

Family Partnership Program *Financial Aid*

ELIGIBILITY AND NEED



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Palo Alto Community Child Care
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www.paccc.org

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The financial aid programs support low-income qualifying families with their child care needs. State and local governments fund this program which is managed by Palo Alto Community Child Care.

Families must meet eligibility and need guidelines for the program. Additional criteria must be met and verification of documentation must occur.

The details provided in this brochure will assist families with acceptable forms of documentation for financial aid certification/recertification of eligibility.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Parents/guardians must provide documentation that verifies the family meets each of the criteria listed below.

- 1) Family Size (pg. 4)
- 2) Physical Address (pg. 5)
- 3) Eligibility (pg. 5-10)
 - a. Child Protective Services (CPS)
 - b. Children at Risk of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation
 - c. Current Cash Aid Recipient
 - d. Homeless
 - e. Income Eligibility
- 4) Need (pg. 11-15)
 - a. Training Toward Vocational Goal
 - b. Employment
 - c. Seeking Employment
 - d. Seeking Permanent Housing
 - e. Parental Incapacity
 - f. Child Protective Service and At-Risk

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5) Common Forms, Recertification and Fee Assessment (pg. 16-17)

Documentation of Family Size

A parent shall provide the names of the parents and the names, and birthdates of the children identified in the family.

- A) Parent(s) shall provide supporting documentation regarding the number of children claimed in the family by providing at least one of the following documents as applicable:
- Birth certificates
 - Court orders regarding child custody
 - Adoption documents
 - Records of foster care placements
 - School or medical records
 - County welfare department records
 - Other reliable documentation indicating the relationship of the child to the parent
- B) When only one parent has signed the application for services and the information provided from the list above indicates the child(ren) in the family has another parent, you may provide a self-certification of being a single parent, signed under the penalty of perjury. Initialing on section V. of form 9600 the applicant parent is certifying to confirm single parent family.
- C) *City of Palo Alto funding only* – The presence or absence of a parent shall be documented by providing one of the following documents:
- Records of divorce or legal separation
 - Court ordered child custody arrangements
 - Evidence that the parent signing the application is receiving child support payments, has filed for child support with the appropriate local agency, or has executed documents with that agency declining to file for child support
 - Any other documentation that confirms presence, or absence, of a parent of a child in the family, indicating that the applicant parent is the responsible party

If due to a recent departure of a parent from the family, the remaining applicant parent cannot provide any documentation in Section C, the applicant parent may submit a self-declaration signed under penalty of perjury explaining the absence of that parent from the family.

Address Requirements

To be eligible for subsidized child care and development services, the parent must live in the State of California while services are being received.

- Any evidence of the family street address in California
 - Rental receipts, utility bills, social services verification of benefits or other documents for the residence of the family
- Homeless – can submit letter of intent to live in California or other documents from a shelter if currently residing in one

*Note: City of Palo Alto funding **only*** – A family must provide supporting documentation of one or more of the following requirements:

- Recent utility bill establishing Palo Alto residency
- Proof of employment by the City of Palo Alto
- Attending a PAUSD elementary school
 - Tinsley Agreement establishing attendance at PAUSD under Tinsley Program
- Homeless – Documentation from a local emergency shelter or agency serving victims of domestic violence accompanied by verification of previous Palo Alto residency within the past year
 - Verification letter or documentation of homeless status by a local social service agency or shelter
- Any other documentation that confirms residency in Palo Alto, California

Documentation of Eligibility

It is the parent's responsibility to provide all documentation required to determine the family's eligibility for subsidized childcare services. The parent(s) must provide documentation of eligibility in one of the following criteria listed. PACCC is responsible for verifying, as applicable.

Child Protective Services

If the basis of *eligibility* is based on Child Protective Services (CPS), parent(s) will need to provide a written referral, dated within six months of application for services that includes:

- A statement from a local county welfare department, child welfare services worker, certifying that the child is receiving Child Protective Services (CPS) and that child care and development services are a necessary component of the CPS service plan
- The probable duration of the CPS service plan
- The waiver of family fee, if requested

- The name, address, phone number, and signature of the county child welfare staff

At-Risk of Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation

If the basis of *eligibility* is based on 'At-Risk', parent(s) must provide a written referral dated within six (6) months preceding the application for services, from a legal medical, social services agency, a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, a Head Start program, or an emergency or transitional shelter, that includes:

- A statement by a legally qualified professional that the child is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation and that child care and development services are needed to reduce or eliminate that risk. A legally qualified professional means a person licensed under applicable state laws and regulations of the state of California to perform legal, medical, health or social services for the general public.
- The probable duration of the at-risk situation
- The name, address, phone number, and signature of the legally qualified professional making the referral
- The waiver of family fee, if requested

If documentation provided by an individual listed above does not have all the necessary information to satisfactorily establish eligibility, the financial aid coordinator will request the said individual to complete the Pilot CPS/At-Risk Referral form.

