

Child Care Choices

You have the power and the privilege to choose who will care for your children. Community Connection for Child Care (CCCC) encourages every parent to choose wisely. CCCC does not make recommendations for any specific child care program, but rather provides consumer information on how to choose a child care program that best fits your needs and the needs of your children.

Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers are licensed by the State of California, Community Care Licensing Division. After you have found a provider you feel will meet the needs of your family, we encourage you to call Community Care Licensing at (559) 243-4588 to get more information about that provider.

Parents must consider many factors when choosing child care and it can be an overwhelming task. Enclosed is a checklist you may use as a tool. Please remember, this is a tool and not a definitive measure of quality. CCCC Resource & Referral Counselors are here to assist you, so do not hesitate to call (661) 861-5200. Remember, no one knows your child(ren) better than you do. If you take your time, visit several programs, use this checklist, check references, and listen to your intuition, you will have taken all the right steps towards choosing wisely.

About this checklist...

CCCC is a member of Child Care Aware (formerly National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies). This checklist is part of a guide to assist parents with choosing high quality child care. This checklist is based on research on what is important to children's health, safety, and development. Many of the indicators on this checklist go above and beyond what California State Licensing requires of licensed programs. For further information on child care resources, please visit the Child Care Aware website at www.naccrra.org or the CCCC website at www.kernchildcare.org.



...Making the Connection

www.kernchildcare.org

State and Federal Funded Child Care and Development Programs

Programs listed below are funded with state funds, federal funds, or a combination of the two. Programs subsidized with federal funds are from the Child Care and Development Fund. Families receiving subsidized child care services have a right to parental choice.

For referral to any of the programs listed below, please call Community Connection for Child Care Kern County's only Resource and Referral Agency at (661) 861-5200.

California Alternative Payment Programs (CAPP)

CAPP is a program administered by the California Department of Education and subsidized with state and federal funds. CAPP requires families (including foster) to submit an application for services and are then placed on a ranking eligibility list. Families are selected from the eligibility list as vacancies occur or funding becomes available. The ranking of the list is determined by family size and total household income not to exceed 70 percent of State Median Income.

All adults counted in the family must be either employed, seeking employment, participating in an educational institution (i.e. community college, university), vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession or profession, or incapacitated. CAPP also serve families who are homeless, families whose children are at risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation as determined by a legally qualified professional, and families whose children are receiving child protective services from the Department of Human Services. CAPP serves children 0 through 12 years of age and older with exceptional needs.

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Stage 1

CalWORKs Stage 1 child care is a program administered by the California Department of Social Services and subsidized with state and federal funds. Families (including foster) are eligible when at least one adult in the family is receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or received TANF within the past 24 months. Families must also meet income guidelines not to exceed 70 percent of State Median Income. All adults counted in the family must be either employed, seeking employment, participating in an educational institution (i.e. community college, university), approved training (i.e. vocational training), or incapacitated. Families are referred by the Kern County Department of Human Services. CalWORKs Stage 1 serves children 0 through 12 years of age and older with exceptional needs.



California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Stage 2

CalWORKs Stage 2 child care is a program administered by the California Department of Education and subsidized with state and federal funds. Families (including foster) are eligible when at least one adult in the family is currently receiving TANF, received TANF within the past 24 months, or approved through diversion services. Families must also meet income guidelines not to exceed 70 percent of State Median Income. All adults counted in the family must be either employed, seeking employment, participating in an educational institution (i.e. community college, university), vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession or profession, or incapacitated. CalWORKs Stage 2 serves children 0 through 12 years of age and older with exceptional needs.

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Stage 3

CalWORKs Stage 3 child care is a program administered by the California Department of Education and subsidized with state and federal funds. Families (including foster families) are eligible when at least one adult is a former TANF recipient or diversion service recipient and is in their 24th month of eligibility for CalWORKs Stage 1 and/or CalWORKs Stage 2. Families must also meet income guidelines not to exceed 70 percent of State Median Income. All adults counted in the family must be either employed, seeking employment, participating in an educational institution (i.e. community college, university), vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession or profession, or incapacitated. CalWORKs Stage 3 serves children 0 through 12 years of age and older with exceptional needs.

Types of Licensed Programs

California State Preschool Programs

California State Preschool Programs are administered by the California Department of Education and subsidized with state funds. Families (including foster families) are enrolled from the eligibility list and must meet state income guidelines not to exceed 70 percent of State Median Income in order to receive state preschool services. Part day and full day preschool programs are available. To receive full day/full year state preschool services, all adults counted in the family must be either employed, seeking employment, participating in an educational institution (i.e. community college, university), vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession or profession, or incapacitated. Eligibility varies by program and site. Educational curriculum is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for all enrolled children. Children that are four years old by December 2 of the school year have priority in the state preschool programs.





