



sierra nevada children's services

# Provider Guide

Investing in our community, one family at a time



# ABOUT SNCS

## **What is SNCS?**

Sierra Nevada Children's Services (SNCS) is a private, community-based nonprofit childcare resource and referral agency that has served families, early care and education professionals and the community since 1978. We have 3 offices in Nevada and Sierra Counties – Grass Valley, Truckee, and Loyalton.

## **SNCS Mission Statement**

Sierra Nevada Children's Services enriches the community by supporting quality child care and empowering families to aspire to life-long success.

## **SNCS Vision Statement**

We provide the bridge between state dependence and self-sufficiency, resulting in families contributing to the community through economic success and growth. This is done by ensuring child care, which reduces barriers to employment and enables more people to work, creating economic expansion.

## **Non-Discrimination Clause**

SNCS operates on a non-discriminatory basis, giving equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, color, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or ethnicity.

## **Confidentiality**

SNCS policy regarding confidentiality states that the use or disclosure of information pertaining to the child or the child's family is restricted to purposes directly related to the administration of the program. The use or disclosure of information will be limited to SNCS staff and authorized representatives of the funding sources or, in the event of a licensing investigation, Community Care Licensing. Information may also be shared with the Department of Social Services regarding CalWORKs families.

Except in the aforementioned instances, information shall not be released without prior written acknowledgment of the enrolled parent or childcare provider, unless a court order is issued to SNCS.

# SNCS PROGRAMS

## **Supportive Child Care**

SNCS administers various programs that are funded by federal, state & local governments to help income eligible families pay for part, or all of their childcare costs. Families may also pay a share of cost on a sliding scale that is based on income and family size.

## **Childcare Referrals**

SNCS is funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide Resource & Referral services to Nevada and Sierra counties. SNCS provides free childcare referrals to anyone in the community, regardless of income. SNCS maintains current information on all licensed family childcare providers and licensed childcare centers in Nevada and Sierra counties.

When a parent contacts SNCS for assistance with looking for child care, SNCS gathers some basic information from the parent to best match the family's needs to a list of childcare providers. SNCS staff is available to answer questions about how to find quality child care. SNCS believes the parent is the best person to choose the care for the child. It is SNCS goal to help parents make informed choices from a broad range of childcare options that meet the family's needs.

Additionally, when providing childcare referrals SNCS staff informs parents that they have the right to view information about a licensed childcare provider (Family Child Care Home or Child Care Center) either at the childcare provider's location or by contacting Community Care Licensing (CCL) (Oliver's Law, January 2000). The purpose of this law is to empower and inform parents and guardians who need childcare services; to encourage parents to review the safety of the childcare program or facility; and to encourage parents to evaluate the program's ability to meet the needs of their child. Information regarding childcare providers is available by calling CCL at (916) 263-5744 (Nevada County) or (530) 895-5033 (Sierra County) or online at <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch/Search/ChildCare>.

SNCS encourages childcare providers to report changes that affect the information provided to families requesting childcare referrals. Accurate information, such as accepted age range and days and hours of operation, is vital for providing accurate referrals to families. SNCS will request vacancy updates once a month. You can opt to receive these updates through text by providing your mobile phone number and asking us to send updates via text, otherwise updates will be requested via email.

SNCS does not inspect or guarantee the conditions of a childcare provider's facility or the quality of care children receive. SNCS does not assume any responsibility for injury or damages arising from the performance of our agreement of services. Providers and parents agree to indemnify and hold harmless SNCS, its officers and its employees from costs, suit or liability allegedly arising from the provision of childcare services.

### **Resources**

SNCS is connected to other agencies in the community that provide services and support for families and childcare providers. SNCS staff can provide referrals to agencies who can assist with services such as housing, food, education, legal services, and employment.

### **Child Development Lending Library**

SNCS has child development resources available for both parents and childcare providers. All 3 of our offices have a Child Development Lending Library that include developmentally appropriate toys, books, and games for children of different ages. The Lending Library also contains educational books and videos to assist both parents and childcare providers in caring for and raising children. The resources range from parenting guidance to information on how to operate a successful family child care home or child care center.

### **Workshops & Trainings**

SNCS offers training workshops throughout the year for childcare providers, as well as other various learning opportunities for childcare providers and parents. The monthly schedule is posted in the main lobby of our Grass Valley office as well as on the SNCS website, [www.sncs.org](http://www.sncs.org).

