

**C-7**

**LETTER FROM ARCHBISHOP NIEDERAUER/  
POLICY AND GUIDELINES  
FOR CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL  
PROGRAMS IN PARISHES OF THE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO**



# THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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April 30, 2009

Dear Pastors and Principals,

The growing number of single parent families and families with both parents working has made us increasingly aware of the need for a variety of approaches to childcare. We know that many of our parishes and schools are very sensitive to this issue and are looking for creative approaches to respond pastorally. We support and encourage this type of local response.

A number of parishes and schools contact our Archdiocesan Agencies concerning our policy and procedures on childcare programs, including not only formal licensed programs designed to provide daily care for preschool-age children, but also simple programs limited to child sitting during Mass time. The policy and guidelines are attached.

The Archdiocese recognizes the need for quality childcare and believes that the parish can be of service in assisting parents in meeting this need. Many parents look to their local faith community for help with their daily lives. We support the involvement of parishes in helping parents respond to their need to nurture their children when they must also work outside the home.

There are a variety of approaches to childcare which involve different degrees of parish involvement. Which option is best for your parish will depend on your particular needs and desires. If childcare is a concern to your parish, the attached childcare policy and related options should be helpful to you. Do contact the referenced offices if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend George H. Niederauer  
Archbishop of San Francisco

Enclosure

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**POLICY AND GUIDELINES  
FOR CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL  
PROGRAMS IN PARISHES OF THE  
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# The Archdiocese of San Francisco

## POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS IN PARISHES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

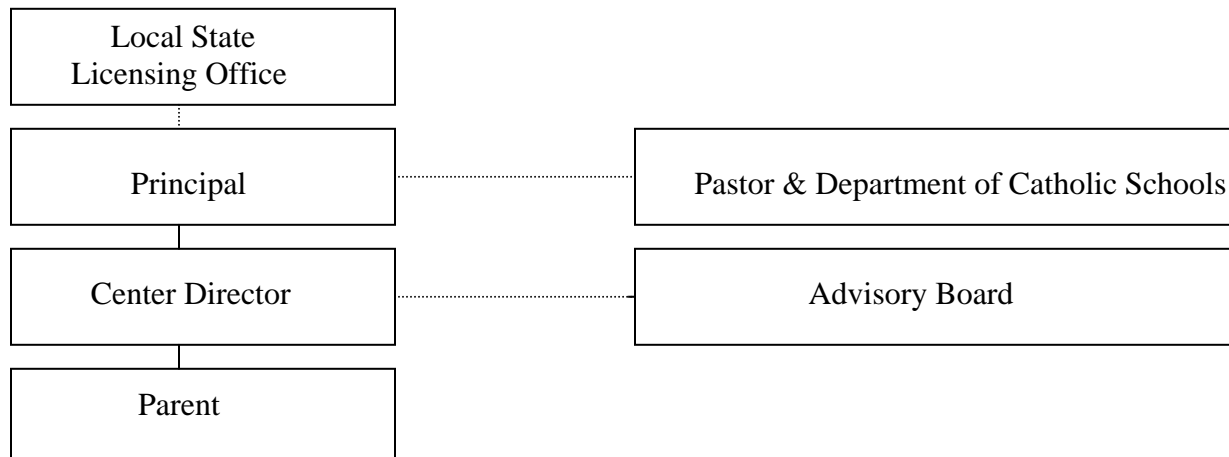
In light of the growing and crucial need for quality childcare/preschool programs in our society, it is the policy of the Archdiocese of San Francisco to promote and facilitate such programs. Listed below are the types of programs parishes might participate in and the guidelines that pertain to them. Parishes are to consult with the Department of Catholic Schools, Superintendent of Schools, before pursuing any such program.

### TYPES OF PROGRAMS

- 1. Programs Run Directly by the Parish School** (*In Parishes where there is no parochial school the words “Parish” and Pastor” should be substituted for the words “School” and Principal*).

Under this arrangement, the School would obtain appropriate licensing through the State and would directly run the Childcare Program. No separate corporations are necessary or appropriate for this purpose. Rather, the school program would be sponsored by the corporate operator of the schools, The Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco, A Corporation Sole. Each program would be required to have a qualified director, responsible to the Principal, and an Advisory Board that would assist the Director and Principal.

