

# Parent Guide

Fiscal Year 2023-24



*Improving the Lives of Families through Child Care Services,  
Research and Advocacy*



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## Welcome

Welcome to Crystal Stairs, Inc. (Crystal Stairs). This Parent Guide is to provide you with information regarding our Subsidized Child Care Programs, funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

Crystal Stairs began with a simple idea: change is possible. As a professor at UCLA, Dr. Karen Hill-Scott, Ed.D. envisioned an organization that would provide services to the Los Angeles community that would have a positive, measurable impact on child and family development.

While our services have evolved over the years, our commitment to your success and to your child's growth and development remains the same. We strive to provide you with high quality services and invite you to contact us anytime you or your family needs help or assistance.

This Parent Guide will help you understand and get the most from your child care services. The guide, based on Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, outlines the rights, responsibilities, and requirements of parents who participate in CDSS funded child care programs.

Please read and review this guide and use it to find answers to questions you may have about your child care services. It is important to remember that any of the information in this guide may change as the State of California changes its child care statutes and regulations. When changes are made, you will be notified in writing. Please keep those letters with this manual. If any part of this guide is unclear, please contact your Family Services Specialist and ask for clarification. You are responsible for following the rules and regulations outlined in this guide.

We look forward to serving you and your family's child care needs.

## About Crystal Stairs

Crystal Stairs is one of the largest private, nonprofit child care services agencies in California. Our mission is to improve the lives of families through child care services, research, and advocacy.

We are proud to serve the South Los Angeles community, including the cities of South Los Angeles, Inglewood, Hawthorne, Lawndale, Compton, Gardena, Long Beach, Lakewood, Bellflower, Carson, Vernon, Paramount, Cerritos, and surrounding areas.

Crystal Stairs offers the following Subsidized Child Care Programs:

- Alternative Payment Programs (APP) also known as voucher based programs:
  - California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)
  - CalWORKs Stage 1, CalWORKs Stage 2 (C2AP), and CalWORKs Stage 3 (C3AP)
- Resource and Referral Program
- Head Start/Early Head Start/ State Preschool Program
- Community Voices Advocacy Program
- Parent Support Services Program
- Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children
- Health Outreach Services

## Our Offices

Crystal Stairs has two office locations:

### **CRYSTAL STAIRS MAIN OFFICE**

5110 W. Goldleaf Circle, Suite 150  
Los Angeles, CA 90056-1282  
Phone: (323) 299-8998  
Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### **CRYSTAL STAIRS LONG BEACH OFFICE**

4300 Long Beach Blvd., Suite 420  
Long Beach, CA 90807  
Phone: (323) 421-1090  
Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Crystal Stairs also has four co-locations inside offices of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). Co-location hours are from 8:00 am to 5 pm, Monday – Friday:

### **CENTURY**

5200 W. Century Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
Phone: (424) 414-5017

### **EXPOSITION**

3833 S. Vermont Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90037  
Phone: (323) 730-6013

### **FLORENCE**

1740 E. Gage Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90001  
Phone: (323) 923-6399

### **RANCHO DOMINGUEZ**

2959 E. Victoria St.  
Rancho Dominguez, CA 90221  
Phone: (310) 603-7198



## Holidays Observed

CDSS Case Management Department is closed on the following holidays this Fiscal Year 2023-2024:

- **Independence Day:** Tuesday, July 4, 2023
- **Labor Day:** Monday, September 4, 2023
- **Thanksgiving Break:** Thursday, November 23, 2023 & Friday, November 24, 2023
- **Holiday Break:** Monday, December 25, 2023 – Monday, January 1, 2024
- **Martin Luther King Holiday:** Monday, January 15, 2024
- **Presidents Day:** Monday, February 19, 2024
- **Cesar Chavez Day:** Monday, April 1, 2024
- **Memorial Day:** Monday, May 27, 2024
- **Juneteenth:** Wednesday, June 19, 2024

### Contacting Our Crystal Stairs Staff During a Holiday

If you contact our staff during a holiday, when you leave a voice message, you can expect your call to be returned within two business days. If you do not receive a call within two business days, please call (323) 299-8998 and ask to speak with the staff's supervisor.

## Crystal Stairs Programs

The Alternative Payment Program, also known as voucher based programs serve eligible families who need child care services and provides support to parents and providers. This parental choice subsidy program helps families arrange child care services and make payment for those services directly to the child care provider.

Families may choose from: Center-Based Care, Family Child Care Homes, and License Exempt Care.

Our Family Service Specialists will make every effort in assisting and making the certification/ recertification process convenient for families. If you have any questions about the services we offer or need help with child care subsidy programs, please call one of the numbers below or stop by one of our office locations.

**Crystal Stairs Customer Service Center**  
**(323) 299-8998**

**Family Services Enrollment Department**  
**(323) 421-1028**

**Stage 1 Case Management**  
**(323) 421-1028 (EN) & (323) 421-1038 (SP)**

**Resource & Referral Department**  
**(877) 543 - 7247**

## CalWORKs Child Care Program

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Child Care Program is managed by the California Department of Social Services in three stages for children through age 12 or children up to age 21 with an exceptional need or severely disabled.

### CalWORKs Stage 1 Program

The CalWORKs Stage 1 Program is administered by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). Families qualified for Stage 1 must be referred to Crystal Stairs by DPSS. For more information, please contact the Los Angeles Department of Social Services or visit <https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/jobs/childcare.html>

### CalWORKs Stage 2 Alternative Payment (C2AP)

Once families on CalWORKs cash aid are determined to be stable, or when parents are discontinued from cash aid, they are transferred to Stage 2 Child Care. Families are eligible to receive C2AP child care services if they meet the program eligibility and need requirements. Families are admitted through a referral from DPSS or by contacting Crystal Stairs at (323) 421-1028.

### CalWORKs Stage 3 Alternative Payment (C3AP)

C3AP is available for eligible families transitioning from Stage 1 or C2AP. After families have been off cash aid within 24 months but prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> month, they are

transferred to C3AP. Families may ONLY enter C3AP through transfer from Stage 1 or C2AP.

### **California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)**

CAPP is available for eligible low-income families who are not on CalWORKs. Our Enrollments Division has enrollment specialist who prioritize the families most in need of child care including families who are involved in the child welfare system or at risk of child welfare involvement to receive child care. Families are then prioritized based on their income, with families with the lowest gross income receiving priority for enrollment.

Enrollment into CAPP depends on available funding.

If you are a family enrolled on one of the Child Care Programs and have questions or concerns about your services or current Child Care arrangements, you may contact your assigned Family Service Specialist. A Family Services Specialist will be appointed upon the family's enrollment.

### **Child Care Resource and Referrals (R&R)**

The Resource and Referral (R&R) Department serves as a center of information for our parents. R&R provides information about child care referrals and parent resources. Our goal is to help you understand your child care. The R&R Department provides parents with information about child care options. R&R can help you find:

- Licensed Family Child Care Home,
- Child Care Centers, or
- Before/afterschool care programs in your area.

This information is free and available to you, regardless of income. For more information, please call:

- **Child Care Resource and Referral Information Line: (888) 543-7247**, *Hours of Operations: Monday – Thursday 9:00 am–4 pm and Friday 9:00 am–2 pm*
- OR**
- **Obtain access to child care referrals 24 hours a day by visiting:**  
[www.crystalstairs.org](http://www.crystalstairs.org)

After you speak with an R&R representative, you will receive a packet by mail. This packet contains child care brochures and a checklist you can use when visiting child care locations.

## Community Voices

Strengthens parent leadership, civic engagement and ability to create systemic change in child care through advocacy efforts. For more information, please call (323) 421-2628.

## Health Outreach Program

Provides enrollment into free or low-cost health care systems as well as community resources to improve the overall health and well-being of children and their families. For more information, please call (323) 299-9295.

## Head Start, State Preschool & Early Head Start Programs

Provides quality early learning and preschool along with family services that support the enhancement of the overall family development, which includes health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities, and family support services for children 0 – 5 years old. For more information, please call (323) 421-1100.

## Parent Support Services Program (PSSP)

The PSSP provides essential resources and enhanced support services for parents to assist them in strengthening their families and reaching greater self-sufficiency. We are devoted to parent education and the growth and development of children. The R&R Department provides referrals to a wide selection of community-based support services. Each is designed to help our families thrive. Some of the available services we refer are:

- Child Care
- Adult Training and Education
- Financial Planning
- Health and Health Care
- Food and Nutrition
- Housing
- Parenting Classes
- Safety Classes
- Aid for Children with Special Needs
- Community Events
- Resource Centers for many other needs and topics

For more information, please call (323) 421-2628.

