Participant Handbook
Manual Para Participantes

Early Childhood Education and Child Care Programs
California State Preschool Program
Head Start and Early Head Start
General Child Care and Development
California State Migrant Program
Alternative Payment Program
CalWORKs Stage 2 and 3

Early Childhood Education Program
7000 Doe Avenue, Suite C
Visalia, CA 93291
(559) 651-3022 Ph.
(559) 651-3802 Fax

Connections for Quality Care
7000 Doe Avenue, Suite C
Visalia, CA 93291
(559) 651-3026 Ph.
(559) 651-2465 Fax
# Contents

Connections for Quality Care .................................................................................................................. 4  
Vision—Mission—Philosophy .................................................................................................................... 5  
Early Childhood Education ....................................................................................................................... 6  
Program Descriptions .............................................................................................................................. 6  
Head Start (HS) ........................................................................................................................................ 6  
Early Head Start (EHS) ............................................................................................................................. 7  
Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) ................................................................................................. 7  
General Child Care and Development: (CCTR) ...................................................................................... 8  
California State Preschool Program (CSPP) ............................................................................................ 8  
Family Child Care Education Network (FCCEN) .................................................................................... 8  
Alternative Payment (AP) Programs ......................................................................................................... 9  
  • California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP) ................................................................. 9  
  • CalWORKs Stage 2 Child Care (C2AP) ......................................................................................... 9  
  • CalWORKs Stage 3 Child Care (C3AP) ......................................................................................... 9  
Program Options ..................................................................................................................................... 10  
Center-Based Option ............................................................................................................................... 10  
Home-based Option ............................................................................................................................... 10  
Your Child’s Health ............................................................................................................................... 11  
Transitions: Next Steps ........................................................................................................................... 11  
What can you do to help? ....................................................................................................................... 11  
Photographic Consent ............................................................................................................................ 12  
DESIRED RESULTS DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE (DRDP) .............................................................. 12  
Open Door Policy .................................................................................................................................... 12  
Prohibition on Religious Instruction ...................................................................................................... 12  
Equal Access ........................................................................................................................................... 12  
Nutrition ................................................................................................................................................... 12  
State Child Care and Development Programs ....................................................................................... 13  
Qualifying for Services ............................................................................................................................ 13  
State Programs (CSPP, CCTR, CMIG, CAPP) .................................................................................... 13  
  Family Eligibility (Title 5, §18406) ................................................................................................. 14  
  Child Eligibility (Title 5, §18407) ..................................................................................................... 14  
  Duration of Eligibility (Title 5, §18408) ............................................................................................ 14  
CalWORKs Stage 3 .................................................................................................................................. 15  
  Family Eligibility (Title 5, §18421) ................................................................................................. 15  
  Child Eligibility (Title 5, §18422) ..................................................................................................... 15  
  Duration of Eligibility (Title 5, §18423) ............................................................................................ 15
Documentation of Eligibility ................................................................. 16

Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Seasonal Head Start ......................................................... 16

Child Age – to determine age eligibility parent must submit birth record for the child they wish to enroll. ........ 16

Categorical Eligibility – the four types of categorical eligibility and the required documentation are ................ 16
• SSI – current SSI benefit printout ..................................................... 16
• Homeless - completed McKinney-Vento form .................................. 16
• Public Assistance – current cash aid (TANF) benefit printout ........... 16
• Foster – foster care placement letter or foster care benefit form ........ 16

Income – to determine income eligibility parent(s) must submit .................. 16
• Paystubs for previous 12 months income for family, or ........................ 16
• Previous year’s W-2 or filed tax return, or ....................................... 16
• Written statement from employer regarding previous 12 month’s income ............................................ 16

State Programs (CSPP, CCTR, CMIG, CAPP, C2AP, C3AP) ......................................................... 16

Documentation of Eligibility .................................................................. 17

Child Protective Services (CPS/CWS) (Title 5, §18092) .............................................................. 16

Documentation of Income Eligibility ......................................................... 17

Total Countable Income (Title 5, §18078, §18084) .................................................. 17

Documentation of Income from Employment .................................................. 17

Documentation of Income from Self-Employment ............................................. 17

Documentation of Need ............................................................................. 18

Child Protective Services (CPS/CWS) (Title 5, §18092) .............................................................. 18

At Risk of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation (Title 5, §18092) .................................................. 18

Training Toward Vocational Goal (Title 5, §18087) ................................................ 18

Employment (Title 5, §18086 & 18086.1) ..................................................... 19

Seeking Employment (Title 5, § & 18086.5) ..................................................... 21

Seeking Permanent Housing (Title 5, § & 18091) ................................................ 21

Parental Incapacity (Title 5, § & 18088) ........................................................ 22

Certification, Re-certification, Changes ....................................................... 23

Certification [Title 5, §18082] .................................................................... 23

Re-certification [Title 5, §18103] (Not applicable to part-day CSPP) ............... 23

Notification of Changes (Title 5, §18102) – (does not apply to part day CSPP) ........ 23

Information for Parents Regarding Notifications ............................................. 24

Approved Benefit Certification (Title 5, §18074.2) – (CAPP, C2AP, C3AP only) ......................... 24

Notice of Action (Title 5, §18094, 18095, 18118, and 18119) – (does not apply to HS, EHS, or MSHS) 24

Other Notifications ................................................................................. 24

Due Process .............................................................................................. 24

Due Process (Parent Appeals) (Title 5 18120) .................................................. 24

Termination of Services ............................................................................. 25

Reasons that services with TCOE-ECE or C4QC may be terminated include: ........ 25

Selecting a Provider .................................................................................. 26

Program Policies ....................................................................................... 26

Parent/Volunteer Code of Conduct ............................................................. 26
FAMILY FEE POLICY

Attendance Policies for Parents (CSPP, CCTR, CMIG)

Attendance Policies for Parents (Alternative Payment and CalWORKs Programs)

Policies for Completing Daily Attendance Sheets (Alternative Payment and CalWORKs Programs)

Fraud Policy

Failure to report the actual number of family members living in the household

Failure to report the actual gross income for the family

Submitting falsified documentation of income, employment, or vocational training days, hours, progress, etc.

Inaccurately representing family eligibility or need in any way

Falsifying attendance records to inaccurately document family need or increase provider reimbursement

Submitting attendance records when the provider is no longer providing services

Parent Complaint Procedure

Uniform Complaint Procedure
Welcome To the Early Childhood Education Program.
The Tulare County Office of Education—Early Childhood Education (TCOE-ECE) Program believes that our role is to help you and your children prepare for success in school and life.

This handbook was developed to help parents and guardians and Early Childhood Educators in working effectively with TCOE-ECE programs. It provides an overview to the different opportunities available to you.

As a participant in our program, you have access to many services. This is a partial list of items that may be of interest to you. Please let us know how we can best serve you.

Parents and Guardians

- Center- and home-based early educational options
- Referrals to licensed child care centers and family child care homes
- Information on choosing quality child care settings
- Parent resource information on selected topics including nutrition, family wellness and strengthening parenting skills
- Referrals to other agencies
- Parenting workshops and trainings
- Your home as a learning environment

Child Care Providers

- Resource information on child care and development
- Age-appropriate activities
- Discipline and child guidance
- Nutrition, health, CPR, and first aid
- Children with special needs
- Child abuse and prevention
- Make-it/take-it activities and projects
- Site visits by program staff

Connections for Quality Care

Eligibility, enrollment, and case management for all Head Start, Migrant Head Start, California State Preschool, Family Child Care Education Network, Alternative Payment, and CalWORKs programs are administered by the Connections for Quality Care (C4QC) office. Each program provides a unique set of services to families and children in Tulare County.

Upon enrollment in a program, you will be assigned a C4QC staff person who will serve as your personal contact for program eligibility and who can provide assistance as needed. If you have any questions or need assistance, please call your assigned person at the following numbers:

Connections for Quality Care
7000 Doe Avenue, Building 100
Visalia, CA
(559) 651-3026
(800) 675-3026
Vision—Mission—Philosophy

Vision

The Tulare County Early Childhood Education Program provides children and families quality comprehensive services, tools, and skills that build overall success in school and throughout life.

Mission

The Tulare County Early Childhood Education Program in partnership with families and community improves the lives of children by providing quality comprehensive child development services which include: education, health, nutrition and mental health. We are a culturally diverse and inclusive program of caring professionals dedicated to serving families and children.

Our mission is accomplished by collaborating with parents in the operation and administration of the program and by supporting the growth of children, families and staff through encouragement, nurturing, education and empowerment.

