PLUMAS RURAL SERVICES

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Child Care Resource & Referral
Child Care Payment Program

PARENT/PROVIDER HANDBOOK

Please keep this handbook as a reference.
The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook will remain in effect until notification from PRS that changes, additions, or deletions have been made.

This Parent/Provider Handbook has been printed with funds provided by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

Approved by the PRS Board of Directors on August 28, 2018
Updated August 19th, 2021

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Welcome to the Child Care Payment Program!

The Child Care Payment Program is here to help families wherever and whenever we possibly can.
We are located at 711 East Main St., Quincy CA. 95971. Our contact phone number is (530) 283-4453.

Listed in this Handbook is some information for parents about the Child Care Payment Program.

Who Can Apply?

The Child Care Payment Program, funded through the California Departments of Education and Social Services, is available to parents and guardians who meet at least one criterion in BOTH the Eligibility and Need areas described below. In addition, participating parents or guardians must either live or work in Plumas County, and be able to offer residency documentation. The program can pay for child care for children ages from birth up to the 13th birthday or until the families annual recertification. Additionally, children with special needs can receive child care up to the age of 21 with required documentation.

How to Apply

Contact Plumas Rural Services' Child Care Payment Program office at (530) 283-4453 or visit our office at 711 E. Main St. Quincy, CA to request information about the program. The Child Care Payment Program will determine if a family qualifies for child care payment assistance. Some families are referred by the Department of Social Services or other qualified professionals. All families who apply for services are asked to complete an Eligibility Form. This form contains information which outlines a family's Eligibility and Need for childcare. This information can also be given to the Child Care Payment Program staff over the phone at (530) 283-4453. Once it is determined that a family qualifies for the program, after receiving their required information, an enrollment appointment is made. If funds are not readily available, the family's name is placed on the Eligibility List. The Eligibility List will rank a family according to need, family size and income. As funds become available, families are enrolled according to the priorities of the particular funding source.

The Child Care Payment Program is open Monday-Friday, 8am-4:30pm. We allow walk-in's, however, if we are meeting with someone or have a meeting coming up, we may not be able to meet with you at that time. You are always welcome to come during our hours of operation. There are days we will be closed for Holidays and possible snow days.

Eligibility

Depending on the funding source, a family is eligible if one of the following applies:

- A child is referred by Child Protective services, or is at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited as determined by a qualified professional.
- The Family is a CalWORKS participant.
- The Family is Homeless
- The Family is income eligible.

Need

Depending on the funding source, the program serves eligible families who have one or more of the following needs:

- Employment
- Seeking Employment (allows up to 29.75 hours per week Monday through Friday for 12 consecutive months)
- Parental Physical or Psychiatric Incapacity (specific restrictions apply).
- Child Protective Services
- School/Training
- Homelessness/Seeking Permanent Housing (Time given to find a home. Allows up to 29.75 hours per week for 12 consecutive months)
- Participating in an approved CalWorks activity

Enrollment Priorities

Families who are placed on the Eligibility List will be enrolled according to the following priorities as funding becomes available:

- First Priority**:**
  1. Children receiving Protective Services through the Plumas County Department of Social Services.

  2. Children referred by a qualified professional because of risk of abuse or neglect.

- Second Priority:
  For eligible children and families who are not in the first priority. These families will be enrolled in order of the lowest gross monthly income adjusted for family size or Family Rank. If two or more families have exact income, the family with special needs children will be enrolled first or who was placed on the Eligibility List.

Income Guidelines

Income eligibility is determined by current total countable income and family size and then compared to State guidelines.

"Total Countable Income": means all income of the individual(s) counted in the family size that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Gross wages or salary, advances, commissions, overtime, tips, bonuses, gambling or lottery winnings;
- Wages from migrant, agricultural, or seasonal work;
- Public cash assistance;
- Gross income from self-employment, minus any business expenses with the exception of wage draws;
- Disability or unemployment compensation;
- Workers compensation;
- Spousal support, child support received from the former spouse or absent parent, or financial assistance for housing costs or car payments paid as part of or in addition to spousal or child support;
- Survivor and retirement benefits;
- Dividends, interest on bonds, income from estates or trusts, net rental income or royalties;
- Rent for room within the family's residence;
- Foster care grants, payments or clothing allowance for children placed through child welfare services;
- Financial assistance received for the care of child living with an adult who is not the child's biological or adoptive parent;
- Veterans pensions;
- Pensions or annuities;
- Inheritance;
- Allowances for housing or automobiles provided as part of compensation;
- Portion of student grants or scholarships not identified for educational purposes as tuition, books, or supplies;
- Insurance or court settlements for lost wages or punitive damages;
- Net proceeds from the sale of real property, stocks, or inherited property; or
- Other enterprise for gain.

Employment

- A parent must submit their most current consecutive months' paystubs that show the hours that were worked and an employment verification form. If the parent just began a new job and does not have paystubs yet, the employment verification form will be used to verify the days, hours and pay to determine the parents' need for child care.
- At the initial enrollment of a parent, the parent must be at or below the 85% of the State Median Income.
- At the annual recertification appointment, the parent must be at or below 85% of the State Median Income.
- Hours allowed for child care will be based on the income documentation supplied to the Child Care Payment Program. For example: If a parent wants 40 hours of child care a week, however, their paystubs only show 25 hours per week, the Child Care Payment Program will only authorize child care hours the parent can prove they worked.
- The Child Care Payment Program specialist will verify a parents' employment.
- Commute time can only be half of the eligible parents need, up to 4 hours per day maximum. Example: if a parent works in Reno for 4 hours per day and the commute time will be 3 hours total, the Child Care Payment Program can only authorize 2 hours of commute time. Based on this example, the parent would then be allowed up to a 6 hour day. Any charges by the child care provider beyond what the Child Care Payment Program can reimburse will be the responsibility of the parent.
- Once a parent has been enrolled, they may receive child care services for no less than 12 months. A parent does not have to update their child care need unless they have a need for increased hours/days or their income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income guidelines. They may volunteer to update their income to lower their Family Fee, but their Family Fee will not increase and their child care hours will not decrease during their 12 month certification.
- The Child Care Payment Program will not pay for volunteer work.
- If a parent moves out of the county or they no longer have custody of their child(ren), the parent will no longer be eligible for child care services and will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.