### **Quality Counts California (QCC)**

QCC is the statewide quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) that supports local and regional agencies in raising the quality of early learning and care. QCC supports all licensed family child care homes, child care centers, and alternative sites serving children birth to age five, to enhance the quality of early learning and care programs they provide and inform parents and families on what different quality levels mean for the child. QCC is designed to support and recognize child care programs for implementing research-based practices to provide high-quality environments and experiences for all children. Not all childcare providers participate in QCC. Providers participating in QCC are dedicated to improving quality program environments, teacher-child interactions, and child learning outcomes. Childcare providers who participate in QCC commit to ongoing professional development, specialized training, program assessments, and accountability, and have the opportunity to receive on-site coaching, professional consultation, quality award stipends, and a state recognized quality rating.

Please visit [nevcoldpc.org](http://nevcoldpc.org) for details on how to join the local/regional QCC program. More information on the statewide QCC program is located at [qualitycountscsca.net](http://qualitycountscsca.net).

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION**

### **General Requirements**

All childcare providers that wish to provide services for families receiving supportive childcare services must meet certain requirements. Providers must meet the following general qualifications in order to receive reimbursement for families served by SNCS programs.

- All providers must be licensed or exempt from licensure.
- All childcare providers must complete all necessary paperwork prior to the approval of childcare services. All childcare providers must sign an agreement with SNCS, and submit a completed W-9. Additional paperwork is required depending on the type of childcare provided (licensed and license-exempt).
- All childcare providers must welcome the enrollment of children with disabilities, making reasonable accommodations for them

and implementing those accommodations. Providers must agree to operate on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to economic status, race, color, creed, religion, ethnicity, or national origin.

- All childcare providers must maintain an open door policy, allowing parents unlimited access to their child when the child is in care.
- All childcare providers must provide a signed statement as to whether or not the child care and development services being provided include religious instruction or worship.
- All childcare providers are independent contractors and are not employees of SNCS. Childcare providers are responsible for keeping records of reimbursement for their own tax purposes. SNCS does not withhold taxes from childcare provider reimbursement.
- All childcare providers must charge rates for subsidized families that are less than or equal to the rates charged for unsubsidized families.

### **Licensed Childcare Providers**

- All licensed childcare providers are required to submit a copy of their facility license to SNCS.
- All licensed childcare providers must provide documentation of rates, contractual agreements, days of non-operation, and hours of operation. If unable to provide such documentation, the provider must complete a signed statement declaring that they do not provide these to unsubsidized families.

- **Liability Insurance**

California law gives family childcare providers several ways to protect from liability claims for accidents or injuries. Family childcare providers should comply with one of the following:

- Carry liability insurance covering bodily injury to children and guests caused by negligence of the provider or an assistant (\$100,00 per occurrence, \$300,000 annual total for all occurrences), or such other limits as may be fixed by law; or

- Purchase a bond in the amount of \$300,000 to cover liability for child injuries; or
- Require a signed affidavit in proper legal form from parents of enrolled children stating that they are aware that the provider carries no liability insurance or bond, and, if the provider is not the owner of the family childcare home, containing a statement saying that the property owner is not liable. The form for these affidavits can be obtained from the local licensing agency.

SNCS shall have no liability or responsibility to verify, advise or assist provider in compliance with such requirements.

- **Auto Insurance**

In the event a childcare provider transports any children by automobile, any vehicle used must have adequate liability insurance coverage. A commercial use policy with adequate limits may be necessary depending on the frequency and/or regularity of automobile use.

**License-Exempt Providers: TrustLine & Relative Care**

- All license-exempt childcare providers (except the child’s aunt, uncle, or grandparent by blood, marriage, or court decree) must be TrustLine registered in order to receive reimbursement for childcare services.
- License-Exempt Providers (LEPs) are limited to providing care to the children of one family other than their own. LEPs must be at least 18 years of age and cannot be on probationary status with Community Care Licensing. Parents, legal guardians, or members of the child’s assistance unit are not eligible for reimbursement for child care services.
- License-exempt childcare providers providing childcare services for CalWORKs Stage 1 families will not receive reimbursement until SNCS receives confirmation that the childcare provider has been cleared by TrustLine. Once cleared, providers may be eligible for retroactive payment for Stage 1 families up to 120 days between the date the provider is registered with SNCS through the date that the provider is TrustLine approved.