Philosophy

We, the staff and providers of the Early Childhood Education, are committed to providing the very best care possible for each child enrolled in the program.

We believe that we offer a program in which all children, including those with disabilities can learn.

We believe our role, as parents, educators, and providers, is to protect, nurture, and ensure the future by honoring children as our most valuable resource.

We believe that parents and guardians are the most significant adults in a child’s life.

We respect a parent’s knowledge and seek to honor their wishes.

We believe that parents, staff and providers are partners, working together to provide a variety of developmentally appropriate, and skill-building experiences for the child.

We believe that building trusting, collaborative relationships with parents is the foundation of quality services. Working together with families is essential to the success of the program. Staff and providers work to foster respectful and reciprocal relationships with children and caregivers.

We foster open communication and promote relationships that build upon the cultures of families and strive to develop respect and cross-cultural understanding among children and parents.

We are proud that the staff, providers, and program reflect not only the world around us, but also challenge bias and honor all people.

We believe that positive self-esteem is the strongest foundation for any kind of learning and socializing.

We believe that a child’s development is promoted through exploration, making choices, experimenting and interacting with others in an environment that is responsive to the developmental stage and needs of the child. With support from a caring adult, each child is encouraged to work toward the level for which they are ready.

We believe that these early experiences, including the development of school readiness skills provide a healthy foundation for lifelong learning.
Early Childhood Education

The Tulare County Office of Education—Early Childhood Education Program provides federal and state early education opportunities and child care to families throughout the county. The programs are funded through the California Department of Education, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and must comply with the regulations that govern these programs: the Head Start Act of 2007, the Head Start Program Performance Standards, California Code of Regulations, Title 22 and Title 5. All families and child care providers participate in the programs without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability. Information pertaining to families served though the TCOE-ECE programs is considered confidential and will be used for program administration purposes only. [Title 5, §18117]

In order to access many of the TCOE-ECE programs, families must be part of the Centralized Eligibility List (CEL). The CEL provides a comprehensive list of families requesting subsidized early education, development and child care services. The CEL ranks families according to the enrollment priorities set by Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and State regulations.

The early education, development and child care programs offered by TCOE-ECE serve children ages 0 through 12 years old. Once a child reaches his/her 13th birthday, services will no longer be provided for the child unless the child has an exceptional need requiring on-going adult supervision documented through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Families enrolled in any of these programs must continually meet their program’s need and/or eligibility criteria as outlined in this handbook in order to receive services.

Program Descriptions
The TCOE-ECE administers several different early childhood education and development programs to assist families residing in Tulare County. Through these programs a family can make an informed decision about the options that will provide the most nurturing and educational setting that meet the needs of children and families. These programs are available throughout Tulare County and the services are available at specific sites. The sites must follow preschool standards set by the Office of Head Start and the California Department of Education. These options include the following:

Head Start (HS)
Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to five from low-income families by building their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Head Start programs provide comprehensive services to enrolled children and their families, which include education, health, nutrition, social and other services determined to be necessary by a family’s need assessment. The Head Start program provides a learning environment that supports children’s growth in the following domains:

- Language and literacy;
- Cognition and general knowledge;
- Physical development and health;
- Social and emotional development; and
- Approaches to learning.

Additional services for children and families:
- Developmentally appropriate learning activities
• Comprehensive case management for child health
• Health checks: lead, hemoglobin, vision, hearing and developmental screenings
• Nutrition assessment and education
• Tips and techniques for parenting skills and support
• Services for children with disabilities

TCOE-ECE’s Head Start program serves preschool children and their families through several different service models. We offer a center-based program where children attend for part-day or full-day services. Children may also be served in a home-visiting model, where a staff person visits once a week to provide services to the child and family. Children and families who receive home-based services gather periodically with other enrolled families for a group learning experience facilitated by Head Start staff.

To be eligible for HS services, a child must be at least three years old by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in our communities. At least 90 percent of the children who are enrolled in the Head Start program must be from low-income families. The family income must be verified before determining that a child is eligible to participate in our program. 10 percent of the total number of enrollment opportunities during the enrollment must be made available to children with disabilities who meet the definition for children with disabilities.

**Early Head Start (EHS)**

The TCOE-ECE Early Head Start program provides early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support to low-income infants and toddlers and their families and pregnant women and their families. Program options for Early Head Start include the following:

• Center-based services provide early learning, care and enrichment experiences to children in an early care and education setting. Staff members also visit the family’s home at least twice per year.

• Home-based services are provided through weekly home visits to each enrolled child and family. The home educator provides child-focused visits that promote the parents’ ability to support the child’s development. Twice per month, the program offers opportunities for parents and children to come together as a group for learning, discussion and social activity.

• Services to prenatal families include:
  o Prenatal education, including fetal development and the risks connected to smoking, alcohol & drug use
  o Feeding options for your baby
  o Labor and delivery information
  o Newborn care
  o Emotional wellness screening

**Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS)**

The TCOE-ECE Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) program is a school readiness early childhood education program for children ages zero to five whose families are low-income and earn the majority of their income from agricultural production and harvesting work. The program is free to families who meet the following eligibility criteria:

• Mobile migrant families who engage in agricultural labor and the entire family changed from one geographic location to another in the preceding two-year period.
• Seasonal farmworker families engaged primarily in agricultural labor that have not changed residence from one geographic location to another in the preceding two-year period.
• Families who earn 51% of their income from agricultural work and meet income level or other eligibility requirements.
• Families and children must live in Tulare County during the time they receive services.

**General Child Care and Development: (CCTR)**

CCTR programs are state and federally funded programs that use center and family child care education networks, providing services for children from birth through kindergarten. These programs provide an educational component that is developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate for the children served. Meals and snacks are provided to children as well as providing parent education, referrals to health and social services for families, and professional development opportunities to employees and providers. CCTR programs are available at sites throughout Tulare County. The sites must meet quality program standards set by the California Department of Education (CDE) and utilize developmentally appropriate curriculum for instruction. Families access the CCTR program through the CEL, with the most eligible families receiving services first. Families remained enrolled as long as they continue to meet the need and eligibility criteria of the program, follow program rules and regulations, and funding is available.

**California State Preschool Program (CSPP)**

TCOE-ECE operates and monitors several center-based programs serving eligible three- and four-year old children through CSPP. The program provides both part-day and full-day services including a core class curriculum that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for the children we serve. Our program also provides meals and snacks to children, parent education, referrals to health and social services for families, and staff development opportunities to employees. Families access CSPP services through the CEL with the most eligible families receiving services first. Families remained enrolled as long as they continue to meet the criteria of the program, follow program rules and regulations, and funding is available. Families enrolled in part-day CSPP must meet the eligibility criteria of the program; families enrolled in full-day CSPP must meet both the need and eligibility criteria of the program.

**Family Child Care Education Network (FCCEN)**

Family child care home providers contracted with the Family Child Care Education Network (FCCEN) must be licensed and meet program health and safety requirements. They are also required to meet the same early education and environment standards as center-based preschools. C4QC staff provides training and technical assistance to providers on how to create a quality-learning environment for children. The provider’s family child care home is evaluated annually using the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale.

In collaboration with C4QC staff, providers complete a Desired Results Developmental Profile for each child twice a year using anecdotal notes and ongoing observations they have collected. Results are used to create lesson plans that meet group and/or individual child goals. After each profile is completed, providers meet with parents to discuss their child’s needs and to plan how they can work together to meet the goals they set.

In addition, children receive hearing and vision testing, dental screenings and referrals for health and mental health services when necessary.

There are two programs under the FCCEN serving children from birth through kindergarten.
• California State Migrant Program (CMIG)
  o Families must be income eligible, earn 51% or more of their income from agriculture, and meet need requirements.
• General Child Care and Development (CCTR)
  o Families must be income eligible and meet need requirements.

**Alternative Payment (AP) Programs**

The AP programs provide eligible parents the opportunity to secure quality early education and child care for children from birth through twelve years while pursuing a goal of self-sufficiency. Children with exceptional needs who have an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and are receiving intervention services or appropriate special education and related services, may qualify for services up to the age of twenty-one. Parents utilize a certificate (voucher) to make financial arrangements with a provider they select who meets their individual child care needs. The provider may be a state preschool or Head Start center, licensed private center, licensed family child care education network provider, licensed family child care provider, license exempt provider such as a friend or family member, or sectarian child care center (depending on the funding source), who is eligible to participate in the C4QC AP subsidized program. License exempt providers may only care for children from one family other than their own and must obtain a TrustLine clearance, unless they are the grandparent, aunt, or uncle of the child. Reimbursements for services are made directly to the provider and will not begin until all required documentation is received and the provider is approved for participation in the AP subsidized program.

