underpays you for services due to a calculation error, the payment may be adjusted.

CHILD CARE FRAUD

A.C.C.E.S.S. is required by State and Federal regulations to hold accountable participants and/or providers who receive services and/or payments by misrepresenting or withholding pertinent information. A.C.C.E.S.S. policy defines fraud as “any intentional action or intentional omission that results in falsification and/or misrepresentation of information, either verbal or written, resulting in ineligible use or provision of child care and/or ineligible receipt of childcare payments”. This also includes License-exempt providers who falsify the nature of the provider’s relationship to the child.

A.C.C.E.S.S. works with HSA Welfare Fraud investigators as well as the Merced County District Attorney’s office on cases of suspected child care fraud by providing documentation including, but not limited to, attendance records and payment history as requested. Consequences of ineligible child care may range from a repayment plan to prosecution by the District Attorney’s office.

Providers who falsify attendance documents and/or receive services or payments by misrepresenting or withholding pertinent information will be terminated from providing subsidized child care services to A.C.C.E.S.S. families.

Any provider terminated for not following A.C.C.E.S.S. program policies will be removed from the program.

It is the provider’s legal obligation to be truthful and accurate in all their dealings with A.C.C.E.S.S. and Child Care Resource and Referral. Any attempt to deceive A.C.C.E.S.S. to obtain payments the provider has not earned, is illegal and may be reported.

PROVIDER COMPLAINTS/PROVIDER TERMINATION

COMPLAINT POLICY

- A.C.C.E.S.S. is committed to work cooperatively with all providers with whom it conducts business.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. is committed to develop and maintain professional and supportive relationships with all providers.
- A.C.C.E.S.S. is committed to resolving all complaints and provider/agency disagreements in a courteous and professional manner.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

A.C.C.E.S.S. handles complaints as follows:

- Refers complaints alleging licensing violations to Community Care Licensing.
- Reports suspected child abuse to the Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD) and/or local law enforcement.
- Suspends referrals to the involved provider or prevents adding additional subsidized children while a complaint is under investigation.
 - Resumes participation with and resumes referrals to the provider when notified that the complaint or investigation has been resolved in the provider's favor.
- Attempts to resolve the issue quickly in accordance with policies and procedures.
- Investigates all concerns regarding the deliberate filing of incorrect information in order to receive subsidized services. A.C.C.E.S.S. expects parents and providers to complete all paperwork accurately and truthfully.

If You **SEE** Something,
SAY Something

To report a complaint or concern
regarding any licensed care facility,
contact the Hotline at:

1-844-LET-US-NO

(1-844-538-8766)

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY
CALL 9-1-1

You may also contact us at LetUsNo@dss.ca.gov
or by mail:



CDSS
CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

California Department of Social Services
Community Care Licensing Division
Centralized Complaint and Information Bureau
744 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

PROVIDER TERMINATION

Causes for Termination

A.C.C.E.S.S. reserves the right to terminate our business relationship with you if:

- You refuse to sign or do not return required documentation for your provider data file
- You submit fraudulent information or claims
- You do not give A.C.C.E.S.S. a copy of your current license
- You do not comply with licensing requirements, including but not limited to capacity limits
- You fail to provide current and correct information regarding child care attendance
- Child care situation is deemed detrimental to the health or welfare of a child
- Your license has been suspended or revoked by Community Care Licensing
- You provide care at a location other than the one identified on your license and/or noted in the provider agreement

- You do not notify A.C.C.E.S.S. of new or changed information. For example, you move without notifying A.C.C.E.S.S.
- You fail to take, or complete corrective action required by A.C.C.E.S.S. or any governmental agency or authority
- You are uncooperative with A.C.C.E.S.S. staff or ask them to commit illegal or unethical acts
- You or your representative threaten violence or harm or demonstrate a similar inappropriate behavior (yelling and/or use of profanity) against A.C.C.E.S.S. staff or a participant
- An administrative action taken or in the process of being taken (includes denied application, denied exemption, temporary suspension order, expedited revocation action, revocation action, or exclusion action that is being initiated, in process, or already taken)
- A probationary license (refer to Title 22, Division 12, Chapter 3)
- You fail to comply with any A.C.C.E.S.S. policy or procedure

Termination without Notice

A.C.C.E.S.S. at its sole discretion may terminate you immediately:

- For a substantiated claim of abuse or neglect
- For a substantiated report of child care fraud
- If Trustline has been denied
- For any reason A.C.C.E.S.S. determines warrants termination

Voluntary Withdrawal from Participation

You may voluntarily withdraw from the subsidized child care program. If you wish to withdraw and you have A.C.C.E.S.S. subsidized children in your care, A.C.C.E.S.S. requests that you give participants a fourteen (14) calendar day notice. This will allow staff and parents the time to make alternative child care arrangements.

