

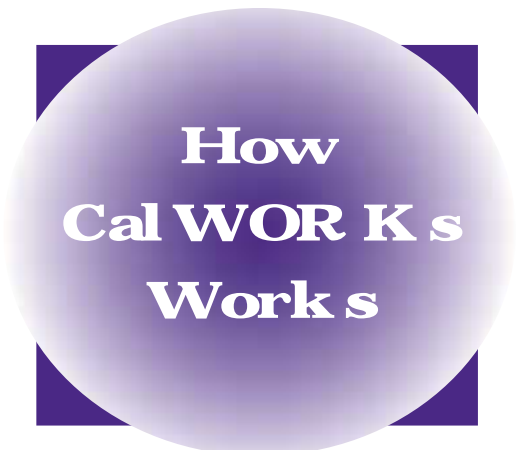
# Finding and Paying for Child Care through CalWORKs



In this booklet you will find answers to most of your questions about CalWORKs child care subsidies, which are administered in San Francisco by the Children's Council and Wu Yee Children's Services.

The first part of the booklet deals specifically with the CalWORKs child care subsidy system. The second part contains information about available child care resource and referral services. It explains how both CalWORKs participants and the general public can choose high-quality child care in San Francisco.

If you require further information or assistance, you are welcome to call a Children's Council parent support specialist at (415) 557-5782.



## How CalWORKs Works

As a CalWORKs participant, you may qualify for child care subsidies administered by the Children's Council of San Francisco and Wu Yee Children's Services. These organizations can help you find quality child care in your area and obtain child care subsidy support.

CalWORKs participants who are receiving cash aid and are involved in welfare-to-work activities are eligible to receive child care subsidies. These payments cover child care during the time parents are at work, attending school, receiving training, or engaged in other approved welfare-to-work programs, including necessary travel time.

Participants can continue receiving child care subsidies for 24 months after they stop receiving TANF cash aid, if there is a need and if their income level and work activities meet the eligibility requirements.

You'll learn more about eligibility from your CalWORKs Employment Specialist, but generally the system proceeds as follows:

- You meet with a CalWORKs employment specialist to agree upon a welfare-to-work

activity. The employment specialist will then forward an authorization document to the Children's Council of San Francisco or Wu Yee Children's Services.

- Your CalWORKs child care case is assigned to a family service specialist at Wu Yee or Children's Council. The family service specialist then contacts you to make an appointment.
- At the scheduled appointment, your family service specialist gathers your information and gives you an orientation to the child care subsidy system.
- Your CalWORKs employment specialist authorizes child care for approved welfare-to-work activities, and for the time you spend traveling to and from these activities. The subsidies are paid to a child care provider to cover your child care while you are receiving TANF cash aid and participating in your approved program.



I M P O R T A N T

- There are some income and time limits associated with subsidies, so make sure you understand the eligibility requirements and the individual welfare-to-work plan that you and your employment specialist agree upon.
- The authorization for child care subsidy covers the specific days and hours of your approved activities. If your schedule changes, or if there are any other changes in your circumstances, be sure to notify your employment specialist! The uninterrupted continuation of your child care subsidy payments may depend on it.

# Child Care Options

You can choose the kind of child care that's best for you. Subsidy payments may be made to three different kinds of providers:

1. Child care centers that are licensed by the State of California
2. Licensed family child care homes
3. License-exempt child care providers

License-exempt providers include neighbors or relatives who may care for your children in their homes or yours. License-exempt providers must apply to and clear "Trustline," a state-mandated background check which requires fingerprinting. (Grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, great-aunts and great-uncles do not have to be cleared through Trustline.)

Remember, a license is not a guarantee of child care quality. That's why it is very important for you to do your own research when looking for a child care provider. It's your child, and you make the choice!

## **Children with Special Needs**

If you are a CalWORKs participant who has a child with special needs or medical conditions, you can get the support and counseling you need to participate in welfare-to-work activities. The Child Care Inclusion Challenge Project (CCICP) can help find a child care

provider who is specially trained in caring for children with special needs. This support is available to families with special needs children 18 and younger. To reach CCICP, call (415) 469-4518.

## **Emergency Backup and Mildly Ill Child Care**

You can also receive CalWORKs support for emergency back-up care when your regular child care provider is not available—for example, if your provider is ill or if your child care center is closed for holidays or vacation. You can choose in-home or out-of-home child care.