Self-Employment

- A declaration of need (under penalty of perjury) that describes the type of employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked per week.
- In order to prove the amount of days and hours worked, you must provide a copy of one or more of the following documents: appointment logs, job logs, mileage logs, a list of clients/customers with contact information, or similar records for the Child Care Payment Program Specialist to view.
- A copy of a business license, a workspace lease, or a workspace rental agreement if applicable.
- If Plumas Rural Services' Child Care Payment Program is unable to make a reasonable assessment of the hours needed for self- employment after attempting to verify such hours and documenting the attempts, the Child Care Program Specialist may divide the parent's self-employment income by minimum wage. The resulting number shall be the maximum hours needed for employment per month. At the next recertification appointment, a parent's earned living wages from self-employment will be divided by the applicable minimum wage to determine the authorized monthly child care hours.
- The parent shall provide a release to enable the Child Care Payment Program to obtain the information it deems necessary to support the parent's need for days and hours worked per week.
- If additional services are requested for travel time or sleep time to support Self-Employment or regular employment, the Child Care Payment Program shall determine, as applicable, the time authorized for:
    - Travel to and from the location at which services are provided and the place of employment, not to exceed half of the daily hours authorized for employment to a maximum of four hours per day; (Divide authorized work hours per day by 2. Not to exceed more than 4 hours per day)
    - Sleep, if the parent is employed anytime between **10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.**, not to exceed the number of hours authorized for employment and travel between those hours. (*Sleep time hours are only if the parent works and travels between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m*.)
- If a parent moves out of the county or they no longer have custody of their child(ren), the parent will no longer be eligible for child care services and will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.

Seek Work

- Seek Work allows a parent to find employment.
- Seek Work is allowed up to 29.75 hours per week Monday through Friday during normal business hours of 8am to 5 pm.
- The first 29.75 hours on the Daily Attendance sheet will be reimbursed. Any days or hours after the 29.75 hours have been used; it will be the responsibility of the parent for additional charges by the child care provider.
- Seek Work is based on drop-in child care only. It is the parents' responsibility to pay the child care provider for any days or hours not reimbursed by the Child Care Payment Program.
- Once a parent is enrolled in the Child Care Payment Program, the parent shall receive not less than 12 months of service.
- If a parent receives employment during their 12 months' of eligibility, they do not need to report it to the Child Care Payment Program Specialist unless their days and hours for child care have increased or their income exceeds the 85% of the State Median Income guidelines.
- At initial enrollment or the annual recertification appointment, in a two parent household, they are not allowed to both seek employment. One parent must have another eligible need for child care that exceeds the amount of hours and days of the Seek Work time allowed.
- If a parent is working less than 10 hours per week, we may allow additional time for Seek Work.
- If a parent moves out of the county or they no longer have custody of their child(ren), the parent will no longer be eligible for child care services and will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.

Incapacity

- The incapacity form given by the Child Care Payment Program must be completed by a legally qualified licensed professional.
- Incapacity only allows up to 50 hours per week for reimbursed child care.
- The legally licensed professional shall state how many hours per week each child is eligible for child care. The legally qualified licensed professional must take into account the type of incapacity and the age of the child(ren) before allowing hours for child care.
- Once the parent has established his/her need for child care based on incapacity, the parent shall receive no less than 12 months of child care.
- The Child Care Payment Program specialist may contact the legally qualified licensed professional to verify the incapacity form is applicable.
- The legally qualified licensed professional must include their name, business address; phone number and professional license number on the incapacity form then sign the form and submit it to the Child Care Payment Program specialist.
- A parent does not need to update their incapacity information unless their income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income.
- If a parent moves out of the county or they no longer have custody of their child(ren), the parent will no longer be eligible for child care services and will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

- A referral from a legally qualified medical, social or emergency shelter worker is required. The referral must state that the parent(s) are receiving child protective services.
- The referral must state that the child(ren) are at risk of abuse or neglect and that child care services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk.
- The legally qualified professional must state if the family income shall be waived or not. This waiver allows the family to have no Family Fee or to qualify for the Child Care Payment Program. The family income can only be waived for the first 12 months.
- The legally qualified professional must state how many hours per week each child is eligible for child care.
- At the 12 month annual recertification, if the family remains eligible for CPS, a families' income shall be reviewed to ensure the family is under the 85% State Median Income guideline to remain income eligible.
- Once a family has enrolled for child care, they shall receive no less than 12 months' of child care for their CPS need.
- If a parent moves out of the county or they no longer have custody of their child(ren), the parent will no longer be eligible for child care services and will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.
- The Child Care Payment Program may only reimburse a Licensed child care provider if a family is enrolled for CPS needs.

