



sierra nevada children's services

Subsidy Parent Guide



Investing in our community,
one family at a time

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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 permits the review of information regarding the child by the custodial parent(s) or those with the legal right to know, upon request and at reasonable times and places.

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.

CHILD CARE 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 a database of licensed family child care providers and licensed/license-exempt childcare centers that is used to provide child care referrals.

SNCS believes the parent is the best person to choose the care for the child. Referrals are intended to provide parents with a variety of choices, and should not be considered as recommendations to a particular program or facility. It is SNCS' goal to help parents make informed choices from a broad range of childcare options that meet the family's needs.

When a parent contacts SNCS for Child Care Referrals information is requested in order to make appropriate referrals. This information is considered confidential and is only available to SNCS staff and will not be released without prior written consent. Families can use mychildcareplan.org to search for childcare at any time or may call toll-free 888-306-7627(SNCS).

The information requested includes, but may not be limited to:

- a) Caller's name and phone number
- b) Home address and e-mail address
- c) Name of closest elementary school
- d) Days and hours child care is needed
- e) Number of children needing care, their gender and date of birth
- f) Type of care parent is considering (e.g. child care center, family child care home, preschool, before/after school care, etc.)
- g) Types of services parent is considering (such as hot meals, toilet training, transportation need, etc.)
- h) An assessment of child(ren)'s special needs or preferences
- i) Interest in the educational background of providers

After discussing their options, parents are given a list of all programs that meet their requested criteria, with a minimum of 4 facilities to be included in the referral. This list will include the names, phone numbers and relevant program information for the child care providers who appear to best meet the family's needs. For reasons of confidentiality, family child care providers' addresses are not released. Parents are encouraged to view the providers' profiles on MyChildCarePlan.org to learn more about the programs.

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 requests quarterly information updates from providers and monthly vacancy updates are requested monthly through the referral database in order to keep the data as up to date as possible. Updates are sent directly from the referral database, providers can opt in to receive text, or email alerts. Full provider updates are requested every quarter. Providers that are no longer licensed are removed from the referral database by changing the status to inactive and turning referrals "OFF". Parents are encouraged to ask the provider directly about availability, as this information changes rapidly.

NOTIFICATION OF PARENT RIGHTS

Parents are informed that prior to choosing a child care program, they have the right to review Community Care Licensing (CCL) reports on facility site visits and substantiated complaint investigations. Information about a licensed childcare provider (Family Child Care Home or Child Care Center) may be viewed at 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 CCL reports is public, and may be obtained 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 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 provides a family-friendly environment where parents can utilize a variety of resources while their children play nearby.

In addition, 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.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION

Our programs recognize that parents are the primary caregivers and educators of their children. Our goal is to provide a welcoming environment for families and invite them to participate as equal partners in the care of their children. Each family brings a history of life experience and cultural heritage that is a valuable component to the partnerships between families, providers and program staff, and is essential to the growth and development of each individual child.

Opportunities to participate include, but are not limited to:

- Annual Parent Survey
- Parent Workshops
- Family Socials and Playgroups

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION:

Our goal is to implement an effective annual program self-evaluation process to support continuous improvement.

The process includes:

- Assessment of the program by parents using the Desired Results Parent Survey
- Assessment of the program by program staff, board members and providers

Based on the results goals, action steps are developed and implemented.

CHILD CARE OPTIONS

LICENSED CHILD CARE

All licensed childcare providers are regulated by Community Care Licensing (CCL), a division of California Department of Social Services. Legislation requires at least one unannounced site visit every 3 years; however, annual comprehensive visits are made to those sites with previous violations or serious complaints. Licensed childcare providers, upon request, must provide a copy of a valid license issued by CCL. Copies of all visits by CCL are required to be available for review at the site by potential or currently enrolled families. Licensed childcare providers are fingerprinted, and have passed a criminal background check and cleared the California Child Abuse Index. Licensed childcare providers are required to charge rates for subsidized children that are less than or equal to the rates charged for nonsubsidized children.

- **Childcare Center**

A licensed facility that provides childcare services for a number of children. Each center's license indicates the number and age groups of children the center may serve. Centers are licensed to serve infants, toddlers, preschoolers or school-aged children or some combination of these age groups. A childcare program that is staffed by school district employees for school age children on a school site is considered a childcare center for purposes of subsidized reimbursement, but are exempt from licensing.

- **Family Childcare Home**

A family childcare home is a private home which has been licensed for the occupant to provide childcare services. There are two types of homes: those licensed for six or eight children (small) and those licensed for twelve or fourteen children (large). In both cases, the license states the number and ages of children that may be served. Anyone who lives in the home and is over 18 years of age must pass a criminal background check and clear the California Child Abuse Index.

Open Door Policy

All licensed child care providers are required to maintain an Open Door Policy in that parents have the right to visit their child's programs anytime during operating hours and are encouraged to participate in activities whenever possible.

License Exempt Care

License-exempt care occurs when an individual provides care for the children of one family other than their own. License-exempt providers must be at least 18 years of age and will be required to complete an EMSA approved Pediatric CPR/First Aid class within 90 days of the license-exempt provider's service start date. Parents, legal guardians, or members of the child's assistance unit are not eligible for reimbursement, nor are individuals currently on probationary status with CCL. Additionally, license-exempt providers must meet with SNCS staff to review participation requirements and complete enrollment paperwork prior to authorization of services. There are 2 types of license-exempt childcare providers.

- **Relative Care**

An individual that qualifies as a relative care provider is an aunt, uncle, grandmother, or grandfather of the child, by blood, marriage, or court decree.

- **TrustLine Care**

An individual who does not qualify for Relative Care must be TrustLine registered to receive reimbursement. TrustLine is the California registry of childcare providers who have passed a background screening. A TrustLine provider is cleared through a fingerprint check of records at the California Department of Justice. SNCS will not enroll or pay any provider until they have been registered on TrustLine. For families enrolled on CalWORKs Stage 1, the provider must first complete and submit all SNCS provider enrollment paperwork, a TrustLine application, and fingerprints. Once cleared, the provider may be eligible for retroactive payment up to 120 days between the date the provider submitted SNCS paperwork through the date the provider was TrustLine registered.

