

**Department of Education Office of Early Learning and
Department of Children and Families
Complaint Form**

DATE Complaint Received _____ **BY** (individual taking the complaint) _____

FROM ___ Family ___ Provider ___ Coalition/Contractor ___ Office of Early Learning ___ Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

AGAINST ___ Family ___ Provider ___ Coalition/Contractor ___ Office of Early Learning ___ Other

Name: _____ Child Care ID # _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

COMPLAINT who was involved (i.e., names and DOB of victim, alleged perpetrator, witnesses, etc.), **what** (i.e., specifics of alleged abuse, type of abuse, location of injury, etc.), **where and when** (i.e., location, address, dates, specific time of day alleged abuse occurred, etc.), **means to locate** (i.e., where can victim and alleged perpetrator be located). Collect as much information as possible. Use additional paper if necessary.

PROVIDER STATUS

___ LICENSED ___ REGISTERED ___ RELIGIOUS EXEMPT ___ NONPUBLIC/PUBLIC SCHOOL

___ INFORMAL ___ SUMMER CAMP ___ ILLEGAL

REPORTED TO

DATE

METHOD REPORTED VIA

(Specify phone, fax, mail, email)

___ Florida Abuse Hotline

___ Department of Children & Families (licensing)

___ Child Care Resource & Referral contractor

___ Local county licensing agency (non-DCF)

___ Early Learning Coalition

___ Child Care Training Information Center

REPORT STATUS (i.e., submitted, pending, accepted) _____

OUTCOME

DATE NOTIFIED _____

___ NO LICENSE ACTION TAKEN

___ ADMINISTRATIVE FINE ACTION TAKEN BY THE LICENSING

___ LICENSE SUSPENDED ___ YES ___ NO DATE LIFTED _____

___ LICENSE REVOKED ___ YES ___ NO DATE REVOKED _____

___ DCF SCREEN OUT (REPORT WAS NOT ACCEPTED)

___ OTHER _____

ELC DATABASE STATUS ___ ACTIVE ___ INACTIVE

**Department of Education Office of Early Learning and
Department of Children and Families
Complaint Form**

Complaint Policy and Procedures

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Office of Early Learning have developed this policy and all related procedures and forms. Early Learning Coalitions and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) contractors are required to implement and enforce these procedures.

I. POLICY

Early learning coalitions and/or their contracted 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;
- The coalition or contractor 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 Florida Abuse Hotline and licensing but which might benefit from technical assistance may be handled by the coalition or contractor, and/or an outside source as is appropriate to each situation. The coalition and/or contractor has the responsibility to provide technical assistance, to the extent possible, to all legally operating providers to help resolve complaints. All child care related issues regarding potential licensing violations, should be referred to the appropriate child care licensing office for follow-up;
- Abuse/neglect complaints or complaints which pose an immediate threat to the health, safety and well-being of a child must be reported within one (1) hour to the Florida Abuse Hotline and the local licensing authority, as applicable via phone, DCF online abuse reporting portal, and/or fax to 800-914-0004 with paperwork to follow. The Florida Abuse Hotline number and abuse reporting portal are: 1-800-962-2873 and <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>. All other reports will be processed within two (2) working days. A Friday report will be processed by Tuesday the following week; and
- In counties where DCF does not have licensing authority, the same policy and procedures apply but are reported to the local licensing agency.

**Department of Education Office of Early Learning and
Department of Children and Families
Complaint Form**

II. REPORTING

TYPE OF COMPLAINT	REPORT TO
ABUSE/NEGLECT (i.e., physical, sexual, emotional/mental, inadequate supervision, abandonment, environmental hazards, malnutrition/dehydration, failure to thrive and protect, family violence, etc.)	THE FLORIDA ABUSE HOTLINE 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873) AND LICENSING AUTHORITY
LICENSING VIOLATIONS <u>Provider Types:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed Child Care Facilities; • Licensed Family Day Care Homes; • Licensed Large Family Child Care Homes; • Registered Family Day Care Homes; and • Religious Exempt Facilities (Screening only) • Summer Camps (Screening only) <u>Examples of health/safety and related issues:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal operation • CPR/First Aid • Ratio/Supervision • Physical environment unsafe in disrepair • Transportation • Square footage • Access • Over capacity • Background screening and training • Inappropriate discipline 	LICENSING AUTHORITY - Contact regional field office or local licensing agency. Any high profile/potential media issues should be copied to the Child Care Regulation Program Office in Tallahassee at (850) 488-4900.
PROGRAMMATIC (i.e., operating schedule, services offered, curriculum, teaching style, not enough/too much structure, too much/too little TV, rowdy behavior, etc.)	COALITION/CONTRACTOR
PERSONAL (i.e., personnel uses obscene language, has unkempt appearance, and/or shows favoritism, etc.)	COALITION/CONTRACTOR
DISCRIMINATION RELATED TO: DISABILITY RACE, RELIGION, LANGUAGE, OTHER FINANCIAL (i.e., cost of care, reimbursement problems, and non-payment)	COALITION INCLUSION COORDINATOR COALITION/CONTRACTOR COALITION/CONTRACTOR

**Department of Education Office of Early Learning and
Department of Children and Families
Complaint Form**

III. 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 participates in the School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten program.

- A complaint report form must be completed for all types of complaints and submitted to the appropriate department. The coalition or contractor 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 Florida Abuse Hotline phone number (800) 962-2873 and is strongly encouraged to report it directly.
- B. For all instances of suspected child abuse or neglect (i.e., licensed or registered providers, school teacher, health care or other professional services provider, etc.) the coalition or contractor staff will remind the complainant of his/her legal responsibility to report the abuse by calling the abuse hotline directly. The complainant will be advised that the coalition or contractor is a mandated reporter and will be making a report to the abuse hotline.

2) LICENSING 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. The coalition or contractor 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 to the abuse hotline and the licensing office, as applicable, within one (1) hour. Other reports will be given to licensing within two (2) working days of the receipt of the complaint.
- C. The coalition or contractor will NOT notify a provider of a complaint since to do so may jeopardize the investigation by the licensing authority.
- D. The coalition or contractor will contact licensing at least monthly to determine the status of complaints outstanding for at least 30 days. Verified complaints can be viewed online.
- E. The coalition or contractor 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. The coalition or contractor will complete the complaint form.
- B. The coalition or contractor will respond or refer to the appropriate department for comment, technical assistance or other action.

4) DISCRIMINATION (Do not report to licensing).

- A. The coalition or contractor will complete the complaint form.

**Department of Education Office of Early Learning and
Department of Children and Families
Complaint Form**

- B. The coalition or contractor will respond or refer to the appropriate department for comment, technical assistance or other action. The coalition will contact the Office of Early Learning at 866-357-3239 if guidance is needed.

5) INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

- A. Families and providers who request a copy of complaint procedures will be provided a copy by the coalition or contractor.

6) NOTIFYING A PROVIDER OF COMPLAINT

- A. The coalition or contractor 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 CCR&R child care listings must be directed to view a provider’s licensing/registration history through DCF’s website at <https://cares.myflfamilies.com/PublicSearch> and if additional information is desired contact the licensing authority before selecting a provider. All child care listings and information provided to families must contain the name, address, and telephone number of the appropriate licensing authority.
- B. Licensing inspections and verified licensing complaints are available online at <https://cares.myflfamilies.com/PublicSearch>.
- C. Licensing records are available for review by the general public as required by law. Circuit/region procedures should be followed when requesting to review hard copy files of licensing records.