Education or Training

- The parent shall provide a current Education/Training Form, completed by their Education/Training institute and a sealed stamp if applicable, with a current copy of their Detailed Class Schedule.
- The parent must provide their “Job Goal” and the courses that must be completed to obtain their Job Goal.
- A General Education Plan (GED) or English as a second language certification will be reimbursed for a family one time only.
- When a parent has an incomplete class, the Child Care Payment Program will not reimburse your child care provider to retake the class.
- A current copy of Financial Aid is required.
- Two hours per core unit is given to the parent for study time. No study time is given for a Lab class. If class time is requested for online courses, an online syllabus is required to be submitted to us to verify the requirement of attending a class online.
- Only one semester of physical education classes will be allowed.
- A parent is allowed up to 6 consecutive years to obtain their Job Goal. If the parent already has a Bachelors Degree, the parent is allowed 24 more units and up to 2 consecutive years past their receipt of a Bachelors Degree.
- If a parent’s need was school, at the time of their annual recertification, the parent must provide a copy of their grades.
- Once the parent has been enrolled, they may receive child care services for no less than 12 months. A parent does not have to update their child care need unless they have a need for increased hours/days or their income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income guidelines.
- If a parent moves out of the county or they no longer have custody of their child(ren), the parent will no longer be eligible for child care services and will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.

Seeking Permanent Housing

OR

Homelessness

- A written parental declaration signed under the penalty of perjury that the family is seeking permanent housing can be accepted. The parent shall include on their declaration form their search plan for finding permanent housing.
- Seeking Permanent Housing allows up to 29.75 hours per week Monday through Friday. If a parent needs to Seek Permanent Housing on a weekend, prior approval from the Child Care Payment Program specialist is required; however, the child care hours cannot exceed 29.75 per week.
- Seeking Permanent Housing is based on a drop-in schedule only. Any additional charges from the child care provider are the responsibility of the parent.
- The first 29.75 hours of child care used are the hours that will be reimbursed. Any additional days or hours beyond the first 29.75 hours will be the responsibility of the parent.
- For Homelessness, we must receive a written referral from an emergency shelter or other legal, medical or social service agency. If this referral is not available, a written parental declaration under the penalty of perjury describing the families' current living situation may be accepted.
- Once the parent has been enrolled, they may receive child care services for no less than 12 months. A parent does not have to update their child care need unless they have a need for increased hours/days or their income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income guidelines.
- If a parent moves out of the county or they no longer have custody of their child(ren), the parent will no longer be eligible for child care services and will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.

CalWorks Participant

- A parent may be eligible for Stage 1 child care if they are currently receiving Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) and are in an approved CalWorks activity that has been authorized by their Department of Social Services case worker.
- A parent is eligible for Stage 2 funding if that parent has received TANF within the last 24 months and met the eligible needs requirements for the Child Care Payment Program.
- No Family Fees are assigned to a family enrolled in Stage 1 child care.
- All documentation listed in this Handbook is required before an enrollment appointment is made with the parent. The documentation required depends upon the eligible need of the parent(s). Please contact Child Care Payment Program at 283-4453 to inquire about the documentation needed by Child Care Payment Program.
- If the parent has been enrolled in the CalWorks Stage 2 program, the enrolled parent will be moved into the CalWorks Stage 3 program on the first day of the 25th month. The parent will be eligible for CalWorks Stage 3 when their 24 months of CalWorks Stage 2 eligibility ends. The parent has 24 months of eligibility in Stage 2 beginning the day after the last month the parent received TANF, even if they were not enrolled in the Child Care Payment Program.
- When a parents' funding is moved to the CalWorks Stage3 program, that parent will remain in the CalWorks Stage 3 program until they are no longer eligible for the Child Care Payment Program.
- A parent cannot be enrolled directly into the CalWorks Stage 3 program.
- If a parent moves out of the county or they no longer have custody of their child(ren), the parent will no longer be eligible for child care services and will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.

The Enrollment Appointment

An enrollment appointment is where a family will meet with a Child Care Payment Specialist to review documents, sign required paperwork and learn about the rules and regulations of the Child Care Payment Program. The parent/guardian must attend and complete the enrollment appointment to enroll for child care assistance. If an Exempt Child Care Provider will be providing child care, that provider will have to set up a separate enrollment appointment. Child Care may begin the day of your enrollment into the Child Care Payment Program if you have chosen a licensed child care provider or an exempt child care provider who has already been Trustline cleared. The Child Care Payment Program can reimburse a Trustline child care provider the day they receive a clearance. If a parent misses their enrollment appointment, that parent will be removed from the eligibility list in the Child Care Payment Program. The required documents to be submitted to Child Care Payment Program before an enrollment appointment is scheduled may include:

- Current consecutive months' paystubs and/or the Employment Verification Form and any other income listed under **"Total Countable Income"** on page 3.
- ALL birth records of children living in the household, even if children only reside there occasionally.
- Current document showing physical address. A current utility bill, lease/rental agreement, etc.… will be acceptable. A cell phone bill will not be accepted.
- A Passport to Services or the Notice of Action from the parents' Department of Social Services counselor showing the last month TANF was received, if applicable.
- Education/Training form, a Detailed Schedule and Financial Aid documents if the parent needs child care for school/training. At the recertification appointment, school grades must to be submitted to Child Care Payment Program for the enrolled semester that child care was reimbursed for.
- Incapacity form, if the parent needs child care for Incapacity.
- Self-Employment documentation **(as listed under the Self-Employment section on page 5)**. The Child Care Payment Program also has Self-Employment documents that can be used by the parent. ALL Self-Employment must be signed under the penalty of perjury by the parent.
- Other documentation may be required depending upon the parents' child care need. A list of required documents is sent to the parent, and must be returned to Child Care Payment Program before an enrollment/ recertification appointment will be scheduled.