Current Aid Recipient

If the basis of eligibility is based on current recipient of cash aid, parent(s) are required to provide proper documentation from the Department of Social Services that the parent(s) is receiving public assistance from the county welfare department.

*Note: City of Palo Alto funding **only*** – A Notice of Action (NOA) from a social services agency is required

Homeless

If the basis of eligibility is based on homelessness, the parent(s) must provide one of the following:

- A written referral from an emergency shelter, other legal, medical, or social service agency; or
- A written parental declaration that states:

- That the family is homeless and
- A description of the family's current living situation
 - In this case, families must complete the Pilot Self-Declaration of Homeless form

*Note: City of Palo Alto funding **only** –*

- Documentation from a local emergency shelter or agency serving victims of domestic violence accompanied by verification of previous Palo Alto residency within the past year
- Documentation verifying homeless status by a local social service agency or shelter

Income Eligibility

Your income eligibility is based on documentation of the total countable income of all individuals counted in the family size; all sources of countable income include:

- Gross wages or salaries, advances, commissions, overtime, tips, bonuses, gambling or lottery winnings
- Wages for migrant, agricultural, or seasonal work
- Public cash assistance
- Gross income from self-employment less business expenses with the exception of wage draws
- Disability, unemployment or workers compensation
- Spousal support, child support received from the former spouse or absent parent, or financial assistance for housing costs, living expenses or car payments paid as part of or in addition to spousal or child support
- Survivor and retirement benefits, pensions or annuities, inheritance
- Dividends, interest on bonds, income from estates or trusts, net rental income or royalties
- Rental income received from rent for room within the family's residence or rental property
- Foster care grants, payments or clothing allowance for children placed through child welfare services
- Financial assistance received for the care of a child living with an adult who is not the child's biological or adoptive parents
- Veterans pensions

- Allowances for housing or automobiles provided as part of compensation
- Portion of student grants or scholarships not identified for educational purposes as tuition, books, or supplies
- Insurance or court settlements for lost wages or punitive damages
- Net proceeds from the sale of real property, stocks, or inherited property
- Other enterprise for gain

Documentation of Income from Employment

If income eligibility is based on employment income, acceptable income documentation for parents who are employed includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- An Employment Schedule Verification form signed release, which includes the employer's name, address, usual business hours and telephone number, authorizing the program to contact the parent's employer and;
- Payroll check stubs (most recent month) or;
- An independent written statement from the employer
- Other record of wages provided by employer

Documentation of Income from Self-Employment

If income eligibility is based on self-employment income, parent(s) must provide a combination of documentation necessary to establish current income for at least the month preceding certification or recertification. The documentation must consist of as many of the following types of documentation as necessary to determine income:

- A copy of the most recent signed and completed tax return with a statement of current estimated income; Note: City of Palo Alto subsidy recipients must provide tax return for recent two (2) years
- Letter from source of income
- Other business records, such as detailed ledgers, receipts, or business logs, showing the source of income and including a summary of the parent's total income, business expenses, and adjusted income

Agency staff is not responsible for making these income calculations for the parent. Parent must complete the Pilot Self-Employment Verification Form.

Documentation for Other Sources of Income

- Cash aid statements, NOA from social services agency
- Child support statements, court order, bank statements, cashed checks
- Foster care grant statements
- Student grant or scholarship statements, financial aid award letter
- Statements for any other source of income not listed
- Documentation of all non-wage income
- Self-declaration for any income for which no documentation is possible

Palo Alto Community Child Care reserves the right to request additional documentation to verify income when necessary. In some cases, four (4) months of most recent income may be required when income is variable and up to twelve (12) months when income is intermittent.

If documentation of income is not possible, you may provide a self-certification of income. A self-certification of income is a declaration (written statement) signed by the parent under penalty of perjury, identifying:

- employer, date of hire, rate and frequency of pay, total amount of income received for the preceding month(s), type of work performed, and the hours and days of employment; or
- the amount and frequency of sources of income for which no documentation is possible

Parents with a self-certification of income will complete the Pilot Self-Declaration of Income form.

PACCC's financial aid coordinator will assess the reasonableness of the days and hours of employment, based on the description of the employment and the documentation provided for income eligibility, and authorizes only the time determined to be reasonable.

*Note: City of Palo Alto Funding **only*** – Recent federal tax filing information is always required.

