



# **ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT AND GENERAL CHILD CARE PROGRAMS**

## **Parent/Guardian and Provider Program Guide**

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This booklet is your guide to the Stanislaus County Office of Education, Alternative Payment and General Child Care programs. It is important that you understand all program policies. Please direct any questions you have to the Alternative Payment or General Child Care program staff at (209) 238-6300.

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# **GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT AND GENERAL CHILD CARE PROGRAMS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **CHILD/FAMILY SERVICES MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Child/Family Services Division is to provide a comprehensive quality family support service system that includes a collaborative effort with other community resource agencies in the endeavor to enhance the quality of life for the clients served.

### **GENERAL SERVICE AREA AND TYPE**

The Alternative Payment (AP) and General Child Care (GCC) programs serve eligible families receiving child care in Stanislaus County. They provide services and subsidies for children who need care.

Parents/Guardians have the right to choose child care that is most appropriate to their needs, as long as the child care provider works within the regulations of the AP and GCC programs.

Note: Each program section in this guide provides a specific service area and type in relation to the program it is addressing.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF SERVICE**

The use or disclosure of any information maintained in the basic data file concerning children and their families is limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the AP and GCC Programs. No other use of the information will be made without prior written consent. Parents/Guardians shall have access to information in their basic data file within a reasonable time after the AP and GCC Programs receive a written request.

The AP and GCC Programs reserve the right to make unannounced visits to the family's home and/or to the provider's child care sites.

## **PROGRAM OPERATION**

### **ADMISSION AND DISPLACEMENT PROCEDURES**

When vacancies occur, applicants will be contacted in order of priority from the Stanislaus County Centralized Eligibility List (CEL). Families will be admitted to the program in accordance with the admission priorities. **Families must update their information every four (4) months to maintain status on the Stanislaus County CEL.**

**If it is necessary to displace families from the AP and GCC Programs, families will be displaced in reverse order of admission priorities.**

### **CHANGES TO FAMILY'S INFORMATION**

Changes can only be approved if funding is available. Approved and/or denied changes will become effective two (2) weeks after receipt of a written request. Failure to report changes within five (5) business days may result in termination from the program.

**Changes must be submitted in writing.** It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the AP and GCC Programs of any change, which includes, but is not limited to the following:

Change of:

- Child care provider
- Family status (size, employment, training/education)
- Income
- Need or use of child care services
- Address (Physical and Mailing)
- Telephone Number

Notice is required from both the parent/guardian and the provider in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance of changes including but not limited to the following:

- Vacation of parent/guardian or child
- Vacation of provider
- Court mandated visitation in excess of two (2) consecutive days
- Change in providers
- Leave of absence
- Termination of the family by the provider
- Termination of the provider by the parent/guardian

If the parent/guardian chooses to change their child care provider, a written request must be submitted to the AP and GCC Programs along with the following documentation:

- Current provider's name
- Names of children in care with current provider
- Reason for change of current provider
- Date the current provider will be terminated
- Days/hours that family will need care with new provider
- Name, address, and telephone number of new provider
- Rates (fee schedule needed if provider has not contracted with SCOE/AP and GCC Programs over the past 12 months)
- License (if applicable and provider has not contracted with SCOE/AP and GCC Programs over the past 12 months)

Families who change providers may be required to attend an interview or training with AP and GCC Programs staff. The AP and GCC Programs pay for services according to the policy of the contracted provider whenever possible. However, when notice is not given, the AP and GCC Programs are not liable for payment of services for either the old or new provider.

An eligible alternate provider may be used when the provider has a non-operational day or when a child is ill. Payment to an alternate provider is limited to ten (10) days per fiscal year when a provider has a non-operational day, and limited to ten (10) days per fiscal year when a child is ill. Alternate providers must be requested and approved a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to services.

**Note: Approved provider changes will become effective two (2) weeks after receipt of all documentation.**

### **MISSED APPOINTMENTS**

The AP and GCC Programs must be notified immediately if a family is unable to keep an appointment, prior to the appointment date. **Failure to keep appointment without proper notification may result in the family automatically being terminated.**

### **FAMILY FEES**

A family whose income falls within a certain range will be required to pay a family fee. Family fees are charged and collected in accordance with California Department of Education (CDE) regulations. A family fee is based on the level of adjusted gross monthly family income and family size. The family fee is paid per family, not for each individual child. The fee is based on the child using the most hours of care per month. An hourly fee is charged per hour if child care is less than two and a half hours per day. A part-time fee is charged per day if child care is part time. A full-time fee is charged per day if child care is full-time (See the section titled "Provider Reimbursement"). If a leave of absence is requested two (2) weeks in advance, fees will be adjusted accordingly. No adjustment shall be made for any excused or unexcused absence.

If the parent/guardian is working a fluctuating schedule, the family fee will be estimated based on the information given on the current Notice of Action, which will then be adjusted based on actual care used after the attendance claim has been received.

Family fees are accrued monthly and are to be paid in advance. They are due by the first business day of each month. Fees will be considered delinquent if not paid prior to the first day of services in any payment period. Payments are payable to SCOE in the form of a check, cashiers check, or money order (Cash will not be accepted). If a client has two (2) returned checks, checks will no longer be accepted. There will be a \$20 bank charge for each returned check. The client will then be placed on a cashier's check or money order basis only. If family fees are late five times within a fiscal year, services will be terminated.

**Note: If a family does not receive a bill, they are still responsible to pay their family fee on time.**

Upon determination of delinquent fees, the family will be mailed a written Notice of Action to terminate services. It will state the amount of unpaid fees, the daily fee, and the period of delinquency. If the fees are still unpaid and a request for an appeal hearing is not submitted fourteen (14) days following the issue date on the Notice of Action, services will be terminated. A one (1) year period of ineligibility will follow termination of services when the cause of termination is failure to pay fees. Fees must be paid prior to being placed back on the Stanislaus County CEL. A reasonable plan from the parent/guardian for payment of delinquent fees may be accepted. The procedure to request an appeal hearing is outlined on the back of each Notice of Action.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN and PROVIDER RELATIONSHIP**

Each child care provider sets their own policies for their program. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to obtain information from the provider about the provider's policies. These include, but are not limited to the following: hours of operation, exceptions regarding pick-up times, days the provider will be closed, (e.g., holidays and provider vacations), fees charged, attendance policies, snacks, meals offered, and program philosophy, which are all established by the provider, not the AP and GCC Programs. Providers may not charge subsidized families differently than private pay families.

### **FAMILY TERMINATION**

When a family chooses to terminate from the AP and GCC Programs, it is required that they notify both the program and the provider in writing at least two (2) weeks in advance of the effective termination date. If a two-week notice is not given, the AP and GCC Programs are not liable for payment to the provider.

The AP and GCC Programs may deny services or terminate a family for any of the following reasons, which include, but are not limited to:

- Non-compliance
- Abandoned child care for 5 consecutive days without notice
- Failure to provide current and correct information at the time of certification or recertification
- Failure to use the hours of care as agreed upon between the parent/provider and the AP and GCC Programs
- Delinquency in the payment of family fees
- Failure to notify the AP and GCC Programs in writing of changes in family or child care status, such as changes in the hours of care, gross monthly income, place of residence, employment, family size or marital status within five (5) business days after the change occurs
- Failure to complete attendance claims accurately and on a daily basis
- Falsification of or refusal to sign attendance claims

- Long-term absences from child care. The AP and GCC Programs do not allow families to be enrolled in the programs if they are not using child care unless a leave of absence has previously been approved
- Family income exceeds the maximum income guidelines
- Misrepresentation of income and/or eligibility
- Unavailability of program funds

In accordance with California Department of Education, Child Development Division guidelines, families will be mailed a Notice of Action at least fourteen (14) days prior to termination of service from the AP and GCC Programs.