## Admission & Enrollment to Child Care Subsidy Program

To apply for child care services, contact the Enrollment Department at (323) 421-1028. The Enrollment Department will determine your family's eligibility for child care services.

If funding is available, families eligible for CalWORKs and CAPP funded programs will start the enrollment process.

To enroll in one of the CDSS funded Programs, families must:

- Establish a basis of eligibility for receiving child care services.
- Have a determined need for those services.
  - Children are eligible to receive child care services if they are:
    - Under the age of 13 or
    - 13 to 21 years of age with exceptional needs who have a School IEP AND a letter/note by a legally qualified health professional that includes a statement that the child requires the special attention of adults in a child care setting.
- In addition to the other eligibility requirements, the child must live in the State of California while services are being received.
- Families experiencing homelessness may submit a declaration of intent to reside in California.

Families not eligible for CalWORKs funding will be placed on the agency CareWait eligibility wait list for the CAPP program. Families are placed here until CAPP funding becomes available for enrollment. When funding is available, the family will be contacted based on rank. Please make sure to keep your contact information up to date by calling (323) 421-1028.

Families on the wait list will be contacted according to the enrollment priorities as follows:

1. First Priority is given to children who are a recipient of child protective services through the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or children who are at risk of abuse or neglect, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency.
2. Second Priority is given to families with the lowest total monthly income in relation to family size:
  - a. If two families have the same rank, the family that has a child with exceptional needs will be enrolled first.
  - b. If children have no exceptional needs, the family in which the primary home language is a language other than English shall be enrolled

first.

- c. If there is no family that meets either criteria above, the family that has been on the wait list the longest will be enrolled first.

After you have been rescreened and found eligible for CalWORKs funding or selected from the agency wait list for the CAPP funding, you will be scheduled for an Initial Certification appointment with a Family Services Specialist. In this appointment, you will learn about the program rules and complete applicable forms. This includes an APPLICATION FOR SERVICES: Confidential Application for Child Development Services and Certification of Eligibility. The Family Services Specialist will collect necessary documents from you and help you complete applicable forms.

After your appointment, the Family Services Specialist will review the information on the APPLICATION FOR SERVICES form and the requested documentation to approve or deny child care services. If you are determined eligible and the information is true and correct, the Family Services Specialist will complete your certification.

Upon establishing initial eligibility, you will remain eligible & receive services for not less than 12 months on the C2AP program or 24 months on the CAPP Program. You will receive information about the maximum benefit level amount. This is the amount of money that Crystal Stairs can repay a child care provider.

Child care providers will only be paid for child care hours approved by Crystal Stairs.

You may select a child care provider with rates higher than your approved maximum benefit level, however, Crystal Stairs will only pay up to the appropriate Regional Market Rate. Any remaining balance not paid by Crystal Stairs will be your responsibility. For more information, please see *Limits on Child Care Reimbursements*.

If services are denied, you will be mailed a Denial of Services Notice of Action. It will include the date services were denied, the reason for denial, and your appeal rights.

You may be able to restart the enrollment process if you were denied for missing appointments, not completing the APPLICATION FOR SERVICES, or if your eligibility status changes. For more information, please contact the Enrollment Department by calling (323) 421-1028.

## Determining Eligibility

Families must be determined eligible to receive subsidized child care services. Families may receive services if they meet one or more of the following eligibility criteria:

- **Child Protective Services (CPS) or At-Risk** means children receiving child protective services through the local county welfare department as well as children identified by a legal, medical, social service agency or emergency shelter as abused, neglected or exploited, or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- **Current Aid Recipient (CalWORKs Cash Aid Recipient)** means an adult or minor teen parent currently receiving cash aid from the county welfare department for the CalWORKs or Cal-Learn program. Proof of current aid is required.
- **Homelessness** means children and youth that lack a fixed, regular & adequate night residence including sharing housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship; living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping; living in an emergency or transitional shelter; living in a car, park, abandoned hospital or buildings, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar settings where primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place is not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation.
- **Means-Tested Government Program:** A family who has a member of its household who is certified to receive benefits from the following means-tested government programs:
  - Medi-Cal
  - CalFresh
  - California Food Assistance Program
  - California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC)
  - CalWORKs (child only cash aid)
  - The Federal Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
  - Head Start
  - Early Head Start
- **Income Eligible** means families with an adjusted monthly gross income at or below 85% of the state median income, adjusted for the family as applicable to the Schedule of Income Ceilings identified by the California Department of Social Services State Median Income (SMI) and Income Ranking Table for Fiscal year (FY) 2023-24. See the below for a copy of the State FY 2023-24 Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent of SMI). The current Schedule of Income Ceilings can also be

found at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov>.

### Schedule of Income Ceilings (85 percent of SMI)

Family Size	Family Monthly Countable Income	Family Annual Income
1-2	\$6,128	\$73,536
3	\$6,931	\$83,172
4	\$8,025	\$96,300
5	\$9,309	\$111,708
6	\$10,593	\$127,116
7	\$10,834	\$130,008
8	\$11,074	\$132,888
9	\$11,315	\$135,780
10	\$11,556	\$138,672
11	\$11,797	\$141,564
12	\$12,037	\$144,444

## Documentation of Family Eligibility

At the time of certification and recertification, families must provide documentation of eligibility in one or more of these eligibility categories:

Type of Eligibility	Required Documentation and/or Verification
Child Protective Services (CPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>A written referral</b> dated within 6 months from the local welfare department certifying that the child is receiving child protective services &amp; that child care &amp; development services are a necessary component of the child protective services plan</li> <li>▪ Documentation of Monthly Income (if a fee waiver request was not included in the referral)</li> </ul>
Child At-Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>A written referral</b> dated within 6 months from a legally qualified professional in a legal, medical, or social services agency stating that the child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and that child care &amp; development services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk.</li> <li>▪ Documentation of monthly income (if a fee</li> </ul>

Type of Eligibility	Required Documentation and/or Verification
	waiver request was not included in the referral)
A current aid recipient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Documentation of public cash assistance</li> </ul>
Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>A written referral</b> from a legal, medical, or social service agency, a local educational liaison for homeless children &amp; youths, a HeadStart program, or an emergency/transitional shelter OR</li> <li>▪ <b>A written parental declaration</b> that the family is experiencing homelessness</li> <li>▪ Documentation of Monthly Income</li> </ul>
<p>Receiving Benefits from a means-tested Governmental Program:            CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, CalFresh, California Food Assistance, California Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation, Head Start or Early Head Start</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrollment Documentation in any of the means-tested governmental programs (Example: Notice of Action   Receipt of Aid   Verification of Benefits) <b>AND</b></li> <li>▪ Copy of Governmental Program Application <b>OR</b></li> <li>▪ If not available, a Self-Declaration of Income as declared on the governmental program application.</li> </ul>
Income Eligible (85% SMI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Guardian or Foster Parent(s):</b> Documentation of Monthly Income (For child and their related siblings)</li> <li>▪ <b>Biological/Adoptive Parent(s):</b> Documentation of Monthly income from all sources for all parents counted in the family size               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regular &amp; Steady Income: Total countable income from either month of the 2-month window immediately preceding certification</li> <li>○ Fluctuating or Inconsistent Income: Total countable income from 12</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Type of Eligibility	Required Documentation and/or Verification
	<p>months immediately preceding certification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Authorization to Release Employment Information (if applicable) AND</li><li>▪ Parental Notification: Requirement to Report Income Over Threshold</li></ul>

## Documenting Need for Child Care Services

Eligible families must show that every adult in the household meets one of the needs required for child care services. All qualifying needs are listed below:

Type of Need	Required Documentation and/or Verification
Employed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment Verification – signed Authorization to Release Information that includes the employer’s name, address, telephone number, and usual business hours.</li> <li>▪ Pay check stubs that include the hours worked for the pay period or</li> <li>▪ A written statement from employer indicating the days and hours of employment</li> </ul>
Seeking Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seeking Employment Self- Declaration form that includes Parent(s) general plan to secure, change, or increase employment.</li> <li>▪ Note: Services for seeking employment is limited to no more than 5 days a week and less than 30 hours per week.</li> </ul>
Self-Employed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-Employment Declaration Form that includes the employment description and estimated days/hours worked per week</li> <li>▪ AND as many of the following <b>supporting documentation</b>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ appointment logs</li> <li>○ client receipts</li> <li>○ job logs</li> <li>○ mileage logs</li> <li>○ a list of clients with contact information</li> <li>○ business license, workspace lease or rental agreement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Employed in the Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statement of Duties</li> <li>▪ Specify the type of work, requirements, and ages of children in need of child care services, If Children are over 5, list their specific child care needs (if applicable).</li> </ul>
Employed at a Large Family Day Care Home (When the child Attends the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A copy of the facility license indicating it is a large family day care home.</li> <li>▪ A signed statement from the employer (child care provider) indicating the parent works as an aide.</li> </ul>