IN-HOME CHILD CARE

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, which includes meeting minimum wage requirements and providing Worker's Compensation Insurance. More information on in-home care is available from SNCS staff.

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.

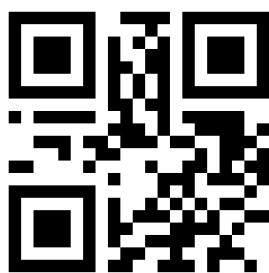
Prior to selecting a childcare provider, it is recommended that the parent and child visit various childcare provider sites to gain more information about the childcare provider and the environment. It is important to ask questions about the childcare provider, the program and activities, the indoor and outdoor environments, and parent/child expectations.

Please visit SNCS website at www.snscs.org for more tools to help you find quality child care that meets the needs of your family. More information on the statewide QCC program can be found at nevcolpc.org or www.qualitycountsca.net



Early Quality Matters in Nevada County

Please visit nevcolpc.org for details on how to join the local/regional QCC program.



More information on the statewide QCC program is located at qualitycountsca.net.



FUNDING OPTIONS

There are several ways a family may be enrolled for supportive childcare services – from the CareWait Childcare Eligibility List, through a CalWORKs referral, or through an Emergency Foster Bridge referral.

CAREWAIT CHILDCARE ELIGIBILITY LIST (CEL)

The CEL gives families access to two funding sources: the California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP) and the California Family Child Care (CFCC)/Family Child Care Homes Education Network (FCCHEN) program. Families may submit an online CareWait application directly from our website, www.snccs.org or by contacting their local SNCS office. Families may be required to create a CareConnect Family account.

**Scan QR code to
access the CEL
application online:**



SNCS child care payment assistance programs provide full or partial payment for childcare services for enrolled families. Programs are designed to assist eligible families in paying for child care, otherwise known as subsidized child care services. Funding is provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

Families who need subsidized childcare services must complete and submit an application in CareWait. Each family is assigned an eligibility rank between 1 and 85, with a lower number indicating a higher likelihood of enrollment.

When funds become available to enroll new families, SNCS contacts families by mail, email, and/or phone for possible enrollment and the family will receive an electronic invitation to join the CareConnect Family portal in order to receive and submit their enrollment documents. Parents who choose not to use the portal will be issued enrollment documents via USPS or will-call at their local office. Enrollment is prioritized by rank with the lowest ranked families enrolled first. The family's current eligibility is determined to see if they are still the most eligible for enrollment at that time. There are 2 sources of funding for which families may be eligible:

- **California Alternative Payment Program**

The California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP) helps pay childcare costs for income-eligible families. Families are enrolled in CAPP funding from the CEL, in order of priority, when funding is available. Families may select the childcare provider of their choice (including providers who provide religious instruction) as long as the provider is willing to complete a SNCS provider enrollment and accept reimbursement from SNCS. Families certified as eligible to receive CAPP services shall be considered to have met eligibility requirements for no less than 24 months.

- **California Family Child Care (CFCC) Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN)**

CFCC serves families eligible for subsidized care. CFCC are a consortia of licensed family child care homes in a community that provide child care and development services, parenting education, social and health services referrals. Family Child Care Home Education Networks also provide training for child care providers and their staff as well as quality assessments of participating licensed family child care homes, development profiles for the children enrolled in the program and support parent involvement. Families certified as eligible for CFCC services shall be considered to have met eligibility requirements for no less than 24 months. **Detailed information about the FCCHEN program may be found in the SNCS FCCHEN CFCC Parent Guide*

CalWORKs

The CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) program has many family support services, including child care. Child care through CalWORKs is a 3-stage program that pays full or partial child care expenses for eligible CalWORKs participants.

- **Stage 1**

Families receiving cash aid may be eligible for CalWORKs Stage 1 child care services and must be referred to SNCS by the CalWORKs office. Eligibility for Stage 1 child care is determined by a county social worker at the CalWORKs office, and SNCS will authorize childcare services based on a CalWORKs referral. Families receive Stage 1 child care services for no less than 12 months or until such time it is determined by the CalWORKs office that the family's situation is stable, and a referral is made to SNCS to transfer childcare funding from Stage 1 to Stage 2.

- **Stage 2 (C2AP)**

CalWORKs Stage 2 is available for 24 months after the family becomes ineligible for cash aid; however, eligibility requirements must be met. Eligibility is determined by SNCS staff. Families must submit documentation of cash aid end date or receive a Stage 2 referral from the CalWORKs office. Families certified as eligible to receive C2AP services shall be considered to have met eligibility requirements for no less than 12 months, and must recertify their eligibility every 12 months.

- **Stage 3 (C3AP)**

If a family is currently enrolled on Stage 2 their child care will be transitioned to Stage 3 24 months after the family becomes ineligible for cash aid. Families certified as eligible to receive C3AP services shall be considered to have met eligibility requirements for no less than 12 months, and must recertify their eligibility every 12 months.

EMERGENCY CHILD CARE BRIDGE PROGRAM FOR FOSTER CHILDREN (BRIDGE PROGRAM)

Bridge Program services are available for eligible children experiencing a foster placement or for a child(ren) whose parent is in foster care. The program aims to increase the number of children placed in foster family homes, increase the capacity of child care programs to meet the needs of foster children in their care, and maximize funding to support the child care needs of eligible families. Eligibility is determined by the county, and eligible families will be referred to SNCS. The Bridge Program includes 3 components:

- Child Care Voucher or Reimbursement – to help eligible caregiver families, parenting youth, and nonminor dependent parents pay for child care costs from birth to age 12, and for children and youth with exceptional needs up to age 21. The voucher/reimbursement is a time-limited payment for up to 6-12 months with the goal of successfully transitioning the child into long term child care paid through another source.
- Child Care Navigator – to assist eligible families in navigating the child care process, identifying and accessing child care options appropriate to the family’s needs and the child’s age and needs, connecting to resources to empower and support informed decisions, and developing an overall, long term child care plan to minimize transitions or disruptions for the child where possible.
- Trauma-Informed Care Training & Coaching – to train and coach the child care workforce on trauma-informed practices to help build capacity and better meet the unique needs of children who have experienced abuse, neglect, removal from the home or family

The Bridge Program is intended to act as a link to help eligible families successfully transition the foster child into high-quality subsidized child care.

OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS

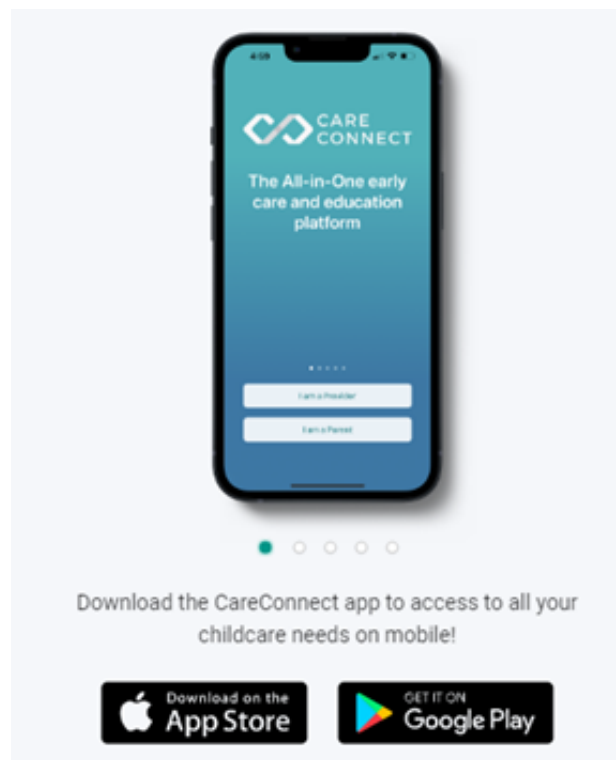
Please contact our Resource & Referral department for more information regarding funding options administered by agencies other than SNCS (Head Start/Early Head Start partnerships, California State Preschool, etc.).

RECEIVING CHILD CARE SERVICES

SNCS administers services that are funded by federal, state, and local governments. Different funding sources may have different rules and regulations. Therefore, it is possible for two families that are receiving services to have different rules applied to their cases.

CARECONNECT FAMILY

SNCS strongly encourages families to utilize the CareConnect Family online portal. The online portal is the most efficient and timely method of completing the enrollment/recertification process and is available in both a web-based and mobile app version.



Families will receive an email or SMS invitation to join the online portal account. The invitation is time-limited so if the invitation is not accepted by the specified expiration date, the parent will need to request a new invitation. CareConnect will allow families to:

- Submit eForms
- Upload/download documents
- Approve and sign for digital attendance

ENROLLMENT AND ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES

Enrollment is based on a priority ranking system determined by CDSS guidelines. A family's rank is determined by the size of the family and the family's gross monthly income. It is important to note that the Child Care Eligibility List (CEL) is not administered on a first-come, first-served basis.

The priority order for subsidized child care and development services are as follows:

1. First priority shall be given to children who are recipients of child protective services, or children who are at risk of abuse or neglect, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social services agency.

2. Second priority shall be given equally to eligible families who are income eligible.

a. Within the priority, families with the lowest gross monthly income in relation to family size shall be admitted first.

b. If two or more families are in the same priority in relation to income, the family that has a child with exceptional needs shall be admitted first.

c. If there is no family of the same priority with a child with exceptional needs, the family of the same priority in which the primary home language is a language other than English shall be admitted first.

d. If there is no family of the same priority in which the primary home language is a language other than English, the family of the same priority that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.

A family is enrolled for services based on eligibility status and need for services. In order to successfully complete enrollment a family must do the following:

- Provide all documentation required to establish eligibility and need for services.
- Meet with a Family Support Specialist for an in person or virtual eligibility assessment.
- Attend an in-person or virtual enrollment appointment and view an orientation of program requirements.
- Select a childcare provider that is enrolled for participation.

Child care services shall be approved to begin once the parent has attended an enrollment appointment, viewed an orientation, completed and signed the application for services (CCD26), and provided all requested documentation. If all of the requirements are met within 30 days from the date the parent signed the application for services, the family will receive a Notice of Action (NOA) approving services. If requirements are not met within 30 days, the parent will receive a NOA denying services. If the parent disagrees with the agency's decision to deny services, the parent may appeal by completing the reverse side of the NOA or making a verbal request. If the parent makes a verbal request for an appeal, a written statement will be completed at the time of the hearing. All appeals must be submitted to SNCS no later than the appeal date shown on the NOA.

ELIGIBILITY STATUS

Families must meet one of the following requirements in order to be eligible for childcare services.

- **Child Receiving Protective Services or Identified as At-Risk Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation**

Eligibility is based on a referral from Child Welfare Services or another qualified licensed professional

- **Current CalWORKs Cash Aid Recipient**

Families who are currently receiving cash aid are eligible for services as a current aid recipient. Families are required to submit documentation of their current public cash assistance in order to meet Cash Aid eligibility requirements.

- **Family Experiencing Homelessness**

If eligibility is based on the family experiencing homelessness, the family must obtain and provide documentation of one of the following:

1. A written referral dated within three (3) months prior to the application for services from one of the following entities:

- A legal, medical, or social service agency
- A local education agency liaison for children and youth experiencing homelessness
- A Head Start program
- An emergency or transitional shelter

2. A written parental declaration, signed under penalty of perjury, that the family is experiencing homelessness

Services are permitted to begin immediately upon the parent signing the application for services (CCD26) when the basis for eligibility is family experiencing homelessness, and the parent must provide all required documentation within 30 days from the date the application for services was signed.

As defined in the McKinney-Vento Act, Homeless children or youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

- Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Children and youths who may be living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters or are abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are children who are living in similar circumstances listed above.

