

Being a Good Neighbor— Tips for Family Child Care Providers



Family child care homes are a very important child care resource in any community. They provide an intimate, home-like setting for children being cared for away from their own homes. For this reason, California law offers certain protections for family day care.

However, it is important for family day care homes to be compatible with residential neighborhoods, by working to minimize negative impacts that can result from their operation. Providers need to be sensitive to neighbors concerns about traffic, parking and noise, and to be proactive, along with parents, in preventing problems. The following are some suggestions for measures that can help to create and maintain good relations.

- ❖ Take the time to get to know your neighbors, to explain your routine, number of children cared for, and, maybe, to invite them to visit your program.
- ❖ Encourage them to talk to you first if they have a concern or complaint. Be willing to compromise. Use a mediation service to help resolve issues, if necessary.
- ❖ Providing written instructions to parents, and sharing those with neighbors, can demonstrate your will to be a good neighbor and to ensure children's safety.

Parking, Traffic, and Safety

- ❖ Ask parents of children you care for to be considerate of neighbors. Give them instructions such as:
 1. Do not block, turn around in, or park in neighbors' driveways.
 2. Do not double park, or honk their horns when picking up children.
 3. Supervise children carefully between vehicles and your home, to keep them from running into the street or across neighbors' yards. If parents park across the street, they must escort children even more carefully.
- ❖ Do not allow children to cross or play on neighbors' property without their permission.
- ❖ Set up your schedule in a way that allows parents to come and go over a period of time, to reduce the parking impact.

Noise

- ❖ When children are playing outside, be aware of the noise level. Children who are having a loud tantrum or argument should be taken indoors until they quiet down.
- ❖ Normal noise of children's play is generally not a problem for neighbors, unless their homes are very close to your yard or they need to sleep. In extreme cases, it is possible to construct fencing in a way that provides a good sound barrier. Vegetation, like tall hedges, can also help.
- ❖ Limit outdoor play time to hours of the day when neighbors are least likely to be disturbed—after 9:00 a.m. and before 5:00 p.m. Be sure there are periods during the day when all children are indoors. If you have a neighbor who works nights and sleeps during the day, or works from home, discuss a schedule that would be least disruptive.

- ❖ If you care for children who arrive very early in the morning or leave very late at night, talk to the parents about coming and going quietly, in consideration of neighbors.

The City of Redwood City requires that Large Family Day Care (up to 12 children) providers obtain a permit to assure that the above issues are addressed. There is no fee for this permit; however proof of notification of adjoining property owners and/or occupants within 100 feet of the home is required. Please contact the Planning and Redevelopment Department for more information.

Resources

- ❖ Redwood City Planning and Redevelopment Department: 780-7234
- ❖ Redwood City Child Care Coordinator: 780-7336
- ❖ State Community Care Licensing office in San Bruno: 266-8843
- ❖ Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center: 373-3490