

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Child Care Payment Program! We think that you will find the Child Care Payment Program to be a useful resource for your family. We can pay for child care when none of the adults counted in your family size are available to take care of the children due to involvement in one of the following activities (need for child care):

- Employment
- Seeking employment (Job seek)
- Schooling towards a recognized profession
- Personal work towards reducing child abuse (CAPP program only-with a referral)
- Seeking permanent housing while homeless (CAPP program only-with a referral)
- Inability to care for children due to incapacity
- Once you are on the program, you may be able to take a “leave.” No child care is paid – your spot in the program will be held for a short time.

Families must be income eligible and live in Butte County- Gross wages and other money coming into the home are counted. Income cannot exceed 75% of the State median income. A family may continue to have child care paid for after moving to another county, if the child care is provided in Butte County.

At least one adult must be the parent of the child(ren) or guardianship must be documented. Children must be under 13 years of age or have a documented exceptional need.

Families have a wide range of child care settings to choose from; there are some restrictions. All child care providers must be approved before child care begins.

The policies in this packet give details on what you need to do to keep your child care services. We must have documentation of your need for child care and your income to approve you for services. When there is a change in one of the following areas, we must be told and you must supply documentation of the change:

- Need for child care (working, school, etc.)
- Hours child care is needed
- Income
- Family size

Should you have any questions or concerns please speak with the staff person assigned to work with you, \_\_\_\_\_ . Feel free to ask for a supervisor if needed.

Sincerely,  
The Staff at Valley Oak Children’s Services

## INTRODUCTION

Valley Oak Children's Services (VOCS) is a non-profit agency funded by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division to provide child care subsidies and other supportive services to eligible families in Butte County.

Valley Oak Children's Services offers various services to parents, children and child care providers. Services include Child Care Resource and Referral, Child Care Food Program, Child Care Payment Program and a Toy Lending Library.

Valley Oak Children's Services operates on a non-discriminatory basis, giving equal access to services without regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability.

Valley Oak Children's Services Child Care Payment Program assists parents in understanding their own specific needs, offers information on choosing safe, quality child care and informs them of additional resources available to them.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Valley Oak Children's Services Child Care Payment Program pays for child care provided to families who are eligible. Valley Oak Children's Services is not the employer in any child care situation.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All information collected during the enrollment and re-certification process is considered confidential, and access will be limited only to persons connected with the administration of the program including the County Welfare Department. If actions of the child care provider or parent lead to suspicion of misrepresentation or violation of regulations, other regulatory agencies may become involved including the District Attorney's Office and/or Community Care Licensing. The Alternative Payment Program or County Welfare Department of another county may be contacted if the child care or residence is within another county. No other use of this information is allowed without the express written consent of the custodial parent or legal guardian who is enrolled on the program.

## ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

An appointment is made with the parent to complete the enrollment process. The parent will be asked to bring certain documentation and information to the appointment.

### **Required Documents Include:**

#### **A. Documentation of Children**

For the purposes of determining the family size, documentation for all of the children in the household will be required.

**B. Documentation of the residence of an absent parent**

When there is reference to an absent parent on any documents related to the case or when one parent leaves the household, documentation of the absent parent's residence is required.

**C. Verification Of All Income**

Documentation may include wage check stubs, SSA award letter (SSI/SSP not counted), and TANF verification from the County Welfare Department, social security award letter, unemployment award letter or monthly ledgers and end of the year tax statements from a parent who is self-employed. Valley Oak Children's Services may contact the employer at any time to verify income and hours worked.

**D. Complete And Current Immunization Records**

These are required for pre-school and infant children. If this is in conflict with the parents' religious beliefs, a statement to that fact may be signed and kept in the file.

**E. Child's Preadmission Health History – Physician's Report (Cd2207)**

This is required for children who are not enrolled in public school and are cared for by exempt providers. A physician must fill out the physician's report. The form must be returned to Valley Oak Children's Services within thirty (30) days. *(Licensed Centers and Family Day Care Homes are required to obtain this document. Valley Oak Children's Services only requires it of families using care exempt from licensing).* An **emergency card** must be completed by the parent and returned with the same timelines as the physician's report.

**Family's Status On The Program**

**CalWORKS Clients Referred To Stage Two**

Stage two clients will be eligible immediately based on the application and documentation supplied by the County Welfare Department. Enrollment will be based on available funding.