Type of Need	Required Documentation and/or Verification
same Facility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pay check stubs / Payroll deductions</li> <li>▪ The parent's fingerprints associated with the license of the facility</li> </ul>
Attending School or Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training Verification Form OR if electing use substitute documentation, it must include the name and address of the training institution, the days and hours of training, dates of session, expected completion date, signature or stamp of the training institution.</li> <li>▪ The current Class schedule</li> <li>▪ Recent Grade/ Progress Report (At Recertification Only)</li> <li>▪ Note: Child care services for job-related training is limited to whichever expire first: After you have completed 6 years of service or received 24 semester units.</li> </ul>
Seeking Permanent Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Seeking Permanent Housing Declaration Form that includes parents a search plan to secure a fixed, regular, and adequate residence.</li> <li>▪ Note: Services may be approved for no more than 5 days per week &amp; less than 30 hours per week.</li> </ul>
Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency; Education agency assistant for homeless children and youth, Head Start Program or an emergency/transitional shelter.</li> <li>▪ A parental Self-declaration of Homelessness may NOT be used to determine "need" for services.</li> <li>▪ Note: Child care services for homelessness need are limited to no more than 5 days per week &amp; less than 30 hours a week.</li> </ul>
Incapacitated Parent(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Statement of Parental Incapacity (CD 9606) Form</b> including a release of information signed by parent.</li> <li>▪ The parental incapacitation form (CD 9606) must be completed by a legally qualified health professional and must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The physical and/or mental health condition</li> <li>▪ Time and days of the week the parent is unable to care for the child and that services are being requested.</li> <li>▪ The name, business address, telephone number, professional license number, and signature of the legally qualified health</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Type of Need	Required Documentation and/or Verification
	<p>professional.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Crystal Stairs Family Services Specialist may contact the legally qualified health professional for verification or clarification of the provided statement.</li> <li>▪ Note: Child care services for parental incapacitation are limited to no more than 50 hours per week.</li> </ul>
<p>Receiving Child Protective Services (CPS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A written referral, created within 6 months of applying for child care services.</li> <li>▪ Must include a statement from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) stating child is receiving CPS and child care services are needed.</li> <li>▪ The name, address, phone number, and signature of the DCFS staff submitting the referral.</li> </ul>
<p>At-Risk of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A statement from a legally qualified professional licensed in California, to perform legal, medical, health, or social services</li> <li>▪ The statement must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child is at risk or neglect.</li> <li>▪ Child care services are needed to reduce or eliminate the risk.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The name, address, phone number, and signature of the qualified professional submitting the referral.</li> </ul>

## Documenting Income

Participants whose eligibility is based on Income: To be “income eligible” for child care services, your families monthly income must be at or below 85% of the State Median Income (SMI). Families must show documentation of income at initial certification or recertification.

### How do I know if I fall below the 85% SMI at the initial certification?

Your Family Services Specialist will determine if you are income eligible at the time of your initial appointment. If your income falls below the 85% income limit, your family will be considered income eligible.

At your initial appointment, your Family Services Specialist will provide you with the maximum income you can make to remain eligible for services, based on your family size.

### **How do I know if I am still income eligible at Recertification?**

Your family will remain income eligible until you reach or pass 85% of the SMI. You are required to report when your monthly income exceeds the 85%.

At your recertification appointment, your Family Services Specialist will again provide you with the exact amount that you can make to remain eligible for services based on your family size.

### **Types of Income to Report**

You must report all income for every adult counted in your family size.

- **Countable Income:** is income of individuals counted in the family size that shall be included when calculating the adjusted monthly income for purpose of determining income eligibility and family fees.
- For the purpose of income eligibility and family fee determination, when a child and his or her siblings are living in a family that does not include their biological or adoptive parent, "family" shall be considered the child and related siblings.
- **Non-Countable Income:** is income of individuals counted in the family size that shall be excluded when calculating the adjusted monthly income for purposes of determining income eligibility and family fees.

### **How do I know what type of income documentation to submit?**

The type of income documentation you will need to submit will depend on your frequency of pay (Employment, Self-Employment Income and Self Certification of Income):

- **Regular & Steady Income:** Total countable income from either month of the 2-month window immediately preceding certification
- **Fluctuating or Inconsistent Income:** Total countable income from 12 months immediately preceding certification
- **Guardian/Foster:** Full month of current income received for the child & related siblings.
- *If the child has zero income, the guardian/ foster parent can complete a self-certification form declaring that they receive no income to care for the child.*

### **What can I do if I do not have documentation to support my income?**

If you are unable to provide documentation to report/verify your income, you may complete a Self-Certification of Income form. This method will only be used as a last resort.

Countable and non-countable sources of income are included on the following page.

<b>Countable Income:</b> is income of individuals counted in the family size that shall be included when calculating the adjusted monthly income for purposes of determining income eligibility and family fees.	<b>Non-Countable Income:</b> is income of individuals counted in the family size that shall be excluded when calculating the adjusted monthly income for purposes of determining income eligibility and family fees.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gross wage or salary, commissions, overtime tips, bonuses, gambling or lottery winnings.</li> <li>2. Wages for migrant, agricultural or seasonal work.</li> <li>3. CalWORKs cash aid</li> <li>4. Gross income from self-employment less business expenses with the exception of wage draws.</li> <li>5. Disability or unemployment compensation.</li> <li>6. Worker's compensation.</li> <li>7. Spousal support, child support from the former spouse or absent parent, or financial assistance for housing costs or car payment paid as part of or in addition to spousal or child support.</li> <li>8. Survivor (i.e., SSA) and retirement benefits.</li> <li>9. Dividends, interest on bonds, income from estates or trust, net rental income or royalties.</li> <li>10. Rent for room within the family's residence.</li> <li>11. Financial assistance received for the care of a child living with an adult who is not the child's biological or adoptive parents.</li> <li>12. Veteran's pension.</li> <li>13. Pensions or annuities.</li> <li>14. Inheritance.</li> <li>15. Allowances for housing or automobiles provided as part of compensation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foster care grants payments or clothing allowances for children placed through child welfare services.</li> <li>2. Earnings of children under eighteen (18) years.</li> <li>3. Loans.</li> <li>4. Grants or scholarships to students for educational purposes.</li> <li>5. Federal Supplemental Assistance Program (CalFRESH/SNAP) or Women, Infants, and children (WIC) benefits or other food assistance.</li> <li>6. Earn income tax credit or tax refund.</li> <li>7. Adoption assistance payments received pursuant to Welfare and institute section 16115 et. seq.</li> <li>8. Non-cash assistance or gifts.</li> <li>9. All income of any individuals counted in the family size with collecting federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or State Supplemental Program benefits.</li> <li>10. Insurance or court settlements for pain and suffering, excluding loss, wages and punitive damages.</li> <li>11. Reimbursements for work-required expenses such as uniforms, mileage, or diem expenses for food and lodging</li> <li>12. Business expenses for self-employed family members.</li> <li>13. When there is no cash value to the employee,</li> </ol>

<p>16. Insurance or court settlements for lost wages or punitive damages.</p> <p>17. Net proceeds from the sale of real property, stocks or inherited property.</p> <p>18. Other enterprise for gain.</p>	<p>the portion of medical and or dental insurance documented as paid by the employer and included in gross pay.</p> <p>14. Disaster relief grants or payments, except any portion for rental assistance or unemployment.</p> <p>15. AmeriCorps Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stipend room and board and grants.</p>
<p><b>Note:</b> Verified child support payments paid by the parent whose child is receiving child development service may be subtracted from the family's countable income.</p>	

## Documenting Family Size

All adults and children living in your household have to be reported using the APPLICATION FOR SERVICES form. You are required to complete the APPLICATION FOR SERVICES during the enrollment appointment and at the time of recertification. If your child turns 18 during certification, they will remain included in the family size until the certification period ends.