- a. Clarification of Roles.** Basic job descriptions should be developed in accordance with personnel guidelines in the Parish. The Department of Catholic Schools can assist in developing “job descriptions” for advisory board members, as well as providing training and technical assistance.
- b. Structure/Lines of Accountability.** Problems/grievances should be resolved in accordance with an agreed-upon process, as indicated in the following “chain of command”:



- 2. Programs Run by Independent Organizations.** Licensed, independent, nonprofit organizations specializing in childcare/preschool may be encouraged to rent Parish facilities at full or nominal cost (as the Parish wishes) subject to the following: the organization must sign a standard Archdiocesan written lease (requiring, among other things, its compliance with all applicable licensing and building code requirements and providing adequate liability and insurance protection to the Parish/Archdiocese). Lease forms are available through the Archdiocesan Real Property Support Corporation. Such leases must be reviewed in advance by the Archdiocesan Legal Counsel and signed by the authorized corporate officials of the Archdiocesan Real Property Support Corporation.
- 3. Programs Organized and Run by Parishioners.** In some cases, parishioners, parent cooperatives, or other types of groups may express a desire to develop licensed programs on their own. Parishes may wish to facilitate the use of Parish space for such programs. However, these programs must be operated entirely by separate corporations/organizations that are not subject to the direction, control, payroll, etc., of the Archdiocese/Parish, and such programs would be subject to the same requirements listed in Option 2 above.

## **SPECIAL NOTES REGARDING SCHOOL-SPONSORED EXTENDED CARE PROGRAMS AND CHILD SITTING DURING MASS TIME**

- 1. School Extended Care Programs.** Childcare is both legally and technically distinct from school-sponsored extended care programs which are coordinated through the Department of Catholic Schools. Private schools are exempt from licensing requirements **only** for extended care programs: that is, on-site, school-operated programs before or after school which serve kindergarten (4.9 years of age or older) through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled at the Parish school.
  
- 2. Child Sitting Service During Mass Time.** The Pastoral Plan for the Archdiocese of San Francisco recommends “Parishes should provide child-care opportunities so that young parents can attend Mass in a prayerful spirit”.

The Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Service advises that no licensing is required for Mass-time Childcare so long as it is provided on the premises where the parents are. However, in setting up any such Mass-time program, please follow the procedures set forth below (which reflect existing policies applicable to various other types of Parish programs).

- a. Any paid supervisor or sitter must be paid by the Parish, not the parents, and appropriate tax withholdings must be taken out. (Parishioners can make donations to the Parish to support the program.)
  
- b. Any paid or regular adult volunteer sitter or supervisor (i.e., as opposed to the use of a large, and frequently rotating, pool of well-known individuals) must be fingerprinted and all regular employees and volunteers, whether adult or minors, must participate in the Archdiocese’s Safe Environment Training Program.
  
- c. As with any good licensed childcare or youth program, there must be some form of accessible adult supervision of the overall program (e.g., the Director of Religious Education), as well as an appropriate parental “drop-in” policy.

For more information on program facilitation and childcare alternatives, contact the Superintendent of Schools, Department of Catholic Schools, 415 (614-5666)

Those who feel they have a program currently in operation that does not meet the above criteria should contact Mr. Jack Hammel, Legal Counsel, Archdiocese of San Francisco (415.614.5623), to assist in bringing the program into conformance as soon as possible

## **OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS FOR CHILDCARE CENTERS AT THE PARISH**

As Parishes determine how they want to support Childcare Programs at the Parish level, there are three options available. The three options refer to programs housed in Parish facilities.

### **I. ALL PROGRAMS ON PARISH GROUNDS**

No matter which option for Parish-housed programs a Parish chooses, the following would hold true.

- ▶▶ Programs need to be licensed by Community Care Licensing.
- ▶▶ Programs should have an informed, responsible Advisory Board.
- ▶▶ All programs would have equal access to free training and technical assistance from the Childcare Switchboard, the Childcare Law Center, and the Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Schools.
- ▶▶ All legal contracts involving the Parish need to be reviewed by the Archdiocesan Legal Counsel.

#### **A. Parish-Run Programs**

##### **Pros:**

- ▶ Clear ministry of the Church.
- ▶ Inspires more confidence in parents because it is “church-sponsored”.
- ▶ Can include religious instruction as part of the program.
- ▶ Can offer parishioners priority for admission.
- ▶ Program is covered under Archdiocesan insurance plan, which means significant financial savings for the program.

##### **Cons**

- ▶ Lines of accountability/responsibility can be unclear.
- ▶ Archdiocese is legally responsible if a problem arises.
- ▶ Ineligible for most local, state or federal funding if sectarian.
- ▶ More clearly the financial responsibility of the Parish.