- **Income Eligible**

The parent shall obtain and provide documentation of the family's total countable income for all the individuals counted in the family size, for the purposes of determining whether a family is income eligible and/or assessing the appropriate family fee, as applicable. The family's adjusted gross monthly income must be at or below 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) at the time of enrollment to meet income eligibility requirements. For all countable sources of income please refer to Appendix I. Families are required to report all income received in any one of the two months prior to enrollment, both countable and non-countable. Families with \$0 income, no income from employment, or income for which no documentation is possible, must provide a written declaration and self-certification under penalty of perjury.

Families who are income eligible shall meet eligibility requirements for no less than 12 or 24 months, depending on the funding source, or until income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income, adjusted for family size.

Income is calculated using gross monthly income that may be regular and steady, fluctuating, and/or intermittent. Income is regular and steady if it generally stays the same from month to month. Income is fluctuating and/or intermittent if it varies because of overtime, variable hours, seasonal employment, commissions, tips, self-employment, etc.

Families who are eligible to enroll based upon their income must report if their income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income (SMI), adjusted for family size, within 30 calendar days. The SMI for your family size can be found on your Income Determination Form, by contacting your Family Support Specialist, or in Appendix II of this guide.

- **Categorical Eligibility**

A family who has a member of its household who is certified to receive benefits from any one of the following means-tested government programs:

- Medi-Cal
- CalFresh
- California Food Assistance Program
- California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- The Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- CalWORKs

Families who are categorically eligible must provide documentation of current enrollment in any one of the means-tested programs, and the family is still required to provide income documentation for the purposes of calculating income and assessing family fees. The family can supply this income information in two ways:

1. By submitting the application for the means-tested government program indicating the income declared at the time of enrollment; or,
2. If the application for the means tested government program is not available, by submitting a self-declaration indicating that they do not have access to the application for the means-tested government program, and to the best of their recollection, the income declared on the application for the means-tested government program.

NEED FOR SERVICES

In addition to meeting one of the eligibility requirements, families must have one of the following documented needs for childcare services: At any time during the initial certification or recertification period a parent may voluntarily request an increase to their certified child care schedule based on documentation of employment or another basis for need, as applicable.

- **Employment**

If the basis of need for services is employment the parent must submit documentation of the days and hours of employment. If the total number of hours worked each week is consistent, but the days and hours of employment vary, the documentation shall support the total number of hours worked each week.

If the parent has an employer, the parent shall obtain and provide documentation of need based on employment that consists of one the following:

- Paystubs that indicate the days and hours of employment
- Paystubs that indicate the total hours of employment per pay period, as long as the hours generally correlate with the parent's requested number of hours needed each week
- An independent written employment verification from the employer indicating the days and hours of employment SNCS will be independently verify information. In the absence of paystubs or other records of wages or if the employer refuses or is non-responsive in providing requested information, SNCS shall determine the reasonableness of the days and hours of employment and establish a certified schedule based on a description of the employment and community practice

If the parent is self-employed, the parent shall obtain and provide documentation of employment consisting of both of the following:

- A declaration of need under penalty of perjury that includes a description of the employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked per week.
- As many documents needed to support the days and hours of employment, including but not limited to appointment logs, client receipts, job logs, mileage logs, a list of clients with contact information, or similar records, and, if applicable, a copy of a business license, workspace lease, or workspace rental agreement.

If the parent is employed in the family's home or on property that includes the family's home, the parent must provide justification for requesting subsidized early learning and care services based on the type of work being done and its requirements, the age of the family's child for whom services are sought, and if the child is more than five year old, the specific child care needs. SNCS shall determine and document whether the parent's employment and the identified child care needs preclude the supervision of the family's child.

If the parent is employed as an assistant in a licensed large family day care home, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1596.78(b), and is requesting services for the family's child in the same family day care home, the parent shall provide documentation of all of the following:

- A copy of the family day care home license indicating it is licensed as a large family day care home
- A signed statement from the licensee stating that the parent is the assistant, pursuant to the staffing ratio requirement of California Code of Regulations, Title 22, section 102416.5
- Proof that the parent's fingerprints are associated with that licensed family day care home as its assistant
- Payroll deductions withheld for the assistant by the licensee, which may be a paystub

SNCS may request additional information if the documentation submitted by the parent is not sufficient to verify employment. Upon initial certification or recertification families shall be certified for services for not less than twelve (12) months. Families are considered to meet the eligibility and/or need requirements for not less than twelve (12) months before having the family's eligibility or need recertified.

- **Seeking Employment**

If the basis of need for services is seeking employment, the following shall apply:

- Services as requested by the parent shall occur on no more than 5 days per week and for less than 30 hours per week.
- Documentation of seeking employment shall include a written parental declaration, signed under penalty of perjury stating that the parent is seeking employment. The declaration shall include the parent's general plan to secure, change, or increase employment

Services for seeking employment will be authorized on a case-by-case basis for parents of school-age children or two-parent families in which both parents are seeking employment. Since this is a part-time benefit, if both parents are requesting services for seeking employment, care can only be authorized to the extent that the parents cannot take turns caring for the child(ren) while the other parent seeks employment. Parent(s) of school-age children must demonstrate a need to seek employment that cannot be met during the hours the child is enrolled in school.

- **Educational Programs**

If the basis of need for services is educational programs, defined as classes or courses for English language learner (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESL), or to attain a high school diploma, a General Education Development (GED), or a High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate, the following shall apply:

- Services shall be limited in total to six years from the initiation of services based on enrollment in educational programs
- The parent shall obtain and provide documentation of enrollment in an ELL/ESL or GED/HSE program
- Documentation shall include the days and hours of enrollment in an educational program, the name of the institution that is providing the instruction, and the parent's class schedule

SNCS shall determine the days and hours needed per week based on the provided documentation.