**A. Requirements for Working Status**

- Child care schedules will be set up to cover work time and transportation time to and from work.
- If a parent needs to work hours that are outside of their regularly scheduled work hour, Valley Oak Children's Services must be notified and documentation will be required (i.e. trainings, covering for other staff, etc.)
- **If the parent (or other adult counted in the family size) has employment in the home or on the property that includes the family's home**, the parent must provide justification for requesting subsidized child care and development services. The justification must include these points:

- 1) How the work does not allow for the child to be supervised based on the type of work being done and its requirements,
- 2) The age of the family's child for whom services are sought
- 3) If the child is more than five years old, the specific child care needs.

Based on the justification provided, Valley Oak Children's Services Staff will determine if the work precludes the supervision of the family's children.

For example, family child care providers and exempt child care providers can supervise their own children while working and will not be approved for child care during those work hours.

- **A parent can have child care paid at the FCCH Home where she/he works if ALL of the following conditions apply:**
  - 1) We have a copy of the family day care home license indicating it is licensed as a LARGE family day care home.
  - 2) We have a signed statement from the licensee stating that the parent's work hours are set for times when the number of children exceed licensing requirements for one person to supervise (more than 6 children or more than 8 children if 2 are school age)
  - 3) We have proof that the parent's fingerprints are associated with that licensed family child care home as an assistant (VOCS may be able to verify this with CCL); and
  - 4) We have proof that payroll deductions are withheld for the assistant by the licensee (a pay stub may be used).
- When the parent (or other adult counted in the family size) works as the In Home Support Services (IHSS) worker for the child care provider, child care reimbursement will not be made for the hours that the parent is providing IHSS service for the child care provider.
- When a parent is self-employed or providing In Home Support Services (IHSS), it is expected that work will be done during the hours that children are in school or other adult in the household is home (with additional hours as needed). If the work must be done outside of these hours, the reason must be documented and approved by a Valley Oak Children's Services Supervisor.
- In two parent families, only the time that both parents are in an approved activity will be covered.
- Periodically, the family's need for child care will be updated. Documentation of the hours worked for the previous month will be compared to the child care hours documented on the child care certificate.

## B. Requirements for Student/Training Status

Child care hours will be determined by the Child Care Payment Program Staff and will cover parent's class/training schedule, travel to and from the class site and study time (when appropriate). Valley Oak Children's Services will **not** pay for child care for classes that were covered in previous semesters or to resolve an incomplete.

- All student/training clients must complete a Training Verification Form (CD9605) or Student Questionnaire accompanied by a computer print out of the class schedule. Information on this form must include the following:
  - 1) A statement of the parent's vocational goal;
  - 2) The name of the training institution that is providing the vocational training;
  - 3) The dates that the current quarter, semester, or training period will begin and end;
  - 4) The classes in which the parent is currently enrolled;
  - 5) Attach to this form, a current class schedule that is either an electronic print-out from the training institution of the parent's current class schedule OR, if available, a document that include the following:
    - The days of the week and times of the day of the classes;
    - The signature or stamp of the training institution's registrar.
    - The anticipated completion date of all required training activities to meet the vocational goal;

**When a student withdraws from any scheduled class, s/he is responsible for notifying the Child Care Payment Program at Valley Oak Children's Services immediately; failure to do so is cause for termination and may lead to ineligible care. The student is responsible for providing documentation from the school when withdrawing from classes.**

### **Student: Adequate Progress**

Upon completion of a quarter, semester, or training period and with-in 10 days of their release from the institution, as applicable, a report card, a transcript, or if the training institution does not use formal letter grades, other records to document that the parent is making progress toward the attainment of the vocational goal. These documents must come directly from the training institution and must meet the following standard:

- 1) In graded programs, earn a 2.0 grade point average for the term; or
- 2) In a non-graded program, pass the program's requirements in at least 50 percent of the classes or meet the training institution's standard for making adequate progress.

If adequate progress is not being made (A&B above), the student will be allowed one more quarter, semester, or training period to show adequate progress as described above. The parent is placed on academic probation and must demonstrate with attendance reports that s/he is actually attending the course (s) in which s/he is currently enrolled on a regular basis. In the event that satisfactory progress is not maintained the parent will need to re-establish eligibility prior to the beginning of the

next term with a need status other than “student.” If the parent has not exhausted their time for student status, they can return to student status in six months.

### **Student: Changing Classes and Withdrawals**

A parent must report any changes in his or her class schedule related to the days and times of any class, including withdrawal from a class, within 5 calendar days of requesting the change from the institution.

Students may withdraw from classes/school within the thirty (30) day timeline set by the school. If the case worker is notified within five (5) calendar days of requesting the change from the institution and documentation of withdrawal received within two (2) weeks, the semester will not count against the student. Failure to report dropped classes may result in ineligible care.