C4QC administers the contracts for three AP programs:

• **California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)**
  Families access this program through the CEL. As CAPP funding becomes available, the most eligible families from the CEL receive services first. Families may remain on the CAPP program as long as they continue to meet the need and eligibility criteria of the program, follow the program rules and regulations, and funding is available.

• **CalWORKs Stage 2 Child Care (C2AP)**
  Families have access to this program if they have previously received public cash assistance (TANF) or a diversion payment through the Department of Public Social Services. Families may be eligible for this program for up to 24 months after discontinuing cash assistance as long as they continue to meet the need and eligibility criteria of the program, follow the program rules and regulations, and funding is available.

• **CalWORKs Stage 3 Child Care (C3AP)**
  This program is available to families who continue to need child care services after their 24 months of eligibility expires in C2AP. Families may remain on the C3AP program as long as they continue to meet the need and eligibility criteria of the program, follow the program rules and regulations, and funding is available.
Eligibility and Program Options
Eligibility for Head Start, Early Head Start and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start

- The child’s age, Tulare County residence, family size and income must be verified.
- No less than 90 percent of enrolled children must be income eligible based upon Federal guidelines, receiving public assistance, foster placement, or be homeless.
- Homeless children are prioritized for Early Head Start/Head Start enrollment in accordance with the 2007 Head Start Act.
- No less than 10 percent of enrolled children must have a diagnosed disability and a verified Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP).
- The above requirements apply to all Early Head Start and Head Start children in all program options.

Program Options

- HOME-BASED options, which provide services to families from prenatal to 5 years, offer the family weekly home visits that are an hour and a half in length and two socialization experiences each month.
- CENTER-BASED options, which provide services to children from 3 to 5 years, offer classroom sessions and at least two educational home visits each year.
  - Full-day
  - Part-day

Which option is right for your child and your family?

Center-Based Option

- The Early Head Start Home –Based Program serves pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and children up to 36 months of age, and their families.
- The Head Start program serves three- and four-year old children and their families; and each child’s age eligibility is calculated according to the September 1 kindergarten eligibility date.

For full day services, parents/guardians must be working or participating in vocational training activities for thirty (30) or more hours per week, seeking employment, or have a special need of the child or family requiring services. Some examples of a child or family special need are: a child with a diagnosed disability or special need, a family member who is incapacitated and cannot provide care and supervision for the child, a parent or guardian who has recently become unemployed and is looking for work.

- The part-day services offer three and one-half hour classroom sessions, typically morning or afternoon.
- The Migrant/Seasonal program is center-based and parents must be working for 30 or more hours per week or seeking employment in agricultural work. 51% of income must come from agricultural work.

Home-based Option

The Early Head Start (EHS) Home-based program is a family-centered program that offers support in the areas of child development, parenting, health and social services to pregnant women, infants, toddlers and their families. The home-based option provides services through an EHS Home Base Educator in your home for 90-minute weekly visits. This program also offers opportunities for families to participate in socialization activities twice a month. EHS will support you in educating and nurturing your children and will provide links to community resources.

Early Head Start benefits to prenatal families:

- Prenatal education: including fetal development and the risks connected to smoking, alcohol and drug use
- Feeding options for your baby
- Labor and delivery information
- Newborn care
• Emotional wellness screening

Benefits to families and children—prenatal to age three:

• Developmentally appropriate learning activities
• Comprehensive case management for child’s health
• Health checks: vision, hearing and developmental screenings
• Nutrition assessment and education
• Tips and techniques for parenting skills and support
• Services for children with disabilities

As the most important person in your baby’s life, you and your baby are beginning a relationship that will last a lifetime. The development of this relationship is in your hands. Your baby will follow your lead, so let the EHS home-based program assist you by providing socially and developmentally appropriate techniques and skills along the way.

The Home-based Head Start (36 months to kindergarten age) option philosophy is based on the belief that success begins in the home setting. By enhancing family successes, the Home-based option provides for broader learning experiences. Staff are facilitators and advocates in partnership with families. The Home-based option provides each family with weekly visits that are one and a half hours in length, and two socializations a month. The Home-base option offers everything the Head Start Center-based option provides, however we make it available in your home, incorporating flexible services with one-to-one support to families.

Your Child’s Health

Be sure that your child has an up-to-date physical exam, tuberculosis clearance and immunizations. We can assist you to locate a medical facility and establish a medical home for your child and family. Please promptly submit the following documentation:

• Immunizations: According to California Immunization Requirements for child care, all children must be up-to-date on immunizations prior to entry into the selected program option.
• Physical exam: According to Title 22 California State Licensing requirements, a physical exam completed within the last 12 months must be presented within 30 days of entry into the selected program option.
• Tuberculosis (TB) Clearance: According to licensing requirements, a TB Clearance completed within the last 12 months must be presented within 30 days of entry into the selected program option.

Transitions: Next Steps

“Transitions” means change. Families go through many changes. Transitions are viewed as opportunities for continuous learning and growth. Transition addresses all changes that occur as the family moves from one setting to another, from home to a center-based program, within a program or between programs. You will become aware of just how important you are when planning for the many transitions you, your child, and family will experience. You have expert knowledge about your child and family, which you can provide to staff. This information will be helpful in guiding and planning the next steps for your family.

As your child’s first teacher, you are key to the successful early transitions when you:

• Understand the importance of effective transitions in the lives of your child and family.
• Prepare and support your child before and during transitions.
• Advocate for your child and other children.

What can you do to help?

• Share what you know about your child
- Learn about new settings and experiences
- Work with your child at home

Photographic Consent
You may be asked for photographic consent. As part of the program activities, pictures/video of your child(ren) may be taken and shared. By granting permission, the pictures and videos may be used by the Tulare County Office of Education, Early Childhood Education, and Connections for Quality Care publications to include, but not limited to, program handbooks, websites, recruitment efforts, newsletters, or displays.

DESIRED RESULTS DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE (DRDP)
The TCOE-ECE program utilizes the California Department of Education DRDP to ensure that all children are making progress in all domains: social emotional, language and literacy, math, science, social studies, and physical and health development.

We use the DRDP, a tool developed by the CDE to assess the development of children. Children are assessed within 60 days of enrollment and twice a year thereafter. Parent/guardian input is a necessary component of this assessment. The assessment is also used to plan and conduct developmental activities that are age appropriate for the children.

Open Door Policy
TCOE-ECE maintains an open-door policy. We welcome parents to visit our classrooms unannounced to observe their child at any time during program hours. Our programs are based upon a partnership with the parents of the children enrolled. Therefore, parents are encouraged to participate in our programs. Parents planning to visit must adhere to our volunteer policy as well as our Standards of Conduct.

Prohibition on Religious Instruction
The TCOE-ECE program refrains from religious instruction or worship, and complies with the regulations which stipulate that religious instruction or worship is prohibited.

Equal Access
The TCOE-ECE program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability in determining which children and families are served. Our program understands and implements the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities.

Nutrition
TCOE-ECE programs may provide breakfast, lunch and/or a snack. All meals served meet or exceed requirements set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Education, Child Care Food Program (CCFP). We participate in the California State Child and Adult Care Food Program and are subject to California State monitoring for compliance to the regulations.

We provide:
- Balanced meals and snacks to all the children in our program.
- Nutrition screenings are conducted and children identified as having nutritional concerns are referred to the nutrition manager for additional consideration.
• Menus are posted in each classroom
• Workshops on nutrition education

Due to CCFP regulation, food served at the centers:
• Cannot be taken outside of the school,
• Cannot be offered to children who are not enrolled in our program.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Written Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**State Child Care and Development Programs**

**Qualifying for Services**

**State Programs (CSPP, CCTR, CMIG, CAPP)**

Parents/guardians must provide documentation that verifies the family meets each of the criteria listed below. The only exception is part day state preschool, which does not require the family to have a need.

