



Sierra Nevada  
Children's  
Services

*investing in our community, one family at a time*

# Provider Guide

***Grass Valley (530) 272-8866***

***Truckee (530) 587-5960***

***Loyalton (530) 993-1288***

***[www.snics.org](http://www.snics.org)***

# Table of Contents

About SNCS .....	4
SNCS Mission Statement .....	4
SNCS Vision Statement .....	4
Non-Discrimination Clause .....	4
Confidentiality .....	4
SNCS Programs .....	5
Supportive Child Care .....	5
Child Care Referrals .....	5
Resources .....	6
Child Development Lending Library .....	6
Workshops & Trainings .....	6
Promotora .....	7
Requirements for Participation .....	7
General Requirements .....	7
Licensed Child Care Providers .....	8
TrustLine & Relative Care .....	9
Family Child Care Network .....	9
Family Fees .....	9
Approved Child Care Schedules .....	10
Child Care Certificates .....	10
Attendance Sheets .....	10
Changing Child Care Providers .....	11
Multiple Child Care Providers .....	12
Absences .....	12
Excused Absences .....	12
Unexcused Absences .....	13

Child Care Provider Reimbursement.....	13
Procedure.....	13
Co-Payments .....	15
Non-Reimbursable Costs.....	15
Rate Changes.....	15
Lost Check Policy .....	15
Complaint Procedures.....	16
Complaints Regarding Child Care Providers.....	16
Complaints Regarding SNCS .....	18

# ABOUT SNCS

## **What is SNCS?**

Sierra Nevada Children's Services (SNCS) is a private, community-based nonprofit child care 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 child care 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 child care costs. Families may also pay a share of cost on a sliding scale that is based on income and family size.

### **Child Care Referrals**

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

When a parent calls looking for child care, SNCS gathers some basic information from the parent to best match the family's needs to a list of child care 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 child care options that meet the family's needs.

Additionally, when providing child care referrals SNCS staff informs parents that they have the right to view information about a licensed child care provider (Family Child Care Home or Child Care Center) either at the child care 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 child care services; to encourage parents to review the safety of the child care program or facility; and to encourage parents to evaluate the program's

ability to meet the needs of their child. Information regarding child care providers is available by calling CCL at (916) 263-5744 (Nevada County) or (530) 895-5033 (Sierra County).

SNCS encourages child care providers to report changes that affect the information provided to families requesting child care referrals. Accurate information, such as accepted age range and days and hours of operation, is vital for providing accurate referrals to families.

SNCS does not inspect or guarantee the conditions of a child care 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 child care services.

### **Resources**

SNCS is connected to other agencies in the community that provide services and support for families and child care providers. SNCS staff can provide a current list of these agencies.

### **Child Development Lending Library**

SNCS has child development resources available for both parents and child care 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 child care providers in caring for and raising children. The resources range from parenting guidance to information on how to successfully operate a family child care home or child care center.

### **Workshops & Trainings**

SNCS offers training workshops throughout the year for child care providers, as well as other various learning opportunities for child care providers and parents. The monthly schedule is posted in the main lobby as well as on the SNCS website.

### **Promotora**

The Promotora Program is a home-based culturally and linguistically appropriate program designed to incorporate strategies to bridge language barriers and promote child health and development through a holistic family strengthening and self-sufficiency approach.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION**

### **General Requirements**

All child care providers that wish to provide services for families receiving supportive child care 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 child care providers must make an appointment with a SNCS staff member and complete all necessary paperwork prior to the approval of child care services. All child care providers must sign an agreement with SNCS, and submit a completed W-9. Additional paperwork is required depending on the type of child care provided (licensed and license-exempt).
- All child care 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 child care providers must allow parents unlimited access to their child when the child is in care.
- All child care 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 child care providers are independent contractors and are not employees of SNCS. Child care providers are responsible for keeping records of reimbursement for their own tax purposes. SNCS does not withhold taxes from child care provider reimbursement.