### **Student: Other types of Classes**

**On-line or televised instructional classes** that are unit bearing classes from an accredited training institution shall be counted as class time at one hour a week per unit. The parent shall provide a copy of the syllabus or other class documentation and, as applicable, the Web address of the on-line program. The accrediting body of the training institution must be among those recognized by the United States Department of Education.

**General Education Development (GED) or English language acquisition** classes are appropriate if such courses support the attainment of the parent’s vocational goal.

### **Student: Limitations on Training**

Students will be limited to whichever expires first:

Six years from the initiation of child care reimbursement for the purposes of education or training. The time clock does not stop if a parent has a break in schooling and goes back to school. If the parent changes his/her vocational goal, the original time limits are kept. Twenty four semester units, or its equivalent, after attainment of a Bachelor’s Degree.

Families enrolled prior to June 27, 2008 have their time clock start on June 27, 2008. Number 2) does not apply to students with Bachelor’s Degree receiving services on June 27, 2008 for vocational training. Limitations 1) and 2) do not apply to parents attending vocational training when the parent has been deemed eligible for rehabilitation services by the California Department of Rehabilitation.

*Limitation 1) and 2) if the parent is attending retraining services available through the Employment Development Department of the State or its contractors due to a business closure or mass layoff.*

### **C. Requirements For Job-seek Status**

Parents participating in Valley Oak Children's Services Child Care Payment Program who need child care in order to seek employment are allotted a set amount of time per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30).

- 1) The parent must notify their case worker immediately when needing job-seek status. Failure to report this change may result in termination from the program.
- 2) The parent will then have 60 consecutive working days with the count starting on the first day of job seek status (usually the first day of unemployment).
- 3) When counting work days to determine the job seek period for which the parent is eligible, count consecutive work days and exclude federal holidays.
- 4) If the parent has another need for care in place before the end of the 60 day job seek period, the remainder of the job seek period can be used if the parent needs to seek employment again later that fiscal year.
- 5) If the parent is not working or going to school by the end of the sixty (60) day period, services may be terminated.
- 6) If there are two parents in the home, each parent has the potential of seeking employment for a 60 day period of time with-in the fiscal year.
- 7) Child care will be paid for no more than 5 days per week and for less than 30 hours per week. It may be a variable schedule if needed.
- 8) Children who attend a full day school program are only eligible for care for full time vacation days.
- 9) If two parents in a family are seeking employment, one parent is expected to care for the child(ren) while the other parent looks for a job. No child care is needed.
- 10) Parents must sign a Job-seek Agreement that gives the requirements of the status as well as the parent's plan to secure, change or increase employment and a general description of when services will be necessary (child care).
- 11) A log of job-seek activities is due by the 8th of each month.
- 12) If at least 20 of the 60 days included child care for work or training status, job seek can be extended for an additional 20 days (not to exceed 80 days in a year).
- 13) See 18086.5 if the governor declares a state of emergency and opportunities for employment have diminished.

### **D. Requirements For CalWORKS Approved Activity Status**

Valley Oak Children's Services will pay for child care hours needed for CalWORKS clients to participate in activities outlined in the client's CalWORKS work plan. Clients are required to supply Valley Oak Children's Services with a current copy of their work plan whenever it is revised.

**Parents who are determined to be out of compliance with their work plan, may be terminated from the Child Care Payment Program.**

**E. Requirements For Referral Status**

To be eligible for this status:

A child is referred by a county welfare department, child welfare services worker because the child is receiving *family preservation services* pursuant to Welfare Institution Code Section 16500.5 or *family maintenance services* pursuant to Section 16506 and the family requires care as part of their family maintenance or family preservation care plan. This referral can be made for a maximum of 12 months with possible additional referrals made after the first 12- month period. It may be noted in the referral letter that it is necessary to waive the parent fee. For families with a fee waiver, income information will not be required and fees will not be assessed or collected. The parent's income is not considered for a maximum of 12 months (if fees are not waived and the family is over income, the maximum fees listed on the chart must be collected). See Management Bulletin 04-12 for more details.

**OR**

A child is referred by a legally qualified professional (licensed) in a legal, medical, or social service agency, or an emergency shelter. The referral is made because the child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This referral can be made for a maximum of 3 months. It may be noted in the referral letter that it is necessary to waive the parent fee. For families with a fee waiver, income information will not be required and fees will not be assessed or collected. The parent's income is not considered for a maximum of 3 months (if fees are not waived and the family is over income, the maximum fees listed on the chart must be collected).