General Child Care and Development

General Child Care and Development programs are administered by the California Department of Education and subsidized with state and federal funds. In Kern County programs are operated in center-based settings providing educational services for children 0 through 12 years of age and older with exceptional needs. Educational curriculum is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for all enrolled children. Children are provided snacks and meals. Parents receive parent education. Families are referred to health and social service agencies.

Migrant Alternative Payment Program

Migrant Alternative Payment Programs are administered by the California Department of Education. This program serves migrant families throughout the Central Valley as they move from city to city to find employment. Families must also meet income guidelines not to exceed 70 percent of State Median Income. Migrant Alternative Payment Program serves children 0 through 12 years of age and older with exceptional needs.

Early Head Start Program Options

Early Head Start is a Federal program for pregnant women, children ages 0 to 3, and their families. Early Head Start applicants must complete an application for services and be placed on an eligibility list. Enrollment requirements include verification of family size, income, age of child, and county residence. Priority enrollments include the following:

- At least 90 percent of children enrolled meet income eligibility requirements based of Federal guidelines, receiving public assistance, in foster care, or homeless.
- At least 10 percent of children enrolled have a verified disability and Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Families meeting income eligibility requirements and over income families may apply.

Head Start

Head Start is a Federal program for children ages 3 to 5. Families applying for Head Start programs must complete an application for services and placed on an eligibility list. Enrollment requirements include verification of family size, income, age of child, and county residence. Priority enrollments include the following:

- At least 90 percent of children enrolled meet income eligibility requirements based of Federal guidelines, receiving public assistance, in foster care, or homeless.
- At least 10 percent of children enrolled have a verified disability and Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Children must be three to four years of age by December 2 of each year.
- Families meeting income eligibility requirements and over income families may apply.

Private/Non-Subsidized Child Care Centers

Child Care Centers are licensed by California State Community Care Licensing. Private/Non-subsidized child care centers are owned by non-governmental organizations or individuals and may provide religious instructions. Parents are encouraged to communicate with center directors and staff to understand the required curriculum, activities, learning philosophy, and ages of children in care.

Parents are encouraged to contact Community Care Licensing for questions or concerns about substantiated or inconclusive complaints.

Community Care Licensing
Fresno Regional Office
770 East Shaw Avenue, Suite 300, MS 29-01
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 243-4588 FAX (559) 243-8070
www.cclcd.ca.gov

Private/Non-Subsidized Family Child Care Homes

Family Child Care Homes are licensed by California State Community Care Licensing. Private/Non-subsidized family child care homes are owned by non-governmental individuals and may provide religious instructions. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the family child care provider to understand the required curriculum and ages of children in care.

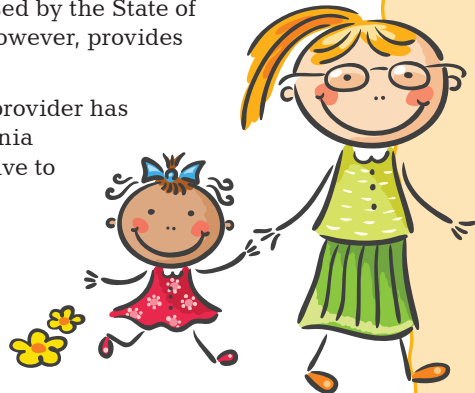
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Exempt Care

An exempt child care provider is not licensed by the State of California, Community Care Licensing. However, provides child care for 1 family.

A TrustLine registered exempt child care provider has a cleared criminal history with the California Department of Justice. TrustLine is exclusive to the State of California.



OLIVER'S LAW

Oliver's Law AB633 (Benoit) – 2006 (AKA: California Child Day Care Facilities Act)

Oliver's Law gives parents the right to access any substantiated or inconclusive complaints concerning the care of licensed child care providers (centers or family child care homes). Parents may access this information by calling Community Care Licensing at (559) 243-4588 or visiting the website at www.cclcd.ca.gov.

MEGAN'S LAW

Megan's Law HR 2137 (AKA: Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994) Language:

Megan's Law requires states under the State's sex offender registration program and under "the designated State law enforcement agency and any local law enforcement agency authorized by the State agency [to] release relevant information that is necessary to protect the public concerning a specific person required to register under this section."