Those families who are terminated for not following the AP and GCC Programs policies shall be placed on a one (1) year penalty period during which the family shall not be eligible for services. The penalty period shall start from the termination effective date included in the Notice of Action. This penalty does not apply to families who have terminated services by their own request.

### **PROVIDER TERMINATION**

When child care providers terminate a family, they are required to notify the AP and GCC Programs and the parent/guardian at least two (2) weeks in advance. If a two-week notice is not given, the AP and GCC Programs will not be responsible for reimbursement.

Providers will not be allowed to participate in the AP and GCC Programs if any of the following conditions occur:

- The provider refuses to sign the Agreement for Services.
- The provider refuses or is unable to provide the AP and GCC Programs with a copy of his/her current license or proof of TrustLine Registry (if required).
- The provider fails to provide current and correct information regarding child care attendance and child care rates. Rates charged for any subsidized child must be equal to or less than the rates charged for a non-subsidized child.
- A child care situation is deemed detrimental to the health or welfare of a child.
- The provider's license or TrustLine clearance is suspended or revoked.

The AP and GCC Programs will give a written notice to any provider who is going to be terminated. The notice will outline the infraction and the reasons for termination.

### **REIMBURSEMENTS**

#### **CONTRACT PROCESS**

Families and providers shall follow the Contract Process.

1. During certification/recertification, the family shall be given an Application for Services for review and signature, followed by a Notice of Action.

2. AP and GCC Programs staff shall issue an Agreement for Services and Program Guide to the provider based on the documentation provided.
3. Immediately upon receipt, the provider shall review (if the agreement for services is incorrect, contact our office immediately), sign and return the following documents to the AP and GCC Programs:
  - Agreement for Services
  - Program Guide Verification form
  - Provider Summary of Program Rules

**The AP and GCC Programs will not pay for child care expenses incurred by a family before they have been certified to be in the program. The Agreement for Services must also be signed and returned by the provider.**

### **PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT**

Provider fees must be based on usual and customary rates charged for services to non-subsidized children. Providers may not charge parents/guardians a categorically higher rate for children with disabilities. The AP and GCC Programs will reimburse providers to a maximum of 1.5 standard deviations from the Regional Market Rate (RMR) for the type of care provided as determined by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

#### **Part-time and Full-time Reimbursement**

If a provider charges **hourly**:

Full time = Full-time care can only be paid using a daily, weekly, or monthly rate.

Part time = Less than 30 hours per week and less than 6 hours of care per day.

If a provider charges **daily**:

Full time = 6 hours of care or more per day.

Part-time = Part-time care may only be paid using an hourly, weekly, or monthly rate.

If a provider charges **weekly**:

Full time = Child care is 30 hours or more per week

Part time = Child care is less than 30 hours of care per week (This does not apply to exempt child care providers. Hourly reimbursement will be used.)

If a provider charges **monthly**:

Full time = Child care is 30 hours or more per week and occurs in every week of the month

Part time = Child care is less than 30 hours of care per week and occurs in every week of the month (This does not apply to exempt child care providers. Hourly reimbursement will be used.)

**Note:** When a provider has not established a rate that corresponds to the certified need, the contractor shall establish the rate using a formula established by the CDE.

### **Adjustment to Reimbursements**

Unscheduled Care:

Rate adjustments for child care exceeding the certified need only apply when proper documentation has been received and prior approval by a SCO representative has been given.

When child care exceeds 52.5 hours per week: (licensed providers only)

Rate adjustments for child care exceeding 52.5 hours a week only apply when child care is not included in the licensed provider's full-time weekly/monthly rate.

Evenings and/or weekends for licensed providers:

Rate adjustments for after-hour care only apply to licensed providers when after hour services include at least 10% of the total care used and when services occur between the hours of 6:00pm and 6:00am or on weekends.

Children with exceptional needs:

A provider caring for a child with exceptional needs is eligible to receive a rate adjustment when such services have a documented fiscal impact to the provider and does not exceed the providers rates charged to a non-subsidized family.

### **CHARGES NOT PAID BY THE PROGRAMS**

- The AP and GCC Programs do not pay when the provider is unavailable to provide services such as when the provider is on vacation, ill, closed for holidays or if the provider elects not to provide services. This does not include the ten (10) non-operational days allowed for licensed providers. (See Absence Policy)
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for charges incurred due to late pick-up of children.
- When parents/guardians make a change but do not provide the AP and GCC Programs two (2) weeks notice prior to the change, the AP and GCC Programs will not be responsible for payment.
- Unexcused absences will not be paid.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for any fees not covered in the Agreement for Services, such as an increase in provider rates without adequate written notice as

required or when the provider's registration fee exceeds the maximum reimbursable amount.

### **CO-PAYMENTS**

If the rate charged by any provider exceeds the 1.5 standard deviation, the parent/guardian will make a co-payment directly to the provider for the difference between the maximum allowed by the AP and GCC Programs and the provider's usual rates or the parent/guardian may select a different provider. Co-payments will not be accounted for or collected by the AP and GCC Programs. (Note: The GCC Program does not allow a provider to charge a co-payment to the family.)

### **REQUEST FOR RATE INCREASES**

Each licensed child care provider may alter rate levels for subsidized children once per year. They shall provide the AP and GCC Program and Resource and Referral with the updated information. Providers may not charge subsidized families differently than private pay families. The AP and GCC Programs require a thirty (30) day written notice for rate increases. All rate increases become effective on the first day of the following month if program funding is available. Before a rate change can be honored, it must be compared to the Regional Market Rate Survey, approved by the AP and GCC Programs, and a new Agreement for Services needs to be issued.

Registration and other special charges must be approved prior to the beginning of services and must be stated on the Agreement for Services.

**Parents/Guardians are responsible for any fees not covered in the Agreement for Services.**

### **ABSENCE POLICY**

**If a child is absent for two (2) or more consecutive days of regularly scheduled care at any time during the month, the parent/guardian and provider must notify the AP and GCC Programs on the third day of absence and on each consecutive day until the child returns to care.**

#### **Excused Absence**

1. Child, sibling, parent or guardian out due to illness.  
Example: Child has pink eye
2. Parent/Guardian picking child(ren) up early must give reason why.  
Example: Parent/Guardian was off of work early
2. Parent/Guardian does not work that day(s).  
Example: Varying work day(s).

Parent /Guardian has set work days, but for unforeseen reason(s) employer closed.

3. Court Order Visitation (Court order must be on file).  
Example: The court stipulates an action.
4. Family emergency includes any unscheduled absence due to death, accident, or hospitalization of a family member. Emergency situations will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Family emergencies must be clearly described on the attendance claim.

**Best Interest Days** (10 days per fiscal year)

When a parent/guardian feels that another activity would be better for the child(ren) to attend.