**When the referred time period ends:**

- 1) To remain on the program, parents must be eligible and have another qualifying need when the referral status ends. When the initial enrollment is completed, an initiation of services NOA will be sent that confirms the enrollment and states the time period for which child care will be reimbursed under the referral status. A letter will be sent with the initial NOA that explains the time limit and what is needed to change to a different status in order to continue receiving child care after the referral status ends.
- 2) Recertification must take place in such a time frame that the recertification is complete with all documentation provided for a new status to be effective on the day after the referral status ends or the child is terminated from the program on the last day of the referral status.

- 3) If parent fees had been waived, income information must be collected in a time frame such that parent fees can begin the first day of the new status.

*Families referred to the Child Care Payment Program because the children are at risk of abuse or neglect are asked to find a licensed child care facility. Valley Oak Children's Services may not pay for care that is exempt from licensing in these situations.*

#### **F. Requirements for Incapacitation Status**

(One or both parents may use incapacitated status when state funds are involved. Only the second parent may use incapacitated status when federal funds are involved.)

The parent(s) or guardian(s) are medically or psychiatrically incapacitated to the extent that they are incapable of caring for the child for some part of the day. In order to be eligible for this status the parent or guardian must provide Valley Oak Children's Services with a Statement of Incapacity (CD9606) filled out by a professional legally qualified to make such an opinion. Incapacitation status may not be combined with any other status without verification to support special circumstances. The family must also be income eligible.

An incapacity form will be accepted from a medical professional for only the first 6 months of a psychological condition. After the first 6 months, incapacity forms must be signed by an appropriate professional related to the type of incapacity. Physical, psychological or mental incapacity must be determined by a professional who is qualified to make such an opinion and specializes in the medical, psychological or mental fields of health care practices respectively. All required information on the incapacity form must be provided by the doctor for the form to be valid.

The parent must sign the top section of the incapacity form authorizing the professional signing the incapacity form to disclose information necessary to establish that the parent meets the definition of incapacity and that services are needed.

Child care hours must be approved and will be limited to 50 hours per week maximum.

#### **G. Requirements for Homeless Status**

Families who are homeless and seeking permanent housing for family stability may be referred by an agency that can document need or may self declare. The family must also be income eligible. **(APPLICABLE ONLY FOR CAPP and FACES)**

## CHANGE IN HOURS NEEDED

### **Limited Term Service Leave**

Parents that will temporarily (3-12 consecutive weeks) not have a need for subsidized child care may be granted a Limited Term Service Leave. The family's place on the program will be held but no child care providers will be paid during this time period. It is up to the child care provider as to whether the space at the facility will be held or not. Any parent wishing to use a Limited Term Service Leave must contact his/her caseworker three (3) weeks prior to the beginning of the leave. Families are allowed up to three (3) Limited Term Service Leaves per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Limited Term Service Leave must not exceed twenty-four (24) weeks total in one fiscal year. **Parents who fail to give a three-week notice before going on a leave may be responsible for paying the child care provider.**

### **Longer LTSLs**

- 1) Limited Term Service Leaves may be granted for up to sixteen (16) consecutive weeks for maternity or medical related reasons that cause the parent to take leave from his/her job or training.
- 2) Students with a long summer break may utilize up to sixteen (16) consecutive weeks for an LTSL.
- 3) Children who have their child care needs met by an After School Education and Safety Program or 21st Century Community Learning Center program may utilize an LTSL for the period of time the afterschool program is in session.

### **Increasing Hours of Child Care**

Due to budgetary constraints child care hours can only be expanded as funding allows. To increase child care hours, the parent must notify Valley Oak Children's Services with a request for expanded hours. The budget will be examined and the parent will be notified if they can have more hours. If funding does not allow an increase then the parent will be put on a waiting list and notified when hours are available. Hours will be increased and siblings added in the order that the requests were made once funds become available.

### **11 & 12 Year Olds in Subsidized After School Programs**

After school programs such as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program are the preferred placement for children who are 11- or 12-years of age. If an 11- or 12-year old child is not getting all his/her child care needs met by a subsidized program, the parent must explain why the afterschool program does not meet the child's needs. A CD9608 form must be completed.

If all of the child's care needs are met by the after school program, the child can be placed on an LTSL that allows for child care when the after school program is not in session or the family can choose to terminate services. The family does have

priority return rights if they determine that the after school program is not meeting their needs and they withdraw from that program.

## FAMILY FEES

Families whose income is above 40% of the State Medium, as specified by the California Department of Education, will be required to pay a fee for services (family fees). The parent fee is based on family size, family gross monthly income, and the length of services provided during the day for the family's child that receives the most hours of child care.