- **Vocational Training**

If the parent's need for services is vocational training, defined as an educational or job training/apprenticeship/mentorship/internship program courses and/or classes leading to a recognized trade or profession, the following shall apply:

- Services shall be limited in total to whichever occurs first: six years from the initiation of services based on need for vocational training or twenty-four (24) semester units, or the equivalent after the attainment of a Bachelor's Degree. The service limitation shall not apply when the parent is receiving services from a program operating pursuant to Education Code section 66060, when a parent is attending vocational training and participating in rehabilitation services through the California Department of Rehabilitation, or when a parent is attending retraining services available through the California Employment Development Department or its contractors due to a business closure or mass layoff.
- The parent shall provide documentation of the days and hours of vocational training including the name of the vocational institution and the parent's current class schedule

The period of eligibility for vocational training is for not less than 12 months. Ongoing eligibility for services based on vocational training is contingent upon making adequate progress. At recertification the parent shall provide documentation of adequate progress from the most recently completed quarter, semester, or training period. Adequate progress is defined as earning a grade point average of 2.0 or higher; or in a non-graded program, passing the program's requirements in at least 50% of the classes or meeting the training institution's standard for making adequate progress. Students dropping below these minimum standards will be allowed one recertification period to improve. At the conclusion of this eligibility period the parent shall have made adequate progress (as defined above) in order to be recertified for services based on vocational training. If adequate progress is not met, the family shall be disenrolled and services based on vocational training are only available to the parent 6 months after the date of disenrollment.

- **Parental Incapacity**

If the basis of need for services is parental incapacity, the following shall apply:

- Services shall not exceed 50 hours per week
- Documentation of parental incapacity shall include a release signed by the incapacitated parent authorizing a legally qualified health professional to disclose information necessary to establish that the parent meets the definition of parental incapacity and needs services.
- The documentation of incapacitation signed by a legally qualified health professional shall include a statement that the parent is incapacitated and that the parent is incapable of providing care or supervision for the child for part of the day, the days and hours per week services are recommended, and the name, business address, telephone number, professional license number of the legally qualified health professional who is rendering the opinion of parental incapacitation, and if applicable, the name of the health organization with which the professional is associated
- SNCS shall determine the days and hours of the certified schedule based on the parent's requested days and hours and the recommendation of the health professional

- **Child's Exceptional Needs**

A child 13 through 21 years of age may receive early learning and care services based on the child's exceptional needs. Documentation of exceptional needs shall include both of the following:

- A copy of the portion of the active individual family service plan (IFSP) or the individualized education program (IEP) that includes the information specified in Education Code section 56026 and California Code of Regulations Title 5 sections 3030 and 3031
- A statement signed by a legally qualified professional that the child requires the special attention of adults in a child care setting and includes the name, address, license number and telephone number of the legally qualified professional who is rendering the opinion

- **Families Experiencing Homelessness**

If the basis of eligibility for services is established by written referral from a qualifying entity, no additional documentation of need for services is required.

- **Seeking Permanent Housing for Family Stability**

If the basis of eligibility for services is established by parental declaration of the family experiencing homelessness, the parent shall provide documentation to establish a need for services to seek permanent housing.

Services based on seeking permanent housing shall occur no more than five days per week and for less than 30 hours per week.

Documentation of seeking permanent housing shall include a written parental declaration signed under penalty of perjury, that includes the parent's general search plan to secure a fixed, regular, and adequate residence. If the family is residing in a shelter, services shall be provided while the parent attends appointments or activities necessary to comply with the shelter participation requirements within the certified schedule.

- **Child Protective Services (CPS)/At Risk**

If the basis of need for services is child protective services or child identified as at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation, the documentation shall contain a written referral, dated within six (6) months immediately preceding the date of the application for services, from a legal, medical, social service agency or emergency shelter. The written referral shall include either of the following:

- A statement from the local county welfare department, child protective services unit certifying that the child is receiving child protective services and that child care and development services are a necessary component of the child protective services plan.
- A statement by a legally qualified professional that the child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and the child care and development services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk.

The statement from the local county welfare department or the legally qualified professional shall include the probable duration of the child protective services or the at-risk situation, the name, address, telephone number, and signature of the legally qualified professional who is making the referral.

FAMILY SIZE

Family size is defined as all children under the age of 18 and their parents who reside in the same household. “Parent” means a biological parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, foster parent, caretaker relative, legal guardian, domestic partner of the parent, or any other adult living with the child who has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child (5 CCR 18078(q)). Families must provide documentation to support the number of children and parents in the household. When only one parent has signed the application for services and the information provided indicates the child in the family has another parent whose name does not appear on the application, then the enrolled parent must self-certify single parent status, under penalty of perjury, on the application for services (CCD 26). If family size fluctuates due to shared custody the child will only be included in the family size when the child is in the custody of the enrolled parent. Children under the age of 18 who are part of the household and are not receiving services will still be included in the family size. Children who are 18 years of age and still in High School shall not be included in the family size.

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify SNCS within 30 calendar days if their income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income, adjusted for family size, if eligibility for services is based upon the family’s income. A table of maximum monthly income, by family size, can be located in Appendix II of this guide. Failure to do so will result in issuance of a Notice of Action for disenrollment from services.

A family may, at any time, voluntarily report income or other changes. This information shall be used, as applicable, to reduce the family’s fees, increase the family’s services, or extend the period of the family’s eligibility before recertification. SNCS must collect documentation to support the requested changes.

Furthermore, a family may, at any time, voluntarily submit a written request to reduce their service level or stop services. SNCS must collect documentation to support the requested changes. Any such reduction in service hours is voluntary and replaces the current schedule. If a family chooses to increase their certified schedule at a later time, they will be required to submit additional documentation

In order to best serve you, SNCS requests that parents report changes in contact information or childcare provider as soon as possible.

RECERTIFICATION

Once a family is enrolled, recertification of need and eligibility for services must be completed every 12 months or 24 months, depending on the funding program in which the family is enrolled. The Family Support Specialist will notify the family within the last 30 days of the certification period that the recertification is due, and what requirements must be met. The parent is required to attend an in –person or virtual need and eligibility assessment, which includes a program orientation as part of the recertification process. The eligibility and need assessment required for recertification must be completed no later than 50 calendar days after the recertification due date.

NOTICE OF ACTION

A Notice of Action (NOA) will be issued any time a change in family size, need, and/or income occurs. A NOA will also be issued for disenrollment of services if program policies are violated, the family no longer meets eligibility requirements, or at the parent’s request. If the parent disagrees with the action, the parent may appeal the action by following the appeal instructions on the reverse side of the notice. During the appeal process it will be determined whether the termination will be upheld or rescinded.