Recertification Appointment

Documents due to the Child Care Payment Program for the recertification appointment:

- Current utility bill, rental agreement or a document that shows the physical address. (A cell phone bill will not be accepted)
- Current consecutive paystubs. A family's days and hours will be determined by the current paystubs if they have been at the same employer when they were first enrolled/recertified. **Example:** If a parent has been using full time care and their paystubs show that they have only been working 25 hours per week, the parent(s) hours allowed for child care will reflect their current paystubs.
- Current Self-Employment documents if the parent(s) is self-employed. A minimum of the three current months' self-employment documents showing profit/loss and work schedule will be required. If the parent has just started their self-employment business, the parent will have to give documentation/statements showing their need for child care *(Hours allowed will be based on the need for the first year of Self-Employment*). We must have a copy of the business license if it applies to the parents' self-employment. A parent's living wages will be compared to the applicable minimum wage to determine how many hours of child care will be authorized per month.
- If the parent is earning "cash" for their employment, the parent(s) must complete the Self Declaration of Employment stating the amount of cash they earn per month and the days and hours they work per week. The Child Care Payment Program has a Self-Declaration Form the parent must complete. The parents' income and authorized hours of child care will be based on the hours of employment.
- Required documentation if the parent has been paying out child support to another parent.
- Foster Parents: A current Foster Care Payment is required if the child(ren) are in the Foster Family's custody.
- Updated child custody agreement, if applicable.
- A new Incapacity form if the parent(s) are continuing to receive child care based on a parent(s) incapacity.
- Education/Training forms if the parent(s) is receiving child care for this need. Must have a current Detailed Schedule and any Financial Aid the parent may be receiving.
- Any other documentation the Child Care Payment Program staff may require.

Documents in the Family File

All information is confidential. To release information to someone other than the enrolled parent(s) requires a Subpoena.

- The original eligibility form
- Income/Employment Documents (paystubs, employment verification form, child support, or any other **Total Countable Income** as listed on page 3
- The Application Form (CD-9600)
- Notices of Action
- The Parent Participation Agreement
- The Family and Child Needs Assessment Form
- Emergency and Identification information
- The selected Child Care Provider
- Authorization to Release Information from the Department of Social Services, if applicable
- Release of Information to other services, if applicable
- Child Care Certificate
- Court-ordered visitation rights, if applicable
- Custody rights, if applicable
- Case notes
- Tracking documents for internal use
- Immunization records when using a license-exempt provider and the child is 0-5 years of age.
- Income Limits, Hour Changes and Seek Work form
- Copies of Birth Certificates or Birth Records of children in the household
- Other documentation as requested

Child(ren) Age Limits

Age of child(ren) and when they are no longer counted in family size or when we will no longer be able to reimburse for their child care are as follows:

- If a child turns 13 years of age during the 12 months of service, the child will be allowed to remain enrolled until the parents'/guardians' recertification
- If a child turns 18 years of age during the 12 months of service, the child will be included in the family size until the parents'/guardians' recertification
- The child(ren) may be eligible up to the age of 21 years if the child has a severe disability

Family Size

Family Size is determined by counting the number of adults and children related by blood, marriage or adoption who reside in the household in which the child is living. When a child is living with a guardian or foster parent, only that child and their siblings, if any, are counted in the family size. The guardian or foster parent must meet one of the needs as listed on Page 2. The foster care payment(s) are counted in the total income. ***If a parent has another child, while enrolled in the Child Care Payment Program, with the same parent that they have stated they are not dating, married to or living with, custody documents must be given to prove they are not with that parent.***

"Parent" means a biological parent, stepparent, adoptive parent, foster parent, caretaker relative, or any other adult living with the child who has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child.

Child Care Certificates

The Child Care Certificate is a document given to a provider that certifies the amount of authorized child care hours and the reimbursement that the provider may expect from PRS. The Child Care Certificate is a required document to be in the Family file and must be signed by a PRS representative, the parent/guardian, and the child care provider. A Certificate must be issued to a provider before child care reimbursement can begin. A parent is responsible for child care charges that exceed the authorized amount on the certificate. Therefore, it is very important that a parent notify us of any changes affecting the amount of child care that they need.

Note: If a provider fails to submit the Child Care Certificate with the required signatures back to this office within 30 days of initial enrollment/recertification, child care services with that provider will end and a new provider must be enrolled.

Additional Child Care Costs

A parent may have to pay child care costs that is more than what the Child Care Payment Program can reimburse. A parents' share of the child care cost depends on two things: 1) The parent(s) income in relation to family size, and; 2) The child care provider's fees in relation to the State of California's reimbursement ceilings. The first thing is known as Family Fees and the second thing is known as Co-payments. You may be responsible for one or both of these payments.

If a parent chose to "home-school" their child(ren), child care used during the days/hours of school session will be the responsibility of the parent.

Family Fees

Family Fees are a portion of the Child Care Payment for which the family is responsible. The California Department of Education publishes a schedule based on family income and size. If the parents' income is at 50% or above the State Median Income, the family will be assigned a Family Fee. The Family Fee is assessed per family, not each child, and is charged only for the child who needs the most hours of child care. Family Fees can range anywhere from $32.00 for a part time month (under 130 hours) to $548.00 for a full time month (130 hours or more). ***Example: If a family establishes a need for child care that will be 130 hours or more per month, a Full Time Monthly Family Fee will be assessed. If the Family is approved for less than 130 hours for the month, the Part Time Monthly Family Fee will be assessed.*** It is the parents' responsibility to inform the Child Care Payment of any changes in their child care need that may decrease the Family Fee. The child care hours will not change. The Family Fee is on the Child Care Certificate, the CD9600 Application and all Notices of Action (NOA). A Family Fee receipt is attached to the Attendance Form and sent to the Child Care Provider with the Daily in/out form(s). Family Fees are paid directly to the child care provider on a monthly basis. When the Family Fee has been paid in full to the Child Care Provider, a signature from the parent/guardian and the provider is required on the Family Fee receipt. Failure to pay the Family Fee will result in a termination Notice of Action sent to the parent giving the parent 2 weeks to pay the Family Fee to their child care provider. Failure to do so will result in termination from the Child Care Payment Program. If a parent is enrolled in the middle to end of the month that will result in part time care for that month, but the family has established a need for child care that will be more than 130 hours per month, the full time Family Fee will begin the first day of the following month.