Fees are paid to the Child Care Provider as designated by Valley Oak on a written family fee notification form. Ongoing family fees are due no later than the first of the month and are always paid in advance of the care being provided. Parents will be given prior notice when fees are initiated or increased. A decrease in a parent's income that affects family fees will be effective the day the income decreased and new income documents are provided.

When the child care provider indicates that fees are delinquent, a Notice of Action to terminate services will be mailed to the family by Valley Oak Children's Services. If fees are not paid, the family will be dropped from care. If a parent is eligible for Valley Oak Children's Services Child Care Payment Program in the future, delinquent family fees will have to be paid before child care begins. See Family Fee Guideline for details.

## ON-GOING REQUIREMENTS

### **A. Eligibility Re-certification**

**It is the responsibility of the parent to notify Valley Oak Children's Services Child Care Payment Program staff of any change in status, income, address or phone number. Failure to report any changes within five (5) days may result in termination from the program.** Parents sign the **Parent Reporting Checklist** upon enrolling and at each re-certification to ensure that parents are aware of what changes to report.

1. Re-certification is required at least once per year (except students- see below).
2. Self-employed parents as well as others may be required to send income verification monthly. Income documentation is due no later than the 8th of the next month.
3. Students must be re-certified at the beginning of fall and spring semester. Students must contact their caseworker at the end of each semester with their plans for the upcoming break.
4. Re-certification or update is always necessary when there are changes in income, family size, marital status or employment.

## **Need Update**

The amount of child care that the family needs is periodically re-evaluated. Documentation of the previous month activity hours must be provided by the parent. Those hours are compared to the child care hours on the certificate for that month.

## **Communication With Valley Oak Children's Services Staff**

Clients are asked to call their caseworker with any changes or questions. Valley Oak Children's Services staff strives to treat everyone with respect. Our staff would appreciate the same in return. If a client is seen as belligerent or out of control, s/he may be asked to call back or re-schedule an appointment at a time when s/he is in a better frame of mind and can communicate civilly.

## **CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS**

### **A. Requirements for the Child Care Facility**

After the enrollment process is completed, parents will be given referrals to providers who fit within the Child Care Payment Program requirements for providers:

- 1) The child care facility must be licensed or legally exempt from licensing.
- 2) Centers and camps that are not licensed must meet the guidelines for exemption from licensing.
- 3) If an individual child care provider is legally exempt from licensing, the provider must be registered through Trustline (Aunts, Uncles and Grandparents must complete appropriate paperwork).
- 4) The facility is not closed an excessive number of days for the rate charged (i.e. private pre-schools charging tuition).
- 5) The rate charged for care must fall within the program guidelines or the parent will have to pay the remainder in a co-payment to the provider.
- 6) The facility has not reached its limit of children subsidized by Valley Oak Children's Services.
- 7) Valley Oak Children's Services cannot pay for private elementary school. Kindergarten and older children can attend before and after school programs at private schools and have the cost reimbursed for the child care portion of the day only.

### **B. Timelines for Choosing Child Care**

Parents should select a provider within one week. If a provider is not found, the parent will receive a three week denial/termination notice that can be voided if care begins before the effective date of that notice.

### **C. Parental Choice/Changing Child Care Situations**

Valley Oak Children's Services encourages parental choice in the selection of child care from the full range of child care situations. We feel that parents are best able to determine the most appropriate care for the specific needs of their child(ren) and situation. Staff will be available to provide parents with information and counseling to assist them in making informed choices when selecting care. Parents and guardians will not be paid for watching their own children.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the Child Care Payment Program at least two (2) weeks in advance when changing child care providers. Parents will need to maintain their current provider for the duration of the two-week notice unless the licensing agency closes the facility or the provider waives the two-week notice.

In the interest of the children, families referred to the Child Care Payment Program because the children are at risk of abuse or neglect are asked to find a licensed child care facility. Valley Oak Children's Services may not pay for care that is exempt from licensing under certain circumstances.

### **D. Children Are Limited To One Child Care Provider**

Only one child care provider can be approved per child unless that provider cannot provide care for all of the hours needed by the family. If child care is contracted with one provider and a second provider is needed for early morning or evening hours, the second provider will not be paid for any period of time that the child could be in care with the first provider. It is important to speak with your case manager before you consider using more than one child care provider; Valley Oak Children's Services may not be able to pay for a second provider. A family is limited to a maximum of three (3) providers at any one time.

Based on regional market rate regulations, when a family's first provider is a licensed exempt provider, a center may be used as well if the child is 3 to 5 years old and not yet attending Kindergarten. The center can be the second provider if the parent chooses a licensed center for the specific purpose of providing the child with large group school readiness experiences.