PARENT'S SHARE OF CHILD CARE COSTS

FAMILY FEES

Families may be required to pay a portion of their childcare costs. This portion is called a family fee. Family fee amounts are established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and determined by the family's adjusted gross monthly income, family size, and hours of certified need for child care. As defined by the CDSS, the full time or part time fee applies as follows:

- Full Time fee applies when the child is enrolled for 130 hours or more per month
- Part Time fee applies when the child is enrolled less than 130 hours per month

Effective October 1, 2023, family fees shall not exceed 1 percent of the family's adjusted monthly income, and a family with an adjusted monthly family income below 75% of the state median income (SMI) shall not be charged or assessed a family fee.

Families whose income exceeds 85% of SMI but are eligible based on categorical eligibility shall be assessed and charged the maximum family fee amount for their documented family size.

Families are exempt from paying fees if they are:

- Families with children who have been identified as, at risk of being abused, neglected, or exploited may be exempt from paying a family fee for 12 months when the referral indicates that the fee is waived
- Families with children who are receiving Child Protective Services may be exempt from paying a family fee for 12 months
- Families receiving CalWORKs cash aid

Family fees are assessed at the following times:

- **Initial Certification**

For newly enrolled families, fees will be assessed using the total monthly certified need as documented. When assessing family fees for families with income fluctuation, a family may choose to provide up to the 12 preceding months of income information necessary for purposes of determining income eligibility or calculating a family fee. The adjusted monthly income shall be determined by averaging the total countable income from at least two months to determine average adjusted monthly income for the purposes of determining income eligibility or calculating a family fee.

- **Recertification**

All families will have their family fees reassessed during the annual recertification process. Fees for families with predictable schedules will be assessed using the total monthly certified need as documented. Fees for families with unpredictable or variable work schedules will be assessed using the documentation provided by the parent to identify the highest number of actual hours worked within any given week.

If the recertification results in a decreased family fee assessment, the fee will become effective on the first day of the month after the Notice of Action is issued. If the recertification results in a new or increased family fee assessment, the fee will become effective on the first day of the month after the appeal request period has expired.

- **When a family requests a reduction to their family fees**

Families may request a reduction to their family fee, and any reduction will be based off the documentation provided by the parent in support of the change and evidence to reduce the family fee.

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. Parents are encouraged to report decreases in income or need for child care so that family fees are billed accurately as adjustments will not be made under any circumstances.

Family fees are billed and collected by SNCS in advance. Payments are due to the Grass Valley SNCS office by the first day of the service month. Payment must be made in the form of check, money order or PayPal only. **SNCS cannot accept cash, or post-dated checks.** Family fees are separate from provider co-payments.

If SNCS is unable to meet all of a family's need for child care for which need and eligibility have been established, SNCS shall grant a fee credit equal to the amount paid to the other service provider of these child care and development services. The fee credit shall apply to the family's subsequent billing period, but shall not be allowed to carry over beyond that billing period. In order to receive a fee credit, the parent shall submit a receipt or cancelled check for the other child care and development services prior to the first of the following month.

DELINQUENT FAMILY FEES AND PAYMENT PLANS

Family fees are considered delinquent after 7 calendar days from the date the fees were due. Upon determination that fees are delinquent, a Notice of Action to terminate services shall be mailed. If the fees are paid by the effective date of the termination notice, childcare services may continue. Fees must be kept current; that is, the current family fee must always be paid; however, SNCS will accept a reasonable payment plan for payment of past due fees. If the payment plan is followed, termination of services for delinquent family fees can be avoided. If a family is terminated for delinquent fees, all fees must be paid prior to re-enrollment for childcare services.

CO-PAYMENTS

Family Fees are paid to SNCS, whereas the family pays co-payments directly to the family's child care 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. Parents 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.

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.

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

APPROVED CHILD CARE SCHEDULES

An approved childcare schedule includes the days and hours of the parent's documented need and certified schedule 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.

The certified schedule will be established at enrollment or recertification, based upon the documentation provided by the parent, and the certified need shall remain in effect until the family voluntarily requests a change, the family is disenrolled, or the family is recertified.

SNCS is unable to reimburse hours of care that include the scheduled instructional minutes of a public or private educational program available to a child in which the child is enrolled and attending, including but not limited to California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start programs, Transitional Kindergarten or Kindergarten. Schedules may be updated during the certification period to reflect a child's current or new enrollment in a public or private education program.

Part Time and Full Time Hours of Certified Need

*Effective February 1, 2024, part time is defined as less than 25 hours per week, and full time is defined as 25 or more hours per week.

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.

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 schedule and are eligible for reimbursement of absences and limited provider non-operational days

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 off days, rotates over a 6-week cycle. Patterned schedules are reimbursed based upon the certified schedule and are eligible for reimbursement of absences and limited provider non-operational days

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 schedule, through June 30, 2025.

UNSCHEDULED CARE/DROP IN DAYS

Unscheduled days of care may be approved when the family has an unscheduled but documented need for service, such as the parent's need to work on a regularly scheduled off, that exceeds the parent's certified need for child care. The parent must notify SNCS in advance and must submit supporting documentation.

CERTIFICATE OF ENROLLMENT

The Certificate of Enrollment (COE) documents and notifies the family and the provider of the authorized child care schedule; copies are provided to both the parent and childcare provider. Families and Providers may also access copies of the COE in CareConnect. The COE contains the approved childcare schedule, the beginning and end dates of service, and the maximum reimbursement amount. COEs are issued upon initial enrollment, recertification, and when changes to the schedule or rates occur.

NOTIFICATION OF ACTION

The Notice of Action (NOA) is a written notice that gives the family an explanation of their eligibility and/or changes in benefit levels and includes the effective date of the intended action.

VOLUNTARY REQUEST FOR CHANGES

A family may at any time voluntarily report income or other changes. This information shall be used, as applicable, to reduce the family's fees, increase/decrease the family's services, or extend the period of the family's eligibility before recertification. The parent will be required to submit a Parental Choice Voluntary Request for Change written request, and provide documentation to support the requested change. A new COE will be issued to the parent and childcare provider once the change is approved and a Notice of Action will be issued to the parent reflecting the approval and effective date of the change. The effective date of the requested change shall not be retroactive beyond the date the request for change was approved by SNCS. The approval date is based on the date SNCS reviews the request and determines the supporting documentation submitted by the parent is sufficient to approve and implement the change.