Co-payments

A co-payment is the amount of child care that exceeds the amount of what the Child Care Payment Program can reimburse the child care provider. **Example:** If a child care provider's charges are $500 for the month and the Child Care Payment Program can only reimburse $400, the parent is responsible for the $100 difference. That difference is known as the co-pay. Child Care Payment Program is not responsible for co-payments.

Registration Fee's

The registration fee may be a charge by a child care provider when a parent attends that child care. Some child care providers charge a registration fee. The child care provider may charge a one-time registration fee or yearly registration fee. Please see the child care providers' contract to see if they have a registration fee. The Child Care Payment Program may be able to reimburse the registration fee if the child care providers' charge is less than the Regional Market Rate (RMR).

Unauthorized Costs

Providers who charge for their vacations, late pick-up fees, hourly rates above their full time daily charges, registration fees, etc. may not always be a reimbursable expense. Ask your subsidy counselor regarding any of these charges made by the child care provider.

Note: We do not reimburse if a child care provider has given a family a two week notice.

Non-Attendance

Reimbursement for child care providers, including license-exempt providers, shall be based on families' certified need, as follows:

> *(i) Providers shall be reimbursed based on the maximum authorized hours of care, regardless of attendance.*
> *(ii) For families certified for a variable schedule, providers shall be reimbursed based on the maximum authorized hours of care.*
> *(iii) For license-exempt providers that provide part-time services, providers shall be reimbursed based on the maximum authorized hours of care.*

When the Child Care Payment Program receives the Daily Attendance Forms, if there are seven or more absences with no explanation why the child was absent, a termination Notice of Action will be sent to the parent. The parent will have 19 days to notify us if they still need child care. If the parent contacts us and says they are using child care, but we receive the attendance forms showing that no child care has been used again the following month, the parent will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program.

Note: If there has been an emergency or a pandemic declared by the State of California, the Child Care Payment Program may be able to reimburse on a families behalf if the family is not attending childcare due to the emergency/pandemic. Payment to a family's childcare provider will also depend on what the State of California has set forth as rules and regulations regarding these type of instances. New family enrollments and recertifications may have to be completed via mail, temporarily, in these circumstances.

Child Care Provider Closures

The Child Care Payment Program may reimburse a licensed child care provider for up to 10 days per fiscal year (July 1st- June 30th) if it is stated in their Policy/Contract.

Leave of Absence/Temporary Suspension from the Child Care Payment Program

- A Leave of Absence/Temporary Suspension allows a family to temporarily suspend child care services from the Child Care Payment Program without having to go back on the eligibility list. A parent must recertify by their annual recertification date even if they are on a Leave/Temporary Suspension of Absence.
- The Child Care Payment Program cannot reimburse a child care provider for absences or any other charges when a parent is on a Leave of Absence.

Unenrollment from the Child Care Payment Program

The parent may volunteer to be un-enrolled from the program at any time. The child care provider may charge a two week notice.

Involuntary unenrollment may occur if any of the following apply:

- Your monthly income exceeds 85% of the SMI (State Median Income)
- A child is no longer age-eligible
- The family is no longer working or living in Plumas County
- Fraudulent activities are discovered
- Repeated violation of the Adult Code of Behavior
- Non-payment of Family Fees
- Excessive non-attendance (not using scheduled, approved child care hours)
- Failure to attend child care every month
- One no-show for a recertification appointment
- **The Program does not have funds to continue services**
- **Failure to adhere to policies or procedures outlined in this handbook**.

An Appeal for a Disenrollment Decision

If a parent does not agree with a decision confirmed by a Notice of Action, the parent may file an appeal with PRS for a hearing within 14 calendar days from the date of the Notice of Action. The right to file an appeal is on the back of a Notice of Action. PRS will notify the parent of the time and place of the hearing within 10 calendar days from the receipt of the request. Only persons directly involved by the hearing shall be allowed to attend. The hearing officer shall provide, to the parents, a written decision within 10 calendar days following the hearing. Services may continue uninterrupted during the appeal process.

To Remain Enrolled in the Child Care Payment Program

- The parent must complete their recertification appointment within 45 days after their annual recertification date
- The parent must inform the Child Care Payment Program when they have changed child care providers
- The parent must inform us if their income exceeds 85% of the SMI within 30 days
- A parent must open their mail and return the Child Care Payment Program phone calls
- Sign and date certificates and attendance forms
- Submit required documentation to the Child Care Payment Program staff
- Notify the Child Care Payment Program when the parents mailing address has changed
- **Failure to comply with any of the items listed above may result in termination from the Child Care Payment Program**