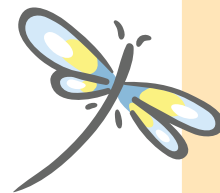
Additional information can be found at the California Department of Justice / Megan's Law website <http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/> or The Office of Justice Programs at <http://ojp.gov/smart/legislation.htm>.

www.kernchildcare.org



2000 K Street, Suite 110
Bakersfield, CA 93301
661-861-5200 • (Toll Free) 877-861-5200

*A program operated by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office
Christine Lizardi Frazier, Superintendent*



Is This the Right Place for My Child?

Make a copy of this checklist to use with each program you visit. Place a check in the box if the program meets your expectations.

WILL MY CHILD BE SUPERVISED?

- Are children watched at all times, including when they are sleeping?
- Are adults warm and welcoming? Do they pay individual attention to each child?
- Are positive guidance techniques used?
- Do adults avoid yelling, spanking, and other negative punishments?
- Are the caregiver/teacher-to-child ratios appropriate and do they follow the recommended guidelines:*

 - One caregiver per 3 or 4 infants
 - One caregiver per 3 or 4 young toddlers
 - One caregiver per 4 to 6 older toddlers
 - One caregiver per 6 to 9 preschoolers (*No more than 6 for Family Child Care Homes*)

HAVE THE ADULTS BEEN TRAINED TO CARE FOR CHILDREN?

- If a center,
 - Does the director have a degree and some experience in caring for children?
 - Do the teachers have a credential or Associate's degree and experience in caring for children?***
 - If Family child care home,
 - Has the provider had specific training on children's development and experience caring for children?
- Is there always someone present who has current CPR and first aid training?
- Are the adults continuing to receive training on caring for children?
- Have the adults been trained on child abuse prevention and how to report suspected cases?

WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO GROW AND LEARN?

- For older children, are there specific areas for different kinds of play (books, blocks, puzzles, art, etc.)
- For infants and toddlers, are there toys that "do something" when the child plays with them?
- Are there daily or weekly activity plans available? Have the adults planned experiences for the children to enjoy? Will the activities help children learn?
- Do the adults talk with the children during the day? Do they engage them in conversations? Ask questions, when appropriate?
- Do the adults read to children at least twice a day or encourage them to read, if they can read?

IS THIS A SAFE AND HEALTHY PLACE FOR MY CHILD?

- Do adults and children wash their hands (after using the bathroom, changing diapers, eating, etc.)?
- Are diaper changing surfaces cleaned and disinfected after each use?
- Do all of the children enrolled have the required immunizations?
- Are medicines labeled and out of children's reach?
- Are adults trained to give medicines and keep records of medications?
- Are cleaning supplies and other poisonous materials locked up, out of children's reach?
- Is there a plan to follow if a child is injured, sick, or lost?
- Are first aid kits readily available?
- Is there a plan for responding to disasters (fire, flood, etc.)?
- Has a satisfactory criminal history background check been conducted on each adult present?
 - Was the check based on fingerprints?
- Have all the adults who are left alone with children had background and criminal screenings?
- Is the outdoor play area a safe place for children to play?
 - Is it checked each morning for hazards before children use it?
 - Is the equipment the right size and type for the age of the children who use it?
 - In center-based programs, is the playground area surrounded by the fence at least 4 feet tall?
 - Is the equipment placed on mulch, sand, or rubber matting?
 - Is the equipment in good condition?
- Is the number of children in each group limited?
 - In family child-care homes and centers, children are in groups of no more than ***
 - 6-8 infants
 - 6-12 younger toddlers
 - 12-20 preschoolers
 - 20-24 school-agers

IS THE PROGRAM WELL-MANAGED?

- Does the program have the highest level of licensing offered by the state?
- Are there written personnel policies and job descriptions?
- Are parents and staff asked to evaluate the program?
- Are staff evaluated each year; do providers do a self-assessment?
- Is there a written annual training plan for staff professional development?
- Is the program evaluated each year by someone outside the program?
- Is the program accredited by a national organization?

DOES THE PROGRAM WORK WITH PARENTS?

- Will I be welcome any time my child is in care?
- Is parents' feedback sought and used in making program improvements?
- Will I be given a copy of the program's policies?
- Are annual conferences held with parents?

CENTER BEING EVALUATED:

NOTES:

Reference:

These questions are based on research conducted by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (<http://naccrra.org>).

***These are the adult-to-child ratios and group sizes recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Ratios are lowered when there are one or more children who may need additional help to fully participate in a program due to a disability, or other factors.*

***Individuals working in child care can earn a Child Development Associate credential.*

****Group sizes are considered the maximum number of children to be in a group, regardless of the number of adult staff.*