- License-exempt childcare providers providing childcare services for families enrolled on Stage 2, Stage 3, or CAPP are not eligible for reimbursement until they have been registered on TrustLine.
- All license-exempt childcare providers must complete an EMSA approved Pediatric CPR/First Aid within 90 days of the start of services. Providers may contact SNCS for a listing of courses.
- Child care that takes place in the child's home with a license-exempt provider is referred to as in-home child care. If child care occurs in the child's home the parent is the provider's employer and is responsible for complying with state and federal laws. More information on in-home care is available from SNCS staff.

### **Family Child Care Home Education Network**

Licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH) providers may participate in the Family Child Care Home Education Network (CFCC/FCCHEN) program. The program is open to any licensed family childcare provider who is interested in participating in program quality recognition and improvements.

A Network provider is dedicated to providing comprehensive and developmentally appropriate child learning opportunities, and receive support, training, and incentives in order to meet program quality environmental standards. Families enrolled under Network funding receive information on the developmental progress of their child, and are supported through a partnership between the family, the provider, and the SNCS Education Director.

Network providers participate in ongoing training, professional development, and technical assistance to enhance and maintain professional care in a quality home environment. Quality care is guided by annual program assessments that focus on the environment, childcare routines, nutrition, activities to support child development and the level of family engagement with the families that are served. Assessments are completed by the childcare provider and the SNCS Education Director.



Network providers have a joint responsibility with the SNCS Education Director for completing individual child assessments through the Desired Results for Children and Families system, using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The DRDP assessment system is designed to encourage progress toward the achievement of desired outcomes by providing families and providers with information and technical assistance to support the individual child's progress and improve program quality. Desired outcomes for children and families include social competence, effective learning, physical and motor competence, health and nutrition, safe environments, and progress towards achievement of goals.

Providers receive an environmental rating through assessments, using the Family Child Care Home Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS) tool. Assessments are designed to strengthen, improve, and maintain quality child care environments, while also recognizing programs that meet or exceed quality standards.

FCCH providers who are interested in joining the Network may contact the Education Director for more information.

### **Family Fees**

Families may be required to pay a portion of their childcare costs, known as a Family Fee. Family fee amounts are established by the California Department of Social Services, and are determined by the family's adjusted gross monthly income, family size, and whether or not the child is enrolled for full time care (130 hours or more per month) or part time care (less than 130 hours per month). Family fees are billed according to the child who is authorized for the most care, regardless of the number of children enrolled in the program. Family fees are not adjusted for absences, provider non-operation days, or actual use of child care. California law does not state definitively who must collect the family fee; therefore, SNCS collects the family fee from the family and gives a receipt to the family. Family fees are separate from provider co-payments.

Please note: family fees have been waived for the 22.23 Fiscal Year

### **Co-Payments**

Family fees are paid to SNCS, whereas the family pays co-pays directly to the provider. A benefit amount, which is the maximum amount reimbursed for childcare services, is determined for each child receiving services. The benefit amount is determined in accordance with state regulation. Families who choose childcare providers whose usual and customary fee exceeds their benefit amount are responsible to pay the difference between the maximum reimbursement and the childcare provider's fee. This co-payment is paid directly to the childcare provider by the family and shall not be accounted for by SNCS. The provider decides whether or not to hold the family responsible for co-pays.

### **Subsidized Provider Reporting**

Following the passing of Senate Bill (SB) 75, Chapter 51, Statutes of 2019, effective July 1, 2019, and Assembly Bill (AB) 378, effective January 1, 2020, there are additional changes to California law regarding the sharing of family child care business and/or personal information. To see the relevant changes to the law, please see sections 8431 and 8432 of the Education Code, section 6253.21 of the Government Code, and section 1596.86 of the Health and Safety Code.

Beginning January 1, 2020, the California Department of Education (CDE) will collect the following additional information from licensed family child care providers and license-exempt individual providers who participate in any state-funded early care and education program, as defined in law:

- A 'Yes' or 'No' field that identifies if a provider is license-exempt (Required Field)
- Home telephone number, if known (Required Field)
- Provider's home language (Optional Field)

SNCS will be submitting this additional information to CDE on a recurring monthly basis through the Child Development Management Information System (CDMIS). The CDE will then submit the list to

specified provider organizations as defined by law and to the passing of AB 378. The CDE can also use this information to meet federal Child Care and Development Block Grant requirements, including emergency response preparedness.