Child Care Choices

- Center based child care programs- preschools or child care centers and are licensed to provide child care for larger numbers of children in a group setting. Center based child care staff must meet standards for training and experience as determined by the State of California, Community care Licensing Division and the California Department of Education.
- Licensed family child care homes are operated by individual licensed child care providers in their own homes. They may be licensed to care for up to eight children as a small licensed facility or provide child care for up to 14 children as a large licensed facility. If the large licensed child care provider provides child care for over 8 children, they must have an assistant. Homes must meet regulations as specified by the State of California, Community Care Licensing division regarding space and child safety factors.
- Exempt child care is care that is provided by a non-licensed provider in that provider's home.
- Exempt child care providers that are not an aunt, uncle or grandparent, must be "TrustLine Registered" before reimbursement will be made.
- Exempt child care providers must be TrustLine Registered before child care reimbursements may begin.
- In-home care is care that is provided by an exempt child care provider in the Child's home. With this option of child care, the parent will now be the employer of the child care provider. Parents who choose in-home child care must pay withholding taxes, Worker's Compensation, and unemployment compensation. The child care provider must be paid at least the minimum wage.
- Families residing in the same household with their chosen child care provider will not be reimbursed under the Child Care Payment Program.
- A parent is allowed to choose more than one child care provider **ONLY** when it is proven that the child care provider is not available to meet all the parents' need for child care.
- **Child care providers are Independent Contractors and are NOT employees of Plumas Rural Services.**

For Child Care Referrals to Licensed Child Care Providers in Plumas County, please call 530-283-4453 ext. 824.

Licensed Child Care

- The licensed child care provider provides child care in their home.

- The licensed child care provider receives their license from Community Care Licensing in Chico, CA.
- For Licensed Centers or Exempt Centers, please contact the Child Care Resource & Referral Coordinator at 283-4453 ext. 824 for information regarding the options of Center child care.
- The small licensed child care provider can provide child care for 6 up to 8 children.
- A large licensed child care provide can provide child care for 12 up to 14 children, with a child care assistant. The parent may contact the Child Care Resource & Referral Coordinator if the parent has any questions regarding licensing at 283-4453 ext. 824.

Exempt/In-Home Child Care Providers – Friends, Family or Neighbors

Family or friends who do not have a child care license are known as license-exempt providers. To become license-exempt child care provider, the requirements are listed below:

- The license-exempt child care provider must be at least 18 years of age.
- The license-exempt child care provider must be free of any felony conviction- including other members of their household.
- The license-exempt child care provider may not receive In Home Support Services for themselves.
- The Child Care Payment Program policy may not reimburse a license-exempt child care provider if that provider is receiving disability or In Home Support Services for themselves.
- The license-exempt child care provider may not be working another job during the hours that child care is provided.
- The license-exempt child care provider may only provide child care for one non-relative family at a time.
- Documentation to prove the child care provider is related by Blood, Marriage or Adoption may be required.
- The license-exempt child care provider must be TrustLined cleared before the Child Care Payment Program will reimburse them for child care.
- If the license-exempt provider is residing with someone who has been Denied TrustLine, the Child Care Payment Program will not reimburse the exempt child care provider.

Required Documents from Licensed Child Care Providers

Documents that need to be submitted to the Child Care Payment Program from a Licensed Child Care Provider:

- A current copy of the child care providers Facility License.
- A current copy of the licensed child care provider's Policies/Rates/Handbook.
- A W-9 listing the licensed child care provider's mailing address and Social Security number or tax identification number.
- Any other documents that are requested from the Child Care Payment Program.

Required Documents from a License-Exempt Child Care Provider

Documents that need to be submitted to the Child Care Payment Program from a Licensed-Exempt Child Care Provider:

- The child care providers' driver's license to verify the age of the child care provider.
- The rate form showing the amount charged by the license-exempt child care provider.
- A current copy of a utility bill or other acceptable document showing the physical address of the license-exempt child care provider.
- A W-9 listing the licensed-exempt child care provider's mailing address and Social Security number or tax identification number.
- The TrustLine Clearance form showing the license-exempt child care provider has been cleared and is on the TrustLine Registry.
- A copy of the TrustLine Registry Application and Livescan, if applicable.
- The TrustLine Registry Criminal Record Statement.

Required Documents for an In-Home Exempt Child Care Provider

An In-Home Exempt child care provider provides child care in the child's home. The parent must submit completed paperwork and meet the requirements before the Child Care Payment Program can reimburse for child care. The required documents and rules are listed below:

- The parent becomes the In-Home exempt child care providers' employer
- The parent is required to provide proof of Workers Compensation.
- The parent is responsible to ensure that their child care provider is paid at least the minimum wage. **Example:** If the Child Care Payment Program can only reimburse $300 and the exempt child care provider's reimbursement will be $800, to equal minimum wage, the parent will be responsible for the difference of $500. The parent must submit to the Child Care Payment Program that they have reimbursed this amount to the In-Home exempt child care provider before reimbursements continue.

- In the Child Care Payment Program, for an In-Home exempt child care provider, the parent must have a minimum of 5 children enrolled for the Child Care Payment Program to fully reimburse the amount of the hourly minimum wage.

Change of Child Care Providers

The Child Care Payment Program is a parental choice program. However, a parent must notify Child Care Payment Program of the change in child care providers ***before*** child care begins with the new child care provider. If a parent chooses to make 3 or more changes to their license-exempt child care providers within a year, the parent will now be required to use a licensed child care provider. There are some instances when the Child Care Payment Program cannot reimburse the child care provider of the parental choice, so it's best the parent knows that before the parent uses a new child care provider for child care. Some licensed child care providers require a two-week notice. The Child Care Payment Program will not reimburse a new child care provider if the parents' current child care provider charges a two week notice.