There is also subsidized care for children who don't feel well enough to attend school or go to their regular child care, but who are not sick enough to require a parent to stay at home with them. Again, you can choose to have a provider come to your home, or bring your child to a special licensed child care facility while he or she is mildly ill. Child care is provided by registered nurses.

Both these services are free to all CalWORKs participants, but you need to pre-enroll. To do so, or to learn more about the emergency back-up or mildly ill child care programs, please call (415) 861-4284.



# Resource & Referral Services

## **Child Care Referral Line**

Child care centers  
Family child care homes  
Summer programs  
After-school programs

## **Child Care Resource Room**

Child care referral listings  
Child care referrals (English and Spanish)  
Toy lending library  
Resource library  
Free handouts and brochures  
Job listings



## **Office Locations and Phone Numbers**

### **Main Office:**

445 Church Street  
San Francisco, CA 94114  
Phone: (415) 276-2900  
Fax: (415) 392-2399

### **Bayview-Hunter's Point Office:**

1319 Evans Avenue, 2nd floor  
San Francisco, CA 94124  
Phone: (415) 970-4301  
Fax: (415) 920-3856

## **Children's Council Referral Line:**

(415) 343-3300

## **Wu Yee Referral Line:**

(415) 391-4956

## **Other Services**

### **Call the Referral Line for more information about...**

Choosing Child Care workshops

Children's Council's free newsletter,  
*Children's News*

How to become a family child care home provider

Technical assistance for child care providers

Enhanced referral services for corporate clients



## What is Resource & Referral?

Children's Council and Wu Yee Children's Services both operate Resource and Referral (R&R) departments that provide free information to families who are seeking child care. We answer questions concerning children and child care in San Francisco. If we do not know the answer to a particular question, we try to refer callers to someone who does.

The Resource and Referral Line database lists approximately 800 licensed providers. To list with us, child care providers must submit a completed application and a copy of their license. All family child care homes and centers listed with us are licensed.

However, licensing is not a guarantee of quality! It is up to you, the parent, to make sure a provider is acceptable. Before placing children in child care, we advise parents to call Community Care Licensing at **(650) 266-8843**, for detailed information on complaints and licensing violations.

**We offer referrals only, not recommendations!** The information provided about each facility or caregiver is self-reported. We

neither warrant nor guarantee any of the information or the quality of care provided. We do not screen or interview any the facilities or caregivers; it is your responsibility to do so. We support parental choice by giving you the information you need to make an informed decision.

When you call, we ask a few statistical questions and gather general information on your child care needs. We need to find out the days and hours of child care you are requesting, the age(s) of your child(ren), and the type of child care you prefer (see “Child Care Options,” on page 5, and “Choices in Child Care,” starting on page 11). Based on the zip code area where you wish to find child care, we search our database for providers that will best meet your needs. We generally offer five to seven referrals per phone call. You are free to call back as many times as you want, until your child care needs are met.

We call the providers on our list every three months to make sure our information is current and correct. We also ask providers to call us when they have openings, when they are full, or if they have other information, such as rates and hours, that need to be changed in our database.

Besides our free Resource and Referral services, we also operate a resource room with informational handouts and flyers for your reference, along with bulletin boards, books, and toys. Counselors are available for drop-in assistance.

We look forward to hearing from you and helping you with any concerns or questions you may have regarding child care in San Francisco.

# Choices in Child Care

Children's Council of San Francisco supports informed parental choice in child care. Our goal is to help you make educated choices about child care options and to become wise consumers, so that you can choose high-quality child care that best suits your individual needs.

*A note about quality:* All child care programs licensed by the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing must adhere to basic health and safety standards. However, just because a child care provider is licensed does not mean that he or she is the best solution to your child care needs. Every parent has different preferences, and every provider offers a different approach to child care. It is up to you, the informed parent, to make the best choices for yourself and your children.

Here are the main child care options and some guidelines for assessing their quality.

## **CHILD CARE CENTERS**

### **Description**

These facilities are also called day care, nursery school, preschool, or center-based programs.

Licensed child care takes place in a facility other than a home.

Programs often promote school readiness with a focus on social and self-help skills.