- All child care providers must charge rates for subsidized families that are less than or equal to the rates charged for unsubsidized families.

### Licensed Child Care Providers

- All licensed child care providers are required to submit a copy of their facility license to SNCS.
- All licensed child care 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 child care providers several ways to protect from liability claims for accidents or injuries. Family child care 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 child care 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 child care 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.

### **TrustLine & Relative Care**

- All license-exempt child care providers (except the child's aunt, uncle, or grandparent) must be TrustLine registered in order to receive reimbursement for child care services. License-exempt child care providers providing child care services for CalWORKs Stage 1 families will not receive reimbursement until SNCS receives confirmation that the child care provider has been cleared by TrustLine. Once cleared, providers may be eligible for retroactive payment up to 120 days between the date the provider is registered with SNCS through the date that the provider is TrustLine approved.
- All license-exempt child care 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.
- All in-home child care providers are employees of the parent.

### **Family Child Care Homes Network**

Licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH) providers may participate in the Family Child Care Homes Network (CFCC) program. The program is open to any licensed family child care provider who offers a quality program that is developmentally appropriate for children. FCCH providers who are interested in the Network must complete an application; completion of an application does not guarantee acceptance into the Network. Each Network child care program is visited on a regular basis by an Education Specialist. Each child is assessed regularly, as are the child care programs. Providers are offered training opportunities, program materials, technical assistance, and support.

### **Family Fees**

Depending on a family's income and the number of children in the family, a family fee is a payment by a family pursuant to a graduated fee schedule established by the California Department of Education. This fee schedule determines whether a fee must be paid at all and, if so, the amount of the fee. California law does not state definitively who must

collect the family fee; therefore, SNCS collects the family fee and receipts are provided to the family.

## APPROVED CHILD CARE SCHEDULES

### Child Care Certificates

Child Care Certificates are used to authorize the child care schedule; copies are provided to both the parent and child care provider. The Child Care Certificate contains the approved child care schedule, and the projected payment amount. Child Care Certificates are issued upon initial enrollment and when changes occur, such as schedule or rate changes.

### Attendance Sheets

Attendance sheets are mailed to child care providers for each child enrolled for services. It is important for parents and child care providers to follow these guidelines in order to receive reimbursement for child care services. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in incomplete or delayed reimbursement. Please refer to Appendix I for examples of proper signing in and out procedures.

- The parent, or other individuals authorized to drop off and pick up the child, must sign the child in and out of care on a daily basis.
- The parent must use full signatures; initials and partial signatures will not be accepted.
- Child care providers must sign children in and out of care for split schedules (for example: school age children who go to and from the facility for school).
- Parents and child care providers must indicate exact times of arrival and departure from the facility. "Block times" (for example: 8:00am-5:00pm every day) will not be accepted. Child care providers may not write in the times for the parent; it is the parent's responsibility.
- All entries must be made in ink; pencil will not be accepted.
- White out will not be accepted on the attendance sheet. If a mistake is made please cross out the mistake and write the correction in any empty space near the entry.

- Parents must indicate exact reason for absence (for example: “fever,” “vacation,” or “with grandma”) and sign on the day of absence. If a parent indicates “absent” only or leaves the line blank the child care provider will not receive reimbursement for the absence.
- Anyone other than the parent who is authorized to drop off or pick up the child should have their signature on file with SNCS.
- Parents and child care providers must sign the bottom of the attendance sheet.
- Child care providers must complete the billing section on the reverse side of the attendance sheet; billing should be in accordance with the rates charged to unsubsidized families (not what the child care provider expects SNCS to reimburse).

The financial stability of SNCS child care payment assistance programs is maintained by careful and constant monitoring of child care attendance.