If you have any questions, please contact:

CDMIS Support

Phone: (916) 445-1907 Email: CDMIS@cde.ca.gov

Fax: (916) 323-6853

Mail: 1430 N Street, Suite 3410, Sacramento, CA 95814

## APPROVED CHILDCARE SCHEDULES

An approved childcare schedule includes the days and hours of the parent's documented need for child care. Travel, sleep, and/or study time, is included when requested by the parent and when certain criteria are met.

Child care is authorized according to the parent's certified need for services, as determined by SNCS. Reimbursement to the childcare provider is based on the parent's certified need for care. Child care that is authorized on a variable schedule will be reimbursed based upon the maximum certified need.

### **Schedule Types**

There are three different types of childcare schedules. The childcare schedule type is determined based upon the family's certified need for care.

#### **1. Set Schedules**

Child care is authorized on a set schedule when the need for child care has predictable days and hours. Set schedules are reimbursed based upon the certified need for care and are eligible for reimbursement of limited absences, holidays, and provider non-operation days

## **2. Patterned Schedules**

Child care is authorized on a patterned schedule when the need for child care rotates on an identifiable pattern of days or hours. . Examples include but are not limited to; rotating between day and night shift, rotates the on/off days, rotates over a 6-week cycle. Patterned schedules are reimbursed based upon the certified need for care and are eligible for reimbursement of limited absences, holidays, and provider non-operation days

## **3. Variable Schedules**

Child care is authorized on a variable schedule when the need for child care varies, with inconsistent or unstable days and hours. Variable schedules are reimbursed based upon the maximum certified need for care.

### **Certificates of Enrollment**

The Certificates of Enrollment (COE) documents and notifies the provider of the authorized childcare schedule; copies are provided to both the parent and childcare provider. Providers may also access COEs for all enrolled children in CareConnect. The COE contains the approved childcare schedule, the beginning and ending dates, and the anticipated maximum reimbursement amount. COEs are issued upon the family's initial enrollment, annual recertification, and when changes to the schedule or rates occur.

### **Attendance Records**

Attendance records (ARs) are mailed to childcare providers who do not utilize digital attendance for each child enrolled for services. It is important for parents and childcare providers to follow these guidelines

in order to receive reimbursement for childcare services. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in termination of your business relationship with SNCS.

- Attendance must be recorded on a daily basis. Pre or post completion of ARs is a violation of state regulations.
- Parent, provider, or other authorized person is responsible for entering the exact time of arrival and departure every day services are utilized (no rounding off times).
- For children attending school: provider is responsible to enter the exact time of leaving to and returning from school every day services are utilized. Indicate the reason for any care provided during school hours.
- All changes/corrections need to be initialed by the person making the change/correction.\* Does not apply to electronic attendance.
- The reason for absence must be given whenever a child does not attend a regularly scheduled day (for example: provider closed, vacation, sick, etc...)
- IMPORTANT: Provider and Enrolled Parent must sign and date the Attendance Certification section under the penalty of perjury on or after the last day of care in the service month.
- Childcare providers are responsible for ensuring that AR's are available and easily accessible to parents at all times. Parent will notify SNCS if the provider does not make the child's ARs easily accessible and readily available to them at all times.\* Does not apply to electronic attendance.
- Incomplete entries on ARs that are submitted to SNCS for reimbursement may not be fixed at a later time.
- When the provider uses *electronic attendance*, the parent shall review accuracy of *electronic attendance* prior to submission and sign under penalty of perjury that care was provided as

documented using an electronic signature. The provider shall also sign under penalty of perjury using an electronic signature.

- If the parent and/or provider knowingly and intentionally provides or approves false, inaccurate, or misleading information on the AR, the family and/or the provider will be disenrolled from services and reimbursements will cease immediately.

If there is a reason that indicates the above requirements are not being adhered to, the parent and/or provider will be informed of the non-compliance and technical assistance will be provided. Repeated non-compliance may result in termination of the business relationship with SNCS. If there is evidence of intentional misrepresentation of attendance by the provider, SNCS will terminate the business relationship and reimbursement will cease immediately. On a case by case basis, the business relationship may be re-evaluated in 6 months upon the provider's written request.

