

# Family Child Care Tips on Being a Good Neighbor\*



**F**amily 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 child care.

It is important for family child 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 care 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.
- Provide written instructions to parents, and share them with neighbors, to 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:

- Do not block, turn around in, or park in neighbors' driveways.
- Do not double park or honk horns when picking up children.

- 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 quiet.
- 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 am and before 5:00 pm. 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.

*\*Thanks to Redwood City Child Care Coordinator*