Example: Visiting a relative or friend, going to a birthday party, movies, skating, etc.

**Leave of Absence** (Limited to 12 weeks/16 weeks medical per fiscal year)

Time requested by a parent/guardian that the child(ren) will not be in care. This reserves the family's spot on the program as long as there are no change(s) to the family's eligibility. Except for emergency situations, requests for leaves must be submitted and signed by the parent/guardian and provider on a Leave of Absence form at least two (2) weeks prior to the start date. The AP and GCC Programs reserve the right to place a family and/or provider on a leave of absence. Child care reimbursements will not be paid during this time.

Example: Family going on vacation.  
Medical for parent/guardian and/or child(ren).  
Parent/Guardian in between jobs.  
Family changing providers.  
Parent/Guardian student between school semesters/terms.

**Non-Operational Days** (10 days per fiscal year)

Reimbursement for non-operational days is only allowed when the licensed child care provider's documentation states that such payment is required from non-subsidized families. Limited to ten (10) days per fiscal year, and does not apply to non-scheduled days or times.

**Unexcused Absence**

When one of the above is not recorded on the attendance claim the absence is considered unexcused and will **not be reimbursed**.

Unexcused Absences:

...are limited to one (1) day of enrollment per month, and cannot be accumulated across months.

...in excess of 3 days in 3 consecutive months are grounds for termination from the program.

...in excess of 3 days in a single month are grounds for termination from the program.

**ATTENDANCE CLAIMS**

Attendance claims are the provider's method of billing the AP and GCC Programs for payment. The attendance claim is the only documentation that is acceptable to verify services rendered and initiate payment for services. **Attendance claims are due the 5th working day of the month for the prior month's services.**

**Attendance claims received after the 5<sup>th</sup> working day of the month will not be processed until the following month.** Payment for child care services will not be paid if an attendance claim is submitted more than **60 days** after child care services are provided, and will become the obligation of the parent/guardian.

Each child is enrolled for specific days per month and specific hours per day. Every contracted day within the month must be accounted for whether care was used or not. The need for services is assessed during the certification and/or recertification interview and reassessed when a parent/guardian reports a change.

1. Verification of Daily Attendance Reporting

Each child must have an attendance claim, which is maintained on a daily basis that indicates the actual days and hours child care is used. A parent/guardian or authorized adult, dropping off or picking up a child(ren) from the provider must sign the child in and out of care daily using a full signature. The actual in and out time for each child must be recorded.

It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that the attendance claim is being completed accurately and on a daily basis. Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) will not be responsible for payment of days with missing signatures or in and out times. Every attempt will be made to allow the provider to complete the claim for full payment. However, the provider has the ultimate responsibility.

2. Record of Absences or Change of Contracted Hours

If the child is absent for any reason during the regular contracted days or hours of care, explain why in the Reason for Absence column. The nature of the absence and/or family emergency must be clearly stated. When a provider is closed, state "provider closed" or "paid non-operational day." The parent/guardian must sign using a full signature next to each absence. For example:

Day	Parents/Guardians Full Signature	Reason for Absence
-----	----------------------------------	--------------------

1	Jane Doe	Upset Stomach
2	Jane Doe	Left Early (Doctor's Appt.)

**Absences not conforming to this requirement will be deemed as unexcused absences.**

3. Charges

The attendance claims are checked for correct charges. The claim is then checked against the Agreement for Services to see if the scheduled amount of care was used. Providers should calculate the total amount due prior to submitting the attendance claim for payment.

4. Completion of the Attendance Claim

At the end of the month, the parent/guardian and provider must review the attendance claim for accuracy and completion. Both parent/guardian and provider must sign the attendance claim verifying the accuracy of the information.

5. Use of Ink

All information on the attendance claims must be written submitted in black or blue ink. Pencil will not be accepted.

6. Reimbursement Process

Incomplete attendance claims will be returned UNPAID to provider. Accurate attendance claims received in the AP and GCC Programs office by the 5<sup>th</sup> working day of the month will be processed and mailed out no later than the last working day of the month. Attendance claims received after the 5<sup>th</sup> working day of the month will be processed the next month.

Payment for child care services will not be paid if an attendance claim is submitted more than **60 days** after child care services are provided, and will become the obligation of the parent/guardian.

If a family terminates from the program and has not signed the child in and out on a daily basis, the AP and GCC Program **will be unable to reimburse** the provider for any services they may have rendered.

*Please do not call the AP and GCC Programs regarding your payment until after the last working day of the month, as high volumes of provider and parent/guardian calls delay the reimbursement process.*

Payments to providers/parents/guardians will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service. At the end of each calendar year, the provider/parent/guardian will be issued a 1099 Form (statement of non-employee earnings) stating the total money received from the SCOE, AP and GCC Programs.

**REIMBURSEMENT SCHEDULE**

The AP and GCC Programs will reimburse providers directly for child care services rendered, unless the provider is an in-home care provider working in the parent's/guardian's home. In this case, the parent/guardian receives the child care subsidy and is then responsible for payment to the provider. The basis of payment is specified in the Agreement for Services.

Payments are always made after the care has been provided and only for the actual hours of attendance, up to the maximum of the contracted hours of care.

The program will not pay for services until the Agreement for Services has been signed and returned.

## **FAIR HEARINGS/COMPLAINTS**

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN COMPLAINTS TO PROGRAM**

#### **Fair Hearing/Appeal**

Parents/Guardians enrolled in the AP and GCC Programs have the right to a fair hearing if they are not satisfied with any decision regarding their child care. The procedure to request a fair hearing is outlined on the back of each Notice of Action. An appeal must be filed within fourteen (14) calendar days after the participant receives the Notice of Action. Upon the filing of a request for hearing, the intended action shall be suspended until the review process has been completed. The review process is complete when the appeal process has been exhausted or when the parent(s)/guardian(s) abandons the appeal process.

#### **Complaints**

All families, regardless of program, may choose to file a complaint using the Uniform Complaint Procedures (see Attachment A).

### **PARENTAL COMPLAINTS IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS**

#### **License- Exempt Providers**

Parents/Guardians with children in license-exempt care may make a complaint against the provider. Only complaints about health and safety noncompliance will be accepted. Parents/Guardians must use the following process:

A written complaint signed by the parent/guardian must include the date, approximate time of the occurrence and name and address of the provider about whom the complaint is being made.

Upon receipt of the written complaint, the AP and GCC Programs will inform the provider of the parent's/guardian's complaint and the right to submit a written rebuttal. The program will inform both the parent/guardian and the provider that payments will cease in 14 days unless a written declaration signed by both parties has been received by the AP and GCC Programs stating that the health and safety

deficiency has been corrected. The AP and GCC Programs will also inform the parent/guardian that serious health and safety concerns should be referred to the local Child Protective Services Agency.

The AP and GCC Programs will maintain a record of parental complaints concerning licensing-exempt provider's failure to meet the health and safety standards as specified in the Health and Safety Self-Certification. When inquiries are made about a specific license-exempt provider, the AP and GCC Programs will inform the requestor of the general nature of the complaint and whether or not the provider submitted a rebuttal.