### **Changing Childcare Providers**

Families enrolled in childcare payment assistance services have the right to change childcare providers at any time. It is critical that the following procedures be followed to prevent a childcare provider or parent from absorbing costs for child care that are not reimbursed by SNCS.

- The provider's termination/notice policy is an agreement between the family and the child care provider. The family is responsible for giving the childcare provider notice when choosing to end childcare services with a childcare provider. The family is responsible for checking with the childcare provider or referring to the provider's contract for the provider's termination and notice policy. SNCS is not responsible for reimbursing services if the family does not adhere to the provider's notice policy.
- The family must notify SNCS before services are authorized with a new childcare provider.

- The new childcare provider must meet requirements for childcare provider participation before services can start.
- Families enrolled in the Family Child Care Homes Network must choose a Network childcare provider. The family may request referrals to current Network providers.

### **Multiple Childcare Providers**

Reimbursement is limited to one childcare provider per child with the following exceptions:

- Child care may be authorized with an eligible *secondary provider* when the child's first childcare provider is not a licensed center and the parent chooses a licensed center for large group school readiness experiences.
- Child care may be authorized with an eligible *secondary provider* when the hours of operation of the first provider do not meet the family's certified need for child care.
- Child care may be authorized with an eligible *alternate provider* when one or both of the following occurs:
  - When the child is ill and cannot attend the regular provider and the family has to obtain an alternate provider (limited to 10 days per fiscal year).
  - When the child's regular provider is closed. Payment to an alternate provider when the regular provider has a paid day of non-operation is limited to 10 days per child per fiscal year.
  - Reimbursement to alternate providers is based on actual hours of attendance and is not eligible for reimbursement of absences or closures.

### **Absences**

Licensed childcare providers are reimbursed for absences as long as it is the provider's usual and customary policy to charge for absences. The childcare provider must submit a copy of their written materials to SNCS documenting their usual and customary policy of charging unsubsidized families for absences and/or non-operation days. Licensed childcare providers may also be reimbursed for 10 days of non-operation per fiscal

year (7/1 – 6/30) if it is documented in their policies and submitted to SNCS. Providers that would like to change their paid days of non-operation must report the change to SNCS in advance.

### **Excused Absences**

Reimbursements for the following absence reasons are *not limited*.

- Illness or quarantine of the child, sibling, or parent.
- Medical appointments for the child, sibling, or parent.
- Court ordered visitation with the other parent (documentation of the court orders must be on file with SNCS).

Reimbursements for the following excused absence reasons are limited. Absences beyond the limitations outlined below will be counted as days of non-attendance when determining if child care used is broadly consistent with the certified need care.

- **Family Emergency**

These are limited to 10 per child, per fiscal year (7/1 – 6/30), and include:

- Immediate need for treatment of anyone (other than the child in care) in the family by a physician or a dentist.
- Death of a family member; funeral or memorial service.
- Any catastrophic event such as theft, fire, flood, weather, car trouble, or impassable roads.
- IEP (Individualized Education Plan), if the child is required to be present.

- **Best Interest**

These are limited to 10 per child, per fiscal year (7/1 – 6/30), and include:

- Parent or child vacation time.
- Time spent with visiting relatives.
- Non-court ordered time spent with non-custodial parent.
- After school or extracurricular activities.

### **Unexcused Absences**



Any absence that is not considered an excused absence or any absence that does not indicate an absence reason. Unexcused absences will be treated as days of non-attendance when determining if the family has abandoned their child care services.

### **Abandonment of Care**

The provider shall promptly notify SNCS when the family has not been in communication with the provider for seven (7) consecutive calendar days and has not notified the provider of the reason the family is not using services.

SNCS will issue a notice of action to disenroll the family on the basis of abandonment of care when there has been no communication between the family and the provider or SNCS for a total of 30 consecutive calendar days.

## **CHILDCARE PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT**

### **Procedure**

Attendance Records (ARs) are mailed directly to childcare providers for providers who do not utilize electronic attendance. It is the responsibility of the childcare provider to submit ARs in a timely manner in order to receive reimbursement for childcare services.