• Families and children must live in Tulare County.
• Eligibility
  • Recipient of child protective/child welfare services
  • Children at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
  • Current aid recipient
  • Income eligible
  • Homeless
  • Eligibility for CalWORKs (CalWORKs Stage 3 and Stage 3 programs only)
• Family Size
• Need (Full Day Only)
  • Recipients of child protective services
  • Children at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation
  • Training toward vocational goal
  • Employment
  • Seeking employment
  • Seeking permanent housing
  • Parental incapacity
CalWORKs Stage 2

**Family Eligibility (Title 5, §18406)** - a family is eligible to receive CalWORKs Stage 2 child care services if all of the following conditions are met:

- The family is and remains income eligible based on adjusted monthly income. Adjusted monthly income is the total countable income received by members of the family included in the family size determination, minus verified child support payments paid by the parent whose child is receiving child care services. Except for child support payments paid by the parent, monthly income is not adjusted for voluntary or involuntary deductions.
- The adult or minor teen parent is responsible for the care of the child needing child care; and
- The adult or minor teen parent is:
  - A CalWORKs cash aid recipient;
  - A former CalWORKs cash aid recipient who received cash aid within the last 24 months; or
  - Determined eligible for diversion services by the county welfare department.
- Current CalWORKs cash aid recipients must be participating in a county welfare department CalWORKs approved welfare-to-work activity or be employed.
- The parent(s) and any other adult whose income is counted towards Stage 2 eligibility must each meet one of the following requirements:
  - Be employed. If the parent(s) works in the home, the nature of the work must preclude the supervision of the parent's children;
  - Be seeking employment;
  - Be participating in a job training and education program leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession, or profession;
  - Be participating in job retention services approved by the county welfare department; or
  - Be incapacitated.

**Child Eligibility (Title 5, §18407)** - A child under 13 years of age, or having exceptional needs, who is living in the household of the eligible family may receive CalWORKs Stage 2 child care services if she/he is:

- A son or daughter of the eligible family;
- Receiving foster care benefits, federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or State Supplemental Program (SSP) benefits; or
- The responsibility of the adult to support and for whom the lack of child care would result in the adult not being able to work or participate in a work activity.

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 during the time child care services are needed.

**Duration of Eligibility (Title 5, §18408)** - Families receiving CalWORKs cash aid are eligible to receive CalWORKs Stage 2 child care when:

- The family is and remains income eligible;
- The family continues to have an eligible need;
- Income reporting requirements are met; and
- Families required to pay a family fee comply with the program’s family fee policy.
CalWORKs Stage 3

Family Eligibility (Title 5, §18421) - A family is eligible to receive CalWORKs Stage 3 child care services if all of the following conditions are met:

- The family is and remains income eligible based on adjusted monthly income. Adjusted monthly income is the total countable income received by members of the family included in the family size determination, minus verified child support payments paid by the parent whose child is receiving child care services. Except for child support payments paid by the parent, monthly income is not adjusted for voluntary or involuntary deductions.
- The adult or minor teen parent is responsible for the care of the child needing child care; and
- The adult or minor teen parent is:
  - A former CalWORKs cash aid recipient and is in his/her 24th month of eligibility for CalWORKs Stage 1 and/or 2 after leaving CalWORKs cash aid, or
  - A diversion services recipient and is in his/her 24th month of eligibility for CalWORKs Stage 1 and/or 2 child care.
- The parent(s) and any other adult whose income is counted towards Stage 2 eligibility must each meet one of the following requirements:
  - Be employed. If the parent(s) works in the home, the nature of the work must preclude the supervision of the parent's children;
  - Be seeking employment;
  - Be participating in a job training and education program leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession, or profession;
  - Be participating in job retention services as approved by the county welfare department; or
  - Be incapacitated.

Child Eligibility (Title 5, §18422) - A child under 13 years of age, or having exceptional needs, living in the household of the eligible family may receive CalWORKs Stage 3 child care services if she/he is:

- A son or daughter of the eligible family;
- Receiving foster care benefits, federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or State Supplemental Program (SSP) benefits; or
- The responsibility of the adult to support and for whom the lack of child care would result in the adult not being able to work or participate in a work activity.

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 during the time child care services are needed.

Duration of Eligibility (Title 5, §18423) - After initial enrollment into a Stage 3 program, child care services will be continued as long as the child meets eligibility requirements listed above and

- The family continues to meet eligibility requirements; or
- The program has received a referral for child protective services; or
- The family is income eligible and the child has a medical or psychiatric special need that cannot be met without the provision of child care services as documented in the family's file.
Documentation of Eligibility

It is the parent’s responsibility to provide all documentation required to determine the family’s eligibility for services. The acceptable forms of documentation for each eligibility criteria are listed below.

**Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Seasonal Head Start**

**Child Age** – to determine age eligibility parent must submit birth record for the child they wish to enroll.

**Categorical Eligibility** – the four types of categorical eligibility and the required documentation are:

- SSI – current SSI benefit printout
- Homeless - completed McKinney-Vento form
- Public Assistance – current cash aid (TANF) benefit printout
- Foster – foster care placement letter or foster care benefit form

**Income** – to determine income eligibility parent(s) must submit

- Paystubs for previous 12 months income for family, or
- Previous year’s W-2 or filed tax return, or
- Written statement from employer regarding previous 12 month’s income

**State Programs (CSPP, CCTR, CMIG, CAPP, C2AP, C3AP)**

**Child Protective Services (CPS/CWS) (Title 5, §18092)** – requires a written referral dated within six months of the application for services which includes:

- A statement on agency letterhead from a county welfare department child welfare services worker, certifying that the child is receiving CPS or CWS and that child care and development services are a necessary component of the CPS/CWS service plan.
- The probable duration of the CPS/CWS service plan.
- The name, address, phone number, and signature of the county child welfare services worker.

**At Risk of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation (Title 5, §18092)** – requires a written referral, on agency letterhead, from a legally qualified professional licensed in the state to perform legal, medical, health, or social services for the general public. The referral must include:

- A statement that the child is at risk of abuse and neglect and that child care and development services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk.
- The probable duration of the at risk situation.
- The name, address, phone number, and signature of the legally qualified professional.

**Current Aid Recipient (Title 5, §18085)** – requires written documentation that the parent is receiving public assistance from the county welfare department. Families, who are eligible for these services, must meet the income requirements, have an on-going need for services and report all changes in their public cash assistance within required reporting timelines.

**Homeless (Title5, §18091)** - the definition of homelessness is when a person or family lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and has a primary nighttime residence that is:

- A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter, transitional housing, or homeless support program designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or
• A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

To document being homeless, the parent must provide one of the following:

• A signed written referral on agency letterhead from an emergency shelter or other legal, medical, or social service agency, or
• A written declaration signed by the parent that the family is homeless, including a statement describing the family's current living situation.

**Documentation of Income Eligibility**

**Total Countable Income (Title 5, §18078, §18084)** – Families who receive services based upon income eligibility must document all sources of countable income including:

• Gross wages or salary, advances, commissions, overtime, tips, bonuses, gambling or lottery winnings, housing and automobile allowance;
• Wages for migrant, agricultural, or seasonal work;
• Public cash assistance;
• Gross income from self-employment less business expenses with the exception of wage draws;
• Disability, unemployment or workers compensation;
• Spousal support, child support received from the former spouse or absent parent, or financial assistance for housing costs, living expenses or car payments paid as part of or in addition to spousal or child support;
• Survivor and retirement benefits, pensions or annuities, inheritance;
• Dividends, interest on bonds, income from estates or trusts, net rental income or royalties;
• Rental income received from rent for room within the family's residence or rental property;
• Foster care grants, payments or clothing allowance for children placed through child welfare services;
• Financial assistance received for the care of a child living with an adult who is not the child's biological or adoptive parent;
• Veterans pensions;
• 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.

**Documentation of Income from Employment**

Examples of acceptable income documentation for parents who are employed include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. An Employment Verification form or a letter from the employer indicating the employer’s name, address, and employment information and/or a signed release authorizing the program to contact the parent’s employer;
2. Payroll check stubs; or
3. An independent written statement from the employer; or
4. Other record of wages provided by employer.

**Documentation of Income from Self-Employment**

Examples of documentation for parents who are self-employed include, but are not limited to, the following:

• A copy of the most recent signed and completed tax return;
• A letter from the source of income; or
• Other business records, such as detailed ledgers, receipts, or business logs, showing the source of income and including a summary of the parent’s total income, business expenses, and adjusted income. Agency staff is not responsible for making these income calculations for the parent.

Documentation for other sources of income includes:
• Cash aid statements;
• Child support statements;
• Foster care grant statements;
• Student grant or scholarship statements.

• Statements for any other source of income not listed;
• Documentation of all non-wage income; or
• Self-certification for any income for which no documentation is possible.

The Tulare County Office of Education Early Childhood Education Program reserves the right to request additional documentation to verify income when necessary.

Documentation of Need
(Full Day Programs CSPP, CCTR, CMIG, CAPP, C2AP, C3AP Only)

It is the parent’s responsibility to provide all documentation required to determine the family’s need for services. The acceptable forms of documentation for each need criteria are listed below.