A Child with a Disability or a Special Need and Child Care Providers

The Child Care Payment Program does not discriminate against children with disabilities or special needs, and neither can licensed providers. A licensed provider cannot refuse care to a child with disabilities or special needs unless it can be proven that special accommodations would be beyond "reasonable" accommodations; nor can they charge more for that child unless they can prove that caring for that child has an on-going financial impact on the provider.

Child Care Provider Reimbursable Charges

All charges must be based on authorized child care. Authorized child care is listed on the Child Care Certificate. Child care that is provided beyond the authorized hours are the responsibility of the parent. Child Care providers should notify the Child Care Payment Program of any increases beyond the Certificate. Attendance Forms are compared to the hours on the current Certificate for compliance before payment is made. *Note: Occasional fluctuations, such as those caused by unexpected overtime, must be reported to the Child Care Payment Program staff for authorization before payment is made.* ***If it is discovered that private pay families are charged less than Subsidized Families, the Child Care Provider will NO LONGER be able to participate in the Child Care Payment Program effective immediately***.

Regional Market Rate and Child Care Provider Reimbursements

- A child care provider will be reimbursed on the 25th of the following month child care was given. If the 25th of the month falls on a weekend or a holiday, the child care provider checks will be mailed out on the business day before.
- The amount a child care provider charges a family will be compared to the Regional Market Rate ceilings. If the child care providers' charges for child care are less than the Regional Market Rate, the Child Care Payment Program will reimburse the child care providers' charges. If the Regional Market Rate is less than what the child care provider has charged, the Child Care Payment Program will reimburse the Regional Market Rate. **Note:**. ***The Child Care Payment Program will compare the appropriate Regional Market Rate to the child care provider's charges on the monthly attendance forms and the child care provider will be reimbursed the lesser amount of the two compared rates.***

Attendance Forms and Family Fee Receipts

- Attendance forms are due to the Child Care Payment Program office by the **5th** of the following month that child care was given. Example: Child care was given for a family in May. The attendance forms are due to the Child Care Payment Program office by June 5th of the following month.
- The attendance form(s) must be signed by the enrolled parent(s) and the child care provider. If the attendance form is missing a required signature, a child care reimbursement will not be issued to the child care provider. However, under special circumstances, a signature might be missing due to the parent moving out of the area or other special circumstances. Please contact the Child Care Payment Program at 283-4453 to see what other possible circumstances might be allowed.
- If a family has a family fee, the family fee receipt must be signed by the enrolled parent(s)/guardians when the family fee has been paid directly to the child care provider. The Child Care Payment Program does not collect the family fee. If the family fee receipt is missing a signature(s), a termination Notice of Action will be issued to the parent/guardian allowing them until the end of the month from receipt of the family fee, to pay their child care provider. If the parent/guardian fails to pay their child care provider within that month, the parent/guardian will be unenrolled from the Child Care Payment Program. A parent/guardian will not be reenrolled until the family fee has been paid in full to the child care provider, pending funding availability as well.

Standards for the Child Care Planning and Referral Process

- Actively listen to and encourage the parent in the child care planning process. Identify family needs in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner, the reason for seeking child care, previous child care experiences, family strengths and special circumstances that may impact child care planning (such as low income, homelessness, military family, foster care family, open CPS case, teen parent or seeking care for a child with special needs).
- Identify the range and types of child care with the full diversity of options available to the parent to promote informed child care choices including the definition of type of care and program setting; information on child care quality indicators such as: adult-child ratios, provider/teacher qualifications and requirements, health and safety requirements by types of care, and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, where applicable.
- Inform the parent of subsidized child care as an option for some families and provide basic information on family size and guidelines.
- For potentially eligible parents who are interested in learning more, provide information on the range of subsidized child care options in the service delivery area (e.g. Alternative Payment Program, Head Start, Early Head Start, Title 5, and local subsidy programs).
- Respond to family need for other community resources and/or income supports by providing contact and program information on federal, state and locally funded assistance programs as appropriate (e.g. military stipends, housing supports, Cal Fresh, Covered California, respite care if available and advocacy opportunities, including Parent Voices).
- Identify existing resources and support systems that will help the family access quality early education and care for the children (e.g. Flexibility in work schedule, success to transportation, family resources, including friends and other family members).
- Provide free consultation on local early education and child care programs and facilities and provide at least four child care referrals to the parent as appropriate to support the child care plan, with at least one program that is not operated by the agency.

- Provide CDSS Community Care Licensing information including:

    - Oliver's Law
    - Information about the Trust line Registry and background check
    - How to access the CA Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division (CDSS CCLD) Transparency website and on-line licensing reports.
    - How to check with the local CDSS CCLD Regional Office for more details on citations and/or complaints for those programs and facilities that support the parent's child care plan and choice.
- Create the Parent's customized child care plan that includes but is not limited to:
    - Parent identified needs
    - Disclaimer regarding referrals
    - Oliver's Law
    - A minimum of four referrals, as appropriate to the child care plan
    - Resources appropriate for the family, including additional resources and tools for screening and assessing programs and facilities, quality indicators and information on the QRIS, if available
    - Information on other community resources identified as supports
    - Information on appropriate subsidies, as appropriate
    - Parents next steps and follow up to customized resources
    - Parent survey if available
- Encourage the parent to provide Feedback on their experience in child care, to seek additional support and information from the R & R program and return at any time when the needs of the family and the child care plan change. When possible, provide a direct referral to the community resources identified in the plan, as appropriate.