- Childcare providers must contact SNCS immediately if they are missing an AR for an enrolled child. Childcare providers should maintain their own record of attendance to submit for reimbursement until the SNCS AR is received. The provider may also print the SNCS AR directly from CareConnect.
- Childcare providers who do not utilize electronic attendance must submit the original AR for the appropriate month in order to receive reimbursement for childcare services. SNCS will not accept a copy or fax of the completed AR or an AR for the incorrect month (e.g. an August attendance sheet was used for the month of July).
- **ARs that are received after the last day of the month following the month of care will not be reimbursed.**

- Incomplete or inaccurate daily entries cannot be corrected after received by SNCS. If the bottom of the attendance sheet is missing a signature, the parent and/or the childcare provider will be contacted immediately. If the missing signature is corrected no later than the last day of the month following the service month the attendance sheet will be reimbursed in accordance with the reimbursement schedule below. Exceptions may apply during declared states of emergency.
- Reimbursement will be made for approved days and hours of child care; use of child care that does not correspond with the childcare schedule or has not been pre-approved by SNCS, will not be reimbursed.
- Reimbursement is based on the family’s certified need for care. Care that is authorized on a variable schedule will be reimbursed based upon the maximum certified need.
- Reimbursement shall be in accordance with California state regulations (WIC Section 10228 (c) and 5 CCR Sections 18413 (a) and 18428. Reimbursements shall be no more than the amount the provider charges for unsubsidized families, not to exceed the maximum reimbursement rate for subsidized families.
- Reimbursements to childcare providers are issued by paper check or direct deposit.
- License-exempt childcare providers providing childcare services for CalWORKs Stage 1 families will not receive reimbursement until SNCS receives confirmation that the childcare provider has been cleared by TrustLine. Once cleared, providers may be eligible for retroactive payment for Stage 1 families up to 120 days between the date the provider is registered with SNCS through the date that the provider is TrustLine approved.
- License-exempt childcare providers providing childcare services for families enrolled on Stage 2, Stage 3, or CAPP are not eligible for reimbursement until they have been registered on TrustLine.
- Reimbursements shall be made according to the following schedule:

Claim Type	Received Date	Paid Date
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Digital Claims	1 <sup>st</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
Physical Claims	1 <sup>st</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>
Digital Claims	6 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>
All Claims	10 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup>	Last day of the month
All Claims	20 <sup>th</sup> – last day of the month	10 <sup>th</sup> of the next month

Because SNCS is funded by the California Department of Social Services, timing of reimbursement to providers can be affected by a delay in the adoption of a State budget or other legislative delays.

Reimbursement shall not occur when an attendance record is submitted under, but not limited to, the following conditions:

- The provider was incarcerated during the time care was provided.
- The provider lost their license and was directed to cease providing care.
- The provider claimed a relationship to the child that precluded the necessity for TrustLine but, in fact, the relationship did not exist, or the provider has been denied TrustLine.
- The provider used a false identity

**Reimbursement Rate Determination**

CA Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 18076 requires that contractors use a single rate category to reimburse providers. Pursuant to Title 5 Section 18074.2, contractors must reimburse providers using the appropriate RMR based on the age of the child, certified need for child care, and the facility type. Contractors are to select the rate category that most closely aligns with providers’ customary rates while remaining in compliance with regulation.

Reimbursements to a provider using a daily rate may only occur under specified circumstances:

- A family has an unscheduled but documented need of six hours or more per occurrence, such as the parent’s need to work on a regularly scheduled day off, that exceeds the certified need for care.
- A family has a documented need of six hours or more per day that exceeds no more than 14 days per month.

Reimbursements to a child care provider based on the daily rate over one month’s time shall not exceed the child care provider’s equivalent full-time monthly rate or applicable monthly ceiling.

For license-exempt providers, or licensed providers whose customary rate does not qualify for the corresponding RMR based on current regulations, Sierra Nevada Children’s Services determines the appropriate rate category by dividing the total hours of care authorized in a given month by 4.33<sup>i</sup> (the average number of weeks in a month) to determine a weekly average. Once a weekly average has been determined SNCS uses that number to determine the appropriate reimbursement category.

- If the average weekly care is less than 14 hours per week SNCS will reimburse at either a Daily or Hourly rate.
  - The Daily rate will only be applied under specified circumstances:
    - Family has an unscheduled but documented need of 6 hours or more per occurrence, such as the parent’s need to work on a regularly scheduled day off, that exceeds the certified need for child care.
    - Family has a documented need of 6 hours or more per day that exceeds no more than 14 days per month.
  - The Hourly rate will apply if the family has a documented need of less than 30 hours per week and less than 6 hours on any day.

