

Valley Oak Children's Services' (VOCS) complaint policy is designed to show concern for the safety and welfare of children in child care and to deal objectively with child care providers.

Complaints may originate from a variety of sources including:

- Parent/consumer of child care services, interested, concerned individuals or agencies, VOCS staff (see licensing violation observation policy)

As a referral agency, we do not license child care facilities nor do we investigate alleged licensing violations. The responsibility for investigating complaints rests with Community Care Licensing (CCL). The role of VOCS in receiving complaints is to be a resource to parents, providers and the community in assisting them in contacting the appropriate authorities. In addition, VOCS can also provide technical assistance to achieve compliance with licensing regulations.

LICENSED FACILITIES

All complaints, including anonymous, will be documented. When the complainant alleges a violation of licensing regulations, the caller is advised of VOCS complaint policy and encouraged to call CCL. It is the responsibility of the caller to call CCL. However, VOCS will make a follow up call to CCL within five days to make sure the complaint has been filed. If the complaint is of a Type A serious nature then VOCS will call within two days. If the complaint has not been filed, VOCS will report the details of the complaint.

Deficiencies Types -

Type A - deficiencies are violations of the regulations and the Health and Safety Code, that if not corrected, have a direct and immediate risk to health, safety or personal rights of the clients in care.

Type B - deficiencies are violations of the regulations and the Health and Safety Code, that without correction, could become a risk to the health, safety or personal rights of clients, or a record keeping violation that would impact the care of clients and /or protection of their resources, or a violation that would impact those services required to meet clients needs.

Type C - deficiencies are violations of the regulations that do not present an immediate (Type A) or potential (Type B) negative impact to the health, safety or personal rights of clients in care and where the licensee is in substantial compliance in degree, frequency and intent.

Upon receipt of completed complaint forms from CCL, VOCS will notify the facility in writing that we have received the information. The document will be held in the confidential section of the facility file. VOCS policy of confidentiality will be strictly applied regarding all complaints. However, if VOCS receives a written request for information from another agency to assist in an investigation, VOCS may provide information from the facility file.

All decisions and/or actions concerning **limited participation or permanent removal** of a child care facility may include but are not limited to the following and are based on information received from CCL.

1. The facility may be **permanently removed** from the referral database for (but not limited to) the following:
 - Revocation by CCL, being on the closure list from CCL, reports they have closed their business, or by their request.
2. A facility will be placed on a **temporary hold** for the following reasons:
 - A confidential investigation is being conducted, they are involved in an administrative action, there is a non-working phone, R&R program staff has been unable to contact the facility during updating, or by request from the facility .
3. A facility may be placed on an **extended hold** for the following reasons:
 - A TSO (Temporary Suspension Order) has been issued, the facility is on probation or has a revoked license which has a stay order on the revocation date.
4. Reinstatement of the facility in the referral database is based on the decision of CCL.

Valley Oak Children's Services will notify a child care facility by mail within ten working days of the decision and will at that time inform the provider of her/his rights to a grievance hearing.

Should a regulatory agency notify VOCS that they are conducting an investigation, the child care facility will not be notified of the temporary hold in order to avoid jeopardizing the investigation. The temporary hold does not imply the validity of the complaint, but is used to give all parties involved time to resolve the matter. The hold shall be in effect pending written notification of the resolution from the regulatory agency conducting the investigation.

APPEAL PROCESS Licensed providers/facilities will be given the right to appeal a decision according to VOCS Appeal Policy for Child Care Providers.

LICENSE-EXEMPT PROVIDERS - VOCS will remove the provider from the database after receiving any complaint that is not of a contractual nature. License-exempt providers do not have a regulatory agency responsible for investigating complaints. Parents using exempt providers will be encouraged to call the appropriate law enforcement agency to register their complaint. As a referral agency, VOCS makes no assumption of guilt or innocence in any allegation. VOCS feels that it is in the best interest of families to remove the exempt provider from our files upon receipt of a complaint. VOCS will notify the provider within 10 working days that they have been removed from the database. If an exempt provider is denied clearance on the TrustLine Registry, or has had their clearance revoked or closed due to a determination by Department of Social Services (DSS), Community Care Licensing (CCL) , Department of Justice (DOJ) or any other background check database, they will be removed from the referral database. VOCS will notify them in writing within 10 working days.