

*Becoming
A
Family
Child Care
Provider*



Prospective Family Day Care Provider:

We at Siskiyou Child Care Council's Resource & Referral Program are pleased that you are interested in becoming a licensed Family Day Care Provider.

We have enclosed a packet of information designed to assist you. It highlights available resources and includes information about becoming a Family Day Care Provider. Please review these materials and let us know if you have any questions.

Our Resource & Referral Program is here to assist you in the licensing process. We provide many services and training opportunities for Family Day Care Providers. Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information about the licensing process and other programs we provide.

Sincerely,

Regina Weston
Program Assistant
Resource & Referral

STEPS TO BECOMING A LICENSED DAY CARE PROVIDER (Family Day Care Home)

1. Decide if the Family Day Care Profession is for you.
2. Attend a Licensing Orientation Workshop at Siskiyou Child Care Council. The cost of the Orientation is \$25. Contact Regina Weston at 938-2748 for complete registration information.
3. Complete the application packet (obtained at time of orientation workshop).
4. Obtain TB clearance for everyone in your home 18 years of age and older.
5. Return the application packet to:

Department of Social Services
Community Care Licensing
520 Cohasset Road, Suite 6
Chico, CA 95926
(530) 895-5033

Packet includes:
Application
TB Clearance
Criminal Record Statement
Emergency and Disaster Plan/Floor Plan

****Make a photocopy of your application for your records before you send it in.**

6. Prepare your home to meet health and safety requirements. Once your application is received you will receive a packet from Community Care Licensing that will have your paperwork for fingerprinting. Anyone in the home 18 or older must be fingerprinted.
7. Await your site visit by the Licensing Evaluator. The evaluator calls you to set up the site visit. Licensing must approve or deny your application within 30 days of receipt of the licensing packet.

SISKIYOU CHILD CARE COUNCIL RESOURCE & REFERRAL PROGRAM

SERVICES TO PARENTS

- * Referrals to licensed and license-exempt child care providers
- * Distribution of child care related information
- Referrals to crisis hot-lines, social service agencies, health care resources, and parent support groups
- * Use of the Toy and Resource Lending Library

SERVICES TO PROVIDERS

- * Technical assistance throughout the licensing process
- * Trainings such as pediatric CPR; pediatric first aid; activities for young children; nutrition; health and safety; child development; and business management
- * Networking support
- * Option of participating in the Child Care Food Program
- * Use of the Toy and Resource Lending Library

SERVICES TO COMMUNITY

- * Presentation to community, parents, and professional groups
- * Involvement with interagency committees
- * Advocates for children and families
- * Provide updates on child care legislation

WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE?

A family day care provider is best described as a person who has a small child care business in her own home. Family day care providers represent the largest group of child care providers in the country.

Anyone who cares for children in their own home is required by law to become licensed unless the children are related to the provider or are the children from only one family. There are two types of family day care licenses. A regular license allows a provider to take care of six to eight children in the home including the provider's own children under 10 years of age. Experienced providers with an assistant can obtain a license to care for twelve to fourteen children.

Licensing requirements insure that a home has met State safety requirements, that every child in the home has a T.B. clearance, and that no adult in the home has a criminal record or history of child abuse.

Each family child care program is unique. Some providers offer programs that include a variety of art, music, and other developmentally appropriate activities. Other providers treat their day care children like an extended part of the family and have them participate in the same events at their own children, like walking to the park, grocery shopping, music lessons, etc. Persons interested in finding a family day care home for their children should talk with several providers about the program that they offer, taking the same care in the selection of a family day care home as they would with any child care center. Each family day care provider has his/her own strengths and weaknesses. Parents should take time to find the provider who offers what they feel would best meet the needs of their own children.

Being a good family day care provider means being a child care specialist, a reliable small business owner, and a parent counselor. Family day care provides a vital community service by creating a safe and caring place for children to develop while their parents are at work. This is a specialized business and is only now beginning to receive the recognition it deserves.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN GETTING LICENSED?