### **Changing Child Care Providers**

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

- The parent must give the child care provider notice when choosing to terminate child care services with a child care provider. The parent should check with the child care provider or refer to the provider’s contract for the provider’s termination policy.
- The parent must notify SNCS before services are authorized with a new child care provider.
- The new child care provider must meet requirements for child care provider participation before services can start.
- Parents enrolled in the Family Child Care Homes Network must choose a child care provider from the Network list. The parent should request the most current list from SNCS.

If sufficient notice is not given to a child care provider, and the child does not attend care, the parent will be responsible for any payment for notice time when the child was not in care.

### **Multiple Child Care Providers**

Reimbursement is limited to one child care provider per child. The following are exceptions.

- Child care may be authorized when the child's first child care 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 alternate provider when one of the following occurs:
  - When the hours of operation of the first provider do not meet the parent's need for child care services.
  - When the child is ill and the parent has to obtain an alternate provider.
  - When the child's regular provider is closed.

### **Absences**

Child care providers are reimbursed for absences as long as it is the provider's usual and customary policy to charge for absences. The child care provider must submit documentation to SNCS that this is their policy for unsubsidized families. Licensed child care 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. License-exempt child care providers are reimbursed for actual attendance only; therefore, they are not eligible to receive reimbursement for absences.

### **Excused Absences**

Reimbursement for the following absence reasons is not limited. Please note that if a child is absent from care for more than 5 consecutive days due to illness, a note from a physician is required. The note may be attached to the attendance sheet.

- 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).

Reimbursement for the following excused absence reason is limited.

- **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.

### **Unexcused Absences**

This includes any absence that is not considered an excused absence. Reimbursement for unexcused absences is limited to 10 days per child, per fiscal year (7/1 – 6/30). Unexcused absences in excess of 10 days per fiscal year may be grounds for termination of services.

It is the responsibility of the child care provider to notify SNCS if a child is absent for an unexcused reason from care for 3 consecutive scheduled days or with no notice from the parent.

## **CHILD CARE PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT**

### **Procedure**

Attendance sheets are mailed directly to child care providers. It is the responsibility of the child care provider to submit attendance sheets in a timely manner in order to receive reimbursement for child care services.

- Child care provider reimbursements are processed once per month, after services are rendered.
- Child care providers must contact SNCS immediately if they are missing an attendance sheet for an enrolled child.
- Child care providers must submit the original attendance sheet for the appropriate month in order to receive reimbursement for child care services. SNCS will not accept a copy or fax of the completed attendance sheet or an attendance sheet for the incorrect month (e.g. an August attendance sheet was used for the month of July).
- Completed attendance sheets are due to SNCS no later than 5:00pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month following care. If the 5<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend or national holiday, attendance sheets are due by 5:00pm on the following work day. Postmarks are not accepted.
- Completed attendance sheets received after the 5<sup>th</sup> will be processed for reimbursement in the following month.
- Attendance sheets that are received after the last day of the month following the month of care will not be reimbursed.
- Attendance sheets received after the 5<sup>th</sup> for the last month of the fiscal year (June) will not be reimbursed if received after the 5<sup>th</sup> of July.
- Incomplete or inaccurate daily entries will be not be reimbursed and cannot be corrected after received by SNCS. If the bottom of the attendance sheet is missing a signature, the child care provider will be contacted after reimbursement processing. 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 the following month.
- Reimbursement will be made for approved days and hours of child care; use of child care that does not correspond with the child care schedule, or has not been pre-approved by SNCS, will not be reimbursed. SNCS reimburses child care providers based on actual attendance.
- Reimbursement will be made in accordance with state regulations (Title 5, Chapter 19), not to exceed the provider's rate or 85% of the RMR as determined by CDE.

- Reimbursements to child care providers are issued by paper check or direct deposit by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

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

### **Co-Payments**

A benefit amount, which is the maximum amount reimbursed for child care services, is determined for each child receiving services. The benefit amount is determined in accordance with state regulation. Parents who choose child care providers whose usual and customary fee exceeds their benefit amount are responsible to pay the difference between the maximum reimbursement and the child care provider's fee. This co-payment is paid directly to the child care provider by the parent and shall not be accounted for by SNCS.