### How do I document the number of children in my family?

You must provide one of the documents listed below for each child counted in your family size:

- Birth record
- Court ordered custody documentation
- Adoption documents
- Records of foster care placement
- School or medical records
- County welfare department records
- Other reliable documentation that indicates your relationship to the child

Crystal Stairs requires only one signature from a parent or guardian on the APPLICATION FOR SERVICES. The signing parent shall self-certify the presence or absence of the second parent under penalty of perjury.

## Determining Child Care Hours

Child care hours are approved based on the parent's need and the business hours/availability of the child care provider. Care will not be approved during school hours for children in TK – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. For two-parent households, child care hours are only approved when no parent can provide care.

If the provider's business hours do not meet your child care needs, you may request another provider. You must notify your Family Services Specialist immediately to choose another provider or add an additional provider. The following are additional child care hours that you can utilize if eligible.

### Sleep Time

Your Family Services Specialist can approve additional child care hours if you work between 10pm and 6am. This is known as sleep time. If you believe you qualify, contact your Family Services Specialist. They will determine if and how many child care hours can be approved for sleep time.

### Study Time

Your Family Services Specialist can approve additional child care hours if you are attending school or job-related training. This is known as study time. Crystal Stairs will confirm your school schedule and units with the school you are attending. Study time hours may be approved on the following:

- For classes with academic units, you may receive two hours per week per unit.
  - On a case-by-case basis, an additional one hour per academic unit may be approved with request and verified need.
- For classes without academic units, you may be approved for study time for no more than the amount of class hours you are enrolled in per week.

### Travel Time

You may request additional time for travel to get to and from your approved activity. A Family Services Specialist will determine the amount of time needed. Time will not exceed half of your authorized need hours and is limited to four hours a day.

## Ongoing Requirements for Families

### Recertifying Parent Eligibility

Upon establishing initial eligibility, you will remain eligible and receive services for no less than 12 months for CalWORKs C2AP and no less than 24 months for CAPP. To continue receiving child care services, you must recertify your family's eligibility by completing the recertification process. At recertification, you will be required to provide documentation to verify your eligibility and need for services in determination of continued/ ongoing eligibility to receive services. **If you do not complete the requirement to recertify services by the 50<sup>th</sup> day following the end of your 12-month or 24-month eligibility period, your child care services will be terminated.**

During the recertification process, you are required to submit documentation to determine and verify your continued eligibility and need prior to your appointment. This may include proof of current income, a copy of a means-tested governmental Program application, or a written referral for CPS or Homelessness eligibility. Documentation to show current need may include an employment verification, proof of school or training (including grades for the previous term), or other documentation supporting the qualifying need for services.

You will receive a mailed letter that tells you the documents that you need to submit.

Once you have submitted all documents requested, a Family Services Specialist will review and verify your information. Once verified, your Family Services Specialist will contact you to schedule a recertification appointment. This appointment is mandatory. You must attend this appointment to sign the APPLICATION FOR SERVICES.

If you are unable to make the scheduled appointment, you must contact your assigned Family Services Specialist before your appointment so that it may be rescheduled. Failure to attend/complete your recertification appointment will result in disenrollment.

### Child Care Approvals For Services

#### How will I know that my child care hours are approved?

You must be certified as eligible, demonstrate a need for services, and select an eligible provider. After you have completed this, you will be issued a Notice of Action. Your selected provider(s) will be issued a Certificate of Enrollment. The Notice of Action and Certificate of Enrollment will outline the specific times and dates that child care may be used.

Note: Crystal Stairs will not reimburse for services used prior to written approval or after services are terminated.

## Completing And Submitting The Attendance Record

Crystal Stairs will mail your approved child care provider pre-printed Attendance Records. You are required to complete Attendance Records on a daily basis for each child in care. You may have an authorized representative sign for you if you are not available. If your provider has not received Attendance Records before the first of the month, contact your Family Services Specialist immediately.

When completing an Attendance Record, you or your authorized representative are responsible for:

- Recording the daily accurate time of arrival and departure which includes a.m. or p.m. after each time entered.
- If absent, record a specific absence reason for any day(s) your child(ren) is absent from care. Acceptable absence types are as follows:
  - Child or parent/guardian illness, injury, hospitalization, or quarantine
  - Doctor, dentist, mental health, counseling or therapy appointments
  - Court ordered visitation for time spent with parent/relative as required by law.
  - A family emergency for unplanned situations of temporary nature such as a death, hospitalization of family member, illness of sibling, or due to sheltering in a place.
- Completing, signing, and dating the Family Fee Certification and Receipt section (if applicable).
- Signing and dating the Attendance Record(s) at the end of each month.

Attendance Records are due by the third business day of the month by 3:00 pm to ensure timely payment. If your Attendance Record(s) is received after the deadline, it is considered late. Late Attendance Records are processed for payment the next month.

Properly completing your Attendance Record(s) on a daily basis and submitting them on time is important. Your provider must submit your Attendance Record(s) on time so your provider is paid accurately and on time. Remember that you and your provider must sign and date the Attendance Record(s) prior to submission. Failure to correctly complete Attendance Records may result in returned Attendance Records to your provider and non-payment.

A sample of how to complete an Attendance Record as well as helpful hints may be found on the following page. To find more information or to view our video on how to complete an Attendance Record, please visit [www.crystalstairs.org](http://www.crystalstairs.org).

### How do I turn in the Attendance Record?

Attendance Records can be mailed to the following address:

## **Crystal Stairs, Inc.**

P.O. Box 99240

Los Angeles, CA 90009-2240

You may also drop off your Attendance Records to our exterior drop boxes or office lobby. We recommend that you make a copy of the Attendance Records prior to submission. Copies cannot be made for you in the office.

Is it possible for me to check the status of the claim?

To check on the status of the claim, the provider may call (800) 833-3663 or visit [www.crystalstairs.org](http://www.crystalstairs.org).

## **Abandonment Of Care**

If your family stops using child care for more than 7 days, your provider may report this to Crystal Stairs. Once reported by your provider, if you do not communicate with the agency or your provider for 30 consecutive calendar days, your family will be dis-enrolled from the program. You may also be dis-enrolled for abandonment if you do not sign the required monthly attendance records.



## Family Fees

Effective October 1, 2023, families whose adjusted monthly gross income is below 75% of the state median income (SMI) shall not be charged or assessed a family fee. Family fees accrued but uncollected prior to October 1, 2023 may be forgiven and not collected. Additionally, the following types of families whose children are enrolled, are exempt from paying a family fee:

1. Families whose child(ren) are recipients of child protective services AND have a written referral specifying that it is necessary to exempt the family from paying a family fee.
2. Families whose basis of eligibility is a parent who is receiving CalWORKs cash aid.
3. Families with income levels in relation to family size, is less than the first entry of the [FY 2023-2024 restructured Family Fee Schedule](#).

Family Fees are assessed at initial certification, recertification and when a change in your services occurs. Your family will be assessed a flat monthly family fee for the duration of your certified period. This fee is based on your certified child care hours.

Your family fee will never increase during your certification period. You may voluntarily report changes to decrease your family fee (i.e. changes in income or family size). Family fees will not be prorated or adjusted if care ends early or you are disenrolled.

Family Fees are assessed using:

- Hours of certified child care need per month.
  - Part-time fees are assessed when the certified need is less than 130 hours per month.
  - Full-time fees are assessed when the certified need is 130 hours or more per month.

Note: Family fees are determined based on your authorized child care hours, not your usage of care.

## Paying Family Fees

Family Fee effective dates are applied:

- The first day child care is authorized during initial Certification.
- The first day of the month after the appeal date has passed during recertification.
- The first day after the receipt and approval of documentation when changes are voluntarily reported.

You are expected to review the Notice of Action as soon as you receive it. You may appeal if you disagree with the fee amount or believe that an error has occurred.

To file an appeal, you must follow the instructions on the reverse side of the Notice of Action. You can also call and request a verbal appeal.

### **Who do I pay my family fee to?**

Your family fee is paid directly to your provider each month before they provide services. Your provider should provide a receipt for the payment. You should keep these receipts for your records.

If you cannot pay your fee, you and your provider may agree on a repayment plan. You must also state if you have entered into a repayment plan on your monthly Attendance Record. You must write the fee amount you paid to your provider on your monthly Attendance Record(s).

If you change your provider mid-month, the family fee will be paid to the first provider.

If you received partial care, the family fee will not exceed the cost of care. The only reimbursement due to the provider will be the family fee.

### **What happens if I am late paying my family fee?**

Your child care provider must report late fees to your Family Services Specialist and record it on the Attendance Record(s). A Delinquent Family Fees Notice of Action will be issued.