#### **B. Parishioner-Sponsored, Separately Incorporated Programs.**

##### **Pros:**

- ▶ Lines of accountability clearer.
- ▶ Archdiocese is protected from legal liability.
- ▶ Eligible for most local, state, or federal funding if not sectarian.
- ▶ Encourages more financial self-sufficiency.

##### **Cons**

- ▶ Needs separate insurance coverage, which is expensive.
- ▶ Less clearly identified as a ministry of the Parish.

### **C. Leasing to Existing Nonprofit Programs**

#### **Pros**

- ▶ Existing programs have experience and track record at providing financially sound childcare.
- ▶ Would be a source of modest revenue to the Parish, while providing services.
- ▶ Many excellent programs are looking for space to move/expand their services.

#### **Cons**

- ▶ No control over policies, admission guidelines or tuition once lease is signed.
- ▶ Little Parish identity.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARISH-RUN CHILDCARE CENTERS**

For Parishes that choose to run a childcare program directly, we would recommend the following guidelines:

### **Advisory Board**

We strongly recommend that each Parish interested in operating a Childcare Center directly convene an Advisory Board that would assist the Principal in providing adequate oversight to the program. The role of the Advisory Board would be to provide programmatic oversight, help resolve concerns, assist with Center fundraising, and contribute technical assistance. Potential Board members could include parent representatives, representative of school (especially if space is shared), Parish staff, and others with expertise in fundraising, accounting, children's services, etc.

### **Accountability**

The Principal would be responsible for hiring/firing and evaluating the Center Director. He/she should do that in consultation with the Advisory Board and the Archdiocesan Human Resources Office, and the Department of Catholic Schools.

### **Support Services**

The Archdiocesan Department of Catholic Schools will provide technical assistance to Parishes interested in opening and operating a Childcare Center, including contemplating the licensing process and convening an Advisory Board. Superintendent of Schools, Department of Catholic Schools, will assist and support Principals or Childcare Directors with the educational component of the program.

### **Conformity to Licensing Regulations**

Community Care Licensing of the State Department of Social Services is responsible for licensing and monitoring all Childcare Centers on an at-least annual basis to assure compliance with state childcare regulations.

### **Insurance**

Parish-run Childcare Programs would be covered under the Archdiocesan insurance policy.

# **POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS IN PARISHES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO**

## **ADDENDUM**

**Family Day Care.** Parishes can serve as a resource for assisting parishioners and their neighbors in making Family Day Care arrangements. Family Day Care Homes must be licensed by the State Department of Social Services. The license must be renewed every three years and provides for basic health and safety standards.

### **DEFINITIONS PERTAINING TO FAMILY DAY CARE:**

#### **Family Day Care:**

Small group care for children from two or more families (in addition to the caregiver's own children) provided in the caregiver's home for less than 24 hours per day. There are two types of licenses:

#### **Small Family Day Care Home:**

Care for a maximum of six children, including three infants.

#### **Large Family Day Care Home:**

Care for 7 – 12 children, including four infants (must have adult assistant).

## **II. FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES**

The Parish community can serve as a resource in assisting parishioners and neighbors in making day care arrangements, without having to provide a program in Parish facilities. Family Day Care is small group care for the children from two or more families (in addition to the caregiver's own), provided in the caregiver's home. Programs usually serve from 6 to 12 children, and often care for infants, as well as preschool-age children. The Parish can help identify potential Day Care homes and help link them with appropriate resources to get licensed and established. Moreover, they can help publicize these programs in the wider community, though care should be taken to emphasize that these programs are not under the auspices of the parish and that interested persons should check directly with the licensing authorities to determine the program's licensing status, experiences, qualifications, etc...

Family Day Care Homes must also be licensed by Community Care Licensing, although that is the responsibility of the person providing care in their home.

**Pros:**

- ▶ It can help interested parishioners stay home with their own children while caring for others.
- ▶ It can provide a source of income for families.
- ▶ It does not require space in Parish facilities.
- ▶ The licensing requirements are not as stringent as for Childcare Centers.
- ▶ They would be eligible for state and federal funds.
- ▶ Specialized programs could be developed to provide sick child, school break, respite, or other kinds of specialized or emergency care.
- ▶ Many parents prefer having their children in smaller, more homelike settings, usually close to home.

**Cons:**

- ▶ Harder to monitor.
- ▶ Services smaller numbers of children
- ▶ Programs differ widely with regards to philosophy and level of care.
- ▶ Financially more vulnerable.