Child Protective Services (CPS/CWS) (Title 5, §18092) – requires a written referral dated within six months of the application for services which includes:

• A statement on agency letterhead from a county welfare department child welfare services worker, certifying that the child is receiving CPS or CWS and that child care and development services are a necessary component of the CPS/CWS service plan;
• The probable duration of the CPS/CWS service plan;
• The name, address, phone number, and signature of the county child welfare services worker.

At Risk of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation (Title 5, §18092) – requires a written referral, on agency letterhead, from a legally qualified professional licensed in the state to perform legal, medical, health, or social services for the general public. The referral must include:

• A statement that the child is at risk of abuse and neglect and that child care and development services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk;
• The probable duration of the at risk situation;
• The name, address, phone number, and signature of the legally qualified professional;

Training Toward Vocational Goal (Title 5, §18087) - Parental need based on vocational training is limited to six years from the date service first began or completing semester 24 units or equivalent after earning a Bachelor’s Degree, whichever occurs first.

The parent must provide documentation of days and hours of vocational training, which includes all of the following:

• A statement of the parent’s vocational goal;
• The name of the training institution that is providing the vocational training;
• The dates on which the current quarter, semester, or training period will begin and end;
• A current class schedule that is either an electronic print-out from the training institution showing the parent’s current class schedule or, if unavailable, a document that includes all of the following information:
  o The classes in which the parent is currently enrolled;
  o The days of the week and times of day of the classes; and
  o The signature or stamp of the training institution’s registrar.
• The anticipated completion date of all required training activities to meet the vocational goal; and
• Upon completing a quarter, semester, or training period, provide a report card, transcript, or if the training institution does not use formal letter grades, other record to document that the parent is making adequate progress toward completing the vocational goal.

Employment (Title 5, §18086 & 18086.1) - documentation for need based on parent(s) employment must include the days and hours of employment.

If the parent has an employer, the documentation will consist of one of the following:

• the pay stubs that were provided to determine income eligibility that indicate the days and hours of employment; or
• if the provided pay stubs do not indicate the days and hours of employment, the program will verify the days and hours of employment by doing one of the following:
  o securing an independent written statement from the employer; or
  o telephoning the employer and maintaining a record; or
  o if the employer refuses or is non-responsive in providing the requested information, the program will determine the reasonableness of the days and hours of employment based on the description of the employment and community practice; or
  o if the parent states in a declaration signed under penalty of perjury that a request for employer documentation would adversely affect the parent’s employment, the program will determine the reasonableness of the parent’s declaration and base certification on the description of employment and known community practice.

When the employed parent does not have pay stubs or other record of wages from the employer and has provided a self-certification of income, the program will assess the reasonableness of the days and hours of employment, based on the description of the employment and the documentation provided for income eligibility, and authorizes only the time determined to be reasonable.

A self-certification of income is a declaration signed by the parent under penalty of perjury identifying:

• the employer and date of hire, rate and frequency of pay, total amount of income received for the preceding month(s), type of work performed, and the hours and days worked, when an employer refuses or fails to provide requested employment information or when a request for documentation would adversely affect the parent’s employment; or
• the amount and frequency of sources of income for which no documentation is possible.
Parents who are self-employed must provide documentation of need based on employment that includes the following:

- a declaration of need under penalty of perjury that includes a description of the employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked per week;
- a copy of one or more of the following: appointment logs, client receipts, job logs, mileage logs, a list of clients with contact information, or similar records sufficient to demonstrate the days and hours worked; and
- as applicable, a copy of a business license, a workspace lease, or a workspace rental agreement.

If the program cannot verify need based on the documentation provided, the program will take additional action to verify self-employment that includes any one or more of the following:

- if the self-employment occurs in a rented space, contact the parent's lessor to verify the parent's renting of the space;
- if the self-employment occurs in variable locations, independently verify this information by contacting one or more clients whose names and contact information have been voluntarily provided by the parent; or
- make other reasonable contacts or requests to determine the amount of time for self-employment.

The parent shall provide a release authorizing the program to obtain the information it deems necessary to support the parent's asserted days and hours worked per week. A release is not required when the parent has an employer and has submitted a declaration that contacting the employer would adversely affect their employment.

In addition to the requirements listed above, if the parent’s employment is in the family’s home or on property that includes the family's home, the parent must provide justification for requesting subsidized child care and development services based on the type of work being done and its requirements, the age of the family's child for whom services are sought, and, if the child is more than five years old, the specific child care needs. The contractor shall determine and document whether the parent's employment and the identified child care needs preclude the supervision of the family's child.

Parents who are licensed family day care home providers pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1596.78 or individual license-exempt providers pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1596.792, subdivisions (d) or (f), are not eligible for subsidized services during the parent's business hours because the parent’s employment does not preclude the supervision of the family's child.

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

- a copy of the family day care home license indicating it is licensed as a large family day care home;
- a signed statement from the licensee stating that the parent is the assistant, pursuant to the staffing ratio requirement of California Code of Regulations, title 22, section 102416.5(c);
- proof that the parent's fingerprints are associated with that licensed family day care home as its assistant, which the contractor may verify with the local community care licensing office; and
• payroll deductions withheld for the assistant by the licensee, which may be a pay stub.

The program will not approve services if the presence of the parent’s child in the family day care home creates the only need for the parent to be the assistant.

**Seeking Employment (Title 5, § & 18086.5)** – seeking employment is limited to 60 working days per fiscal year per parent, for no more than five days per week and for less than 30 hours per week. The period of eligibility shall start on the day authorized by the contractor and extend for consecutive working days. Working days is defined as Mondays through Fridays, excluding any federal holidays.

Required documentation for seeking employment includes

- A declaration written by the parent and signed under penalty of perjury stating that the parent is seeking employment.
- The declaration must include a description of when the parent’s plan to secure, change, or increase employment and a description of when they will need services in order to seek employment.

Based on the parent’s declaration, TCOE-ECE and C4QC will determine the number of working days available and the approved child care schedule, which may include a variable schedule. When making a determination, the program will take into consideration whether there is another adult or caregiver available to supervise and care for the children during the time the parent is requesting to seek employment, or if the hours are reasonable based on knowledge of the local business community or nature of work.

If the parent received services based on employment or vocational training for at least 20 working days at the same time they received services for seeking employment, eligibility for seeking employment may be extended for an additional 20 working days. Eligibility for services to a parent under these circumstances is limited to 80 working days during the fiscal year.

If the Governor declares a state of emergency based on reduced opportunities for employment, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction may make a decision to suspend the 60 working day limitation for seeking employment. The decision will include information on the geographic areas affected and the duration of the suspension. If a parent’s services for seeking employment were exhausted after an emergency was declared and before the Superintendent suspends the eligibility limitation, TCOE-ECE and C4QC may re-authorize services for seeking employment under the conditions listed in the Superintendent’s suspension order.

If eligibility based on seeking employment is stopped before the parent uses the entire number of allowed days, the number of unused working days remaining will be available for the remainder of the fiscal year.

**Seeking Permanent Housing (Title 5, § & 18091)** – if the need for services is seeking permanent housing for family stability, the parent’s period of eligibility for child care and development services is limited to 60 working days during the fiscal year, and shall occur on no more than five days per week and for less than 30 hours per week. The period of eligibility shall start on the day authorized by the contractor and extend for consecutive working days. Working days is defined as Mondays through Fridays, excluding any federal holidays.

Documentation of seeking permanent housing shall include:

- A declaration written by the parent and signed under penalty of perjury that the family is seeking permanent housing;
• The declaration must include the parent’s search plan to secure a fixed, regular, and adequate residence and must have a general description of when services will be necessary;
• If the family is residing in a shelter, services may also be provided while the parent attends appointments or activities necessary to comply with the shelter participation requirements. The parent must provide a signed statement from the shelter, transitional housing agency, or homeless support program documenting the required appointments or activities.

Based on the parent’s declaration, TCOE-ECE and C4QC will determine the number of working days available and the approved child care schedule, which may include a variable schedule. When making a determination, the program will take into consideration whether there is another adult or caregiver available to supervise and care for the children during the time the parent is requesting to seek permanent housing, or if the hours are reasonable based on knowledge of the local community.

If the parent does not expect to secure housing prior to the end of the eligibility period:

• The parent may request an extension in a declaration of need signed under penalty of perjury that includes an update of their search plan and a signed statement from the shelter, transitional housing agency, or homeless support program indicating the parent’s continued need for services; and
• TCOE-ECE and C4QC may authorize an extension of search eligibility for up to 20 additional working days.