### **Non-Reimbursable Costs**

SNCS does not cover the cost of fees that are not included in the child care provider's basic cost for child care 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 child care 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**

SNCS will honor a change in a provider's rates only once per fiscal year (*Education Code, Section 8222*). All 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.

# COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

## Complaints Regarding Child Care Providers

As a Child Care Resource and Referral agency, SNCS does not license child care 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 child care 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 shall 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 child care providers are required to maintain, at their site, copies of CCL visit reports. Parents may access these records or may contact CCL for information about complaints regarding child care providers. A child care 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 child care provider. Parents that choose a TrustLine registered or relative child care provider may review the record of complaints maintained by SNCS on that child care

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 child care provider.

**Complaints Regarding SNCS**

SNCS recognizes that it must comply with state and federal laws and regulations governing programs. A complaint alleges that there has been a failure to comply with state and federal laws and regulations governing programs. A complaint may allege unlawful discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, age, gender, color, physical or mental disability. A complaint may also allege a disregard of state or federal law in any of the SNCS programs. Complaints of possible discrimination must be filed within six months of the time of the alleged event or when knowledge was first obtained.

Any individual, 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 office shall investigate 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.

Within three working days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer shall informally discuss the possibility of using mediation. If mediation is unsuccessful, 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, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the investigation and decision, including any corrective actions. Civil law remedies may be pursued through local, state or federal aid agencies, offices, or private/public interest attorneys.

If you disagree with the decision made by SNCS you may appeal in writing within 15 days to:

California Department of Education  
P.O. Box 944272  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2720

You must specify reason(s) for appealing the decision and include a copy of the locally filed complaint and the decision.

## Appendix II SNCS Attendance Sheet

DAY OF MONTH	PARENT SIGN IN THIS COLUMN ONLY		PROVIDER MUST INITIAL IF CHILD HAS A SPLIT SCHEDULE				PARENT SIGN IN THIS COLUMN ONLY		ABSENCE REASON	OFFICE USE TOTAL HOURS
	TIME IN	PARENTS SIGNATURE	TIME OUT	PROVIDER INITIALS	TIME IN	PROVIDER INITIALS	TIME OUT	PARENTS SIGNATURE		
F 1	7:02	<i>Justin Kuo</i>	8:15	JH	3:00	JH	4:10	<i>Justin Kuo</i>		
S 2	7:05	<i>Justin Kuo</i>					4:12	<i>Justin Kuo</i>		
3										
M 4										
5										
6										
7										
F 8	7:09	<i>Justin Kuo</i>	8:15	JH	3:00	JH	4:15	<i>Justin Kuo</i>		
S 9	7:00	<i>Justin Kuo</i>					4:09	<i>Justin Kuo</i>		
10										
M 11									<i>Sick</i>	
12										
13										
14										

Refer to each example above by the date listed (month is July). The child (9 years old) is scheduled to use child care Monday, Friday and Saturday from 7:00am – 4:30pm. School hours are 8:15am – 3:00pm. Each day the child is scheduled must have complete times and signatures, or an exact reason for absence.

7/1, 7/8	Example of before and after school care. The parent's signature verifies the time the child was dropped off (7:02) and picked up (4:10) from the child care facility. The provider's initials verify the time the child was dropped off (8:15) and picked up (3:00) from school.
7/2	Example of non-school day. The child is signed in and out of care by the parent or an authorized person only.
7/4	The provider is closed, therefore no care was used.
7/9	A signature is missing in the parent sign in column. Days with missing signatures or in/out times will not be reimbursed.
7/11	The child was absent from care due to illness. The parent must sign and indicate an exact reason for absence on scheduled days of attendance.

Nevada County

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