



YOU HAVE CHOICES

FAMILY, FRIEND, AND NEIGHBOR CARE

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) Care in California

Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care is the most common form of child care for working families. In California, it plays an essential role in the state's Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) ecosystem, offering a flexible, culturally familiar, and personalized early learning environment.

What is FFN Care?

FFN care is an informal child care arrangement provided by a child's relatives, friends, neighbors, or babysitters. It can take place either in the provider's home or the child's own home. In California, FFN providers fall into a legal category known as license-exempt child care, meaning they can legally operate without a state child care license as long as they meet specific requirements.

California Legal Rules & Capacity Limits

An FFN provider is exempt from licensing only under the following strict conditions:

- **Relative Care:** The provider is caring only for children related to them by blood, marriage, or adoption (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, or adult siblings). Legally, there is no strict cap on the number of relative children they can look after.
- **Non-Relative Care (The "One Family" Rule):** If the provider takes in children who are not related to them, they can only care for their own children plus the children of exactly one other family at any given time.

What is it	An unlicensed, informal care arrangement. Because FFN providers operate without a state license, they must follow specific rules regarding the number of children they care for and background check requirements if they receive state subsidies. Providers should register on Trustline.org to complete a background check.
Schedule	Can offer part-day, full-day, overnight, or weekend options. This is entirely negotiated between the parent and the provider.
Age	Varies by provider. They can care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children (for after-school care).
Cost	Varies. Rates are determined by the provider. Eligible low-income families can utilize state-funded Alternative Payment (AP) vouchers to fully or partially cover the costs.