To remain in the program, you must pay the balance in full. You and your provider must complete the receipt included with the Delinquent Family Fees Notice of Action. Send the completed receipt to your assigned Family Services Specialist.

If you submit the notice/receipt before the date of termination, child care services will be restored. If you started a repayment plan, you will not be terminated if you follow the plan.

Crystal Stairs may disenroll you from the child care program if you do not pay your family fee. You are not allowed to re-enroll until the delinquent fee balance has been paid.

### **Family Fees VS. Co-Payments**

Family fees are not the same as co-payments. Some providers may charge fees above the reimbursement limit. You are responsible to pay for the difference; this is considered a co-payment.

You may have both a family fee and a co-payment. If you have questions, please contact your Family Services Specialist.

## Reporting Changes

### Your Family's Right To Voluntarily Report Changes

If you are income eligible, you must report when your monthly income exceeds the 85% SMI. These changes must be reported within 30 days of the increase in your income.

You are not required to report any other changes regarding your eligibility and/or need for child care services during your certified period.

You may voluntarily report changes in your family size, income, or need for child care services. Changes can be made to increase or change your approved hours or to decrease or eliminate your family fee.

Requests to decrease your approved child care hours must be made in writing. However, you have the right to keep or return to your current approved service level.

#### How do I report a change?

You can report changes directly to your assigned Family Services Specialist. Some changes must be submitted in writing and verification may be required.

#### Once I report a change, is there anything I need to provide?

Once you report a change, you are required to provide documentation to support the change.

#### Examples of changes in family conditions that may be voluntarily reported include:

- Receiving a salary increase or decrease
- Change in marital status
- Birth of a new child
- Becoming unemployed
- Starting a new job
- Changing from full-time work to part-time work
- Enrolling your child into school
- Changing your child's school or track
- Changing child care providers

You are encouraged to report:

- Updates to emergency contact information for you and your authorized representative
- New mobile or home telephone numbers
- New street or mailing addresses
- New e-mail addresses

## **Changing Child Care Providers**

You may change your child care provider at any time. If you wish to change or end services, please give your provider a two weeks' notice. This notice should first be given to your provider and then to your assigned Family Services Specialist. Make sure to include the last date child care will be needed with your current provider.

You must also submit a Provider Identification Form with your new provider's information. Our R&R Department may assist you with selecting a new provider. Please contact R&R at (888) 543-7247.

### **What happens once I select a new provider?**

Once child care services with your new provider have been approved, you will receive a Notice of Action. The Notice of Action will indicate the first day your new provider will be reimbursed for services.

The new provider will be sent a Certificate of Enrollment. It will contain the start date(s), schedule(s), and Attendance Record(s) for all children who are authorized for care.

### **What if I don't give a two weeks' notice before changing providers?**

You will be responsible for any child care payments for services used. You may also be responsible for payment if you remove your children from the provider before the end of the two weeks' notice.

Your current provider and assigned Family Services Specialist must be aware when you plan on changing providers. Crystal Stairs will not pay for services after the last day children attend care.

# Denial/Disenrollment From The Program

## Denial/Disenrollment

### You may be disenrolled from child care services if you:

- No longer meet eligibility requirements
- No longer have a need for child care services
- Fail to follow to state regulations

### Child care services may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- Abandonment of Care
- At your request
- Child exceeds the program age limit
- Failure to complete the recertification process within the 50-day period immediately after your 12-month or 24-month certification period
- Failure to follow Crystal Stairs' program policies
- Failure to pay family fees and/or keep up with the repayment plan
- Failure to report that your monthly income exceeds the 85% State Median Income
- Failure to submit requested documents
- Program funding is no longer available
- Providing incorrect or inaccurate information to obtain services you are not eligible to receive or to reduce family fees
- Misuse of child care services or inaccurate use of pre-approved child care hours
- Reaching or exceeding the 6-year or 24 units (post B.A.) training limit with no additional eligible need
- Threatening families or staff (specific or implied)
- Endangering the life of any family or staff member
- Using foul language (written or verbal)
- Using verbal or physical abuse with families or staff
- Vandalizing property

## Denial/Disenrollment Process

If you are denied services or disenrolled, you will receive a Denial/Disenrollment of Services Notice of Action. It will explain the reason for the disenrollment from our programs.

If you feel you have been mistakenly denied/disenrolled, you have the right to appeal.

## Appeals

If you disagree with an action, you may appeal by filing a request for a hearing. To file an appeal, you must follow the instructions on the reverse side of the Notice of Action. After the request has been received, an Appeal Officer will review your case.

During the appeal process, the NOA action will be suspended, and you will continue to receive child care services. The review process is complete when the appeal has been exhausted or you abandon the appeal. You may have an authorized representative attend the hearing with you or on your behalf. When an authorized representative is present at the hearing, you are not required to attend.

### How do I start an appeal?

You can start the appeal process by requesting it verbally, in writing, or in person. You may also request an appeal by telephone or fax, or email at [appeals@crystalstairs.org](mailto:appeals@crystalstairs.org).

To request an appeal in writing, fill out the back side of the Notice of Action and return it by mail, fax, or in person to:

#### **Crystal Stairs, Inc.**

ATTN: CDSS Appeals Unit  
5110 W. Goldleaf Circle, Suite 150  
Los Angeles, CA 90056-1282  
Fax: (310) 337-5699

### When is the appeal due?

Request for an appeal must be filed within 14 calendar days after you receive the Notice of Action. The appeal request must be received before the appeal due date on the Notice of Action.

If your appeal request is received after the deadline, it will not be accepted and your child care services will end on the "Effective Date" written in the Notice of Action.

### What happens after my appeal is received?

After the appeal is received, you will be scheduled for an appeal hearing. You will receive the time and date of the hearing within 10 days of your appeal submission. During the hearing, the action in question will be reviewed and resolved.

Please bring any supporting documentation to help explain and support your position to the appeal hearing.

### When will I know the outcome of my appeal hearing?

Within 10 days of the hearing, you will receive a decision in writing.

### **What if I disagree with the decision?**

You may appeal Crystal Stairs' decision to the CDSS by submitting a written statement explaining why you believe that Crystal Stairs' decision was incorrect, and a copy of the Crystal Stairs decision letter and the Notice of Action being appealed.

The appeal documents should be mailed, faxed, or e-mail to:

#### **California Department of Social Services**

Child Care and Development Division

Attn: Appeals Coordinator

744 P Street, MS 9-8-351

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 1-833-559-2417

Fax: 916-654-1048

CCDDAppeals@dss.ca.gov

### **Your appeal would be considered abandoned if:**

1. You do not submit a request for a local hearing within 14 calendar days of receiving your NOA.
2. You (or your authorized representative) do not attend the local hearing; or
3. You do not submit a timely request for the CDSS' review after the local hearing process has taken place.

## Selecting A Provider

### Parental Choice

Crystal Stairs wants to empower you to make the best choices about your child(ren)'s care. Our AP Program encourages & helps parents arrange child care services that best fit their family's needs.

Your selected provider must agree to be reimbursed (repaid) for services by Crystal Stairs. Payment to a provider will not begin until all required documentation has been submitted and the Provider Agreement is completed and approved.

If your child is old enough to attend pre-school, we encourage you to consider a provider who can prepare them for school. You are encouraged to choose care based on your child(ren)'s ages and family's needs. The Child Care Options chart on the next page may help you select your child care provider.

Please review and consider all child care provider options listed in the chart on the next page.

