
Sierra Nevada Children's Services

Resource & Referral Policy

Grievance & Complaint Policy

I. Introduction

Sierra Nevada Children's Services, (SNCS) is a private, nonprofit child care resource and referral agency that has served families, early childhood professionals and the community since 1978.

SNCS has utilized state funding resources and community partnerships to actively support whole family growth and individualized personal development. As an agency dedicated to working with children and families, we thrive on our ability to provide quality assistance, compassion and respect to everyone we assist in Nevada and Sierra counties.

II. Mission Statement

Sierra Nevada Children's Services enriches the community by supporting quality child care and empowering families to aspire to life-long success.

III. Child Care Referral Policy

Sierra Nevada Children's Services (SNCS) offers child care referrals to families to help parents identify the licensed and license-exempt child care programs available in their neighborhoods. The referral service is staffed a minimum of 30 hours per week to all persons free of charge regardless of their income level or other eligibility requirements. SNCS does not recommend any particular child care provider, facility or service. These referrals are intended to provide parents with a variety of choices and should not be thought of as recommendations to a particular program or facility.

When a parent calls SNCS for Child Care Referrals, information is requested in order to make appropriate referrals in Nevada and Sierra counties. This information is considered confidential and is only available to SNCS staff. The services we offer are private and confidential, and we do not release personal information without prior consent.

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

- a) Caller's name and phone number
- b) Home address and e-mail address
- c) Name of closest elementary school
- d) Days and hours child care is needed
- e) Number of children needing care, their gender and date of birth

- f) Type of care parent is considering (e.g. child care center, family child care home, preschool, before/after school care, etc.)
- g) Types of services parent is considering (such as hot meals, toilet training, transportation need, etc.)
- h) An assessment of child(ren)'s special needs or preferences
- i) Interest in the educational background of providers

After discussing their options, parents are given a list of at least four (4) programs, based on availability. This list will include the names, phone numbers and relevant program information for the child care providers who appear to best meet the family's needs. For reasons of confidentiality, family child care providers' addresses are not released.

Notification of Parent Rights - Parents are informed that prior to choosing a child care program, they have the right to review Community Care Licensing reports on facility site visits and substantiated complaint investigations. That information is public, and may be obtained by calling Community Care Licensing, River City Regional Licensing office at 916-263-5744. Information regarding criminal record clearances, child care provider complaints, or violations is available through the licensing office to receive information, the correct spelling of the last name of the provider, their facility number or their correct physical address will need to be provided. Provider data is also searchable by facility on Community Care Licensing's Website at or by visiting the Community Care Licensing website at <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch/>.

SNCS offers additional parent education information including "Choosing Quality Child Care" to assist parents in making their child care choices. This brochure includes a checklist and information on how to interview prospective providers, information about regulations and how to contact Community Care Licensing.

IV. [Provider Policy](#)

When a provider becomes licensed in California by Community Care Licensing, they are eligible to be enrolled in the referral database at no cost to them. SNCS staff will request information required to create a Provider Profile including a copy of their license. These files are only available to SNCS's staff.

Requirements for participating in the SNCS referral database:

1. Family Child Care Homes must have a valid facility license issued by Community Care Licensing
2. Centers and license exempt center-based programs must:
 - a. Have a valid facility license issued by Community Care Licensing; or
 - b. Be legally exempt from licensing
3. Facility must be located within Nevada or Sierra Counties

The following information is used to create a provider profile and may be shared with parents:

- a) Provider's name, address, phone number and email (address will not be shared but used to determine distance from schools, etc.)
- b) License information
- c) Days, hours and months of operation
- d) Ages of children served
- e) Languages spoken
- f) Experience in caring for children with special needs
- g) Any transportation provided
- h) Any fictitious business name
- i) Additional documentation, policies, permits and accreditation

SNCS requests quarterly information updates from providers and keeps the data as accurate as possible. Providers that are no longer licensed are removed from the referral database by changing the status to inactive and turning referrals "OFF". The parents should ask the provider about availability, as this information changes rapidly.

V. [Removal from Referral List](#)

If SNCS is notified by the California Department of Social Services that a child care facility has been issued a temporary suspension order, had its license revoked, or has been placed on probation, the contractor shall, within two business days:

- a) Remove the facility from the referral list;
- b) Notify the following entities within SNCS jurisdiction that a particular facility has been given a temporary suspension, had its license revoked, or has been placed on probation:
 - 1) Alternative Payment programs that operate under article 3 of the Education Code, commencing with section 8220;
 - 2) CalWORKs childcare and development programs that operate under article 15.5 of the Education Code, commencing with section 8350, including county welfare departments that operate child care and development programs for families participating in CalWORKs Stage 1.
 - 3) The contractor shall notify the facility in writing that referrals have been discontinued. The notice shall include the reason(s) for the decision and shall inform the facility of the California Department of Social Services' process for appealing.

The contractor shall document action taken pursuant to subdivision (a) above. The contractor shall retain the documentation and make it available to the California Department of Education upon request.

VI. [Grievance and Complaint Policies](#)

[Complaints Regarding Childcare Providers](#)

As a Childcare Resource and Referral agency, SNCS does not license childcare facilities nor does SNCS investigate alleged violations.