### **E. Complaints About Child Care Providers**

Parents using licensed care may file a complaint with Community Care Licensing.

Parents using license exempt child care may make a written complaint about the provider regarding health and safety issues. The license exempt provider will have the opportunity to submit a written rebuttal. Both parties will receive notice that care will end in three (3) weeks unless a written declaration that the situation

has been rectified (signed by both parties) is received by Valley Oak Children's Services. Upon receiving inquiry about a specific provider, Valley Oak Children's Services will inform the requestor of the general nature of any complaint and whether or not the provider submitted a rebuttal. Serious health and safety concerns should be reported to Children's Services Division (formerly CPS).

**F. Provider Rate Guidelines**

Valley Oak Children's Services will not pay provider rates that exceed the guidelines provided by the state. If a parent chooses a provider whose rate exceeds the guideline, the parent will be responsible for paying the difference directly to the provider. In-home exempt providers must be paid minimum wage; the parent is the employer in this situation.

**G. Additional Fees**

Valley Oak Children's Services will not pay additional costs for supplies or field trips. No deposits will be paid. Registration fees or transportation between elementary school and child care may be paid if the cost does not exceed the amount Valley Oak Children's Services is allowed to pay.

**H. The First Day of Child Care Reimbursement**

The first day that child care will be paid for cannot be prior to the date of the enrollment. If a licensed provider is new to the program, an orientation must be done with the provider before care can begin. If a relative exempt provider (the child's aunt, uncle or grandparent) is used, basic information about the provider including social security number and rate charged must be given to the case worker on or before the first day of care

**I. Substitute Care**

**1) 10 days when the child is too sick to attend regular child care**

If a parent has a licensed provider that cannot accommodate a sick child, the parent can use a substitute provider for up to 10 sick days per child per year. The licensed provider will be paid for the absence if the day of the absence was contracted for and the absence is documented on the certificate/timesheet. Additional days of substitute care can be paid when there is documented need from a doctor and prior approval is given by Valley Oak Staff.

**2) 10 days when the regular provider is closed and care is still needed**

If a parent needs child care on one of the 10 closed days that Valley Oak has approved for the regular provider, a substitute can be paid.

- 3) Valley Oak Staff must approve the use of all substitutes. A child cannot have more than two substitute providers contracted per year.
- 4) All substitutes who are not licensed must meet all of the requirements for exempt providers. The 28-day registration process must **be initiated before the first day of substitute care with a child's aunt, uncle or grandparent. Valley Oak Children's Services will not pay a non-licensed provider (other than the child's aunt, uncle or grandparent) until that person is granted TrustLine registration. TrustLine is a mandatory background check that is required of all child care providers who are not licensed or are not related to the child as an aunt, uncle or grandparent.**
- 5) **All licensed substitutes must be oriented to the program before substitute care begins.**

**Parents need to consider the child care facility's payment system and closed day policies when choosing a provider. If the provider is closed more than 10 days per year, the parent will be responsible for payment of the closed days in excess of the 10 approved by Valley Oak Children's Services!**

#### **J. Day Camps**

Children are limited to 2 camp programs per summer. Parents should choose from the list of camps that have been approved based on the sponsor, hours and rates. If the child needs full-time care, a full-time camp must be chosen. The child cannot attend camp and have a second provider when all of the hours could be covered by a camp. A second provider may be approved for early morning and/or evening hours.

#### **K. Vacation Days Only Care for School Age Children**

In some instances school age children do not need child care on regularly scheduled school days but child care is needed when school is closed (vacation days). These situations arise for the following reasons: the child attends a subsidized after-school program; a parent is seeking employment; a parent works/attends training during the child's school hours only; a joint custody arrangement.

- Vacation days throughout the year- The child will have an open schedule with a provider who can provide a full day of child care whenever the child does not have school. All agreements with child care providers for "Vacation Care Only" will be created as "Hours as Needed" (HAN)

- contracts. This means Valley Oak Children's Services will only reimburse the provider for days the child actually uses child care.
- o Limited Term Services Leave (LTSL) for children in a subsidized after school program- Parents can utilize a LTSL for these students at anytime the after school program is in session. The child can receive child care services again when the program is closed.

## PROVIDERS EXEMPT FROM LICENSING

If the provider is exempt from licensing, the twenty eight (28) day registration process must be initiated before child care can begin. The parent has one (1) week to get all completed forms back to Valley Oak Children's Services. A three (3) week Notice of Action to Terminate will be sent near the end of that one (1) week period if forms are not in (allowing a total of 28 days). Providers and parents must also attend a Caregiver Workshop within the twenty-eight (28) day timeline. If all paperwork is still not received or the workshop not attended by the effective date on the notice, the process will be considered abandoned. The effective date on the Notice of Action will be the last day child care will be reimbursed with that provider. The family is limited to four (4) initiations of exempt care in one fiscal year.