	Federal and State Funded Child Care Centers	Privately-Owned Child Care Centers and Family FCCHs	License Exempt Providers (Family/Friend/Neighbor)
Type of Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepares children to succeed in school (e.g. Head Start, Early Head Start, State Preschool, L.A. Universal).</li> <li>Preschool provides child care subsidies that help families pay for services that are based on family eligibility.</li> <li>Provides educational school-like settings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centers care for children in larger classroom settings and children are separated by age groups.</li> <li>Family Child Care Homes (FCCHs) care for children in smaller groups out of their homes with no more than 14 children depending on their license capacity.</li> <li>Family pays full cost of care unless they receive subsidy; program may offer scholarships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be a family member, friend or neighbor; may also include some school-age centers and summer camps.</li> <li>Provides a family-friendly setting that can support parents' values and culture.</li> </ul>
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participates in programs and trainings that improve or maintain the quality of care.</li> <li>Required to document and inform parents of child's growth and development.</li> <li>Follows State Laws and State Licensing and Health &amp; Safety standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some participate in programs that improve or maintain the quality of care.</li> <li>May attend workshops and/or trainings.</li> <li>Must meet State Licensing and Health &amp; Safety Standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will vary based on experience of person caring for the child.</li> <li>Parents take sole responsibility for ensuring the quality of their child's care.</li> <li>There are no licensing or Health &amp; Safety standards unless it is a school-age center.</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must provide educational activities that are age-and developmentally appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will vary based on provider experience and training; must provide safe toys, play equipment and materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May or may not offer regular activities.</li> </ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must have college education and ongoing training.</li> <li>Must have child abuse and criminal background clearances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May have college education and may attend ongoing trainings and classes.</li> <li>Must have child abuse and criminal background clearances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No educational requirements needed but may attend trainings.</li> <li>Must complete criminal background clearances unless care is by the grandparent, aunt or uncle of the child.</li> </ul>
Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May offer full-day and/or part-day child care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most are open between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Some may be part time, overnight, weekends, or 24 hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May provide the most flexible hours to meet the parent's need for child care.</li> <li>Hours depend on the provider selected.</li> </ul>
Inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspected by Community Care Licensing (310) 337-4333.</li> <li>Reviewed by Federal &amp; State Auditors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspected by Community Care Licensing (310) 337-4333.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No inspections.</li> </ul>

## Types of Child Care Providers

### Licensed Child Care Provider

Licensed providers are child care centers or family day care homes. They offer non-medical care and supervision to children in a group setting. In California, child care centers, as well as small and large Family Child Care Homes, must be licensed.

### Child Care Center

Licensed child care centers are regulated by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). State law determines staff size, educational requirements, and health and safety standards of these centers.

CDSS conducts site visits to ensure child care centers meet licensing requirements. All center staff must clear any serious criminal history with the Department of Justice (DOJ). All licensed centers must have licenses for the ages they provide child care services.

### Small and Large Family Child Care Homes

Family Child Care Homes provide care in their home. Small Family Child Care Homes are licensed to care for no more than 8 children. Large Family Child Care Homes are licensed to care for no more than 14 children. All Family Child Care Homes are regulated by the CDSS.

All licensed Family Child Care Home staff must clear any serious criminal history with DOJ. All Family Child Care Homes must have licenses for the ages they provide child care services.

### License Exempt Child Care Providers

Licensed-exempt child care providers are not required to be licensed by the State. There are no State health and safety regulations that exempt providers must follow.

In California, the following types of child care are exempt from licensing:

- Certain public or private recreation programs (license exempt centers).
- Care provided by a relative or non-relative.

### License Exempt Centers

License exempt centers are regulated by the City's Department of Parks and Recreation. Licensed-exempt centers operate during non-school hours or for fewer than 12 weeks each year.

Some licensed-exempt centers include:

- Public or private recreational programs, including summer camps
- Before-and-after-school programs operated by public or private schools
- Programs operated by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, and similar organizations

### **License-Exempt Relative Provider**

A licensed-exempt relative provider may offer care for the children of one family only. California recognizes a relative to be an aunt, uncle, grandmother or grandfather of the child(ren). Relative providers are exempt from the DOJ background check. Parents may not be the provider for their own child(ren) receiving child care services.

The relative provider must complete the Provider Agreement process before they begin providing care. Each time a new relative provider is requested, a new Provider Agreement must be created. The agreement process may take up to 4 weeks to be approved.

### **License-Exempt Non-Relative Provider**

A non-relative provider is anyone other than an aunt, uncle, or grandparent of the child. Non-relative providers must be cleared of any serious criminal history. They are required to submit fingerprints and an application to the Department of Justice (DOJ), through TrustLine.

Once approved, these providers are known as "TrustLine-Registered Providers." Non-relative care providers will not be reimbursed for services until they have been cleared by the TrustLine process.

The non-relative provider is required to complete the Provider Agreement process before they begin providing care. Each time a new non-relative provider is requested, a new Provider Agreement must be completed. The agreement process may take up to 4 weeks to be approved.

You may also request child care services with an in-home child care provider. For more information regarding in-home care requirements, contact your assigned Family Services Specialist.

### **What if I need care immediately and cannot wait for my provider to be approved?**

You can choose a Licensed Interim Child Care Provider while your chosen provider is completing the agreement process.

For a listing of Licensed Interim Child Care Providers, contact R&R at (888) 543-7247. Inform the R&R representative that you are currently receiving services and are in need of interim provider.

Once the agreement process is complete, you can start care with your selected provider. You do not need to send a two weeks' notice to the interim provider before removing your children from their care.

If you wish, you may continue care with the interim provider. Please inform your Family Services Specialist immediately if you wish to make the interim provider your main provider.

## The Provider Agreement Process

A new provider agreement must be requested, submitted, and approved before child care services can begin. The agreement process is shown below:



The Provider Agreement process can take up to 30 days to be completed after the Agreement Packet is received. The approval of the agreement can be delayed or cancelled if:

- You and the provider do not complete the agreement, or
- Your Provider does not submit the required documentation by the due date in the Agreement Packet.
- The agreement process may be extended if your provider is required to complete the TrustLine Registry process.

If you have questions regarding our process, please contact the Crystal Stairs representative listed in the agreement packet.

### Provider Notifications

Provider Notice of Communication will be issued when there is a change to:

- Reimbursement
- Certified need (hours of care)
- Certified schedules
- Rate changes
- Increase or decrease to family fees
- Disenrollment from services
- Changing providers

### Abandonment of Care

Provider must promptly notify the program if the child abandons care (no show or contact) for 7 consecutive calendar days. The agency will attempt to contact the

parent. A Notice of Action for disenrollment will be issued if there has been no communication with the provider or staff for 30 consecutive calendar days.

## Limits On Child Care Reimbursements

Crystal Stairs limits reimbursements for provider rates and other charges based on regulations set by the CDSS. When you are approved for child care, you will receive information about the maximum amount that Crystal Stairs can reimburse a provider. If the provider you choose charges above our listed rates, you must pay the difference.

### Regional Market Rate Ceiling on Reimbursement

The Regional Market Rate sets the maximum amount that Crystal Stairs can repay your provider by considering your child's age, type of provider, and family's need for services. The Regional Market Rate can be found on the CDSS's website: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov>.

You and your provider will receive and use this information to calculate any co-payments. If you have questions about the Regional Market Rate Survey, please contact R&R at (888) 543-7247 for more information.

### Days of Non-Operation

Licensed child care providers may be reimbursed for days they are not open. These are considered non-operational days. Crystal Stairs will reimburse licensed child care providers for a maximum of 10 non-operational days per fiscal year.

The provider must provide written documentation stating that all families must pay for services used on these days.

Crystal Stairs will not reimburse any other type of provider for services on days of non-operation. You can choose an alternate provider when your regular provider is not open to provide services.

### Alternate Provider

When your child cannot attend your regular provider because they are sick or the provider is unavailable, you can use another provider. This is called an alternate provider. You must notify your Family Services Specialist immediately if you plan to use an alternate provider.

Eligible alternate providers must have a current Provider Agreement with Crystal Stairs. The alternate provider will be reimbursed when use of their services is approved.

### Drop-In Care

Drop-in care is unscheduled or irregular child care services that are needed immediately. It is used when you need care outside of your current child care hours. You must notify your Family Services Specialist as soon as possible if you are in need of drop-in care.

## **Reimbursement Limited to One Provider**

Crystal Stairs will reimburse only one provider of services per child. The provider must follow your certified need hours for services.

### **Are there any exceptions to this rule?**

Crystal Stairs may reimburse more than one provider per child when the hours or operation of the first provider cannot accommodate all of your certified need hours.

Crystal Stairs may also reimburse more than one provider when your regular provider is not licensed, but you select an additional licensed provider to help prepare your child for school.

## **Child Care During Instructional Hours For School-Age Children**

Crystal Stairs will not reimburse any provider giving care during school hours when your child(ren) is enrolled in and attend a public or private school or program.

## **Child Receives Services at Other Child Care Facilities**

Crystal Stairs will not reimburse for services when a child is receiving service from another child care and development agency or has another subsidized child care contract.

## General Policies

### Non-Discrimination Policy

Crystal Stairs welcomes children with disabilities and other special needs. We work with you, child care providers, as well as health and educational professionals to find the best services for your needs and program access.