The role of SNCS is to:

- Receive complaints.
- Act as a resource to parents, providers and the community in assisting them in contacting the appropriate authorities.
- Provide technical assistance to providers for compliance with licensing regulations.

Confidentiality will be strictly enforced regarding all complaints. However, if SNCS receives a request from an investigative agency to assist in the investigations, SNCS may provide information from the provider file to the investigating agency.

In no instance shall SNCS make an assumption of guilt or innocence based on the documented complaint.

The following complaint procedures apply when a complaint is received by SNCS regarding any childcare provider within its referral database:

- Ask the complainant if they have spoken with their provider. The provider may be unaware that the complainant is unhappy and may be able to resolve the issue immediately.
- Inform the complainant that SNCS does not investigate complaints.
- Direct the complainant to file a formal complaint with Community Care Licensing (CCL). Parents may telephone 1-844-LET-US-KNOW

All of the following are to be considered serious complaints and may be grounds for immediately placing a facility on temporary hold from referrals:

- Violation of children's rights.
- Child abuse (physical or sexual).
- Use of corporal punishment.
- Unacceptable disciplinary techniques, such as shaming, humiliation, withholding food or toileting privileges, locking child in closet/bathroom, etc.
- Gross unsanitary practices/conditions, such as presences of feces/urine, improper food handling, lack of hand washing before and after food handling/diapering, etc.
- Broken/shattered glass or other sharp objects.
- Poisonous plants/household chemicals (unless properly secured pursuant to CCL regulations).
- Complaints alleging that children have been left alone or in the care of person(s) not cleared through CCL.
- Presence of unsecured firearms.
- Over licensed capacity.
- Insufficient CCL mandated child/staff ratios.
- Presence of unsecured and/or non-childproofed medications and vitamins.

- Presence of seriously damaged/broken toys or equipment.
- Presence of illegal drugs/provider intoxication.
- Any action (written or verbal) alleging discrimination of child and/or family based on sex, race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, age, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.
- Any attempt to falsify records to receive payment from any SNCS program.

All licensed childcare providers are required to maintain, at their site, copies of CCL visit reports. Parents may access these records or may review the facility's profile on the CCL website; <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch/>. A childcare provider may be permanently removed from the SNCS referral database upon a decision made by CCL.

SNCS shall maintain a record of any written parent complaints regarding any TrustLine registered or relative childcare provider. Parents that choose a TrustLine registered or relative childcare provider may review the record of complaints maintained by SNCS on that childcare provider. All written complaints must include the nature of the complaint, the date and approximate time of occurrence and the name and address of the childcare provider.

a) What is a grievance?

Parents and providers are encouraged to share their suggestions and concerns, as this offers a way for our program to better serve their needs. Should a grievance concerning agency policy or practice be brought to SNCS attention, the matter will be forwarded to the Program Director in an effort to resolve the issue. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the complaint will be forwarded to the Executive Director.

Additionally, if satisfaction is not reached through the grievance process, a formal complaint may be filed with the California Department of Education. Uniform Complaint Policy information may be found in the lobby of Sierra Nevada Children's Services, as well as in both the Parent and Provider Guides.

b) What is a complaint?

Sierra Nevada Children's Services (SNCS) must comply with State and Federal laws and regulations when administering its programs. A complaint is an accusation that in some fashion SNCS has not acted in compliance with State and/or Federal laws and regulations, including allegations of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying and non-compliance.

In order to file a complaint, a "Sierra Nevada Children's Services Uniform Complaint Procedure Form" must be completed and submitted to SNCS. These forms are available at the SNCS office, free of charge, and may be requested at anytime. A complaint should be submitted as soon as possible.

Complaints of possible discrimination must be filed within six months of the incident, or when first discovered. The Executive Director may extend this deadline for up to 90 calendar days for good cause.

c) Who may file a complaint?

Any individual, duly authorized representative or interested third party, public agency or organization may file a written complaint of alleged noncompliance. Confidentiality and protection against retaliation are assured.

d) What information must be in the complaint?

The complaint should describe the non-compliance problem and include all the information needed to support the allegation or complaint. Complaint forms and assistance are available at the SNCS Grass Valley Office. The Executive Director shall assure that there is an investigation of the complaint and seek to resolve complaints at the local level. If all parties agree, a neutral mediator may be assigned. All parties shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when meetings are scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made.

e) Where do I send complaints?

You may send a written complaint to: Executive Director, 420 Sierra College Drive, Ste. 100, Grass Valley, CA 95945, (530) 272-8866 or fax (530) 272-1354.

f) How long does it take to resolve the complaint?

An investigative meeting will be held within five working days of receiving the complaint to give all parties an opportunity to present information and question witnesses. Within 60 days of receiving the complaint (unless the complainant agrees to an extension of time), the Executive Director shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the investigation including findings, conclusion of law, disposition of the complaint, rationale, and any corrective actions. Civil law remedies may be pursued through local, state or federal aid agencies, offices, or private/public interest attorneys.

g) What if I disagree with the decision?

You may appeal in writing within 15 days to:

California Department of Social Services Child Care and Development Division
ccddstakeholders@dss.ca.gov

You must specify reason(s) for appealing the decision, stating how the facts of the agency's decision are incorrect and/or the law was misapplied, and include a copy of the locally filed complaint and the decision.