



County of Santa Cruz

HUMAN RESOURCES AGENCY

Cecilia Espinola, Administrator

1000 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

(831) 454-4130 or 454-4045 FAX: (831) 454-4642

April 18, 2002

AGENDA: April 23, 2002

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

County of Santa Cruz

701 Ocean Street

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

ADOPT RESOLUTION TERMINATING AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE STATE LICENSING FUNCTIONS FOR FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES

Dear Members of the Board:

As you know, the Human Resources Agency (HRA) has performed the State licensing function for Family Day Care Homes in Santa Cruz County for more than eleven years. Licensing of Family Day Care Homes (FDCH's) is the responsibility of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), but counties have the option of contracting with the State to provide these services locally. Currently, Santa Cruz County is one of only eight California counties that provide FDCH licensing services; the remaining 50 counties rely on the CDSS Community Care Licensing Division to provide these services through its regional offices throughout the State.

As you may recall, in the County Administrative Officer's November 20, 2001 report on the repeal of the County utility tax, day care licensing was identified as one area where reductions could potentially be made. In light of impending budget reductions at the State and local levels, HRA has been reviewing all of the Agency's mandated and non-mandated activities to determine where it is possible to make reductions. Day care licensing is one such non-mandated activity, a function that most counties choose not to perform. After conducting a thorough review of this program and consulting with the State and the local childcare community, HRA recommends that your Board transfer the day care licensing function back to the CDSS Community Care Licensing Division's regional office in San Jose. The purpose of this letter is to request that your Board adopt a necessary resolution to terminate the County's agreement with CDSS for Day Care Licensing services. Please note that this action would have no effect on the licensing of center-based childcare facilities, which are already licensed by the State.

The Day Care Licensing Program

In FY 2001/2002, the average monthly number of licensed FDCH's in Santa Cruz County is 417. Under the County's agreement with the State, HRA is required to implement, enforce, and comply with all State laws and regulations pertaining to the licensing of FDCH's. These laws and regulations govern the requirements that must be met in order to become licensed and maintain a license in good

Agenda: April 23, 2002

Resolution Terminating Agreement with the State to License Family Day Care Homes

standing **as** a FDCH provider, including provider training, the physical facility in which children are cared for, health and safety standards (including fire clearance), the number and ages of children that may be cared for, the number and qualifications of day care staff (including criminal background clearances), and various other requirements.

The Proposed Transition from County to State Management of Day Care Licensing

In recent weeks, HRA has held discussions with the Regional Manager and the Child Care Advocate from the San Jose Community Care Licensing office in order to discuss the potential transition of the day care licensing function, and to determine how the program would operate under State management. Another key participant in these discussions has been the Director of the County Office of Education's Child Development Resource Center (CDRC). **As** the resource and referral agency for childcare in Santa Cruz County, the CDRC is uniquely positioned to be aware of the needs and concerns of FDCH providers **as well as** families who use FDCH services.

One positive aspect of the County's management of day care licensing is that licensing services and activities are performed by local social workers who are familiar with, and sensitive to, the local community. Fortunately, this aspect is likely to be preserved under State management of the program. The San Jose office already has staff members (both English and Spanish-speaking) who live in Santa Cruz County, and the Regional Manager indicated that she would make every effort to assign these staff members to the **Santa** Cruz County caseload.

Based on our discussions with the representatives of Community Care Licensing, the chart on page 3 provides a *summary* of day care licensing activities that are currently performed by the County, and how these activities would be carried out by the State.

As can be seen from the chart, for the most part the transition from County to State management of day care licensing would be a seamless one, and the level of service to the community would be preserved. The State office would work closely with the Child Development Resource Center to maintain contact with, and disseminate information to, licensees and potential licensees. In addition, **as** mentioned earlier, the State would make every effort to assign staff who live in Santa Cruz County and are therefore familiar with the community.

COUNTY	STATE
HRA provides two orientations a month for prospective day care providers—English language in Santa Cruz and Spanish language in Watsonville. Average attendance is 5-10 in Santa Cruz and 10-15 in Watsonville.	Given its staffing constraints, State would provide one orientation a month, alternating each month between English language in Santa Cruz and Spanish language in Watsonville. Additional orientations are available in Salinas and San Jose. Also, prospective licensees will have access to a variety of resources from CDRC to educate and prepare themselves while waiting to attend an orientation . (See discussion on page 4.)
HRA links applicants with child care resources in the community (e.g., CDRC, Migrant Head Start, Community Bridges, Growth & Opportunity)	State would continue to provide this service, using CDRC as a central location for distribution of information and materials.
HRA provides technical assistance to applicants in completing application forms. Assistance is provided both on the phone and in-person. Average number of new licenses = 7.5 per month.	State would provide the same services.
HRA assists applicants in completing the required criminal background check at local Livescan sites (Cabrillo, County Office of Education, Sheriffs Department)	State would assist applicants in completing the background check at the same sites currently used by HRA.
HRA refers applicants to required CPR/Health & Safety classes offered in the community.	State would provide the same referrals.
HRA processes licensing applications in 30 to 90 days, depending on various factors including applicant's promptness and length of time to complete Livescan criminal records check.	State also processes licensing applications in 30 to 90 days.
HRA conducts home visits at various points in the licensing process—pre-licensing check, consulting visits, 36-month visits, visits to investigate complaints/deficiencies, visits when licensees request an increase in capacity.	State would conduct the same home visits.
HRA answers miscellaneous questions for licensees, primarily on the telephone.	State would provide the same service. The San Jose office assigns a "duty person" each day to handle questions. Spanish speakers are available to answer questions in Spanish.
HRA periodically mails educational information on various topics to licensees.	State would use CDRC newsletter/mailings for this purpose.
HRA provides information to the County's Childcare Developer Fees loan program when licensees apply for loans.	State would provide the same service; the Child Care Advocate would be the primary contact for this purpose.
When parents are seeking a childcare provider, HRA answers their inquiries about FDCH providers' file histories (usually on the telephone).	State would provide the same service; the duty person at the State office responds to phone calls, pulls files and provides information about the file history.