Grievance Procedure

When you have a complaint about our services, reimbursement, policies or procedures, and/or practices of A.C.C.E.S.S., please follow the steps-by-step instructions below:

Program participants (child care providers and families) who have a disagreement or misunderstanding with an A.C.C.E.S.S. staff member are encouraged to speak with that staff person first. Often times these issues turn out to be a misunderstanding about a regulation or agency policy.

1. If the program participant is not satisfied with a resolution after speaking with the staff person involved, contact the supervisor, 209 381-6790.
2. If the program participant is still not satisfied with a resolution after speaking with the supervisor, contact the program manager, 209 381-6793.
3. After speaking with the program manager, If the program participant still has questions or concerns, contact the Early Education Department Director at 209 386-6061.
4. If the program participant that are dissatisfied with the resolution decision issued by the Director the participant may submit a complaint to the compliance officer at 209 381-6627.

Uniform Complaint Procedure

The Merced County Office of Education recognizes its primary responsibility to comply with State and Federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. MCOE shall investigate complaints alleging failure to comply with such laws and/or alleging discrimination and shall seek to resolve those complaints in accordance with MCOE's uniform complaint procedures. (5 CCR 4620) Uniform complaint procedures shall be used when addressing complaints alleging:

- A. Unlawful discrimination based on actual or perceived age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, medical condition or marital status in any program or activity that receives or benefits from state financial assistance. This definition of "unlawful discrimination" extends to any person who is perceived to have any of the above characteristics or who is associated with someone who has, or who is perceived to have, any of those characteristics.
- B. Failure to comply with State and/or Federal laws in the following areas: Adult Basic Education, Consolidated Categorical Aid Programs, Migrant Education, Vocational Education, Child Care and Development, Child Nutrition and Special Education. (California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sections 4610, 4630)

Complaints alleging unlawful discrimination may be filed by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to unlawful discrimination. The complaint must be initiated no later than six (6) months from the date when the alleged discrimination occurred or when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination. The Superintendent, for good cause, may extend the six-month period for up to 90 days at the complainant's written request. (Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 4630)

Complaints regarding deficiencies related to instructional materials, emergency or urgent facilities conditions that pose a threat to the health and safety of students or staff, and teacher vacancy or mis-assignments shall be investigated and resolved pursuant to MCOE Policy entitled, Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures.

Copies of MCOE's complaint procedures shall be available free of charge.

Appeals

If a complaint is denied, in full or in part by MCOE, the complainant may appeal to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Appeals must be filed within fifteen (15) days of receiving MCOE's decision. The complainant may, within that fifteen (15) day period, file a written request for an extension. Extensions will not be automatically granted, but may be granted for good cause. Appeals must be in writing. Appeals must specify the reason(s) for appealing MCOE's decision. Appeals must include a copy of the original complaint and a copy of MCOE's decision.

If a complaint is denied, in full or in part, by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the complainant may request reconsideration by the Superintendent. Reconsideration must be requested within thirty-five (35) days of receiving the State Department of Education report. The original decision denying the complaint will remain in effect and enforceable unless and until the State Superintendent of Public Instruction modifies the decision.

Civil Law Remedies

In addition to the above-described complaint procedure, or upon completion of that procedure, complainants may have civil law remedies. These civil law remedies can include, but are not limited to, injunctions and restraining orders. These civil law remedies are granted by a court of law and may be used, in part, to prevent MCOE from acting in an unlawful manner. Delay in pursuing civil law remedies before a court of law may result in loss of rights to those remedies. Any questions regarding civil law remedies should be directed to an attorney.

Compliance Officer

MCOE designates the following compliance officer to receive and investigate complaints and ensure compliance with the law:

Deputy Superintendent – Human Resources Department
MCOE Compliance Officer
632 W. 13th Street
Merced, CA 95341
Phone: 209-381-6627

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Child Care Provider Technical Assistance

A.C.C.E.S.S. staff conducts visits to child care providers in order to provide support, technical assistance and to ensure program compliance. Visits may be pre-arranged or unannounced. Child care providers will be offered materials and assistance and asked to produce attendance logs and other documentation for children in subsidized care.

Self-Review

A.C.C.E.S.S. staff conducts an annual evaluation of the child care services program. This annual self-review is conducted to verify compliance with program requirements and to improve services. Parents enrolled in the program are asked to assist in the self-review by completing the parent survey. Survey findings are used to improve program operations and services to families.

Categorical Program Monitoring

Every three to four years, the CDSS conducts a coordinated Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) of all subsidized child care service programs. A.C.C.E.S.S. programs are subject to these regular reviews.

Alternative Payment Monitoring Unit

In accordance with provisions of the Budget Act of 2004, the CDSS monitors and evaluates A.C.C.E.S.S. to establish error rates in the areas of: 1) family fee determination, 2) income eligibility, 3) reimbursements to child care providers, and 4) basis for hours of care (need). In addition, A.C.C.E.S.S. is subject to the provisions of the Federal Improper Payment information Act of 2002 which insures that funds do not go to the wrong recipient or the recipient receives the incorrect amount.