### Equal Employment Opportunity

Crystal Stairs is committed to providing equal opportunities for access to our services and complying with federal and state anti-discrimination laws, including not discriminating against individuals based on their actual or perceived:

- Race
- Religion or religious creed
- Color
- National origin
- Alienage
- Citizenship status
- Ancestry
- Physical or mental disability
- Medical condition
- Gender identity and gender expression (including transgender individuals who are transitioning, have transitioned, or are perceived to be transitioning to the gender with which they identify)
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Genetic information
- Predisposing genetic characteristics
- Marital status (including registered domestic partnership status)
- Familial status
- Sex and gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and related medical conditions)
- Domestic violence victim status
- Civil Air Patrol status
- Military and veteran status; or
- Any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law (collectively referred to as "Protected Characteristics")

For the purpose of this policy, discrimination on the basis of "national origin" also includes:

- Discrimination against individuals that hold an AB 60 California driver's license; a license issued to those who cannot document their lawful presence in the United States;
- Discrimination based upon actual or perceived physical, cultural, or linguistic characteristics associated with a national origin group;
- Marriage to, or association with, individuals of a national origin group;
- Tribal affiliation;
- Membership in or association with an organization identified with or seeking to promote the interests of a national origin group;
- Attendance or participation in schools, churches, temples, mosques or other religious institutions generally used by persons of a national origin group; or
- A name that is associated with a national origin group.

## Prohibited Harassment

Crystal Stairs is committed to providing an environment that is free of illicit harassment based on protected characteristics. As a result, Crystal Stairs maintains a strict policy prohibiting sexual harassment and harassment against employees, applicants for employment, individuals providing services in the workplace pursuant to a contract, unpaid interns or volunteers, parents and children taking part in our programs based on protected characteristics.

This policy applies to all persons involved in our operations, including coworkers, supervisors, managers, temporary or seasonal workers, agents, clients, vendors, independent contractors, customers, any other third party interacting with Crystal Stairs and parents and children taking part in our programs (and prohibits proscribed harassing conduct by any employee or third party of Crystal Stairs, including nonsupervisory employees, supervisors and managers).

If such harassment occurs on Crystal Stairs' premises or is directed toward an employee or a third party interacting with Crystal Stairs the procedures in this policy should be followed.

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment also includes various forms of offensive behavior based on sex, and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. The following is a partial list:

- Unwanted sexual advances;
- Offering agency services in exchange for sexual favors;
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances;
- Visual conduct: leering, making sexual gestures; displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, posters, websites, emails or text messages;
- Verbal conduct: making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, sexually explicit jokes, or comments about an individual's body or dress;
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, and suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations;
- Physical conduct: touching, assaulting, impeding or blocking movements; and
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report sexual harassment.

An individual may be liable for harassment based on sex even if the alleged harassing conduct was not motivated by sexual desire. An individual who engages in unlawful harassment may be personally liable for harassment even if the Agency had no knowledge of such conduct.

## Other Types of Harassment

Harassment on the basis of protected characteristics is prohibited. Prohibited harassment may include behavior similar to the illustrations above pertaining to sexual harassment. This includes conduct such as:

- Verbal conduct: including threats, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs, based on an individual's protected characteristics;
- Visual conduct: including derogatory posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings or gestures based on protected characteristics; and
- Physical conduct: including assault, unwanted touching, or blocking normal movement because of an individual's protected characteristics.

## Abusive Conduct

It is expected that during work hours, Crystal Stairs and persons in the workplace perform their jobs productively in a manner that meets all of managements' expectations, and that they refrain from any malicious, patently offensive or abusive conduct including, but not limited to, conduct that a reasonable person would find offensive based on any of the Protected Characteristics.

Examples of abusive conduct include:

- Repeated infliction of verbal abuse (such as the use of malicious, derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets);
- Verbal or physical conduct that a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, or humiliating; or
- The intentional sabotage or undermining of a person's performance.

## Retaliation

Retaliation is prohibited against any person by another employee or by Crystal Stairs for:

- Using Crystal Stairs' complaint procedure;
- Reporting proscribed discrimination or harassment; or
- Filing, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in any investigation, proceeding or hearing conducted by a governmental enforcement agency.
- Prohibited retaliation includes, but is not limited to, denying access to any Crystal Stairs' services, programs, or benefits.

## How to Report Harassment, Discrimination, Retaliation, or Abusive Conduct

Any individual who believes that he or she has been harassed, discriminated against, or subjected to retaliation or abusive conduct by a Crystal Stairs employee supervisor, agent, client, vendor, customer, or any other third party interacting with Crystal Stairs in violation of the foregoing policies, or who is aware of such behavior against others, should immediately provide a written or verbal report to the Director of Human Resources at

(323) 421-1470.

Supervisors and managers who receive complaints of misconduct must immediately report such complaints to the Director of Human Resources, who will attempt to resolve issues internally.

When a report is received, Crystal Stairs will conduct a fair, timely, thorough, and objective investigation that provides all parties appropriate due process and reaches reasonable conclusions based on the evidence collected.

Crystal Stairs expects all individuals to cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by Crystal Stairs into a complaint of proscribed harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or regarding the alleged violation of any other Crystal Stairs policies.

Crystal Stairs will maintain confidentiality surrounding the investigation to the extent possible and to the extent permitted under applicable federal and state law.

Upon completion of the investigation, Crystal Stairs will communicate its conclusion as soon as practical. If Crystal Stairs determines that this policy has been violated, remedial action will be taken, commensurate with the severity of the offense. Appropriate action will also be taken to deter any such conduct in the future.

### **Additional Enforcement Information**

In addition to Crystal Stairs' internal complaint procedures regarding harassment, discrimination, and retaliation, individuals should also be aware that the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) and the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) investigate and prosecute complaints of prohibited discrimination, harassment or retaliation.

### **Family Data File**

Crystal Stairs must file and verify information for everyone participating in our programs. Parents and child care providers are asked to provide all required documents and completed forms.

All family documents and forms are kept in a family data file. Each data file contains current health and emergency information for the child(ren) in the family. We do not require immunization records for child(ren) attending public or private elementary schools or receiving care in licensed facilities.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

Crystal Stairs believes that parents have a right to privacy regarding their family's file. We will only share information about a family's child care services if it is requested by the law, authorized reviewers, the State of California, or the U.S. Government.

Family information may be reported to other companies for research purposes. The data will not include names or details regarding your family. You or an authorized

representative may review your basic family file data at reasonable times and places, upon request.

## **Notice of Action (NOA)**

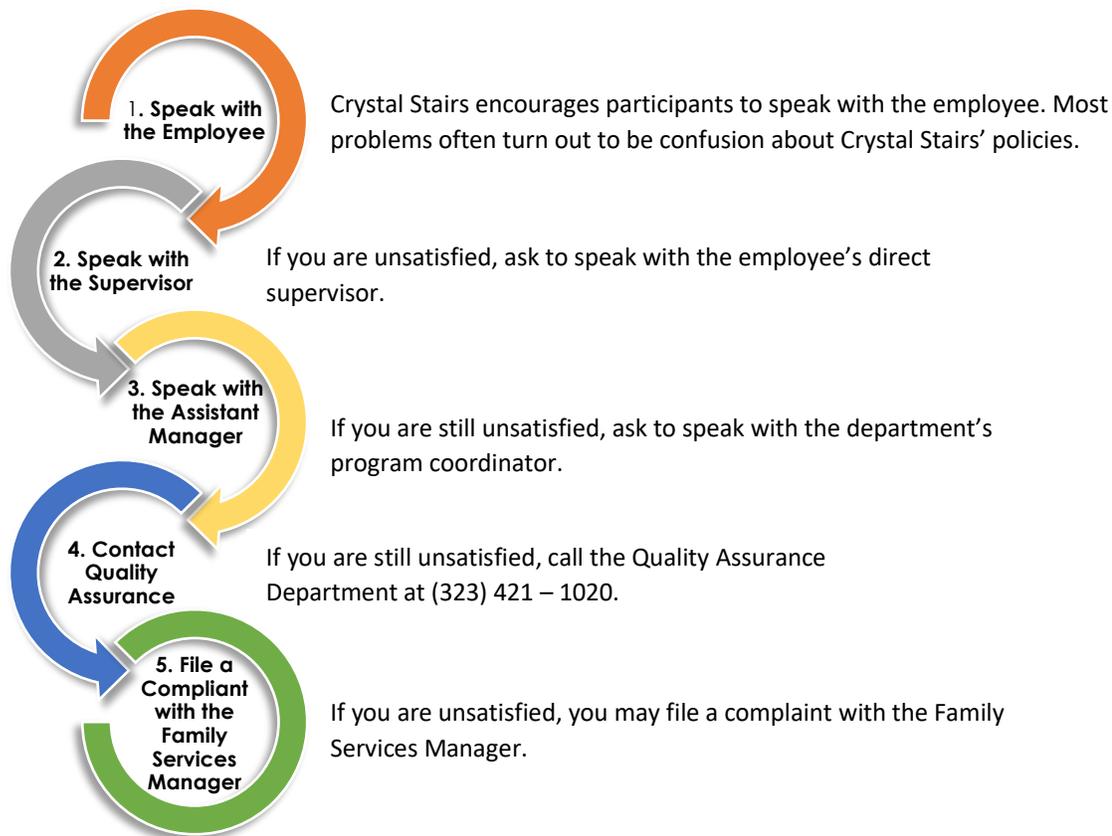
When any action is made to your child care services, you will receive a Notice of Action. Notices of Action are issued:

- At Initial Certification for services (within 30 calendar days of completing an application).
- When your Initial Certification is denied.
- After completing your Recertification for services.
- After changes that affect eligibility, need, and family fees (including changes in child care hours and providers) have been approved.
- After you have been dis-enrolled from the program.