- If the average weekly care is 14 or more hours per week but less than 30 hours per week SNCS will reimburse at a Daily, Part Time Weekly, or Part Time Monthly Rate.
  - The Daily rate will only be applied if the family has a documented need of 6 hours or more per day and less than 14 days per month.
  - The Part Time Weekly rate will only be applied if care is not authorized every week of the month.
  - The Part Time Monthly rate will only be applied if care is authorized every week of the month.
- If the average weekly care is 30 or more hours per week SNCS will reimburse at a Full Time Weekly or Full Time Monthly rate.
  - The Full Time Weekly rate will only be applied if care is not authorized every week of the month.
  - The Full Time Monthly rate will only be applied if care is authorized every week of the month.

The Regional Market Rate (RMR)<sup>ii</sup> for the appropriate reimbursement category is then compared to the provider's rate. SNCS is allowed to reimburse up to the appropriate RMR amount or the provider's requested rate, whichever is less. License exempt individuals will be reimbursed at the appropriate RMR, as determined by SNCS.

All schedules are reimbursed based upon the parent's certified need for care. Child care that is authorized on a variable schedule is reimbursed based upon the maximum authorized care.

**When Does SNCS Prorate the Reimbursement Amount?**

- If care is being reimbursed on a weekly or monthly basis, and the authorized childcare schedule begins or ends in the middle of the week or month.
- If the facility is closed during a child's regularly scheduled day of care and is not otherwise covered as a paid closure.
- If a child turns 2 or 6 in the middle of the month, resulting in a change in the applicable RMR ceiling.

<sup>i</sup> If care is not authorized every week of the month the weekly average will be determined by dividing the total hours of care in the month by the number of weeks the authorization covers

<sup>ii</sup> To look up the RMR in your county visit <https://rcscc.adm.dss.ca.gov/>

### **Non-Reimbursable Costs**

SNCS does not cover the cost of fees that are not included in the childcare provider's basic cost for childcare services. These fees may include diaper fees, transportation fees, late fees, etc. Additionally, SNCS does not cover time when a child is suspended from the childcare program.

SNCS will reimburse registration fees as long as fees or prorated portion thereof, plus the rate established for the provider, do not exceed the maximum allowable benefit amount. Any non-reimbursable portion of registration fees are the parent's responsibility.

### **Rate Changes**

All rate changes must be in writing and will become effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month following notification of the rate change.

### **Lost Check Policy**

In the event that a check is lost SNCS will reissue the check after 15 business days.

## **GRIEVANCE & COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

### **Complaints Regarding Childcare Providers**

As a Childcare Resource and Referral agency, SNCS does not license childcare facilities nor does SNCS investigate alleged violations. The role of SNCS is to:

- Receive complaints.
- Act as a resource to parents, providers and the community in assisting them in contacting the appropriate authorities.
- Provide technical assistance to providers for compliance with licensing regulations.

Confidentiality will be strictly enforced regarding all complaints. However, if SNCS receives a request from an investigative agency to assist in the investigations, SNCS may provide information from the provider file to the investigating agency.

In no instance shall SNCS make an assumption of guilt or innocence based on the documented complaint.

The following complaint procedures apply when a complaint is received by SNCS regarding any childcare provider within its referral database:

- Ask the complainant if they have spoken with their provider. The provider may be unaware that the complainant is unhappy and may be able to resolve the issue immediately.
- Inform the complainant that SNCS does not investigate complaints.
- Direct the complainant to file a formal complaint with Community Care Licensing (CCL). Parents may telephone (916) 263-5744 and request the consultant for Eastern or Western Nevada County, or call (530) 895-5033 and request the consultant for Sierra County.

All of the following are to be considered serious complaints and may be grounds for immediately placing a facility on temporary hold from referrals:

- Violation of children's rights.
- Child abuse (physical or sexual).
- Use of corporal punishment.
- Unacceptable disciplinary techniques, such as shaming, humiliation, withholding food or toileting privileges, locking child in closet/bathroom, etc.
- Gross unsanitary practices/conditions, such as presences of feces/urine, improper food handling, lack of hand washing before and after food handling/diapering, etc.
- Broken/shattered glass or other sharp objects.
- Poisonous plants/household chemicals (unless properly secured pursuant to CCL regulations).