### **Licensed Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers**

Parents/Guardians with children in licensed care may file a complaint against the provider by contacting the following agency:

Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division  
770 East Shaw Avenue, Suite 300  
Fresno, CA 93710  
(559) 243-4588

### **PROVIDER COMPLAINTS TO PROGRAM**

All child care providers are entitled to appeal the decision to terminate them from the AP and GCC Programs. The provider has ten (10) days from receipt of the initial notification of termination to request an appeal. To request an appeal, the provider must send a registered letter addressed to:

Stanislaus County Office of Education  
AP and GCC Programs  
1324 Celeste Drive  
Modesto, CA 95355

If a request for an appeal is not made within ten (10) days, the provider waives his/her right to appeal and the decision to permanently remove him/her from participation in the AP and GCC Programs shall be final.

# **ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT PROGRAM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE), Child/Family Services Division (CFS) welcomes you and your family to our State Alternative Payment and Federal Block Grant/Alternative Payment programs. The rules for both of these programs are very similar; therefore have been combined into one section. Throughout this section we will specify rules that only apply to either of the programs.

## **PROGRAM PURPOSE**

### **DESIGN**

The SCOE, Alternative Payment Program (AP) is a public agency funded by the California Department of Education (CDE), Child Development Division (CDD) to provide services and subsidies to eligible families for child care and development services. Since these programs are dependent upon funding, services are only available if the continued funding exists. SCOE adheres to all CDE regulations governing the Alternative Payment program. SCOE operates on a non-discriminatory basis, giving equal access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability.

## **SERVICES**

### **AREA AND TYPE**

The AP program serves eligible families receiving child care in Stanislaus County. They provide services and subsidies for children who need child care. Children may participate in the program from birth to 13 years of age. Children incapable of caring for themselves may be served to age 18 in the Federal Block Grant/AP program and age 21 in the State AP program. To document these exceptional needs, written verification is required from a legally qualified medical or mental health professional, and an Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be on file. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) with children ages eleven and twelve must certify that there is not a subsidized after school program that meets their need before they can be served by the AP Program.

## **PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS**

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Eligibility for the AP program is determined by family income and need. In addition, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) must live and/or work in the State of California. Families eligible for services must have an adjusted monthly income at or below 75% of the state median income, adjusted for family size. A family has a need for services when they meet one of the criteria below:

1. The child is receiving protective services through the local county welfare department or is identified by a legal, medical, social service agency, or emergency shelter as abused, neglected, or exploited, or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

In cases where the child is in an out-of-home custodial placement, the child is deemed to be removed from the "at risk" situation. As a result, the child would not meet eligibility requirements for protective services. The child can be served by being deemed an income-eligible family of one. In such cases, the custodial parent/guardian must have a qualifying need unless the child is still deemed to be "at risk" or is still receiving child protective services.

2. The parent/guardian and any other adult counted in the family size must meet one of the three criteria listed below:
  - a. Employed
  - b. Actively seeking employment
  - c. Participating in vocational training or an education program leading to a recognized trade, profession, or paraprofession.
3. Incapacitated: Any adult(s) counted in the family size may be incapacitated, including medical or psychiatric needs, to the extent that the adult's ability to provide normal care for the child is significantly limited. Verification by a legally qualified professional is required and shall be recorded on a Statement of Incapacity form (CD-9606). (Note: A single parent/guardian may not be incapacitated, unless they are enrolled in the State AP program.)
4. Seeking permanent housing/Homeless
5. Family is a public assistance recipient.

## **PRIORITIES FOR ADMISSION**

### **First priority**

Children receiving child protective services, seamless child protective service transfers, or families whose children are at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited shall be

admitted first. Within this priority, children receiving protective services through the local county welfare department shall be admitted first.

## **Second priority**

All children whose families are not within the first priority shall be admitted according to family income, which includes all other seamless transfers. The lowest per capita income will be admitted first. For determining the order of admission, public assistance grants are counted as income. If two or more families have comparable per capita income, the family with special needs children shall be admitted first. If more than one family has special needs children, the family that has been on the waiting list the longest shall be admitted first.

When all of the children in a family are not certified based on child protective services or the child's special need, the other children or the parents/guardians in the family must meet both eligibility and need criteria as specified in the "Eligibility" section (above) prior to enrollment and shall be admitted in accordance with priorities specified above. Except for situations where not all of the children in a family are certified based on child protective services, a family that has a child or children enrolled in the program shall be allowed to enroll additional children provided funding is available.

## **CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

When a family is selected from the Stanislaus County CEL, the parent/guardian must verify that all the information previously collected is still correct. If the family is eligible, an orientation appointment will be made to begin certification. The AP program must be notified if a family is unable to keep an appointment prior to the appointment date. Failure to keep an appointment without proper notification may result in the family automatically being placed back on the Stanislaus County CEL.

When a child's residence alternates between the homes of separated or divorced parents, eligibility, need, and fees are determined separately for each household in which the child is residing.

**At the time of the appointment, the following information and documentation must be provided:**

1. Verification of all gross income earned from the past month for each adult counted in the family size is required. Documentation may include: wage stubs, copies of income tax returns, TANF or/and Medi-cal verification, verification of child support received and/or paid out, unemployment award letters or financial aid/work study award letters. For self-employed parents/guardians, documentation may include a signed declaration of earnings or copies of income tax returns. A letter from the

parent(s)/guardian(s) employer may temporarily substitute for a wage stub. The letter must include the amount of gross income earned for the past thirty days and must be signed and dated by the employer, personnel officer, immediate supervisor, or payroll officer.

When income fluctuates regularly, the adjusted monthly income shall be computed by averaging the total adjusted gross income received during the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the month in which the application for services is signed.

2. Home address, a phone number, if applicable, a work number, work address, and work hours are required.
3. A written statement of days and hours child care will be needed.
4. For school age children the following documentation is required:
  - Name of school
  - Traditional/SpecificTrack (Parent/Guardian may be asked to provide the program with a school calendar)
  - Daily school schedule (Example: 8:00am to 3:00pm)
  - Written documentation from after school program that states there is currently no space available for the child
5. Verification to establish eligibility. If employed, participating in vocational training or an education program, actively seeking employment, or referred by Child Protective Services, the parent/guardian shall provide the information outlined below. When eligibility is certified, an Agreement for Services will be issued.

## **Employed**

Parents/Guardians who are employed must submit an Employment Verification form completed and signed by the employer, payroll clerk, or authorized representative at the time of initial enrollment.

If employed by a temporary employment agency, a copy of your time sheet for each day/week must be submitted at the end of each week throughout your assignment(s).

If self-employed, the nature of the work must preclude the supervision of your children. A declaration of need that includes a description of the employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked per week along with copies of appointment logs, client receipts, job logs or a list of clients with contact information must be on file. If you lease or rent a workspace, a copy of the lease or rental agreement is also required.

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify AP staff each time there is any change in income or work hours.