Adjusted Gross Monthly Income for Families with Severe Disabilities (City of Palo Alto Funding Only)

Families that have a member with a severe disability requiring non-reimbursable medical expenses are eligible for a subsidized rate that takes into account these expenses. A severe disability is defined as those conditions, which are catastrophic (violent or sudden in nature with extreme consequences), long-term (occurring or involving a long period of time of hardship and suffering) or terminal (leading ultimately to death).

The following documentation is required:

- A written letter from a medical physician detailing the nature of and severity of the disability and;
- Formal documentation substantiating that the expenses are directly related to the disability (a verifiable statement of non-reimbursable medical expenses)

Income from Temp Agency (City of Palo Alto Funding Only)

Parents employed by a temporary work agency (temp) are eligible for childcare subsidy. The parent will be required to submit the following documentation verifying that he or she is employed by the agency and accepting assignments as they are offered:

- An offer letter from the agency that states the hours of the employee has requested work (e.g. part-time, 8:30am to 12:30pm) and the range of pay;
- A record of when the parent was offered an assignment, it was accepted, the length of the assignment, the hours worked, and the rate of pay. The parent must submit the record to the financial aid coordinator at the end of each month, along with pay stubs of wages earned for the month;
- The parent must sign an employer verification form to have on file with the temp agency and the financial aid office.

Teenage Parents (City of Palo Alto Funding Only)

- The parent may be referred to the program by PAUSD as needing subsidized childcare in order to remain in school;
- During the summer months, the parent must be enrolled in summer school or employed in order to continue to receive subsidized childcare services; and
- The parent will be required to participate in the childcare program for a minimum of 15 hours per week

Documentation of Need

Families who are eligible for the financial aid program must document that each parent in the family meets a “need” criterion. Child care and development services shall only be available to the extent to which a parent meets a need criterion that:

- Precludes the provision of care and the supervision of the family’s child for some of the day;
- There is no parent in the family capable of providing care for the family’s child during the time care is requested; and
- Supervision of the family’s child is not otherwise being provided by school or another person or entity.

It is the parent’s responsibility to provide all documentation required to determine the family’s ‘need’ for services. The acceptable forms of documentation for each need criteria are listed below.

Training Toward Vocational Goal

If the basis of need for services is training toward vocational goals, English Language Learner, GED or HS diploma, parent’s child care and development services is limited to six years from the date service first began or completing 24 semester units after earning a Bachelor’s Degree, whichever expires first. The parent must provide documentation which includes the following:

- A statement of the parent’s vocational goal or training activities
- The name of the training institution that is providing the training
- Days and hours of training
- The dates on which the current quarter, semester, or training period, will begin and end
- A current class schedule (electronic printout) from the training institution showing the parent’s current class schedule or, if unavailable, a document that includes all of the following information:
 - The classes in which the parent is currently enrolled
 - The days of the week and times of 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

Adequate progress of no less than a 2.0 must be maintained, or pass grade for non-graded courses. Verification of progress occurs at recertification.

Employment

If the basis of *need* for services is employment, documentation must include the following:

- The pay stubs that were provided to determine income eligibility that indicate the days and hours of employment; or
- If the provided pay stubs do not indicate the days and hours of employment, the program will verify the days and hours of employment by doing one of the following:
 - Securing an independent written statement from the employer; or
 - Complete the Pilot Employment Schedule Verification Form
 - If form does not come back independently from parent, agency must contact employer to verify information listed on the form
 - Agency can collect this information by phone, fax, and/or email

If the employer refuses or is unresponsive in providing the requested information, the program will determine the reasonableness of the days and hours of employment based on the description of the employment and community practice; or If the parent states in a declaration signed under penalty of perjury that a request for employer documentation would adversely affect the parent's employment, the program will determine the reasonableness of the parent's declaration and base certification on the description of employment and known community practice.

A release to verify employment is not required when the parent has an employer and has submitted a declaration that contacting the employer would adversely affect their employment.

Parents Who are Self-Employed

Must provide documentation of need based on self-employment that includes the following:

- A declaration of need under penalty of perjury that includes a description of the employment and an estimate of the days and hours worked per week
- A copy of one or more of the following:
 - Appointment logs, client receipts, job logs, mileage logs, a list of clients with contact information, or similar records sufficient to demonstrate the days and hours worked; and

- As applicable, a copy of a business license, a workspace lease, or a workspace rental agreement

When *need* for services is based on self-employment, parent(s) must complete the Pilot Self-Employment Verification form.

If the program cannot verify need based on the documentation provided, the parent shall provide a release authorizing the program to obtain the information it deems necessary to support the parent's asserted days and hours worked per week. The program will take additional action to verify self-employment that includes any one or more of the following:

- If the self-employment occurs in a rented space, contact the parent's lessor to verify the parent's renting of the space
- If the self-employment occurs in variable locations, independently verify this information by contacting one or more clients whose names and contact information have been voluntarily provided by the parent; or
- Make other reasonable contacts or requests to determine the amount of time for self-employment

In addition to the requirements listed, if the parent's *employment is in the family's home* or on property that includes the family's home, the parent must provide justification for requesting subsidized child care and development services based on the type of work being done and its requirements, the age of the family's child for whom services are sought, and, if the child is more than five years old, the specific child care needs. The agency shall determine and document whether the parent's employment and the identified child care needs preclude the supervision of the family's child.