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- You must be 18 years of age or older.
- You must attend an orientation session put on by the Department of Social Services to get an application package. Orientations are held online or at Siskiyou Child Care Council.
- You will be asked to submit your fingerprints for a criminal records check. Every adult living in your household must also have their fingerprints taken and submitted for review.
- You and any adult living in your household must also have a test for tuberculosis and proof of clearance.
- You will be asked to submit proof of 15 hours of health training. The training includes pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), pediatric first aid, and preventative health practices.
- You must notify your property owner/landlord of your intent to provide child care and provide written proof of this notification to the licensing agency.
- If you own your home, you must provide proof of ownership to the licensing agency. If you rent or lease you must provide a copy of your lease or rental agreement.
- If you are applying for a license to care for 8 or 14 children, you must obtain written consent to provide child care from the property owner/landlord and provide written proof of this consent to the licensing agency.
- You will be asked to fill out an application for a license. When all the paperwork is complete, a home visit will be made by a licensing analyst who will conduct a health and safety inspection of the home.
- The entire process takes between two and four months. The purpose of a license is to ensure that the provider's home meets state health and safety standards. A family child care license is only good in the home of the provider who is licensed. This means that they cannot legally use their child care license to provider care in the parent's home. It also means that every time a provider moves, they must be re-licensed. A family child care license is not required when a provider cares for one family's child or children in addition to their own children, or a relative's child or children.

- Licenses are kept current by payment of an annual licensing fee. If payment is not made, the license is subject to suspension.
- Currently, the application fee for licensing a small family day care home is \$66 and for a large family daycare home is \$127. The license will not expire, but an annual fee of \$66 or \$127 will be assessed.
- With annual payment of fees, the license is in force and current unless or until revoked.
- If a complaint is filed, licensing will investigate through an unannounced visit as soon as possible or within ten days.

In order to obtain a large family day care home license, the provider must complete all the requirements for license for six and:

- Have one year experience as a licensed small family child care home. This requirement may be waived if the licensing agent determines that the applicant has sufficient qualifying experience.
- The applicant must have an assistant (at least 14 years old).
- If you are increasing/applying for a license to care for 8 or 14 children, you must notify each parent in care that you will be providing care for additional children. This notification must be in writing and signed by the parent.

GETTING STARTED IN FAMILY DAY CARE

Starting a family daycare service is not just a matter of rules and regulations. It's a very personal decision, which will affect your home and family, and perhaps your neighborhood.

Factors to consider

Talk to other providers, visit their homes, and think a bit more about it. A good way to try out this kind of work is to assist or substitute in another home.

Many people find it helpful to keep a list of all of their questions and concerns over a period of time and then to talk with other providers about them.

Your family

Families have different ways of bringing child care into their homes. Sometimes every person in the house is an important member of the home child care family.

In other families, one person is the provider, and others in the family are not very involved with the program. Often some of the family's rooms are closed off to the child care children, and equipment is stored out of sight after they leave.

Although it is difficult to offer a program in your home if others in your family are not supportive, it can be done if careful attention is given, and action is taken, to deal with problems when they arise.

Before you decide to begin a home child care program, you should talk frankly with each member of your household about your plans, how their lives will be affected, how they can help and support you, and about what they would like from you in return. Sometimes a provider neglects this important step, goes to the effort of starting a program, and then changes her mind because it does not work for her family. Be sure that everyone in your family will at least try to accept your decision, if not actively support you.

It is also important for you to think about what limits you want to set to keep your work from spilling over too much into your family and personal life. Your spouse or other household members may be concerned about the children's comings and goings, phone calls after hours, clutter, and noise, being asked to help with the children or the income tax forms, and you being more tired than you used to be. Your children may be worried about whether you will still have enough time and love for them when they see you caring for other children.

All family members should have individual private space where the children in your care will not disturb their things.

Your children

Many people considering family day care as a profession are parents who see this as a way to be at home with their own children. Starting a program will bring change to your children's lives, just as your starting a new job would. There will be a period of adjustment, feelings to cope with, and perhaps behavioral changes to consider.

Developmental stages: Consider the specific ages and developmental needs of your own children, and how your work with other children will relate to what they are already experiencing. If you have a new baby, you may want to wait until the baby is settled and you know her or his routines before you introduce new ones. A 2-year old who is not ready to share toys will do better if there are plenty of duplicate toys. A 4-year old intent on self-fulfillment may not like the new rules and will need well-timed, careful explanations and reminders. Teen-agers used to roaming freely through the house need to know your expectations for how they should interact with the children in your care.

Communication: Make sure your children know your expectations, and your rules and limits are clear. Anticipate any confusing surprises, and discuss them ahead of time.