**Loss of a job must be reported to the AP program on the next business day after job termination notice. Failure to report the loss of a job may result in termination from the program.**

Parents/Guardians applying for services through the AP program must use the following procedure if they are enrolled in training or vocational program:

1. Parents/Guardians must have on file a Training Verification (CD-9605) form from the sponsoring agent/school regarding the type of training and the number of hours per week during which the training takes place. Training verifications will only be accepted if they contain the following:
  - a. The parent's/guardian's **vocational** goal and anticipated completion dates of all training to meet the vocational goal are clearly stated
  - b. The beginning and ending dates of the current semester/term are clearly stated
  - c. The training schedule, including the course titles, times and days of classes, is filled out completely and properly
  - d. Signature of the parent/guardian, and the signature and stamp of the school seal by the agency/school registrar/program director
2. If the training institution will not sign the training verification:
  - a. Parent/Guardian completes and signs the Training Verification, leaving the "signature and stamp of registrar of school organization" blank.
  - b. Attach an official letter signed and stamped from the training organization that states name of school, date training will begin/end and anticipated completion date for training/education.
3. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) enrolled in training/vocational programs must complete unit hours for which they are enrolled and the AP program is reimbursing child care for.

Report cards, transcripts or other records must be provided at the end of each term to document adequate progress toward attainment of the training/vocational goal. Progress will be reviewed and monitored at the end of each semester/quarter or on the pre-arranged ending date of the training/vocational program, whichever comes first.

Unless parents/guardians can show good cause for an exception, the AP program will only pay for child care during one course of training per fiscal year when enrolled in a training/vocational program.

4. Requests for changes to a child(ren)'s schedule must be made two weeks in advance.
5. Parents/Guardians in a vocational/training program shall be limited to four years of enrollment and/or hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Special circumstances will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

### **Actively Seeking Employment**

Parents/Guardians can actively seek employment for a maximum of 5 days per week, 6.5 hours per day and 60 working days during the fiscal year. All parents/guardians who are actively seeking employment must submit an Actively Seeking Employment Verification form at the end of each week. This form will document job search activities for the prior calendar week.

### **Incapacitation**

An adult counted in the family size may be incapacitated. Verification by a legally qualified professional must be provided on a Statement of Incapacity form (CD-9606). The form must be completed and submitted before subsidized child care services may begin. ). (Note: A single parent/guardian may not be incapacitated, unless they are enrolled in the State AP program.)

### **At-Risk or Child Protective Services Families**

**Children at-risk** of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and referred from a legally qualified professional in a legal, medical, or social services agency, or an emergency shelter may receive child care and development services for up to a maximum of three (3) months. A second referral will not extend child care and development services beyond the initial three (3) months. After the three (3) month time period a family's services will be terminated, unless the family meets other "need" and "eligibility" requirements as listed in the "Certification of Eligibility" section of this guide.

**Children receiving child protective services (CPS)** through the county welfare department may receive child care and development services for up to twelve (12) months if referred by a county child welfare services worker because the child is receiving family preservation services or family maintenance services and the family requires care as part of their family maintenance or family preservation case plan. After the initial twelve (12) month time period a family's services will be terminated, unless the family's child care services worker issues another referral authorizing child care and development services, or if the family meets other "need" and "eligibility" requirements as listed in the "Certification of Eligibility" section of this guide.

Both at-risk and CPS families are subject to the family fee schedule with the following exemptions:

- Families with at risk children may be exempt from paying fees if determined by the legally qualified professional in a legal, medical, or social services agency or emergency shelter to be necessary.
- CPS families may be exempt from paying a fee for up to twelve (12) months if determined to be necessary by the county welfare department, child welfare services worker.

The combined time period for the fee exemption cannot exceed a total of twelve (12) months. Fee exemptions cannot be granted beyond twelve (12) months regardless of whether the child continues to be eligible as a CPS child.

Both at-risk and CPS family's written referral must contain each of the following items:

1. The name and birth date of each child being referred for service
2. The frequency of needed child care services (number of days per week and number of hours per day child care is needed for each child)
3. The referral must be written on the referring agency's letterhead
4. The probable duration of the child protective service plan or the at-risk situation
5. The name, address, telephone number, license number and signature of the "legally qualified professional" who is making the referral
6. For CPS- A referral letter by a county child welfare services worker from the local county welfare department certifying that the family is receiving family preservation services or family maintenance services and the family requires care as part of their family maintenance or family preservation case plan
7. For At-Risk- A referral letter by a legally qualified professional from a legal, medical, or social services agency, or an emergency shelter certifying that the family is at-risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and child care and development services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk

### **RECERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

Recertification of eligibility is required at least once every 3 months for families receiving services because the child is at risk of or because of actual abuse, neglect, or exploitation. All other families will be recertified at least once each contract period and at intervals not to exceed 12 months.

**Recertification may be necessary when there are changes in income, family size, marital status, employment or use of child care services.**

### **PARENTAL CHOICE**

It is the parent's/guardian's right and responsibility to choose the child care provider for their children. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged to choose a clean, healthy, and safe environment for their children. If you need assistance in choosing a child care provider, contact SCOE, Child Care Resource and Referral program at (209) 558-4050.

The AP program will pay for child care that is provided by one of the following:

- A licensed family child care home

- A licensed child care center
- A license-exempt school-aged program operated on school grounds by qualified school district personnel
- A license-exempt individual who has been registered and cleared through “Trustline”
- A specific license-exempt relative that is related by blood, marriage, or court decree (grandparent, aunt, or uncle of the child)
- An in-home care provider who has been registered and cleared through “Trustline” and who becomes the employee of the parent/guardian. A family using an in-home child care provider is required to have a minimum of three (3) children in child care **for the same period of time**

Child care is a contract between parent/guardian and provider. Any disputes arising or liability resulting from the parent/guardian-provider contract shall not involve SCOE in any way. The AP program does not inspect or warrant the condition of the provider’s home/facility, or the degree or type of supervision provided. The AP program assumes no responsibility for injury or damages arising from the parent/guardian or child care provider’s performance. The parent/guardian and provider agree to hold harmless SCOE and the AP program and their employees, from costs, lawsuits, or liabilities arising from child care services.

If a child(ren)’s certified hours of care can be accommodated by one provider then multiple providers cannot be used. Multiple exempt providers must provide documentation as to why the exempt provider cannot meet the family’s total need. Written documentation must be submitted and approved by a SCOE representative prior to beginning services.

Parent/Guardians may use multiple providers when they elect to enroll their child (ren) in a licensed early education program for a half day and use a different provider for the remaining hours.

### **PROVIDER PARTICIPATION**

The SCOE, AP program provide subsidies and services to children needing child care. Any licensed family child care provider, licensed child care center, license-exempt individual, or after school program exempt from licensure under current law, may participate in the SCOE, AP program. (Note: The State AP program requires verification that a child care provider does not provide religious instruction or allow worship in its child development program.)

**All providers must meet the following requirements:**

1. The provider resides in Stanislaus County, or has his/her facility in Stanislaus County.
2. The provider agrees to remain in compliance with applicable licensing or registry laws and regulations.
3. The provider submits his/her current fee schedule, policies and a signed copy of the agreement between the provider and the parent/guardian.
4. All licensed family child care home providers must supply the AP program with a copy of their current child care license.
  - Licenses are specific to a provider and home. A provider who moves must have a license reflecting the new address before being eligible for reimbursement as a licensed provider through the AP program.
  - The AP programs Agreement for Services is non-transferable. After receiving a license reflecting the new address, the family child care provider will be issued a new Agreement for Services reflecting the current information. The AP program will not reimburse providers who do not have a current license and Agreement for Services on file.
5. Child care centers must provide the AP program with a copy of a current child care license.
  - The Agreement for Services is nontransferable. If there is a change of ownership, the AP program must be notified in writing prior to the change. The new owner must provide the status of the new license and who is assuming liability and responsibility during the license change-over. If the original owner is assuming responsibility and liability for the new owner until the license is processed, a written declaration must be submitted to the AP program. If there is a time when the facility becomes unlicensed, the AP program will not reimburse services. At the time that the new license is issued, a new Agreement for Services must also be issued.
6. Latchkey programs exempt from licensure must provide the AP program with a declaration that the program is located on school grounds and is staffed by “qualified teachers” that are school personnel.
7. License-exempt providers must be registered with TrustLine unless they are the grandparent, aunt, or uncle of the child. All exempt providers must complete, in conjunction with the parent/guardian, a Health and Safety Self-Certification form.