Parents who are licensed family day care home providers pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1596.78 or individual license-exempt providers pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1596.792, subdivisions (d) or (f), are not eligible for subsidized services during the parent's business hours because the parent's employment does not preclude the supervision of the family's child.

Seeking Employment

If the basis of need for services is Seeking Employment, status is limited to no more than five (5) days per week and no more than 32 ½ hours per week of care. The period of eligibility shall start on the day authorized by the agency and extend for *no less than twelve (12) months*.

Required documentation for seeking employment includes:

- A declaration written by the parent and signed under penalty of perjury stating that the parent is seeking employment
- The declaration must include the parent’s plan to secure, change, or increase employment; and include a description of when they will need services in order to seek employment.

Based on the parent’s declaration, the agency will determine the approved child care schedule, which may include a variable schedule. When need is based on Seeking Employment, parent must complete the Pilot Seeking Employment form.

Note: Recipients of City of Palo Alto funding utilizing ‘seeking employment’, the period of eligibility is ninety (90) working days. Documentation and verification of job search activity may be required. Parent must provide an update to need within, and no more than, ninety (90) days for continued subsidized childcare services. If no update is received in ninety (90) days, termination of subsidy will occur immediately.

Seeking Permanent Housing

If the basis of need for services is seeking permanent housing, the parent’s child care and development services is limited to 5 days per week and no more than 32 ½ hours per week of care. Documentation of seeking permanent housing shall include:

- A declaration written by the parent and signed under penalty of perjury that the family is seeking permanent housing
- The declaration must include the parent’s search plan to secure a fixed, regular, and adequate residence and must have a general description of when services will be necessary

Based on the parent’s declaration, the agency will determine the approved child care schedule, which may include a variable schedule. When need is based on Seeking housing, parent must complete the Pilot Seeking Permanent Housing form.

Parental Incapacity

Parental incapacity means the temporary or permanent inability of the child's parent(s) to provide care and supervision of the child(ren) for part of the day due to a physical or mental health condition. Services based on parental incapacity cannot exceed 50 hours per week. If the basis of need for services is Parental Incapacity, parent(s) must provide a signed release authorizing a legally qualified health professional to disclose information necessary to establish incapacitation. The legally qualified health professional will need to provide PACCC with a statement that includes all of the following:

- That the parent is incapacitated that the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision for the child for part of the day
- And, if the parent is physically incapacitated, identifies the extent to which the parent is incapable of providing care and supervision;
- The days and hours per week that services are recommended
- The name, business address, telephone number, professional license number, and signature of the legally qualified health professional and, if applicable, the name of the health organization the professional is associated with

The contractor may contact the legally qualified health professional for verification, clarification, or completion of the provided statement. Approved days and hours of services will be based on the recommendation of the health professional. When need is based on parental incapacity parent must have a licensed professional complete the Pilot Statement of Parent/Guardian Incapacity form.

CPS or At-Risk of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

If the basis of need for services is a CPS or At-Risk status, please refer to the above aforementioned section on Eligibility for CPS or At-Risk for required documentation.

COMMON FORMS Parent(s) May Complete

- CPS/At-Risk Referral
- Self-Declaration of Homeless
- Self-Declaration of Income
- Statement of Parent/Guardian Incapacity
- Seeking Permanent Housing
- Seeking Employment Plan
- School or Training Verification
- Employment Schedule Verification
- UPDATE Employment Schedule Verification
- Self-Employment Verification
- Contract Hours Worksheet
- Pilot Program Agreement
- 9600 (application for services)
- NOA (Notice of Action)
- Request to Reduce Child Care Hours

RECERTIFICATION

For families funded by CDE California State Preschool Program (CSPP) or General Childcare Program (CTTR) a renewal of the financial aid application will occur after 24 months from the date of initial certification/approval (with the exception of families approved for need on the basis of seeking employment, a recertification is due no less than 12 months from date of initial certification). This process of recertification shall be done within a reasonable amount of time but should not exceed 90 days.

*Note: City of Palo Alto funding **only*** – Families must be recertified annually to verify continued compliance with all of the eligibility criteria for receiving subsidized child care services. A renewal of the financial aid application will occur after 12 months from the date of initial certification (with the exception of families approved for need on the basis of seeking employment, an UPDATE on need for care is due within 90 days).