Any such reduction in service hours is voluntary and replaces the current schedule. If a family chooses to increase their certified schedule at a later time, they will be required to submit additional documentation

REPORTING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

The parent is required to report to SNCS when their child enrolls in an educational program and/or has changes to their child's school schedule. SNCS is unable to reimburse hours of care that include the scheduled instructional minutes of a public or private educational program available to a child in which the child is enrolled and attending, including but not limited to California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start programs, Transitional Kindergarten or Kindergarten. Child care schedules may be updated at any time during the certification period, and SNCS may contact the family to initiate changes to reflect a child's current or new enrollment in a public or private education program. Failure to notify SNCS may result in a Notice of Action for disenrollment from services.

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

Families who temporarily have no need for child care service, but do not wish to be disenrolled from the program may voluntarily report a change and will be required to submit a written request for a Temporary Suspension of Service. SNCS is not responsible for child care reimbursement during the time in which the temporary suspension of service is in effect. A Temporary Suspension of Service shall be no more than 12 consecutive weeks during the fiscal year, and will only be granted once per fiscal year, regardless of the duration. Reasons for a temporary suspension in service may include, but are not limited to:

- Parent break from school/training
- Medical, family, or maternity leave
- Parent visitation/custody arrangements

The family has the right to resume participation in child care services, according to their original certified schedule for care, once the temporary suspension of service has ended. Failure to resume services will be considered as Abandonment of Care and shall result in a Notice of Action to disenroll the family from services.

ATTENDANCE AND ABANDONMENT OF CARE

By making your child's attendance a priority, you will be taking an important step in supporting your child's school success and setting a good example. The provider shall promptly notify SNCS when the family has not used care for seven (7) consecutive calendar days and has not notified the provider of the reason the family is not using services. Upon notification from the provider, the Family Support Specialist will contact the family by phone and email (when available) to offer technical assistance and child care referrals, if necessary.

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. Day one shall be the first day the child was absent from care without notification.

CHANGING CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

Continuity of care relates to the child's continuous relationship and care experience with the same child care provider and supports the quality of care over a length of time. Families are encouraged to maintain their child's continuity of care, however, families enrolled in childcare services have the right to change childcare providers at any time. Example of reasons for changing childcare providers include, but are not limited to: provider's program or hours of operation do not meet the entire needs of the family, convenience of provider location, provider closing their business, family preference of program philosophy, availability of before/after school care, etc. 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 Home Education Network must choose a Network childcare provider. Families 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 hours of operation or daily capacity of the first provider is unable to accommodate the family's entire certified schedule.
- 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 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 care with an alternate provider. Payment to an alternate provider, due to child illness, is limited to 10 days per fiscal year. Care with an alternate provider in excess of ten days per fiscal year based on the illness of the child may be reimbursed if the parent provides a physician verification. Title 5 Section 18076.2 (c)
 - 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.

CHILD CARE PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

- All childcare providers that receive reimbursement from SNCS must be enrolled with SNCS before services are approved with the provider.
- All childcare providers are independent contractors and are not employees of SNCS. SNCS does not withhold taxes from childcare provider reimbursement; childcare providers are responsible for keeping records of reimbursement for their own tax purposes.
- In-home childcare providers are employees of the parent and must meet minimum wage requirements.
- All childcare providers are required to submit the SNCS attendance records or CareConnect electronic attendance for reimbursement. If a SNCS attendance record is unavailable, the parent and/or provider shall notify SNCS immediately and use their own document to record attendance until the SNCS attendance record is received.
- License-exempt childcare providers are required to complete an EMSA approved CPR/First Aid course within 90 days of the start of childcare services.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Attendance Records (ARs) are mailed to childcare providers who do not use electronic 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 services.

- Attendance must be recorded on a daily basis. Pre or post completion of ARs is a violation of state regulations.
 - For Family Child Care Home Education Network (CFCC), the parent must sign on a daily basis, using their full legal signature for each time in/out
- 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...) *CFCC enter absence reason in parent signature line
- 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 a parent is not adhering to the above requirements, the parent and/or provider will be notified of the non-compliance and technical assistance will be provided.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE

Attendance Records (ARs) are mailed directly to childcare providers who do not utilize electronic attendance. It is the responsibility of the childcare provider to submit attendance records 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.

Reimbursements shall be made within 21 calendar days of the submission of a completed monthly attendance record/invoice, according to the following schedule:

Submitted Via	Date Attendance Record is Received	Date reimbursement is Mailed/ Direct Deposited
Digital Claims	1 st through the 5 th of the month	10 th of the month
Physical Claims	1 st through the 9 th of the month	20 th of month
Digital Claims	6 th through 9 th of the month	20 th of month
All Claims	10 th through 19 th of the month	Last day of the month
All Claims	20 th through last day of the month	10 th of following month
All Claims	ARs received after the last day of the month	Will not be reimbursed

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. If SNCS is unable to make a reimbursement within 21 calendar days due to extenuating circumstances, SNCS will notify the provider within a reasonable timeframe of when SNCS became aware of the circumstance causing a delay of the reimbursement payment. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to, an emergency or payment system malfunction.

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 AMOUNT DETERMINATION

Reimbursement shall be based on the family's certified need for care/maximum authorized hours of care, regardless of attendance, including for families with variable schedules and families utilizing a license-exempt provider who provides part-time services.

CA Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 18076 requires that contractors use a single rate category to reimburse providers. Rate Categories include:

Hourly, Daily, Part-Time Weekly, Full-Time Weekly, Part-Time Monthly, and Full-Time Monthly. 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.