Once all the paperwork is returned to Valley Oak Children's Services, there is a chance the Trustline Registry applicant may be denied by the Department of Justice/Department of Social Services. If the child care provider is denied registration, Valley Oak Children's Services will notify the parent as soon as the agency is notified. If a provider has been denied from the Trustline Registry, and exhausted all appeals, child care reimbursement will be discontinued in five days or when child care ends, whichever happens first.

### **A. When the child care is provided in the provider's home:**

Care is considered out of the home and the child care provider is considered self-employed. The parent and Valley Oak Children's Services are **not** responsible for minimum wage or taxes. There are no further restrictions on this type of care and the payment is made to the provider.

### **B. When child care is provided in the parent's home:**

Care is considered in-home and the parent is considered the employer. As the employer, the parent is responsible for paying the child care provider minimum wage and must pay appropriate employee taxes. To ensure the in-home provider is paid minimum wage, a minimum number of children (the number is set by Valley Oak Children's Services), must be in care at all times. The check for child care is written to the parent who then must pay the provider (and properly withhold all taxes when paying) and pay taxes to the appropriate government offices. If the parent does not pay the provider in a timely way, or withhold and pay/report properly to tax agencies, the parent will be terminated from the program.

## REIMBURSEMENT FOR CHILD CARE WITH CERTIFICATES (sign in/out sheets)

- 1) **The parent** and case worker initiate an appropriate child care schedule. Valley Oak Children's Services will only provide reimbursement for care that is documented correctly on the certificate.
- 2) One child care certificate must be filled out for each child in care.
- 3) The parent must notify the child care provider of anyone other than the parent that may be signing the child in or out.
- 4) When the parent or other adult takes the child to child care, s/he must note the actual time and full signature on the sign-in sheet/certificate. The same process is followed when the child is picked up from child care.
- 5) There are columns provided on the sign-in sheet for the provider to sign a school age child in and out for school with the provider's initials.
- 6) Absences must be noted and signed by the parent.
- 7) Child care certificates must be filled out completely and in ink (no white out).
- 8) At the end of the month, both the parent and provider must review the certificate for completeness/accuracy and sign at the bottom.
- 9) It is the responsibility of both the child care provider and the parent to ensure that the child care certificate is received by Valley Oak Children's Services no later than 5:00 p.m. on the eighth (8th) of the month.
- 10) Refusal by the parent to sign the child care certificate daily and at the bottom is reason for termination from the Child Care Payment Program.

### **Absences For Licensed Care With A Set Schedule**

If a child is not in care for all of the contracted hours, the parent must indicate the reason for the absence on the certificate. Excused absences will be paid by Valley Oak Children's Services.

**Important:** If the child will be out of care for five (5) days or more, the parent must notify the Child Care Payment Program immediately.

The parent or provider must write the reason for the absence on the signature line of the certificate and the parent must sign next to the reason with full signature. The types of absences that are allowed include illness (unlimited), family emergency (not to exceed one week), and days that are in the best interest of the child (not to exceed 10 per fiscal year).

## **Types of Excused Absences**

A. Illness (not limited): **Some acceptable explanations would be: “doctor’s appointment,” “flu,” “fever,” “measles,” “head ache,” etc.** “Illness” or “sickness” is not specific enough.

B. **Family Emergencies (not to exceed one week):**

- Illness of a sibling.
- Immediate need for treatment of anyone in the family unit by a physician/dentist, or health professional.
- Death of a family member.
- Any incident such as theft, fire, flood, or any situation which results in the family having their normal schedule disrupted to the extent that the family or the children are temporarily dislocated, and/or the parent cannot accompany their child safely to day care.
- Transportation problems.

When a family uses emergency days for one week, the parent must call Valley Oak Children’s Services by the last day of that week. The parent either reports that the emergency is taken care of and the child will resume attendance at child care on a regular basis or the situation is not resolved and the parent must make arrangements to take a Limited Term Service Leave.

C. **Best Interest Days (not to exceed 10 per year):**

Families will be allowed absences for the “best interest of the child.” Excused absences, (BID’s) shall be limited to ten (10) days per fiscal year. Best interest days are defined as absences that fall within the following categories:

- Parent’s Holiday or parent’s vacation.
- Visits with grandparents and other family members. Court ordered visitation that is not an ongoing placement plan is not counted in the 10 BID days.\*\*\*
- School sponsored field trips.
- Vacations.