Agenda: April 23, 2002

Resolution Terminating Agreement with the State to License Family Day Care Homes

The only area where the level of service would be somewhat reduced under State management is the number of orientation sessions provided per month. Although HRA has provided two orientations per month (one in Santa Cruz and one in Watsonville), given current staffing levels and a State hiring freeze, the San Jose Regional Manager is able to commit to providing one, but not two, orientations per month in Santa Cruz County at this time. (Should the funding level change in the future, the frequency of orientations can be revisited.) The orientation sessions would alternate each month between Santa Cruz (in English) and Watsonville (in Spanish). It is important to note that the San Jose office also conducts orientations in ~~Salinas~~ and San Jose, and these sessions would also be available to Santa Cruz County residents.

Given that number of people attending the orientation sessions tends to be fairly low (five to 10 in Santa Cruz and 10 to 15 in Watsonville), we do not believe that the reduction from two to one orientation per month presents an undue hardship to the community. At the worst, a potential applicant may have to wait 30 days longer to attend a local orientation than she would have before, should she choose not to attend an orientation in Salinas or San Jose.

In addition, applicants will continue be able to access a variety of resources to educate and prepare themselves while waiting to attend an orientation session. For example, the CDRC provides an Early Childhood Education Resource Library with a variety of materials that applicants may use to educate themselves and plan their programs. CDRC also provides a self-assessment guide that potential applicants may use to help them decide whether family day care is right for them. The CDRC also conducts mock licensing visits to help applicants prepare for the formal licensing visit. Family Childcare Associations exist in both Santa Cruz and Watsonville to provide an opportunity for applicants and licensees to network with one another and receive information. All of these resources will continue to be available and will be closely coordinated with the activities of the San Jose Regional Office.

HRA has discussed the potential transfer of the Family Day Care Licensing Program with key members of the child care community, including representatives of the County Office of Education, the Pajaro Valley Unified School District's Migrant Head Start Program, and the Family Child Care Associations in both Santa Cruz and Watsonville. If your Board approves HRA's recommendation to transfer the program to the State, HRA will work closely with Community Care Licensing, the CDRC, and these key child care organizations to conduct an extensive program of community outreach to inform the child care community about the change prior to the effective date. Outreach activities will include letters to all current licensees, articles in the CDRC newsletter and other relevant newsletters, and community meetings in both Santa Cruz and Watsonville. Community members will have the opportunity to become acquainted with State staff and to be informed about what the change will mean to them. By working closely with the State and the childcare organizations, we believe it will be possible to make the change a seamless and minimally disruptive one for the community.

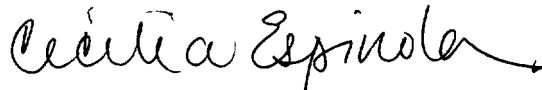
Based on HRA's discussions with the State and the childcare community, it appears that transferring the Day Care Licensing Program to State management would have little or no negative impact on Santa Cruz County residents. Therefore, given the imminent budget reductions faced by the County, HRA recommends that the program be transferred to the State effective July 1, 2002.

Agenda: April 23, 2002

Resolution Terminating Agreement with the State to License Family Day Care Homes

IT IS THEREFORE RECOMMENDED that your Board adopt the attached Resolution Terminating the Agreement with the State of California to License Family Day Care Homes, and authorize the Human Resources Agency Administrator to work with the State to transfer the program to State management effective July 1, 2002.

Very truly yours,



CECILIA ESPINOLA
Administrator

Attachments:

Resolution Terminating the Agreement with the State of California
To License Family Day Care Homes

CEVY

RECOMMENDED:



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

- CC: County Administrative Office
- HRA-Fiscal
- Auditor-Controller
- County Counsel
- Local Child Care Planning Council
- Children and Families Commission
- Children's Network
- Children and Youth Commission
- Marcia Meyer, Child Development Resource Center
- Watsonville Family Day Care Association
- Santa Cruz Family Child Care Association