8. License-exempt providers who care for the children in the child's home become an employee of the parent/guardian (in-home care). A family using an in-home child care provider is required to have a minimum of three (3) children in child care **for the same period of time**. The parent/guardian agrees to meet all federal and state employer requirements that include, but may not be limited to:
  - registering with the IRS to receive an employer identification number (EIN)
  - paying the employer's share of social security and Medicare taxes on wages the parent/guardian pays to the provider
  - withholding the provider's share of social security and Medicare taxes
  - making quarterly tax deposits and filing quarterly tax returns using Form 941
  - issuing provider a W-2 form at the end of the calendar year
  - withholding and submitting to the state the provider's share of State Disability Insurance (SDI)
  - paying required Unemployment Insurance (SUI) to the state quarterly
  - providing worker's compensation insurance for provider
  - paying difference between minimum wage and 1.5 standard deviation of mean market rate for type of care provided to the provider
9. All providers must operate on a nondiscriminatory basis giving equal treatment and access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability.
10. License-exempt providers must have a signed statement declaring that providers will allow parents/guardians unlimited access to enter and inspect their home without advance notice whenever children are in care. This statement must be on file in the AP office before the provider can participate in the programs.
11. Providers must inform the AP program within five (5) days of any changes.

# **GENERAL CHILD CARE PROGRAM**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE), Child/Family Services Division (CFS) welcomes you and your family to our General Child Care (GCC) Program. We know that you and your children will enjoy the activities and services provided.

The program is operated by the Stanislaus County Office of Education, CFS Division, and serves infants six (6) weeks through five (5) years of age based on contract funding.

All administrators and professional staff have the appropriate credentials, permits, or a Family Child Care Home license to serve in public/privately funded child care programs. Family Child Care Home providers are selected based on their experience with children, knowledge of child development, and their ability to work well with children, families, and the community.

Our program is designed to help each child attain his/her fullest potential. This is done through curriculum designed to promote physical, social, emotional, and mental growth.

Our experience, confirmed by research, indicates that children succeed in their learning experiences when parents/guardians and caregivers work together. This booklet is designed to introduce our program to you and invite you to join hands with us in making this an important experience and a happy memory for your child. You are invited to visit or volunteer at any time.

We hope this program guide will help prepare you and your child for new and exciting learning experiences.

Child's primary caregiver is \_\_\_\_\_

Family Child Care Home (FCCH) phone number is: \_\_\_\_\_

The FCCH address is \_\_\_\_\_

SCOE Program Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

## **PROGRAM PURPOSE**

### **DESIGN**

The Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE), General Child Care (GCC) program is funded by the California Department of Education (CDE), Child Development Division (CDD) to provide child care and comprehensive services and subsidies to eligible families for child care and development services. Since these programs are dependent upon funding, services are only available if the continued funding exists. SCOE adheres to all CDE regulations governing the programs. SCOE operates on a non-discriminatory basis, giving equal access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability.

### **PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

#### **We Believe:**

- That the years of early childhood are the most important years developmentally in the lives of all persons.
- That parents/guardians are the primary caregivers and educators of their children.
- That each family's cultural beliefs should be respected and supported as a means to best meet the family's needs.
- That optimal growth is accomplished by engaging children in appropriate activities that affirm their cultural heritage and promote their cognitive, social, emotional, language, and physical development.
- That the life and healthy development of each individual is important to society.
- That the contributions of healthy families hold the potential to affect positive change in our society.

Because of these beliefs we are committed to protecting and improving the quality of care, education and services we provide to our children and families.

### **PROGRAM GOALS**

SCOE strives to provide children and families with quality services. SCOE has developed the following goals that reflect the most important components of our program.

### Goal I

Provide quality child care and services to enrolled children and families.

### Goal II

Encourage and support parental understanding of and involvement in their child's program activities.

### Goal III

Provide qualified program staff and Family Child Care Home Providers.

### Goals IV

Build effective community partnerships

### Goal V

Implement an effective Annual Self-study Process.

## **PROGRAM FOCUS**

The staff of SCOE is committed to providing a high-quality child care program that supports and extends the family. In this program; staff, providers and parents/guardians are partners working together to provide a warm, loving, safe and healthy environment to enable children to develop to their fullest potential.

All administrators, support staff and Family Child Care Home (FCCH) Providers have the appropriate credentials, licenses, and permits as necessary to serve in this child care program. Staff is selected based on their experience with children, knowledge of child development, and ability to work well with children, families, and the community.

### **Our program is designed to:**

- Support and encourage every child's growth to promote cognitive, social, emotional, physical and language development.
- Promote the child's self-esteem by designing program activities that are reflective of the child's culture and respectful of their individual needs.
- Include and encourage parents/guardians to participate in their child's education program.
- Foster the development of a positive and competent self-image.

## **SERVICES**

### **AREA AND TYPE**

The GCC program serves eligible families in Stanislaus County by providing services and subsidies for children who need child care. Children may participate in the program from six (6) weeks through five (5) years of age based on contract funding.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) have the right to choose child care that is most appropriate to their needs from the specific SCOE network of licensed Family Child Care Home (FCCH) providers.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT**

### **Communication**

Parents/Guardians should check with their child's FCCH provider daily regarding information and notices from SCOE program staff. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact SCOE staff with questions or concerns they may have regarding the program. SCOE has an open door policy that encourages parents/guardians to participate in program activities whenever possible.

### **Parent Meetings**

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to attend the monthly parent meetings where program and other pertinent information is distributed. In addition to monthly parent meetings, a Parent Advisory Committee is convened where parent/guardian representatives are asked to provide input into program activities.

### **Parent Conferences**

Program staff initiates two (2) parent conferences each year for the purpose of sharing information regarding their child's growth and development. Conferences will be scheduled at the parent's/guardian's convenience. Parent conferences are a required part of this program and it is important for parents/guardians to keep their conference appointments.

## **EDUCATION PROGRAM**

### **Developmental Assessment**

To ensure the appropriateness of the education program, a Child Care Specialist (CCS) conducts a written assessment of all enrolled children to determine their current skill level in a variety of developmental areas; i.e. cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical. The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is the required assessment tool. Children six (6) weeks through five (5) years are assessed.

The CCS conducts the assessment near the beginning of a child's enrollment and then periodically throughout the year as required to track children's developmental progress. Staff conducting the DRDP speaks the language of the children being assessed and is supportive of cultural differences.

While a formal developmental assessment is not conducted for school age children, a child's needs, skills, and interests are identified through a parent/guardian and child questionnaire.