PARENT AND CHILD CARE PROVIDER EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Early Education Department has a parent education program. Activities may include:

- School readiness activities, home visitation, playgroups, workshops, trainings, and more
- Other educational programs held throughout the year that assist parents with their understanding of child development, such as Parent Institute Conference and Parent Leadership Training Institute
- Publications that offer education and information

For more information on programs, call Child Care Resource and Referral at 209 381-6793

CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL (R&R)

An important function of R&R is to provide free child care referrals to parents, whether or not a family qualifies for subsidized child care. In addition to making referrals, staff is available to answer questions on child development concerns and to coordinate child care provider trainings on professional topics, licensing, business practices, improving the quality of the child care environment, marketing, and more.



MY CHILD CARE PLAN

Child care referrals are available to parents free of charge. R&R works with each family to design a child care plan that meets their family needs based upon information family provides.

- If you are a licensed family child care provider, licensed center or license-exempt center, your facility can be included in A.C.C.E.S.S.'s provider database, which is updated regularly and maintained by the department.
- R&R makes child care referrals in accordance with the agency's referral policy.

PROVIDER REFERRAL POLICY

The Child Care Resource and Referral program operates on the basis of parental choice in child care. We believe that parents who have accurate and objective information about available child care options and are knowledgeable about quality child care are the best ones to evaluate and choose child care for their children.

We offer parents the opportunity to learn what to look for in a child care setting and their rights as parents to pursue adequate and safe care for their children. A.C.C.E.S.S. makes referrals, not recommendations.

Our policy is:

- Parental choice in selection of child care services
- To refer to licensed providers based on proximity to the parents' stated location preference, age of the child and times that care is needed
- To make every effort to serve parents looking for child care. However, we make referrals, not recommendations. A.C.C.E.S.S. staff is not responsible for the fulfillment of child care services
- To provide at least five (5) referrals (whenever possible)
- To offer information to the caller about their option to choose a license- exempt provider

- Not to discriminate against any individual or group based on race, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, handicap or income
- Not to release information on providers or the families we serve. All information received from providers and parents remains confidential unless it involves the immediate health or safety of a child
- A.C.C.E.S.S. reserves the right not to refer to providers:
 - Where there is documentation of abuse or neglect
 - When service or place of care has been documented as unsafe and conditions have not been corrected
 - When a facility is not licensed and is not exempt from licensing requirements

CHILD CARE REFERRAL SYSTEM

- Asks parents/guardians questions such as child's age, child care schedule, desired location, etc. The information provided by the parent allows R&R to offer the best referrals for the family, based on information given by the providers in the database
- Randomly generates from its database of licensed providers a list of up to 10 providers who may be a match
- Encourages parents to visit, interview and observe several providers
- Suggests that parents call Community Care Licensing (CCL) to inquire on the status of a provider's license and to see if there are any past or pending complaints
- Provides parents with tips and tools for selecting a provider, including a pamphlet, Quality Child Care, which includes:
 - A checklist on how to interview providers;
 - Child care regulation information; and
 - Other suggestions for selecting providers
- Confidentiality
 - In accordance with the Early Education Department confidentiality policy, information gathered during referrals will not be made available to outside sources
 - The data collected are used to assist state and local agencies to understand and plan effectively to address child care needs in the community
 - Parents may obtain referrals in person, via phone or email

PROVIDER OUTREACH AND TRAINING

R&R provides guidance, support, information, and offers professional development for providers that include:

- Many workshops and training sessions per year on a range of topics and plans conferences and institutes with community partners
- How to provide quality child care
- Child development topics and concerns
- How to acquire a child care license from Community Care Licensing
- How to find resources such as grants and loans
- How to become a subsidized child care provider
- How to operate a business, including business record keeping, marketing, creating

and maintaining family files

- Capacity building
- Parent Engagement

QUALITY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

CHILD CARE INITIATIVE PROJECT (CCIP)

- Assists unlicensed child care providers in becoming licensed through the Community Care Licensing process
- Assists licensed Family Child Care Providers (FCCs) in increasing the quality of their environments
- Provides training in guidance and discipline, growth and development, nutrition, meal preparation, and health and safety, with an emphasis in infant care
- Provides access to resources such as fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and first aid/CPR classes
- Helps individuals build a successful and strong business

IMPROVE AND MAXIMIZE PROGRAMS SO ALL CHILDREN THRIVE (IMPACT)

- First 5 IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive) is an innovative approach that forges partnerships between First 5 California and counties to achieve the goal of helping children ages 0 to 5 and their families thrive by increasing the number of high-quality early learning setting, including supporting and engaging families in the early learning process.
- Supporting more settings to achieve high-quality standards helps ensure more of California's children enter school with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to be successful.
- This provides families the information and support they need to promote and optimize their children's development and learning, both inside and outside the home.