Feeling special: Sometimes your children will resent it when you are tending to one of the other children. Try and find way to let your child know that he or she is special to you, while avoiding making the other children feel neglected. If your child is old enough to understand, you can explain that child care makes it possible for you to stay at home, and that you have more time together this way than if you worked any place else. Also the extra money you will be bringing in will allow for family purchases. Resentment can sometimes be turned into cooperation if you find a special job for your child: welcoming the other children and parents, entertaining the baby while you cook, or passing out the clay.

Practical considerations: Think ahead about problems that will arise. What will you do if your own child becomes ill? What about summer vacations, and other days when school will be closed? How can you assure a family vacation time?

Most providers find it best to set aside some toys for their own children and some that belong to everybody. If you rotate toys every so often, your child can set aside a few toys for private use each time.

Children are often concerned that your care of other children will crowd them out. Make sure your children have some space of their own, and that they can control who goes there.

Establish a daily special time with each of your own children, and be consistent in making sure that it happens.

WHAT TO DO WHILE WAITING FOR YOUR LICENSE

1. Take care of required changes in your home to meet licensing regulations.
2. Inquire about Liability Insurance.
3. Decide what ages of children you are willing to care for (there is a BIG need for infant and school age care as well as evenings and weekends!)
4. Prepare a Contract and develop Day Care Rules for Parents & Children. (Examples can be obtained from Siskiyou Child Care Council.)
5. Contact Siskiyou Child Care Council to find out information about the California Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) grant that provides funding for costs associated with getting licensed.
6. Plan for children's daily activities.
7. Attend workshops and other events sponsored by Siskiyou Child Care Council.
8. Contact Siskiyou Child Care Council or other providers for questions regarding setting fees and policies.
9. Prepare your home environment for kids and obtain toys, playground equipment and other necessary resources. (Be sure to check out our Toy & Resource Lending Library!)
10. Attend Infant and Pediatric CPR, First Aid Training and Health & Safety classes to meet the 15 hours of mandated training.

AFTER YOU ARE LICENSED

- * Call Siskiyou Child Care Council to be added to our referral files and to sign up for the Child Care Food Program.
- * Advertise your program.
- * Open you home and your heart to your family day care business and enjoy!
- * Continue to learn about your PROFESSION through classes, workshops, readings, and networking with other child care providers...and call us ANYTIME you need assistance

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO MARKET YOUR FAMILY DAY CARE PROGRAM

STEP 1: Create a scrapbook to show prospective parents. Include materials that explain your policies, daily schedule (activities, menus) and other items such as your letter of agreement or contract, fee schedule and a list of resources (books, night time baby-sitters).

STEP 2: Think about the knowledge and skills you have. Let people know about your credentials. Share information about the training you have received (such as First Aid, CPR, and child development classes), the degrees or certificates you have earned, your affiliations (such as a local association or support group), your state-issued license and evidence of participation in the Child Care Food Program. The fact that you may be a mother or grandmother is also very important to perspective clients.

STEP 3: Remind friends and family that you are a family day care provider and would be happy to talk with others about the services you provide. Get a business card and spread it around.

STEP 4: Inform individuals and organizations that have contact with prospective clients about your services. Childbirth instructors, the PTA, YMCA, scout groups, elementary school counselors and secretaries, social service agencies, hospitals, churches etc. Other providers (both family day care and center-based) whose programs are full are also good sources for referral.

STEP 5: Hold an open house, a coffee party, or sponsor an event for current and prospective clients. Your current clients are probably your biggest fans. They will help advertise you and your program to others and will enjoy the open house or special event as well. Design a business card and carry it at all times, so you can pass it out whenever people are interested in your program.

STEP 6: Offer to speak at association meetings and functions in your community. You might speak on a specific topic or just inform the association's members about who you are and what you do.

STEP 7: Advertise your name and telephone number in the phone book, the local paper, on bulletin boards, and through your local child care resource & referral agency. Another important free advertising resource is social media such a Facebook. Please make sure to include your license number when advertising.

STEP 8: Design a logo with the name of your program (or let the children do it!) and have it printed on t-shirts, knapsacks or diaper bags, stickers and buttons. Once artwork is created it can be used in many ways. You can use your logo on flyers and on your business cards too. You might go to a community college or high school graphics arts department for student assistance in creating your logo.