## **Home Visit/Activity Plans**

DRDP results and observations are used to help the Child Care Specialist, parent/guardian and provider develop appropriate activities for each child and children as a small group.

The Child Care Specialist initiates the Home Visit/Activity Plan and the Summary of Progress that outline activities that support children's growth in each developmental domain i.e. cognitive, social, emotional, physical and language.

FCCH providers are responsive to the individual needs of children, especially infants and toddlers for whom stable and consistent routines are crucial.

Providers plan for child-initiated/free choice activities both indoors and outdoors throughout the day. A balance of quiet and active play is provided through art, math, science, music, manipulative, and language activities etc.

Activities support the cultural and linguistic needs of the children as most providers speak the primary language of the children served.

FCCH providers are accepting and responsive to the needs of children with special needs. Activity plans for children having special needs reflect goals and activities as outlined in their IFSP or IEP. General activities are adapted whenever possible to include children with special needs.

FCCH providers develop activities based on the school age parent/guardian/child questionnaire that reflects the child's interests and strengths. Children are provided opportunities to complete their school work as well as time to play with other children in the home.

## **PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS**

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Eligibility for the GCC program is determined by family income and need. In addition, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) must live and/or work in the State of California. Families eligible for services must have an adjusted monthly income at or below 75% of the state median income, adjusted for family size. A family has a need for services when they meet one of the criteria below:

1. The child is receiving protective services through the local county welfare department or is identified by a legal, medical, social service agency, or emergency shelter as abused, neglected, or exploited, or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

In cases where the child is in an out-of-home custodial placement, the child is deemed to be removed from the "at risk" situation. As a result, the child would not meet eligibility requirements for protective services. The child can be served by being deemed an income-eligible family of one. In such cases, the custodial parent/guardian must have a qualifying need unless the child is still deemed to be "at risk" or is still receiving child protective services.

2. The parent/guardian and any other adult counted in the family size must meet one of the three criteria listed below:
  - a. Employed
  - b. Actively seeking employment
  - c. Participating in vocational training or an education program leading to a recognized trade, profession, or paraprofession.
3. Incapacitated: Any adult(s) counted in the family size may be incapacitated, including medical or psychiatric needs, to the extent that the adult's ability to provide normal care for the child is significantly limited. Verification by a legally qualified professional is required and shall be recorded on a Statement of Incapacity form (CD-9606).
4. Seeking permanent housing/Homeless
5. Family is a public assistance recipient.

## **PRIORITIES FOR ADMISSION**

### **First priority**

Children receiving child protective services, seamless child protective service transfers, or families whose children are at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited shall be admitted first. Within this priority, children receiving protective services through the local county welfare department shall be admitted first.

### **Second priority**

All children whose families are not within the first priority shall be admitted according to family income, which includes all other seamless transfers. The lowest per capita income will be admitted first. For determining the order of admission, public assistance grants are counted as income. If two or more families have comparable per capita income, the family with special needs children shall be admitted first. If more than one family has special needs children, the family that has been on the waiting list the longest shall be admitted first.

When all of the children in a family are not certified based on child protective services or the child's special need, the other children or the parents/guardians in the family must

meet both eligibility and need criteria as specified in the "Eligibility" section (above) prior to enrollment and shall be admitted in accordance with priorities specified above. Except for situations where not all of the children in a family are certified based on child protective services, a family that has a child or children enrolled in the program shall be allowed to enroll additional children provided funding is available.

### **CERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

When a family is selected from the Stanislaus County CEL, the parent/guardian must verify that all the information previously collected is still correct. If the family is eligible, an orientation appointment will be made to begin certification. The GCC program must be notified if a family is unable to keep an appointment prior to the appointment date. Failure to keep an appointment without proper notification may result in the family automatically being placed back on the Stanislaus County CEL.

When a child's residence alternates between the homes of separated or divorced parents, eligibility, need, and fees are determined separately for each household in which the child is residing.

**At the time of the appointment, the following information and documentation must be provided:**

1. Verification of all gross income earned from the past month for each adult counted in the family size is required. Documentation may include: wage stubs, copies of income tax returns, TANF or/and Medi-cal verification, verification of child support received and/or paid out, unemployment award letters or financial aid/work study award letters. For self-employed parents/guardians, documentation may include a signed declaration of earnings or copies of income tax returns. A letter from the parent(s)/guardian(s) employer may temporarily substitute for a wage stub. The letter must include the amount of gross income earned for the past thirty days and must be signed and dated by the employer, personnel officer, immediate supervisor, or payroll officer.

When income fluctuates regularly, the adjusted monthly income shall be computed by averaging the total adjusted gross income received during the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the month in which the application for services is signed.

2. Home address, a phone number, if applicable, a work number, work address, and work hours are required.
3. A written statement of days and hours child care will be needed.
4. For school age children the following documentation is required:

- Name of school
  - Traditional/SpecificTrack (Parent/Guardian may be asked to provide the program with a school calendar)
  - Daily school schedule (Example: 8:00am to 3:00pm)
  - Written documentation from after school program that states there is currently no space available for the child
5. Verification to establish eligibility. If employed, participating in vocational training or an education program, actively seeking employment, or referred by Child Protective Services, the parent/guardian shall provide the information outlined below. When eligibility is certified, an Agreement for Services will be issued.

### **Employed**

Parents/Guardians who are employed must submit an Employment Verification form completed and signed by the employer, payroll clerk, or authorized representative at the time of initial enrollment.

If employed by a temporary employment agency, a copy of your time sheet for each day/week must be submitted at the end of each week throughout your assignment(s).

If self-employed, the nature of the work must preclude the supervision of your children. A declaration of need that includes a description of the employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked per week along with copies of appointment logs, client receipts, job logs or a list of clients with contact information must be on file. If you lease or rent a workspace, a copy of the lease or rental agreement is also required.

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify GCC staff each time there is any change in income or work hours.

**Loss of a job must be reported to the GCC program on the next business day after job termination notice. Failure to report the loss of a job may result in termination from the program.**

### **Vocational Training or Education Program**

Parents/Guardians applying for services through the GCC program must use the following procedure if they are enrolled in training or vocational program:

1. Parents/Guardians must have on file a Training Verification (CD-9605) form from the sponsoring agent/school regarding the type of training and the number of

hours per week during which the training takes place. Training verifications will only be accepted if they contain the following:

- a. The parent's/guardian's **vocational** goal and anticipated completion dates of all training to meet the vocational goal are clearly stated.
  - b. The beginning and ending dates of the current semester/term are clearly stated.
  - c. The training schedule, including the course titles, times and days of classes, is filled out completely and properly.
  - d. Signature of the parent/guardian, and the signature and stamp of the school seal by the agency/school registrar/program director.
2. If the training institution will not sign the training verification:
- e. Parent/Guardian completes and signs the Training Verification, leaving the "signature and stamp of registrar of school organization" blank.
  - f. Attach an official letter signed and stamped from the training organization that states name of school, date training will begin/end and anticipated completion date for training/education.

3. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) enrolled in training/vocational programs must complete unit hours for which they are enrolled and the GCC program is reimbursing child care for.

Report cards, transcripts or other records must be provided at the end of each term to document adequate progress toward attainment of the training/vocational goal. Progress will be reviewed and monitored at the end of each semester/quarter or on the pre-arranged ending date of the training/vocational program, whichever comes first.