- Complaints alleging that children have been left alone or in the care of person(s) not cleared through CCL.
- Presence of unsecured firearms.
- Over licensed capacity.
- Insufficient CCL mandated child/staff ratios.
- Presence of unsecured and/or non-childproofed medications and vitamins.
- Presence of seriously damaged/broken toys or equipment.
- Presence of illegal drugs/provider intoxication.
- Any action (written or verbal) alleging discrimination of child and/or family based on sex, race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, age, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.
- Any attempt to falsify records to receive payment from any SNCS program.

All licensed childcare providers are required to maintain, at their site, copies of CCL visit reports. Parents may access these records or may review the facility's profile on the CCL website; <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch/>. A childcare provider may be permanently removed from the SNCS referral database upon a decision made by CCL.

SNCS shall maintain a record of any written parent complaints regarding any TrustLine registered or relative childcare provider. Parents that choose a TrustLine registered or relative childcare provider may review the record of complaints maintained by SNCS on that childcare provider. All written complaints must include the nature of the complaint, the date and approximate time of occurrence and the name and address of the childcare provider.

### **Grievances and Complaints Regarding SNCS**

#### **Grievances:**

Parents and providers are encouraged to share their suggestions and concerns, as this offers a way for our program to better serve their needs. Should a grievance concerning agency policy or practice be brought to



SNCS attention, the matter will be forwarded to the Program Director in an effort to resolve the issue. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the complaint will be forwarded to the Executive Director.

Additionally, if satisfaction is not reached through the grievance process, a formal complaint may be filed with the California Department of Social Services. Uniform Complaint Policy information may be found in the lobby of Sierra Nevada Children's Services, as well as in both the Parent and Provider Guides.

**Complaints:**

Sierra Nevada Children's Services (SNCS) must comply with State and Federal laws and regulations when administering its programs. A complaint is an accusation that in some fashion SNCS has not acted in compliance with State and/or Federal laws and regulations, including allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying and non-compliance.

In order to file a complaint, a "Sierra Nevada Children's Services Uniform Complaint Procedure Form" must be completed and submitted to SNCS. These forms are available at the SNCS office, free of charge, and may be requested at any time. A complaint should be submitted as soon as possible.

Complaints of possible discrimination must be filed within six months of the incident, or when first discovered. The Executive Director may extend this deadline for up to 90 calendar days for good cause.

Any individual, duly authorized representative or interested third party, public agency or organization may file a written complaint of alleged noncompliance. Confidentiality and protection against retaliation are assured.

The complaint should describe the non-compliance problem and include all the information needed to support the allegation or complaint. Complaint forms and assistance are available at the SNCS Grass Valley Office. The Executive Director shall assure that there is an investigation of the complaint and seek to resolve complaints at the local level. If all

parties agree, a neutral mediator may be assigned. All parties shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when meetings are scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made. You may send a written complaint to: Executive Director, 420 Sierra College Drive, Ste. 100, Grass Valley, California, 95945.

An investigative meeting will be held within five working days of receiving the complaint to give all parties an opportunity to present information and question witnesses. Within 60 days of receiving the complaint (unless the complainant agrees to an extension of time), the Executive Director shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the investigation including findings, conclusion of law, disposition of the complaint, rationale, and any corrective actions. Civil law remedies may be pursued through local, state or federal aid agencies, offices, or private/public interest attorneys.

You may appeal by submitting an email within 15 days to:

California Department of Social Services  
Child Care and Development Division  
[ccddstakeholders@dss.ca.gov](mailto:ccddstakeholders@dss.ca.gov)

You must specify reason(s) for appealing the decision, stating how the facts of the agency's decision are incorrect and/or the law was misapplied, and include a copy of the locally filed complaint and the decision.

## **Serving You at Three Locations:**

### **GRASS VALLEY OFFICE:**

420 Sierra College Drive, Suite 100  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530.272.8866  
Fax 530.272.1354

### **TRUCKEE OFFICE:**

10075 Levon Street, Suite 201A  
PO Box 3239  
Truckee, CA 96160  
530.587.5960  
Fax 530.587.0899

### **LOYALTON OFFICE:**

701 Main Street, Suite 1  
PO Box 1139  
Loyalton, CA 96118  
530.993.1288  
Fax 530.993.1512

### **Stay Connected:**

[info@sncs.org](mailto:info@sncs.org)  
[www.sncs.org](http://www.sncs.org)