If the eligibility based on seeking permanent housing is stopped before the parent uses the entire number of allowed days, the number of unused working days remaining will be available for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Parental Incapacity (Title 5, § & 18088) –
Parental incapacity means the temporary or permanent inability of the child’s parent(s) to provide care and supervision of the child(ren) for part of the day due to a physical or mental health condition. Services based on parental incapacity cannot exceed 50 hours per week.

Documentation must include:

• A release signed by the incapacitated parent authorizing a legally qualified health professional to disclose information necessary to establish that the parent meets the definition of incapacity and needs services.
• The documentation of incapacitation provided by the legally qualified health professional must include:
  o a statement that the parent is incapacitated, that the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision for the child for part of the day, and, if the parent is physically incapacitated, identifies the extent to which the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision;
  o the days and hours per week that services are recommended to accommodate the incapacitation, taking into account the age of the child and the care needs. This may include time for the parent’s regularly scheduled medical or mental health appointments;
  o the probable duration of the incapacitation; and
  o the name, business address, telephone number, professional license number, and signature of the legally qualified health professional and, if applicable, the name of the health organization the professional is associated with, TCOE-ECE and C4QC may contact the legally
qualified health professional for verification, clarification, or completion of the provided statement. Approved days and hours of services will be based on the recommendation of the health professional, the age of the child, and whether there is another adult available to supervise and care for the child during the time request.

**Certification, Re-certification, Changes**  
*(CSPP, CCTR, CMIG, CAPP, C2AP, C3AP)*

**Certification [Title 5, §18082]**  
Parents must attend a certification appointment to submit all required documentation to establish eligibility and need for the program. Once eligibility and need are determined, parents complete an application and other required paperwork and review program requirements, policies, and regulations.

**Re-certification [Title 5, §18103] (Not applicable to part-day CSPP)**  
After initial certification, families must be recertified for services as follows:

- Families receiving services because the child is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation must be recertified at least once every six (6) months;
- Families receiving services because of actual abuse, neglect or exploitation must be recertified at least every six (6) months at which time TCOE-ECE and C4QC require documentation that the family is participating in a protective services plan in accordance with the requirements of the local county welfare department, child protective services unit;
- All other families must be recertified at least once each fiscal year and at intervals not to exceed twelve (12) months;
- TCOE-ECE and C4QC must update the family’s application to document continued need and eligibility and determine any change to family fees, if applicable, as follows:
  - For migrant and other seasonally employed families, the application must be updated within thirty (30) days whenever there is a change in family size or need if the need is based on training or incapacity of the parent;
  - For all other families, the application must be updated within thirty (30) days whenever there is a change in family size, income, public assistance status or need.

The requirement to update the files does not apply to families receiving services because the child is abused, neglected or exploited or at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Parents will be required to schedule a certification or re-certification if they do not bring all required documentation to the appointment. Parents will be allowed to schedule one additional time before action is taken to terminate services, if time permits.

**Notification of Changes (Title 5, §18102) – (does not apply to part day CSPP)**  
Parents are required to report to C4QC staff within five (5) calendar days if any changes in family income, family size, or the need for services. The second time a parent fails to report changes to C4QC within the required time period, the family’s services will be terminated.
Information for Parents Regarding Notifications

Approved Benefit Certification (Title 5, §18074.2) – (CAPP, C2AP, C3AP only)

Parents enrolled in AP and CalWORKs programs are issued a Notice of Action (NOA) which serves as a child care certificate showing their approved benefit level, family fees if applicable, and days and/or hours of approved child care services. Once the parent selects a child care provider, a copy of the NOA is mailed to the provider at the address on file with C4QC. Provider reimbursements are based on the NOA, cannot exceed approved benefits or Regional Market Rate Ceilings, and cannot be higher than the usual and customary rates the provider charges families who pay privately. This means the program cannot reimburse providers for: 1) care that is not approved; 2) charges that are over the Regional Market Rate ceilings; or 3) rates that are higher than those charged to non-subsidized families. Providers may collect fees not reimbursed by C4QC from the parent.

Notice of Action (Title 5, §18094, 18095, 18118, and 18119) – (does not apply to HS, EHS, or MSHS)

A Notice of Action (NOA) is issued to the parent upon approval, denial, termination, or change in services (change in family income, need, family fees, etc.) The NOA contains information regarding the action being taken. Parents should read each NOA carefully when received and contact their assigned staff person if they have questions. Parents have the right to appeal if they feel the action the program is taking is incorrect and not in accordance with regulatory requirements and program policies.

Other Notifications

TCOE-ECE and C4QC send letters and other correspondence to parents and providers throughout the year. These documents contain important information regarding required documentation, changes in services, or changes in regulations. It is extremely important that parents and providers read and review all letters and correspondence from the program in a timely manner, as many are time-sensitive and require a response.

Due Process

Due Process (Parent Appeals) (Title 5 18120)

When a parent disagrees with the action listed on a NOA, they may file a request for a hearing with the program by contacting the person listed on the back of the NOA. The deadline for filing an appeal is listed on the top right corner on the front of the NOA.

After filing the request for hearing, the intended action will be suspended, and services will continue, until the appeal process is complete, or the parent abandons the appeal. Within ten (10) calendar days of receiving a request for a hearing, the program will notify the parent of the
time and place of the hearing. The hearing shall be conducted by an administrative staff person, or "hearing officer."

The parent or parent's authorized representative is required to attend the hearing. If the parent or the parent’s authorized representative fails to appear at the hearing, it will be considered that the parent has abandoned the appeal. Only persons directly affected by the hearing shall be allowed to attend. The program will arrange for an interpreter at the hearing if one is requested by the parent.

The hearing officer will explain the legal, regulatory, or policy basis for the intended action to the parent. During the hearing, the parent will have an opportunity to explain the reason(s) they believe the program’s decision was incorrect. The program’s staff will present any material facts omitted by the parent.

Within ten (10) days after the hearing, the hearing officer will mail or deliver a written decision to the parent.

**Termination of Services**

**Reasons that services with TCOE-ECE or C4QC may be terminated include:**

- No longer meeting eligibility and/or need requirements.
- Excessive absenteeism, or over use of allowable absences.
- Failure to report changes in income, employment, training, incapacity, hours services are needed, family size, or any other changes that may affect family eligibility within required timelines. (Full day only)
- Failure to provide all required documents requested by the TCOE-ECE or C4QC staff.
- Evidence of intentional misrepresentation of information provided to TCOE-ECE or C4QC for the purpose of receiving services.
- Failure to comply with the requirements and policies in this document, or any law, rule or regulation, guideline, or directive established by the Federal Government, the State of California, or the California Department of Education.
- Physical or verbal abuse of a Tulare County Office of Education employee, such as making threats, using obscenities, or inflicting physical harm.

**Selecting a Provider**

When selecting provider, whether a center, family child care home, or child care provider, parents should gather information on all options available to them and make a decision that meets their individual needs and those of their child. There are several ways to do this.
Resource and Referral Services (R&R) has knowledgeable, caring staff who will explain the different types of providers and answer any questions you have about what each option has to offer your child and family. They can provide information on the California Community Care Licensing website, the TrustLine and criminal background check requirements for California, and other health and safety issues, including a checklist of what to ask potential providers. Staff will work with you to develop an individual child care plan to meet your needs based on what you want for your child. This plan may include only one type of provider, or depending on your circumstances, a combination of providers and programs.

In addition to helping parents select a provider, R&R offers information and education on a variety of topics of interest to parents, as well as training and technical assistance for providers. For more information call (559) 651-0185 or toll-free (855) 634-3193. You can also access information on their website at http://www.tcoe.org/RandR.

Tulare County Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) – placing an application on the CEL puts your child on the required eligibility lists for the programs offered by TCOE-ECE and C4QC. CEL staff will provide information about the different program options and areas where they are located. Based on the information you provide and your preferences, CEL staff will indicate the program(s) and provider(s) you are interested in when adding your application to the list.

C4QC Centralized Eligibility and Enrollment Team staff determines eligibility and enroll children for all TCOE-ECE and C4QC programs, as well as maintain an ongoing relationship with parents to determine continued eligibility as required by Head Start and the California Department of Education. Staff will provide information about the eligibility and need requirements for each program, general information about what each has to offer, and help parents find the options that work best for them.