General Policies

Harassment

Plumas Rural Services (PRS) is committed to providing a work environment free of unlawful harassment. PRS' policy prohibits harassment because of sex (which includes sexual harassment, gender harassment due to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition) and harassment because of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law or ordinance or regulation. All such harassment is unlawful. PRS' anti-harassment policy applies to all staff, clients, and vendors of PRS and prohibits unlawful harassment by any staff member, client or vendor of PRS. Prohibited unlawful harassment as defined above includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

a. Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs, or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments;
b. Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, or gestures;
c. Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race, or any other protected basis;
d. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of employment or continued employment, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors.;
e. Offensive job interference where such conduct has a purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's work performance or creating an intimidating , hostile, or offensive work environment; and
f. Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Every employee is encouraged to immediately inform the person harassing him or her that the behavior is unwelcomed, offensive, or inappropriate. Any employee who feels subjected to harassment should immediately inform his or her Division Director, any other Division Director, or the Executive Director. In addition, a written signed statement of the complaint must be submitted to the employees' Division Director, any other Division Director, or the Executive Director within ten (10) days of the initial report. The employees' complaint should include details of the incident or incidents, names of individuals involved, and names of witnesses. Division Directors will refer all harassment complaints to the Executive Director of Board of Directors, if appropriate. PRS will immediately undertake an effective, thorough, and objective investigation of the harassment allegations.

Non-Discrimination

The Child Care Payment Program gives equal treatment to all applicants and participants regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, or immigration status, unless the family is under an order of deportation. Families are treated equally whether they require full time or part time services.

Confidentiality

All information gathered from families, including the fact of their enrollment, is strictly confidential. Use of this information is limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program. No other use of this information shall be made without the parent's prior written consent, unless the information is demanded by law enforcement officials with the power of subpoena. Release of such information to person(s) not affiliated with the Child Care Payment Program, will be grounds for immediate termination from the Child Care Payment Program in Plumas County.

Parental Choice

The Child Care Payment Program is a parental choice program; i.e., we do not tell a parent whom to choose for child care. However, there are certain limitations as to whom we can reimburse that are spelled out in the Provider Participation Section of this handbook.

Fraud/Misuse of Child Care Services

Providing false or incomplete information when determining eligibility for the Child Care Payment Program constitutes fraud. Upon discovery of misuse of child care services, a family will immediately be un-enrolled from the program, and monies paid on the family's behalf will be recovered either through a structured re-payment plan or a referral to small claims court or the District Attorney's Office and that child care provider will no longer be eligible to participate in the program as well.

Complaints

Complaints may be lodged against any parent, provider, or the agency. Complaints about a parent should be directed to the Subsidy Counselor who works with that family. Complaints against the Agency or its employees should be directed to the Child Care Program Manager. If the complaint is against the Program Manager, then it should be referred to the PRS Program Services Director. Complaints against providers are expanded upon in the Provider section of this manual.

PLUMAS RURAL SERVICES

UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

It is the intent of Plumas Rural Services Child Development Program to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Individuals, agencies, organizations, students, and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding the Plumas Rural Services Child Development Program's alleged violation of state and/or federal laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (*Education Code,* sections 200 and 220 and *Government Code,* Section 11135) in any program or activity funded directly by the state or receiving federal or state financial assistance.

Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the California Department of Education:

California Department of Education
Child Development Division

Complaint Coordinator
1430 N Street, Suite 3410
Sacramento, CA 95814

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written decision of the Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. In this event, the complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing.

A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including but not limited to, injunctions; restraining orders; or other remedies or orders.

Grievances

Unlike a complaint, a grievance is a formal action taken by a parent/guardian against the Child Care Payment Program. If a family feels that an action taken by the agency, including termination, is unjustly founded, then the family can file a formal grievance. The process for this grievance is outlined on the second page of the Notice of Action.

PRS/Provider Relationship

*PRS pays for childcare services on behalf of the parents who have chosen those providers themselves. Providers are independent contractors, **NOT** employees of Plumas Rural Services.*

Disclaimer

Because the Child Care Payment Program is a parental choice program, parents select their own child care providers for their own children. Therefore, Plumas Rural Services assumes no responsibility for injury or damages resulting from the provision of child care services.

Child Abuse Reporting

According to Section 11165 of the California Penal Code, it is the law that people who work with children must report instances of known or suspected child abuse to the Child Protective Agency. This law applies to Licensed Child Care Providers. Though PRS employees are not mandated reporters, our mission leads us to act in the best interest of children. Therefore, PRS staff will report any instance of known or suspected child abuse.

Code of Adult Behavior

It is the expectation that parents, providers, or their representatives utilizing the services of PRS will conduct themselves in a cooperative, non-hostile manner when interacting with PRS staff or other individuals in the office facility. If staff determines that behaviors are hostile or non-cooperative, they will inform the adult and request that the behavior be changed. If the offensive behavior continues, the staff member will contact a supervisor who, after talking to the individual, may request that he/she leave the building.

If hostile, non-cooperative or threatening comments are made during a telephone conversation, the staff member will verbally notify the individual that the comments are unacceptable and that, if they continue, the conversation will be ended. If the unacceptable comments continue, the staff member will terminate the conversation.

If a provider, parent or representative threatens an employee either physically or verbally, the employee will contact a supervisor and/or law enforcement and a report will be filed.

If hostile, non-cooperative behavior continues, program services will be terminated.

Religious Instruction

PRS does not provide religious instruction or allow worship in its Child Development Program. Similarly, the Child Care Payment Program cannot pay providers who provide religious instruction or allow worship when the family is enrolled in a State program which includes the Family Child Care Home Education Network Program. However, the Child Care Payment Program can pay providers who provide religious instruction when the family is enrolled in a Federal program.

Child Care Food Program

If you are a child care provider and are interested in participating in the Child Care Food Program located in Chico at Valley Oak Children's Services.
You may contact them at **1-800-273-5343**.