

Choices for Children

Resource & Referral Program Guide

Choices for Children Offices
www.choices4children.org

South Lake Tahoe

1029 Takela Drive, #1
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
530-541-5848

Cameron Park

3161 Cameron Park Dr., #101
Cameron Park, CA 95682
530-676-0707

Alpine

100 Foothill Rd., Suite 6
Markleeville, CA 96120
530-694-2129

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Our Mission Statement

Our mission is to enrich children's lives through innovative support, education, and enhanced family and provider services.

Our program puts families at the center of a community of support services.

Program Philosophy

Our programs reflect our commitment to strong families and communities. We believe that when families have the services/support they need, they will be able to raise competent, capable children. We believe that all children must have safe, secure, developmentally appropriate environments to fully experience the opportunities of childhood and reach full potential.

We support parent and provider resources and education in order to enhance the quality of children's lives. We provide a variety of services, empowering families to make informed choices, which meet their unique needs. We believe that we must continue to expand both child care capacity and quality in order to maximize the choices available.

We value our staff and assist them in providing the highest quality of services to our families. Our staff reflects the diverse communities we serve. We strive to create a supportive, trusting environment in which each staff member is respected for their ideas, their work with families, and their unique contributions. We provide and support professional growth opportunities for all staff and encourage expanded leadership and new skills. We strive to be inclusive, respecting each client and each staff member's dignity, worth and uniqueness. We are responsive to the diverse and unique needs identified in the communities we serve.

We are committed to collaborative efforts that promote expansion of interconnected community services for families. We encourage our communities to assume responsibility to children/families by providing, expanding and improving comprehensive services and healthy, safe environments.

Introduction to Choices for Children's Services

Choices for Children (CfC) is a private non-profit organization, established in 1976 to provide services to El Dorado and Alpine Counties. Over the years, the agency has become an important provider of child development programs funded by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division and other funding sources. CfC assists thousands of families per year. CfC believes that families and children deserve quality child care. Our services play a significant role in enhancing the lives of families in these two rural counties.

CfC supports families and children with a variety of programs in El Dorado and Alpine Counties. Our primary services include child care Resource and Referral, assistance with paying for child care, (Alternative Payment Program and CalWORKS Stage 1 (Alpine County only) Stages 2 and 3), Parent/Provider education and the Child Care Food Program.

CfC assists families with processing TrustLine Registration for license-exempt caregivers, collects data and maintains databases used in research on child care for local family services. Program services are available through our offices in Cameron Park, South Lake Tahoe and Markleeville.

CfC accesses a wide variety of community resources, which offer assistance to families in need of services. CfC supplies training and guidance for providers in caring for children. We work closely with community organizations in both counties such as the County Offices of Education, Community Care Licensing, Local Planning Councils, Children and Families Commissions, Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services, and others through our broader information and referral services. We facilitate provider's networks in both South Lake Tahoe and on the Western Slope. CfC partners with other statewide organizations to bring resources to the local communities.

CfC offers equal opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of income, sex or sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability.

Child Care Resource & Referral Programs

Choices for Children is funded by the California Department of Education to provide Resource and Referral Services to both El Dorado and Alpine Counties.

Child Care Referrals

CfC provides free child care referrals to eligible providers who apply in the community. We maintain information on all licensed family child care providers, licensed centers, and exempt providers. When we provide referrals to CDI programs, we also provide referrals to other available programs to avoid conflict of interest.

When a parent calls looking for child care, we gather basic information about the family, including name, address, phone number, child's name and date of birth, request of hours needed, and region of the county care is needed. We then match the child's needs to the providers available in the area requested.

Our staff is available to answer parent's questions about how to find quality child care, or to help parents feel more comfortable asking the right questions when they interview providers. We believe the parent is the best person to choose care for their child. Our goal is to raise the level of expertise of parents as consumers of child care.

Confidentiality

Our policy regarding confidentiality states that the use or disclosure of information pertaining to the child, the child's family, or provider is restricted to purposes directly related to the administration of the program. The Choices for Children database is not released publicly nor is it for sale. However, non-profit organizations that have useful information for providers and/or parents may request that the information be mailed by CfC (organization will supply materials, mail ready, with postage affixed).

What is Licensed Child Care?

Licensed child care takes place in a family child care home or in a child care center. A small child care home is licensed for up to 8 children a large home may be licensed for up to 14 children. A child care center is licensed for more than 14 children, specific ages of children, and the number of teachers related to the adult; child ratios specified by Title 22. All licensed providers have submitted fingerprints; have criminal background checks, and a California Child Abuse Index clearance. In family child care, anyone who lives in the home and is over 18 years of age or older goes through the same clearance process.

The site is inspected for safety issues by an analyst from Community Care Licensing (CCL) a division of State Department of Social Services. Legislation requires at least one unannounced site visit every 5 years; however, annual comprehensive visits are made to those sites with previous violations or serious complaints. Licensed providers must post and provide a copy of a valid license issued by CCL if parents ask. Copies of all site visit reports by CCL are required to be available for review at the site by potential or current enrolled families.

Pertinent Information About Individual Providers (Oliver's Law)

Choices for Children informs parents in each referral of their right to view complaint information or fingerprint exemptions about the provider/facility either at the provider's location or by calling or visiting Community Care Licensing.