Program Policies

Parent/Volunteer Code of Conduct

It is the policy of the Tulare County Early Childhood Education (TCOE-ECE) Program to provide a safe workplace and environment for employees, families and children enrolled in its programs and to establish high standards of operation. In order to ensure that TCOE-ECE programs support these standards, parents, staff, and community members must agree to uphold the following principles and practices:

All employees, parents, families, and volunteers must abide by the following standards of conduct:

1. Respect and promote the unique identities of all children and families;
2. Treat all staff/employees with respect;
3. Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and other employees;
4. Never leave children unsupervised or unattended;

5. Positive methods of child guidance will be used. Engaging in corporal punishment, emotional, or physical abuse, or humiliation is prohibited; additionally, methods of discipline that involve isolation without adult supervision, the use of food as punishment or reward, and the denial of basic needs are not to be utilized.

The Parent/Volunteer Standard of Conduct will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Parents or family members will address their own child’s misbehavior at program functions in positive ways. No physical or verbal punishment is allowed at Head Start and Child Care functions or in classrooms.

2. Parents/Volunteers will direct all concerns regarding other children at a Head Start and Child Care function or classroom to staff immediately. It is never appropriate for a parent or family member to discipline another family’s child at a program function or in a classroom.

3. Parents/Volunteers will treat Head Start and Child Care staff members with respect, and follow agency policy regarding disagreements or concerns. If a parent, family member or volunteer has an issue or concern regarding incidents that occurred at the center or during a home visit, they should contact their child’s teacher after class or the home educator. If the concern is not resolved, the supervisor should be notified. Confidentiality will be maintained in all discussions involving children, parents, caregivers, volunteers, and staff members.

4. If a parent or family member has a disagreement or problem with another parent or family member, that problem will be addressed with respect following program protocol. It is never appropriate for a parent or family member to threaten anyone during a program function. This includes the use of inappropriate or negative remarks, body language, or eye contact.

5. The Tulare County Office of Education—Early Childhood Education provides smoke-free environments. Buildings, playgrounds, and all program activities are non-smoking areas. No smoking is permitted within view of children.

Inappropriate behavior by parents, guardians, and family members will be cause for termination of services. Inappropriate behavior shown towards staff, family, or children includes the following:

1. Physical harm
2. Abusive or loud language (i.e. cursing)
3. Intimidation or threatening body language (i.e. closed fist, pointing fingers)
4. Lack of cooperation (i.e. not following program rules and procedures)
5. Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Parents who appear to be impaired by drugs or alcohol will not be permitted to pick up their children. Instead staff will assist in finding alternative transportation.
6. Failure to place children in appropriate vehicle restraints as required by California law.
7. Any form of harassment, including verbal and written threats (including social media, such as Facebook).
In the event that a situation places staff, children, parents or family members at harm, TCOE-ECE reserves the right to ask the parent or family member or volunteer to leave the event or program. If the parent/family member or volunteer refuses to leave, the appropriate authorities may be called. The TCOE-ECE program may also re-evaluate the enrollment status of a family or participation in the program.

FAMILY FEE POLICY

Using the Family Fee Schedule, issued by the California Department of Education, families are assessed a flat monthly fee based on hours of certified care, income, and family size. Fees for families with unpredictable schedules are based on a four month average of certified hours of care and updated three times a year. Less than 130 hours per month = part time monthly fee. 130 or more hours per month = full time monthly fee.

When more than one child in a family is enrolled in a state subsidized program, the fee is assessed and collected based on the child who is enrolled with the greatest number of hours per month.

At enrollment, fees are effective on the first day of certified services. When a family’s fee changes due to an update or annual recertification, the new fee is effective on the first of the following month.

Invoicing and Payment

Family fees are billed monthly, in advance. Fees cannot, under any circumstances, be recalculated based on a child’s actual attendance. Invoices are mailed on or about the 12th of the month and payments are due on the last day of the month. The Tulare County Office of Education cannot control delays or other mail related issues that occur after the invoice is mailed. Parents are responsible for paying their fees by the last day of each month whether they receive an invoice or not.

Payments are accepted one of three ways: in person; by mail; or by being placed in the office drop box if the office is closed. Checks, cashier’s checks, or money orders are the only accepted method of payment. Cash, debit, and credit card payments are not accepted under any circumstances. If a personal check is returned for non-sufficient funds, all future payments must be made by money order or cashier’s check.

Credit for Fees Paid to Other Service Providers

When the program cannot meet all of a family’s needs for child care for which eligibility and need have been established, families will receive a credit for payment made for child care and development services to other service providers according to the following:

- The fee credit will be applied to the family’s next fee billing period. It does not apply to the current invoice.
- After the credit is applied to the next billing period, any remaining amount will not carry to the following billing period.
To receive the credit, families must submit copies of payment receipts for the other child care and development services within 30 days of making the payment, along with a completed *Credit for Fees Paid* form. The receipts must show the provider’s name, child name, total amount paid, date of payment, rate of payment, and dates of services provided.

**Delinquent Fees**

1. Fees are delinquent if not received in the Connections for Quality Care office within seven days after the due date.

2. When fees are delinquent, a Notice of Action is sent stating services will be terminated 19 days from the notice date. *If delinquent fees are paid in full prior to the termination date services may continue without interruption.*

3. Families may request a payment arrangement for delinquent fees. The request must be made and arrangements finalized **prior** to the termination date. A payment agreement will be sent to the family describing the terms of the arrangement. Families must meet the conditions of the payment agreement and pay current fees on time each month to avoid termination of services.

4. If fees remain unpaid by the termination date stated on the Notice of Action, child care services will end on that day.

5. Upon termination of services for nonpayment of delinquent fees, the family is ineligible for child care and development services until all delinquent fees are paid.

**Attendance Policies for Parents (CSPP, CCTR, CMIG)**

Parents enrolled in child care subsidy programs are expected to abide by program policies regarding attendance. Failure to abide by these attendance policies will result in the termination of child care services.

1. The absences listed below are considered **excused absences**:
   
   a. illness of the enrolled child or parent of the enrolled child,
   b. quarantine of the enrolled child or parent of the enrolled child,
   c. family emergency (hospitalization or death of a sibling, aunt, uncle, or grandparent; all roads to center or family care home are blocked due to fire, flood, or emergency closure),
   d. court-ordered visitations (court order must be on file with the program).

If excused absences for the reasons listed above exceed 14 consecutive days, additional documentation supporting the absence will be required.
2. Excused absences (for reasons other than listed above) that are in the best interest of the child are considered best interest days. These absences are limited to **10 days per fiscal year per child**. Best interest days that exceed the 10 day limit are considered unexcused.

3. Any absences that do not meet the criteria as either an excused absence or a best interest day are considered unexcused absences. Unexcused absences are limited to **five days per fiscal year (July-June)**. It is the parent’s responsibility to contact the program when their child is absent. If a child’s unexcused absences exceed five days per fiscal year, and the program has not been contact by the parent, a termination notice will be issued.

Parents must report all changes affecting eligibility and need to their assigned eligibility specialist with in five (5) calendar days of the change occurring (5 CCR, Section 18102). This includes, but is not limited to, changes in income (including cash aid), employment, training, incapacity, hours services are needed, family size, or any other changes that may affect family eligibility. When reported within five (5) days, if it is determined there is a change in the family’s eligibility or need, a Notice of Action will be issued indicating the change. If changes are not reported with in five (5) calendar days, a termination notice, including a description of the services the parent improperly received as a result of not reporting a change, will be issued.

**Attendance Policies for Parents (Alternative Payment and CalWORKs Programs)**

Parents enrolled in child care subsidy programs are expected to abide by program policies regarding attendance. Failure to abide by these attendance policies will result in the termination of child care services.

1. The absences listed below are considered excused absences:
   
   e. illness of the enrolled child or parent of the enrolled child,
   
   f. quarantine of the enrolled child or parent of the enrolled child,
   
   g. family emergency (hospitalization or death of a sibling, aunt, uncle, or grandparent; all roads to center or family child care home are blocked due to fire, flood, or emergency closure),
   
   h. court-ordered visitations (court order must be on file with the program).

2. Excused absences (for reasons other than listed above) that are in the best interest of the child are considered best interest days.

3. Any absences that do not meet the criteria as either an excused absence or a best interest day are considered unexcused absences.

4. **Limited Term Service Leave** is defined as time the family remains enrolled in the program, but temporarily does not have a need for child care and reimbursement is not made to the provider. If a family is placed on limited term service leave, and the
provider does not wish to provide a place for the child when the leave expires, the family will be referred to other providers. Limited Term Service Leave may be granted for the following reasons.

a. Birth and care of the newborn child of the parent.
b. Placement with the parent of a child for adoption or foster care.
c. To care for the parent’s child, spouse, or parent who has a health condition.
d. Break in employment.
e. Break in school or training.
f. Child’s visit with non-custodial parent that is not court ordered.
g. Family emergency that is expected to last more than two weeks.
h. Family vacation in excess of best interest day limit.

