

BANANAS HANDOUT

Referral Policies

Who BANANAS Serves

BANANAS serves all families looking for child care and all child care programs in the cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont. Our basic services are free. BANANAS provides its services to parents and child care providers fairly and equally, regardless of sex, race, ancestry, color, ethnic group identification, religious belief, national origin, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, marital status, medical condition, disability, and mental or physical condition. Our agency respects the confidentiality of both the parents and providers who receive our services.

What Kinds of Child Care BANANAS Refers To

We refer families to all types of child care, both licensed care and care which is legally exempt from licensing requirements. Licensed programs include family child care homes and child care centers. Exempt types of care include nanny shares, playgroups, babysitting co-ops and exchanges, and some public recreational programs. BANANAS cannot refer families to nannies, but does provide technical assistance on hiring practices.

BANANAS refers to programs on an equitable basis, i.e., we do not recommend one type of care over another. We give equal exposure to providers of the same type of care when a parent requests that type of care, and we will not recommend one provider over another. BANANAS will give parents appropriate child care choices about the types of child care the parent requests, in the geographic area the parent desires, and provide counseling about choosing quality child care. We will give the following information on these choices: type of program, hours of service, ages of children served, fees, general location, contact information, program capacity and whether or not transportation is included for school-age care. Additional information on languages spoken, special needs experience and other specific aspects of a program can also be provided upon request. In addition, parents will receive information about subsidized child care when appropriate.

Placement in the Referral Database

Any licensed program located in our service area, which has a regular or provisional license, has the right to be in the BANANAS referral database. Programs with probationary or conditional licenses are not allowed to be in the database. Licensing status will be checked upon entry and verified as needed after entering the database. If a provider has been issued a provisional license subject to completion of requirements, that information will be noted on the provider's profile in the database.

Referral Process

BANANAS adheres to the principle of parental choice in choosing child care situations. We believe that parents are best able to choose and evaluate child care for their children because they know their children's needs best. We encourage parents to act on their own knowledge and feelings as they select among multiple possibilities. BANANAS' goal is to assist parents in finding the widest range of available child care situations and provide them with information and advice on making a quality choice of care. Parents tell us their child care needs and preferences in terms of location, hours of operation, ages of the children cared for, size of program, range of fees they can afford to pay, and any other need for special family services. We give parents an unlimited number of referrals based on their preferences. Depending on availability, some parents take twenty names; others take only three or four.

Responsibility for selecting and employing a child care provider rests with each parent. The information we provide to parents does not constitute a recommendation of any kind. We cannot guarantee the quality of the providers in our database and urge parents to thoroughly screen providers before leaving a child in care. **Parents have the right to get information about any substantiated or inconclusive complaints about any licensed child care provider that they select for their child. That information is public and can be accessed by calling the California Department of Social Services at 1-844-538-8766 or**

visiting <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch>. **Parents may also ask each provider to show them documents pertaining to their licensing history, which must be available at their facility.**

Our referral policies and procedures recognize the ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences inherent in the diverse communities that we serve, and we strive to meet the unique needs of these communities. There are no eligibility requirements that must be met in order to receive referrals.

Does BANANAS Ever Pay For Child Care?

Part of BANANAS' services to families includes the operation of child care payment programs. These are programs which help pay for the child care of eligible low-income parents. Families served by these programs choose their child care in the same way as any other family receiving referrals from us. BANANAS administers the funds, which pay for the child care, but we do not assign children to a particular child care setting; parents make the choice for their child. Anyone who believes they may be eligible for one of these programs should contact BANANAS for more information.

Update Process

We depend on providers to make sure our referrals are up-to-date. We ask providers to contact us whenever there are changes in their program or when they have openings. We also contact all providers in our database quarterly for updates. Every three months via email or regular mail, they receive a request to update their information. If they do not respond they may receive a postcard notifying them that they have been removed from the active referral database. The program will then remain OUT OF OUR DATABASE until we hear from the provider. If we do not hear from a provider after four update periods, we will assume that they are no longer doing child care and take them out of our database permanently. Providers may request to be removed from our active referral database temporarily. Often it is because the provider is on an extended vacation, recovering from an illness, or not needing referrals because their program is full, etc.

BANANAS strives to have clear and consistent policies and procedures, which insure our services are helpful and fair to our parent and provider clients. Your comments or questions about this referral policy are welcome. Please call BANANAS and ask to speak to the agency program director or the referral services manager. Please note that our policies are subject to change.

For more information, or additional free copies of this form, call or write BANANAS, 5232 Claremont Ave., Oakland, CA 94618, 658-7353. This handout can also be downloaded at www.bananasbunch.org.

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