For children enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten or Kindergarten who are less than 6 years of age, the applicable age category shall be determined as follows:

- **Centers**

- The 6+ age category when the child is considered school-age for licensing purposes
- The 2-5 age category when the child is considered preschool age for licensing purposes

- **Licensed Family Child Care and License Exempt**

- The 6+ age category when the child is six years of age or older
- The 2-5 age category when the child is less than six years of age

Contractors are to select the rate category that most closely aligns with providers' customary rates while remaining in compliance with regulation. If a child care provider's reimbursement rate category could be construed as either full-time weekly or full-time monthly, the reimbursement shall be in accordance with either of the following:

- The applicable rate category that most closely corresponds to the rate category on the licensed provider's rate sheet; or
- If a single applicable rate category cannot be determined from the licensed provider's rate sheet on file, the applicable rate category that results in the higher reimbursement

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.

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 4.33i (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 weekly care average 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:
 1. 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.
 2. Family has a documented need of 6 hours or more per day and less than 14 days per month.
 - > The Hourly rate will apply if the family has a documented need of less than 25 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 25 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 25 or more hours per week SNCS will reimburse at a Full Time Weekly or Full Time Monthly rate, whichever results in the higher reimbursement amount.

The Regional Market Rate (RMR)ⁱⁱ 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.

SNCS is unable to reimburse hours of care that include the scheduled instructional minutes of a public or private educational program available to a child in which the child is enrolled and attending, including but not limited to California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start programs, Transitional Kindergarten or Kindergarten.

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.

i 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

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

DISENROLLMENT FROM SERVICES

REASONS FOR DISENROLLMENT

Continuity of care relates to the child's continuous relationship and care experience with the same child care provider and supports the quality of care over a length of time. Families are encouraged to maintain their child's continuity of care, and SNCS will not disenroll a family from child care services prior to the end of the family's 12 or 24 month certification period, with the following exceptions:

- When the recalculation of income, based on the provided documentation indicates that the family's adjusted gross monthly income exceeds income eligibility (85% of State Median Income) and the family does not meet the requirements for another eligibility category
- When the parent changes residency outside of California as reported by the parent
- When there is substantiated evidence of fraud that invalidates the initial certification and the family is not otherwise eligible
- When the family has abandoned care
- When the parent fails to comply with the program requirements and parental responsibilities
- When the parent fails to complete recertification
- When the parent fails Failure to pay family fees on time or comply with the payment plan agreement
- When the parent exhibits a lack of cooperation with SNCS staff.
- When the parent exhibits threats affecting the health, safety, or well-being of SNCS staff
- When the parent requests to end services.
- When SNCS has lack of funding
 - If it is necessary to disenroll families due to lack of funding, families shall be disenrolled in reverse order of enrollment priorities.

The parent will be issued a Notice of Action (NOA) to inform them of a decision to disenroll the family from childcare services.

If a family has been disenrolled from SNCS' services for any reason, the parent and childcare provider will receive an updated Certificate of Enrollment, either by USPS mail or CareConnect, indicating the last effective day of services.

The family has the right to appeal any disenrollment. The family must request the appeal prior to the appeal date indicated on the front of the Notice of Action.

APPEAL PROCEDURES

Parents have the right to appeal any decision made by SNCS regarding eligibility, receipt of child care, disenrollment, or payment for services. Details of the appeal procedure are found on the reverse side of the NOA.

Requests for an appeal can be made verbally or in writing by completing the back of the Notice of Action.

Failure to submit a request for an appeal to SNCS by the date the appeal is due, shall result in the family abandoning their rights to an appeal, and SNCS shall implement the intended action.

SNCS will make every effort to schedule the appeal hearing at a time that is convenient for the parent. However, if SNCS is unable to schedule the hearing in a timely fashion the parent will be notified of the hearing date and time in writing. Failure to attend the appeal hearing shall deem the appeal abandoned and SNCS shall implement the intended action.

MISREPRESENTATION & FRAUD POLICY

Knowingly misrepresenting eligibility by providing SNCS with incorrect or inaccurate information to obtain a benefit that the parent would otherwise not be entitled to receive will result in denial or disenrollment of childcare services. Child care used under misrepresentation and fraud may result in a referral to the District Attorney. Parents will be responsible for repayment of funds dispersed under fraudulent circumstances.

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 email letusnow@dss.ca.gov or call 1-844-LET-US-NO (1-844-538-8766). Parents may also call (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://www.ccl.dss.ca.gov/carefacilitysearch/>. A childcare provider may be permanently removed from the SNCS referral database upon a decision made by CCL.



<https://www.ccl.dss.ca.gov/carefacilitysearch/>

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.

Information regarding how to file a complaint is 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
ccdstakeholders@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.

Appendix I

Countable Sources of Income

1. Gross wages, salary, advances, commissions, overtime, bonuses, tips
2. Gross income from self-employment less business expenses with the exception of wage draws
3. Gambling or lottery winnings
4. Wages for migrant, agricultural, or seasonal work
5. Public cash assistance
6. Child support and spousal support
7. Unemployment compensation, Disability compensation, or Worker's compensation
8. Survivor benefits or Retirement benefits
9. Rent for room within the family's residence
10. Dividends, interest in bonds, income from estates, trusts, net rental income or royalties
11. Financial assistance received for the care of a child living with an adult who is not the child's biological or adoptive parent
12. Veteran's pension
13. Pension or annuities
14. Inheritance
15. Allowances for housing or automobiles provided as part of compensation
16. Portion of student grants or scholarships not identified for educational purposes such as tuition, books, or supplies
17. Insurance or court settlements for lost wages or punitive damages
18. Net proceeds from the sale of real property, stocks, or inherited property
19. Other enterprise for gain

Appendix II

Schedule of Income Ceilings (85% SMI) for Initial Certification and Recertification of Child Care and Development Programs

Schedule of Income Ceilings

The following Schedule of Income Ceilings must be used in determining income eligibility for families initially certified or recertified on or after July 1, 2023. For more information regarding eligibility priorities see [WIC Section 10271\(b\)](#).

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

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

Source: 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample File

SERVING YOU AT THREE LOCATIONS:



sierra nevada children's services

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

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Sierra Nevada Children's Services Toll Free Number:

888-306-7627(SNCS)

Stay Connected:
info@sncs.org
www.sncs.org