Unless parents/guardians can show good cause for an exception, the GCC program will only pay for child care during one course of training per fiscal year when enrolled in a training/vocational program.

4. Requests for changes to a child(ren)'s schedule must be made two weeks in advance.
5. Parents/Guardians in a vocational/training program shall be limited to four years of enrollment and/or hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Special circumstances will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

### **Actively Seeking Employment**

Parents/Guardians can actively seek employment for a maximum of 5 days per week, 6.5 hours per day, and 60 working days during the fiscal year. All parents/guardians who are actively seeking employment must submit an Actively Seeking Employment Verification form at the end of each week. This form will document job search activities for the prior calendar week.

## **Incapacitation**

Any adult counted in the family size may be incapacitated. Verification by a legally qualified professional must be provided on a Statement of Incapacity form (CD-9606). The form must be completed and submitted before subsidized child care services may begin.

## **At-Risk or Child Protective Services Families**

**Children at-risk** of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and referred from a legally qualified professional in a legal, medical, or social services agency, or an emergency shelter may receive child care and development services for up to a maximum of three (3) months. A second referral will not extend child care and development services beyond the initial three (3) months. After the three (3) month time period a family's services will be terminated, unless the family meets other "need" and "eligibility" requirements as listed in the "Certification of Eligibility" section of this guide.

**Children receiving child protective services (CPS)** through the county welfare department may receive child care and development services for up to twelve (12) months if referred by a county child welfare services worker because the child is receiving family preservation services or family maintenance services and the family requires care as part of their family maintenance or family preservation case plan. After the initial twelve (12) month time period a family's services will be terminated, unless the family's child care services worker issues another referral authorizing child care and development services, or if the family meets other "need" and "eligibility" requirements as listed in the "Certification of Eligibility" section of this guide.

Both at-risk and CPS families are subject to the family fee schedule with the following exemptions:

- Families with at risk children may be exempt from paying fees if determined by the legally qualified professional in a legal, medical, or social services agency or emergency shelter to be necessary.
- CPS families may be exempt from paying a fee for up to twelve (12) months if determined to be necessary by the county welfare department, child welfare services worker.

The combined time period for the fee exemption cannot exceed a total of twelve (12) months. Fee exemptions cannot be granted beyond twelve (12) months regardless of whether the child continues to be eligible as a CPS child.

Both at-risk and CPS family's written referral must contain each of the following items:

1. The name and birth date of each child being referred for service
2. The frequency of needed child care services (number of days per week and number of hours per day child care is needed for each child)
3. The referral must be written on the referring agency's letterhead
4. The probable duration of the child protective service plan or the at-risk situation
5. The name, address, telephone number, license number and signature of the "legally qualified professional" who is making the referral

6. For CPS- A referral letter by a county child welfare services worker from the local county welfare department certifying that the family is receiving family preservation services or family maintenance services and the family requires care as part of their family maintenance or family preservation case plan
7. For At-Risk- A referral letter by a legally qualified professional from a legal, medical, or social services agency, or an emergency shelter certifying that the family is at-risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and child care and development services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk

### **RECERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY**

Recertification of eligibility is required at least once every 3 months for families receiving services because the child is at risk of or because of actual abuse, neglect, or exploitation. All other families will be recertified at least once each contract period and at intervals not to exceed 12 months.

**Recertification may be necessary when there are changes in income, family size, marital status, employment or use of child care services.**

### **PARENTAL CHOICE**

It is the parent's/guardian's right and responsibility to choose the child care provider for their children from those licensed FCCH providers within the SCOE, FCCH network. If you need assistance in choosing a child care provider, contact a SCOE, GCC staff person at (209) 558-4030.

The GCC program will pay for child care that is provided by licensed FCCH's within the SCOE network of providers.

Child care is a contract between parent/guardian and provider. Any disputes arising or liability resulting from the parent/guardian-provider contract shall not involve SCOE in any way. The GCC program assumes no responsibility for injury or damages arising from the parent/guardian or child care provider's performance. The parent/guardian and provider agree to hold harmless SCOE and the GCC program and its employees, from costs, lawsuits, or liabilities arising from child care services.

### **MEALS AND SNACKS**

Family Child Care Home Providers participate in a state subsidized food program that ensures menus and provided meal services are monitored and support children's nutritional needs and cultural preferences. The Child Care Food Program ensures no child is discriminated against regarding meal service.

Meals and snacks are typically served "family style" as children are encouraged to serve themselves and interact with others at the table.

Children are not forced to eat food items they may not like, but providers encourage the trying of new or different foods. **Providers must be informed of any food allergies a child has.**

Every infant taking a bottle will be held by their provider during feedings. At no time will infants be left with a propped-up bottle, allowed to walk carrying a bottle, or put down in a crib with a bottle.

The Child Care Food Program is available to all eligible children.

### **PROVIDER PARTICIPATION**

The SCOE, GCC program provides subsidies and services to children needing child care. Any licensed family child care provider may apply to contract with SCOE. The GCC program requires verification that a child care provider does not provide religious instruction or allow worship in its child development program.

**All providers must meet the following requirements and submit all requested documents to SCOE, GCC Program:**

1. The provider must be located in the Local Planning Council's (LPC) priority zip codes.
2. The provider agrees to remain in compliance with applicable state licensing regulations.
3. The provider must follow GCC Funding Terms and Conditions and Title 22 Regulations.
4. The provider submits his/her current fee schedule, policies and a copy of the agreement between the provider and the parent/guardian.
5. All licensed family child care home providers must supply the GCC program with a copy of their current child care license and pediatric CPR/First Aid card.
6. Licenses are specific to a provider and home. The GCC program Agreement for Services is non-transferable. A provider who moves must have a license reflecting the new address before being eligible for payment. After receiving a license reflecting the new address, the family child care provider will be issued a new Agreement for Services reflecting the current information. The GCC program will not make payment to providers who do not have a current license and Agreement for Services on file.
7. All providers must operate on a nondiscriminatory basis giving equal treatment and access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race ancestry, national origin, religion,

color, or mental or physical disability.

8. The provider must submit a copy of valid liability insurance covering their child care business.

### **DAILY ATTENDANCE**

After beginning the GCC program, you are expected to make every effort to see that your child attends regularly according to the approved hours of care. Regular attendance is very important for your child's development and sense of stability. Periodic or irregular attendance is difficult for children as well as caregivers.

When you pick up your child, be sure that the caregiver knows you are leaving. All persons authorized to pick up a child must be 18 years of age or older. Written permission or a telephone call from the parent or legal guardian is needed to give authorization for another individual to pick up your child.

Parents/Guardians who are separated must provide copies of legal restraining orders before Stanislaus County Office of Education staff will prevent either legal parent/guardian from taking the child from the facility. In any situation where the immediate safety or well being of the child appears to be at stake, we reserve the right to ask your cooperation in making alternate transportation arrangements.

### **PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT SYSTEM AND CO-PAYMENT**

Provider fees should be based on usual and customary rates charged for services to non-subsidized children. The GCC program will reimburse providers to a maximum of 1.5 standard deviations listed on the Stanislaus County Regional Market Rate (RMR) for the type of care provided as determined by the CDD.

**The GCC Program does not allow a provider to charge a co-payment to the family.**