Parents will be required to pay the child care provider for any Best Interest Days that the agency can not cover because they are in excess of ten.

D. **Court ordered visitation** is an excused absence when it is not the ongoing placement plan for the child and the duration is less than three (3) consecutive weeks. It must be documented with court settlement papers. If there is an ongoing placement schedule, the child care schedule will account for the days that the child is spending with the other parent; Valley Oak will not pay for the days the child is with the other parent. If visitation will last three (3) consecutive weeks or more the child may be placed on a Limited Term Service Leave. (See LTSL description)!

### TERMINATION OF SERVICES

**When a family chooses to terminate from Valley Oak Children's Services Child Care Payment Program, we request that they give the provider and Valley Oak Children's Services a two (2) week notice.**

**Parents participating on the Child Care Payment Program will receive a termination notice for the following reasons:**

- 1) Failure to provide correct information at the time of the enrollment or re-certification.
- 2) Failure to return training verification, grades, and job-seek logs and other required documents when due.
- 3) Failure to find appropriate child care within the given timelines.
- 4) Failure to promptly notify Valley Oak Children's Services of changes within five (5) working days of the change. Changes to notify the agency about include: hours child care is needed, gross monthly income, employment, family size, address/phone number or marital status.
- 5) Delinquency in payment of family fees.
- 6) Failure to use the hours of care agreed upon by VOCS and the parent.
- 7) Failure to provide a complete and accurate certificate by the eighth (8th) of the month
- 8) Falsification of or refusal to sign child care certificates.

- 9) Long term unexcused absences from child care or excessive use of best interest days.
- 10) A parent with an exempt in-home provider fails to pay the provider the full amount received from Valley Oak Children's Services (minus taxes). Wages must be paid within five (5) working days of receiving the check from Valley Oak Children's Services.
- 11) Family income exceeds the amount allowed for the program that is 75% of state median income.
- 12) The Child reaches the maximum age for the program.
- 13) Failure to arrange or attend a re-certification appointment when notice to do so has been received.
- 14) The family no longer has a need for care as outlined in Parent Policies.
- 15) Parent does not comply with any of the regulations set forth in these policies.

### FAIR HEARING

Parents enrolled in the Child Care Payment Program have the right to a fair hearing if they are dissatisfied with any decision regarding their participation in the program. The fair hearing procedure is outlined on the back of the Notice of Action (CD7617). The parent first goes through a hearing at the local level with Valley Oak Children's Services staff. Further information about the fair hearing process will be furnished upon request.

### UNIFORM COMPLAINT

Any individual, public agency, or organization may file a written complaint against Valley Oak Children's Services alleging unlawful discrimination or failure to comply with the law. Complaints should be sent to Valley Oak Children's Services' Executive Director.

### A FAMILY BECOMES INELIGIBLE FOR CHILD CARE

The parent will be responsible for paying Valley Oak Children's Services for any funds awarded during a period of ineligibility. If Valley Oak Children's Services pays for child care for which the family is not eligible, the parent will be billed for that amount.

**Note: Periods of ineligibility** are created when a parent does not report complete and accurate information at an enrollment or re-certification appointment.

**Ineligibility may also result from failure to report changes** including, but not limited to, the following: parent's employer/school, employment/school schedule, income (increase or decrease), discontinuance of Cash Aid, family size and/or marital status. *These changes as well as change in address and phone number must be reported within 5 working days of the change.*

#### RE-ENROLLING AFTER TERMINATION

If a family is terminated from the Child Care Payment Program because of failure to follow the policies, there is a waiting period before re-enrollment is possible. The family can be entered on the eligibility list after being terminated from the program but that family will not be considered for an opening until one (1) year from the effective date of termination. This timeline may be waived if the client is at a later date transferred for fulfilling CalWORKS obligations. In addition, any outstanding bills must have been paid before a family will be re-enrolled.

#### OMISSION OR MISREPRESENTATION OF INFORMATION

If VOCS suspects that the parent has provided incomplete or inaccurate information to establish or maintain eligibility and/or need for the program, the District Attorney's Office will be contacted to investigate. The family will be sent a termination notice and billed for ineligible care (see section below).

If VOCS determines that the parent provided incomplete or inaccurate information to effect family fees, family fees will be re-calculated and billed retroactively based on the accurate information.

If VOCS suspects that there is misrepresentation in regard to the child care provider and/or the amount of the child care utilized, the District Attorney's office will be contacted to investigate. The family and/or the child care provider may be terminated from the program and the parent and/or provider may be required to repay the agency the funds that were misused.

The District Attorney's office will take legal action when warranted.