### **Teacher Training, Education, & Qualifications**

12 to 24 Early Childhood Education (ECE) units are required for directors and teachers.

Completion of 15-hour CPR, first aid, and health/safety training is required of at least one teacher on site.

Fingerprint and TB test clearance is required for all teachers.

### **Availability**

Privately funded and subsidized programs serve infants, preschoolers, and school-age children.

Only a small number of centers in San Francisco accept children under two years of age.

Families who meet low-income guidelines may be eligible for subsidized or sliding scale programs.

Infant and subsidized care usually requires a wait (6 to 18 months).

### **Schedule**

Centers have fixed hours of operation—usually from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.—with no flexibility.



Most do not accommodate temporary, drop-in, evening, or weekend care.

### **Capacity**

The total number of children is based upon the physical size of the facility. 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child is required.

### **Ratios**

Privately funded programs have a maximum teacher-to-infant ratio of 1:4 and teacher-to-preschooler ratio of 1:12.

Subsidized programs have a maximum teacher-to-infant ratio of 1:3 and teacher-to-preschooler ratio of 1:8.

## **FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES**

### **Description**

Licensed child care is provided by an individual in his or her home.

The environment may be an informal home setting or a more structured, center-like program.

This is the most flexible option with regard to fees and hours of operation.

### **Provider Training, Education, & Qualifications**

Completion of 15 hours CPR, first aid, and health/safety training is required.

Fingerprint and TB test clearance is required.

Completion of ECE courses is not required.

However, many providers voluntarily take ECE courses and actively participate in trainings at a local R&R agency. Caregivers are often experienced babysitters, educators, nurses, or parents.

## **Availability**

These facilities are more readily available than centers, especially for infants.

Providers set their own age range between infancy and school-age.

Most accept children aged 0–5 years, and do not have a waiting list.

## **Schedule**

Hours are usually flexible and varied.

Providers may offer temporary, back-up, drop-in, mildly ill, evening, and/or weekend care.

## **Capacity**

Licenses are issued for small and large capacities.

A small license allows 6 or 8 children; a large license allows 12 or 14.

If the provider only cares for infants, his/her maximum capacity is 4.

## **Ratios**

6 children total: No more than 3 children can be under 2 years old.

8 children total: No more than 2 children can be under 2 years old, and 2 must be 6 years or older.

12 children total: An additional caregiver must be present, and no more than 4 children can be under 2 years old.

14 children total: No more than 3 children can be under 2 years old. and 2 must be 6 years or older.

## LICENSE-EXEMPT CARE

### Description

Legal, license-exempt child care is provided in the child's or provider's home.

### Provider Training/Education

No formal training, education, or CPR/first aid certification is required of license-exempt providers, although you may choose to include these among your desired qualifications.

Trustline registry is a background check that runs provider fingerprints through the California Child Abuse Index and California Criminal History System. It is required by state law for all license-exempt providers except grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, great-aunts, and great-uncles.

### Availability

This is directly related to the amount of time and energy parents dedicate to research and interviewing.

Caregivers can be relatives (other than natural or legal parents or guardians), friends, acquaintances, or neighbors.

### Schedule

This varies depending upon the needs of the family and the availability of the provider. License-exempt providers can often accommodate non-traditional evening and weekend hours.

### Capacity

License-exempt providers may care for the child(ren) of only one family, or of an additional family providing the children are related to each other.

## HAVE A QUESTION? CONTACT US!

Children's Council of San Francisco and Wu Yee Children's Services offer a wide variety of programs that support children, families, and child care providers in San Francisco.

For more information, you are welcome to call us during regular office hours (Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.), or leave a message on our Resource and Referral Line and we will return your call.

### **CHILDREN'S COUNCIL of SAN FRANCISCO**

#### **Church Street office**

General phone: (415) 276-2900

Parent support specialist: (415) 557-5782

Resource and Referral line: (415) 343-3300

#### **Bayview-Hunter's Point office**

General phone: (415) 970-4301

Resource & Referral Line: (415) 343-3300

Website: [www.childrenscouncil.org](http://www.childrenscouncil.org)

### **WU YEE CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

General phone: (415) 391-8993

Resource & Referral Line: (415) 391-4956

Website: [www.wuyee.org](http://www.wuyee.org)