

# CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL STATE NETWORK COMPLAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

(Revised 3/14/05)

Local Early Learning Coalitions (ELC) and R&R Service Providers are required to implement and enforce these procedures.

## I. Policy

Local Early Learning Coalitions/R&R Service Providers must record and process all complaints from any source and lodged against any person, agency or organization according to the procedures specified below:

- ◆ All complaints will be recorded on the approved form and retained in a complaint file for a minimum of five years.
- ◆ Coalition/R&R will process complaints against providers according to these policies and procedures without regard to whether or not the provider is subcontracted with the agency to provide subsidized early care and education services.
- ◆ Complaints which are not required to be reported to the abuse hotline or licensing but which might benefit from technical assistance may be handled by Coalition/R&R and/or other staff or an outside source as is appropriate to each situation and in accord with contractor policy. Coalition/R&R has the responsibility to provide technical assistance, to the extent possible, to all legally operating providers to help resolve complaints.
- ◆ Abuse/Neglect complaints or complaints which pose an immediate health and/or safety risk will be reported within the hour to the Florida Abuse Hotline and/or the licensing authority (by phone and/or FAX with paperwork to follow). All other reports will be processed within 2 working days, (i.e. a Friday Report will be processed by Tuesday the following week).
- ◆ In counties where DCF does not have licensing authority, the same policy and procedures apply but are reported to the local licensing agency.

## II. TYPE OF COMPLAINT

## REPORT TO

(Note: If in doubt, report to licensing)

### **ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Physical, sexual, emotional/mental

### **The Florida Abuse Hotline**

1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)

### **VIOLATIONS BY:**

(Contact district or local licensing agency and the State Licensing Office in Tallahassee 850-488-4900)

### **Licensing Authority**

- Licensed Early Care and Education Facilities
- Licensed Family Child Care Homes
- Registered Family Child Care Homes
- Exempt Facilities

Complaints involving health, safety, sanitation and related issues: i.e.

- |                      |                          |                              |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| >screening           | >square footage          | >CPR/First Aid               |
| >access              | >ratios                  | >nutrition                   |
| >health requirements | >safety & transportation | >discipline                  |
| >physical facility   | >staff credentials       | >transportation              |
| >too many children   | >illegal operation       | >admissions & record keeping |

**PROGRAMMATIC**

i.e., operating schedule, services offered, curriculum, teaching style, not enough/too much structure, too much/too little TV, rowdy behavior.

**ELC/R&R Service Provider**

**PERSONAL**

i.e., obscene language, unkempt appearance, smoking (in a FCCH), shows favoritism.

**ELC/R&R Service Provider**

**DISCRIMINATION RELATED TO:**

**Disability**

**FL. Directory of Early Childhood Services  
1-800-654-4440**

**Race, religion, language, other**

**ELC/R&R Service Provider**

**FINANCIAL**

i.e., cost of care, reimbursement problems, and non-payment.

**ELC/R&R Service Provider**

**II. PROCEDURES**

Policies and procedures including complaints about all providers: licensed, registered, exempt, and “illegal” providers will be processed according to these policies and procedures without regard to whether or not the provider is subcontracted with the service provider to provide school readiness services.

- ◆ **A complaint report form must be completed for all types of complaints and submitted to the appropriate department. Coalition/R&R must retain a copy in a complaint file.**

**1) ABUSE/NEGLECT COMPLAINTS**

- A. If a complaint concerns child abuse or neglect, the complainant must be given the abuse hotline phone number (800) 96-ABUSE and is strongly encouraged to report it directly.
- B. If the complainant is a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect (i.e. licensed or registered providers, school teacher, health care or other professional services provider, etc.), Coalition/R&R will remind the complainant of his/her legal responsibility to report the abuse by calling the hotline directly.
- C. The complainant will be advised that the Coalition/R&R is a mandated reporter and will be making a report to the abuse hotline if the caller gives any specific information about the situation.

**2) VIOLATIONS**

- A. The complainant will be strongly encouraged to call the licensing authority directly. The caller will be given the telephone number of the licensing authority.
- B. Coalition/R&R staff will complete the complaint form and provide a copy of the form to the licensing authority for follow-up. Complaints posing an immediate risk related to health, safety and/or sanitation will be reported within one hour. Other reports will be given to licensing within 2 working days of the receipt of the complaint.
- C. Coalition/R&R will NOT notify a provider of a complaint since to do so may jeopardize the investigation by the licensing authority.
- D. Coalition/R&R will contact licensing at least monthly to determine the status of complaints outstanding for at least 30 days.
- E. Coalition/R&R will document on the complaint form the outcome with regard to license status.

**3) PROGRAMMATIC, FINANCIAL OR PERSONAL COMPLAINTS (Do not report to licensing.)**

- A. Coalition/R&R will complete the complaint form.
- B. Coalition/R&R will respond or refer to the appropriate department for comment, technical assistance or other action.

**4) DISCRIMINATION**

- A. Coalition/R&R will complete the complaint form.
- B. Coalition/R&R will send complaints regarding disability discrimination to the local contractor for the Florida Directory of Early Childhood Services.
- C. Coalition/R&R will respond or refer to the appropriate department for comment, technical assistance or other action.

**5) INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

- A. All early care and education providers will receive a copy of these Complaint Procedures as part of their “provider packet.”
- B. Families who request a copy of complaint procedures will be provided a copy by Coalition/R&R.

**6) NOTIFYING A PROVIDER OF COMPLAINT**

- A. Coalition/R&R will NOT notify a provider of any complaint that must be reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline or to the licensing authority.

**7) NON-REFERRAL DATABASE STATUS (TEMPORARY)—PENDING DCF DETERMINATION OF LICENSURE STATUS**

- A. A provider must be placed in “do not refer” status when their license has been suspended.

**8) REMOVAL OF A PROVIDER FROM THE DATABASE**

- A. A provider must be removed from the database (inactivated) when their license has been revoked.

**9) ACCESS TO PROVIDER HISTORY**

- A. All families receiving R&R early care and education referrals will be strongly encouraged to contact the licensing authority before selecting a provider. All “family information packets” will contain the name, address, and telephone number of the appropriate licensing authority.
- B. Licensing records are available for review by the general public as required by law.
- C. Licensing inspections are available on-line at [www.myflorida.com/childcare](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare).

Developed by Department of Children & Families and the Children’s Forum