Limited Term Service Leaves shall not exceed 12 consecutive weeks, with the following exceptions. Leaves from employment or training shall not exceed 16 consecutive weeks if the leave is for medical or family leave, or a period when the vocational training program is not in spring, fall, or winter session. Limited Term Service Leave may be granted for any portion of the contract period in which a child is attending an Afterschool Education and Safety Program or a 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program.

If approved, the leave will begin on the date Connections for Quality Care staff received the request. Leaves will not be granted retroactively.

5. Services are provided based on the certified need of the parent(s). Parents using child care that is broadly inconsistent with the approved services listed on the most current Notice of Action will be contacted to determine if the parent’s need has changed. Broadly inconsistent is defined as a pattern of use that, if reported, would have changed the parent’s approved benefit level. Parents will not be contacted when the inconsistencies are temporary in nature and/or reflect a temporary or one-time change in the parent’s schedule.

6. Within 5 working days of receiving notification that days and hours of services recorded on submitted attendance sheets or invoices are broadly inconsistent with the parent’s certified need, Connections for Quality Care staff will contact the parent to determine if the need for care has changed.

After contacting the parent, if it is determined there is a change in the family’s eligibility or need, a Notice of Action will be issued indicating the new hours of care and the services that the parent improperly received as a result of not reporting a change. The second time a parent fails to report a change in family circumstances, a Notice of Action will be issued terminating the family’s child care services for violation of 5 CCR, Section 18102 that require a parent to report changes within five calendar days.

7. Payment to Alternate Providers: Payment to an alternate provider shall be limited to ten days per child per fiscal year. An alternate provider may be reimbursed in excess of
ten days per year based on the illness of the child if parent provides a physician’s verification.

**Policies for Completing Daily Attendance Sheets (Alternative Payment and CalWORKs Programs)**

Attendance sheets must remain at the provider’s home/facility; they are not to go home with the parent. The times the child arrived and left the provider’s care must be entered daily. All absences must be documented with the specific reason for absence. The parent and provider must sign the attendance sheet at the end of each month, declaring under penalty of perjury that all information on the document is accurate. When submitted attendance sheets do not contain all required information, appear not to be completed on a daily basis, or contain errors that make the documentation insufficient for determining care used, parents and providers will be contacted and reminded of the requirement to complete the sheets correctly on a daily basis. The third time an attendance sheet is received in the condition described above, and the parent is responsible for not meeting the requirements, a Notice of Action will be issued to the parent terminating child care services for failure to complete attendance records on a daily basis with the required information. If the provider is responsible for not meeting the requirements, the program will take action according to the policies in the *Child Care Provider Participation requirements and Policies for Reimbursement*.

Our office provides yellow pre-printed attendance sheets containing the following information to child care providers. If the provider does not receive the yellow pre-printed attendance sheets for a child they are to call (559) 651-3026.

- Child’s name
- Child’s date of birth
- Provider’s name
- Provider’s address
- Parent’s name
- Program name

Our office provides blue attendance sheets to child care providers to use for newly enrolled children. The parent and provider are responsible for completing the following information on the top of the blue attendance sheet.

- Enter month and year child care services began and ended.
- Enter legal name of the Child and Date of Birth (DOB).
- Enter legal name of the Parent.
- Provider’s name and address.
- Place a checkmark next to the program name that the child is enrolled in.

*Mail or bring completed attendance sheets to: Connections for Quality Care, 7000 Doe Ave., Suite C, Visalia, CA 93291. There is a drop box available for submitting attendance sheets during hours the office is closed.*

**Sign-In/Sign-Out Instructions:**
1. Complete one sheet for each child;
2. Times must be entered on a daily basis when dropping off and/or picking up child. Use actual time in and time out, do not round times. Circle AM or PM;
3. The specific reason for child’s absence must be written on the sign-in line for that day. For example, if the child is ill, write “Johnny is sick”. Examples of other absences reasons are: a) No work. B) Johnny stayed home with mom. C) Johnny spent day with aunt. D) Death in family – grandmother;

4. When parent has a split schedule, enter the first times in and out on the yellow attendance sheet. For second drop off and pick up enter the times in and out on a blue attendance sheet and staple it to the first sheet. The child’s name, along with the month and year of attendance, must be written on the blue attendance sheet.

**PROVIDER SECTION (to be completed by the provider only):**
The PROVIDER SECTION is for children that leave and re-enter the provider’s care, such as children who attend school. Provider enters the time out and time in.

**Licensed Providers Only:**
1. Enrollment fee – If you have an enrollment fee, enter the amount only when it’s due.
2. Non-operation day – Paid days of non-operation are limited to 10 days per fiscal year. Days of non-operation will be paid only if the days are included in the provider’s policies on file with Connections for Quality Care. Provider must write “Paid Non-Op” on the line to request reimbursement for the day.

**Provider and Parent Statements:**
The parent and the provider are required to read the statement at the bottom of the attendance sheet. The parent and the provider must sign each attendance sheet at the end of the month, or on the last day the child attends, in order to be processed for reimbursement.

**Provider Invoice:**
The provider must submit an invoice for reimbursement, which is located on the back of the attendance sheet. Provider enters the rate, rate type (hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly), and the total amount invoiced for the month, along with a full signature and the date.

**Correcting Errors:**
When errors are made on the attendance sheet, draw a line through the error. Enter the correction above or below the error and initial the correction. If the provider made the error, the provider makes the correction. If the parent made the error, the parent makes the correction. **DO NOT USE WHITE-OUT.**
Fraud Policy

Intentional misrepresentation or providing false or inaccurate information for the purposes of securing services and/or reimbursement that the family or provider is not entitled to is considered fraud. Fraud is grounds for immediate termination from the program. Examples of fraud include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to report the actual number of family members living in the household;
- Failure to report the actual gross income for the family;
- Submitting falsified documentation of income, employment, or vocational training days, hours, progress, etc.;
- Inaccurately representing family eligibility or need in any way;
- Falsifying attendance records to inaccurately document family need or increase provider reimbursement;
- Submitting attendance records when the provider is no longer providing services;

TCOE-ECE and C4QC reserve the right to verify the accuracy of any information or documentation submitted by the parent for the purpose of receiving early education or child care services. If it is determined that the parent submitted inaccurate or false information during a certification or re-certification for services, the family will immediately be terminated from the program and will be responsible for repayment to TCOE-ECE/C4QC for reimbursement made to a provider that the family was not entitled to. All information will be provided to law enforcement for investigation.

Parent Complaint Procedure

Step I.
A parent shall first discuss his/her grievance with the Supervisor. The Supervisor will address the individual’s concerns and at the same time make the Head Start Administration aware of the complaint. The complaint must be in writing and submitted to the Supervisor. All parents of enrolled children may address complaints/concerns to Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing at any time.

Step II.
If no solution is reached, the parent may take his/her grievance, which must be in writing, to the appropriate Supervisor. This must be done within ten working days from the initial complaint.

Step III.
If no solution is reached, the parent may take the grievance, which must be in writing, to the Program’s Administrator within ten working days.

Step IV.
Again, if no solution is reached, the parent may take his/her grievance, which must be in writing, to the next regular Parent Committee meeting or request that a special meeting be called.

**Step V.**
Again, if no solution is reached, the local Parent Committee must vote to take the grievance to the Countywide Program Policy Council. This must be approved by a majority vote that concurs that the grievance has merit. The appropriate Supervisor will take the grievance to the Program Policy Council. The parent needs to be present.

**Step VI.**
The Parent Committee Chairperson must contact the Program Policy Council Chairperson ten working days prior to the Program Policy Council meeting and request that the grievance be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. The Program Policy Council members will hear the grievance and make a decision at this time.

**Step VII.**
If the parent disagrees with the Program Policy Council’s decision, the parent may take the grievance, which must be in writing, to the County Superintendent within ten working days. The County Superintendent has ten working days to make a decision. The decision of the County Superintendent is final.

**Uniform Complaint Procedure**
The Tulare County Board of Education recognizes that the Tulare County Superintendent of Schools has primary responsibility for complying with applicable state and federal laws and regulations governing educational programs. The County Office of Education shall investigate complaints alleging failure to comply with such laws and/or alleging discrimination and shall seek to resolve complaints in accordance with the County Office of Education’s Uniform Complaint Procedures.