What is License Exempt Child Care?

In California a license to provide child care is **not** required for:

- Child Care provided on tribal land.
- School districts with child care programs staffed by school district employees for school age children on school sites.
- Cooperative Care occurs when the parents rotate care, and is limited to 12 children, and no money is exchanged.
- Parents on Site Child Care is for parents attending a class, or church, or an activity; if it is of short duration and the parent is readily available.
- Recreation & Parochial Schools
- A provider who cares for the children of one family at any one time. The provider may be a family, friend or neighbor. In order to be in the CfC referral database they must be TrustLine registered.(finger printed and cleared by Department of Justice) There are two types of care in this category:

1. In-Home Care takes place in the child's home

OR

2. Care in the license exempt provider's home

Resources

CfC has resources available in both English and Spanish for parents, providers, and the early childhood community. We have a complete Resource Center that includes a large selection of materials appropriate for infant through school age children. Our library features: themed kits, educational toys, books and items to enhance the care provided for children with special needs. We also have many valuable books and videos to assist in caring for and raising children. We offer laminating, binding, dye cut and consumable materials available at a low cost. The training resources range from information on parenting, guidance and discipline, curriculum and how to start up a new family child care home or child care center.

Special Events and Trainings

Choices for Children sponsors annual events such as: Holiday Party in Markleeville, Kids' Expo in Placerville and Day of the Young Child in South Lake Tahoe. Agencies and organizations in the community come together to collaborate with information, activities and services for families with young children. These are one-day events that build resources and fun for families.

Our annual conferences and provider events are held in South Lake Tahoe and the Western Slope. In South Lake Tahoe we sponsor a Provider Appreciation Brunch/Training annually. On the Western Slope, A Day for Early Childhood offers a mini-conference with informative workshops.

Referral Complaint Policy and Procedure

Choices for Children's complaint policy is designed to protect the health and safety of children in child care settings in El Dorado and Alpine Counties. Our policy provides a means for parents to voice their concerns and complaints with regard to their child care arrangements. As a referral agency, we do not license child care providers, nor do we investigate licensing violations. The responsibility for investigating complaints rests with the appropriate agency. We refer providers who are in good standing with licensing.

- A. We will respond to the following types of complaints by referring them to the appropriate licensing agency.
 1. Reports that children in a child care facility are in immediate danger because of health and safety conditions. This would include a complaint of child abuse or neglect.
 2. Reports that a child care facility is not in compliance with licensing regulations.
 3. Reports that a child care facility is operating without a license and licensing is required.
- B. We will not respond to complaints when they involve the following circumstances:
 1. When a complaint is received regarding a disagreement between a parent and a provider involving fees for child care services.

2. When a complaint is received regarding a personal disagreement between a parent and provider.

When we receive a complaint, we encourage the person making the complaint to report it directly to the licensing agency. In addition, we will document the complaint on a complaint form, and report the complaint to the appropriate agency. After the complaint is filed, and if advised by Community Care Licensing, we place a temporary hold on referrals until the complaint has been investigated. If the complaint is unsubstantiated or has been corrected, the temporary hold will be removed. However, if notified by Community Care Licensing that the complaint is unresolvable and has resulted in revocation of their license, the provider will be removed from the CfC referral database. We will then notify the provider in writing stating that they have been removed from our referral files.

- C. Licensing violations of a serious nature include, but are not limited to:
 1. The center or home is consistently exceeding licensing capacity.
 2. Staffing ratios are not being maintained.
 3. Children are left with a minor, with no responsible adult present.
 4. The provider is under the influence of drugs, alcohol or other substance while providing care.
 5. Use of corporal punishment or child abuse or neglect.

Providers whom have been placed on probation, has a license revoked or receives a temporary suspension order (TSO) will automatically be taken off of our referral database, and all applicable subsidy programs (Choices for Children, DHS, El Dorado County Office of Education, PaceApp, Tahoe Montessori, Happy Kids, Alpine Children's Center, First 5- Alpine/El Dorado, Kindertown, Under the Magic Pine Tree, Alpine Early Learning Center) in our service area will be notified within two days of receiving the notification from licensing.

If a TSO has occurred, the subsidy payment program will automatically terminate payment to the licensed child care facility or home. Parents and the provider will be notified in writing of such termination.

If a provider is placed on probation, a written notice will be given to the parent, that the provider has been placed on probation and will give the parents the option to locate alternative child care arrangements. Parents may choose to have their child/ren remain in care without risk of termination of subsidy payments.

Uniform Complaint Policy

It is the intent of Choices for Children to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Individuals, agencies, organizations, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding Choices for Children's alleged violation of federal and/or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (Ed Code sections 200 and 220

and Government Code section 11135 and the Americans with Disabilities Act) 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 State 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 California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing in this event.

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.

Legal Reference: 5 CCR, Chapter 5.1. Uniform Complaint Procedures

Appeal Process

If a provider disagrees with the decision to remove their name from Choices for Children's referral files, they have the right to appeal to the Executive Director in writing, who will then respond within 10 calendar days.

Send written appeals to:

Choices for Children
Attn: Doris Fredericks, Executive Director
111 Market Street
San Jose, CA 95113