It is important that you read and keep every Notice of Action. Contact the Family Services Specialist listed on the Notice of Action if you have any questions or concerns. If you disagree with any action written on the Notice of Action, you may appeal the action by completing the back of the Notice of Action.

## **Communicating Concerns and Issues**

Crystal Stairs values our relationships with parents and child care providers. However, we are aware that misunderstandings, concerns, mistakes, or challenges may occur. To resolve your issues successfully, please follow the steps below:



## Filing Complaints

If you have followed the grievance procedure outlined above, and you believe that your issue has not been resolved, you may file a complaint with the Family Services Manager by mailing your written complaint to:

### **Crystal Stairs, Inc.**

Family Services Manager  
 5110 West Goldleaf Circle, Suite 150  
 Los Angeles, CA 90056-1282

Our goal is to follow all state and federal child care laws. If you believe Crystal Stairs has broken the law, you can file a complaint. This includes claims of discrimination in any program or activity using federal or state funds.

To file a complaint, you must submit a signed, written letter to:

### **California Department of Social Services**

Child Care and Development Division  
 744 P Street, MS 9-8-351  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

If you are unsatisfied with the Department of Social Services final decision, you may seek legal action in state or federal court. You may retain a lawyer to assist you in seeking legal

action.

## **Fraud**

Giving false or misleading information to access Crystal Stairs' services is prohibited. Violating the fraud policy could result in disenrollment from the program and/or legal action.

Fraudulent or misleading actions include, but are not limited to:

- Giving false or misleading information on CalWORKs or CCAP provider agreements, attendance forms, or other documents to:
  - Receive child care or services.
  - Increase or continue receiving your current services.
  - Stop a decrease or termination of your services.
- Avoiding the denial, decrease, or termination of your services by not:
  - Reporting all income and income sources or
  - Telling us when your income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income.
- Accepting child care services knowing you are not eligible to receive them.
- Claiming time for child care you have not received.

If Crystal Stairs suspects or is notified that you have committed fraud in order to receive child care services, a review will be initiated.

Depending on the results of the review, your case may be sent to DPSS, and/or to the CDSS for further action. The review may include unannounced visits, telephone calls, reviews of related documents, and other actions.

If you are found to have violated our fraud policy at any point in time, Crystal Stairs may send you a Notice of Action disenrolling you from the program. Your eligibility for other Crystal Stairs programs may also be denied.

The Notice of Action will include the termination date, the reason(s) for the decision and your right to appeal. You may also receive a request to repay any services received fraudulently.

If you disagree with the disenrollment decision, you may file an appeal to request a hearing. The steps to file an appeal are included on the back of the Notice of Action. If you do not appeal the disenrollment decision, your child care services will be terminated on the date listed on the Notice of Action.

If you are terminated for violating our fraud policy, you will not be eligible to receive future child care services from any Crystal Stairs program. If you are currently receiving cash-aid (TANF), you may still be eligible for services.

## **Repayment In Cases of Fraud**

Crystal Stairs requires you to repay the costs of child care services you received through

fraud.

If you lost your eligibility to receive Crystal Stairs', services, you will be required to repay for all services in full. You may pay in one payment or by a repayment plan. If you require more than 12 months to complete the repayment plan, you must contact the CDSS Assistant Manager to obtain prior approval.

Failure to follow the repayment plan may prohibit re-enrollment or result in disenrollment.

## **Interagency Transfers**

Selecting a child care provider from outside the Crystal Stairs service area may result in a transfer to another child care agency. You must meet all of the following requirements if you wish to transfer agencies:

- All family fees have been paid.
- Not currently appealing termination of services.
- All required paperwork has been submitted.
- The agency you choose has the funds available to pay for child care services.

## **Stage 1 to Stage 2 or Stage 3 Transfers**

Families transferring into the CDSS funded programs from Stage 1 are certified for child care for no less than 12 months. Transferring families are not required to provide documents to determine eligibility or need for child care services until recertification. While you are not required to report changes during this time, you may voluntarily report changes that may impact your child care services. This may include an increase in your service hours, or a decrease in your family fee.

## Glossary of Key Terms

1. **Authorized Representative** - A trusted adult a parent/guardian has authorized, in writing, to act on their behalf.
2. **Business Days** - Standard working days are Monday through Friday, not including federal holidays and weekends.
3. **CalWORKs - California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids** is a State-administered program. CalWORKs provides temporary financial assistance and employment focused services to families with young children. These families also have income and property below the State maximum limits for their family size.
4. **CPS - Child Protective Services** is a program run by the County Welfare Department that ensures child safety and protection. CPS investigates and stops cases of possible abuse or neglect of children.
5. **Community Care Licensing** - The State agency that licenses and oversees both day care and residential facilities for children and adults in California.
6. **Centralized Eligibility Wait List** - A list of families who are seeking subsidized child care services from the CAPP program. Families must meet income and need guidelines. A parent can fill out an application to be added onto the Wait List.
7. **DCFS - Department of Children and Family Services** is The Los Angeles County department that ensures child safety and protection by investigating and intervening in cases of possible abuse or neglect of children.
8. **Family** - A family means the parents and the children for whom the parents are responsible who comprise the household in which the child receiving services is living. For purposes of income eligibility and family fee determination, when a child and his or her siblings are living in a family that does not include their biological or adoptive parent, "family" shall be considered the child and related siblings.
9. **Fiscal Year** - The 12-month period used for calculating yearly financial statements in businesses and other organizations. Crystal Stairs, Inc.'s fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>.
10. **Gross Income** - Total countable income from all sources, earned before taxes.
11. **Homeless** - A person or family that lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence. Their primary night time residence could be (1) A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter, transitional housing, or homeless support program designed to provide temporary living accommodation; or (2) A public or private place not designed for, or usually used as a regular sleeping place for human beings.
12. **Initial Certification** - The formal process for approving an application for services by collecting information and documentation to determine if a family is eligible to receive subsidized child development services. The signature of the authorized representative on an application for services certifies that the legal requirements have been met and documented.
13. **Legally Qualified Professional** – A person who is licensed by the State to perform medical, health, legal, or social services.

14. **Parent** - Biological parent, adoptive parent, step parent, foster parent, caretaker, relative, legal guardian, domestic partner of the parent, or any other adult living with a child who has responsibility for the care and welfare of the child.
15. **Recertification** - The formal process for approving an application for services by collecting information and documentation. The documentation determines if your family and/or child continue to meet the legal requirements to receive subsidized child care services.
16. **Regional Market Rate (RMR)** the maximum amount that providers can be reimbursed in accordance with the statutory ceilings currently in effect.
17. **Subsidies** - Payments made to providers on behalf of low-income and working parents to help cover the costs of child care..

## Glossary of Key Abbreviations

<b>C2AP</b>	California Stage 2 Alternative Payment
<b>C3AP</b>	California Stage 3 Alternative Payment
<b>CAPP</b>	California Alternative Payment Program
<b>CDSS</b>	California Department of Social Services
<b>CalWORKs</b>	California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids
<b>CPS</b>	Child Protective Services
<b>DCFS</b>	Department of Children and Families Services
<b>DPSS</b>	Department of Public Social Services
<b>IEP</b>	Individualized Education Plan
<b>IFSP</b>	Individualized Family Service Plan
<b>IHSS</b>	In-Home Supportive Services
<b>SSI</b>	Social Security Income
<b>WTW</b>	Welfare-to-Work