Excerpts from State Law Related to Child Care

EXCERPTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 1596.70-1596.798 (through 2001)

1596.70. This chapter and Chapters 3.5 (commencing with Section 1596.90) and 3.6 (commencing with Section 1597.30) may be cited as the California Child Day Care Facilities Act.

1596.71. This chapter applies to Chapters 3.5 (commencing with Section 1596.90) and 3.6 (commencing with Section 1597.30). This chapter also applies to Chapter 3.65 (commencing with Section 1597.70).

1596.72. The Legislature finds all of the following:
(a) That child day care facilities can contribute positively to a child's emotional, cognitive, and educational development.
(b) That it is the intent of this state to provide a comprehensive, quality system for licensing child day care facilities to ensure a quality day care environment.
(c) That this system of licensure requires a special understanding of the unique characteristics and needs of the children served by child day care facilities.
(d) That it is the intent of the Legislature to establish within the State Department of Social Services an organizational structure to separate licensing of child day care facilities from those facility types administered under Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 1500).
(e) That good quality child day care services are an essential service for working parents.

1596.73. The purposes of this act are to:
(a) Streamline the administration of child care licensing and thereby increase the efficiency and effectiveness of this system.
(b) Encourage the development of licensing staff with knowledge and understanding of children and child care needs.
(c) Provide providers of child care with technical assistance about licensing requirements.
(d) Enhance consumer awareness of licensing requirements and the benefits of licensed child care.
(e) Recognize that affordable, quality licensed child care is critical to the well-being of parents and children in this state.

1596.74. Unless the context otherwise requires, the definitions contained in this chapter govern the construction of this chapter and Chapters 3.5 (commencing with Section 1596.90) and 3.6 (commencing with Section 1597.30).

1596.75. "Child" means a person who is under 18 years of age who is being provided care and supervision in a child day care facility, except where otherwise specified in this act.

1596.750. "Child day care facility" means a facility that provides nonmedical care to children under 18 years of age in need of personal services, supervision, or assistance essential for sustaining the activities of daily living or for the protection of the individual on less than a 24-hour basis. Child day care facility includes day care centers, employer-sponsored child care centers, and family day care homes.

1596.76. "Day care center" means any child day care facility other than a family day care home, and includes infant centers, preschools, extended day care facilities, and schoolage child care centers.

1596.77. "Department" means the State Department of Social Services.

1596.770. "Director" means the Director of Social Services.

1596.771. "Employer-sponsored child care center" means any child day care facility at the employer's site of business operated directly or through a provider contract by any person or entity having one or more employees, and available exclusively for the care of
children of that employer, and of the officers, managers, and employees of that employer.

**1596.773.** (a) "Probation" means the period of time that a licensed child day care facility is required to comply with specific terms and conditions set forth by the department in order to stay or postpone the revocation of the facility's license.

(b) "Revocation" means an administrative action taken by the department to void or rescind the license of a child day care facility because of serious or chronic violations of licensing laws or regulations by the facility.

**1596.78.** (a) "Family day care home" means a home that regularly provides care, protection, and supervision for 14 or fewer children, in the provider's own home, for periods of less than 24 hours per day, while the parents or guardians are away, and is either a large family day care home or a small family day care home.

(b) "Large family day care home" means a home that provides family day care for 7 to 14 children, inclusive, including children under the age of 10 years who reside at the home, as set forth in Section 1597.465 and as defined in regulations.

(c) "Small family day care home" means a home that provides family day care for eight or fewer children, including children under the age of 10 years who reside at the home, as set forth in Section 1597.44 and as defined in regulations.

**1596.79.** "Person" means an individual, partnership, association, corporation, limited liability company, or governmental entity, such as the state, a county, city, special district, school district, community college district, chartered city, or chartered city and county.

**1596.790.** "Planning agency" means the agency designated pursuant to Section 65100 of the Government Code.

**1596.791.** "Provider" means a person who operates a child day care facility and is licensed pursuant to Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 1596.90) or 3.6 (commencing with Section 1597.30).

**1597.30.** The Legislature finds and declares:

(a) It has a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of children in family homes that provide day care.

(b) That there are insufficient numbers of regulated family day care homes in California.

(c) There will be a growing need for child day care facilities due to the increase in working parents.

(d) Many parents prefer child day care located in their neighborhoods in family homes.

(e) There should be a variety of child care settings, including regulated family day care homes, as suitable alternatives for parents.

(f) That the program to be operated by the state should be cost effective, streamlined, and simple to administer in order to ensure adequate care for children placed in family day care homes, while not placing undue burdens on the providers.

(g) That the state should maintain an efficient program of regulating family day care homes that ensures the provision of adequate protection, supervision, and guidance to children in their homes.

**1597.40.** (a) It is the intent of the Legislature that family day care homes for children should be situated in normal residential surroundings so as to give children the home environment which is conducive to healthy and safe development. It is the public policy of this state to provide children in a family day care home the same home environment as provided in a traditional home setting.

The Legislature declares this policy to be of statewide concern with the purpose of occupying the field to the exclusion of municipal zoning, building and fire codes and regulations governing the use or occupancy of family day care homes for children, except as specifically provided for in this chapter, and to prohibit any restrictions relating to the use of single-family residences for family day care homes for children except as provided by this chapter.

(b) Every provision in a written instrument entered into relating to real property which purports to forbid or restrict the conveyance, encumbrance, leasing, or mortgaging of the real property for use or occupancy as a family day care home for children, is void and every restriction or prohibition in any such written instrument as to the use or occupancy of the property as a family day care home for children is void.

(c) Except as provided in subdivision (d), every restriction or prohibition entered into, whether by way of covenant, condition upon use or occupancy, or upon transfer of title to real property, which restricts or prohibits directly, or indirectly limits, the acquisition, use, or occupancy of such property for a family day care home for children is void.

(d) (1) A prospective family day care home provider, who resides in a rental property, shall provide 30 days' written notice to the landlord or owner of the rental property prior to the commencement of operation of the family day care home.

(2) For family day care home providers who have relocated an existing licensed family day care home program to a rental property on or after January 1, 1997, less than 30 days' written notice may be provided in cases where the department approves the operation of the new location of the family day care home in less than 30 days, or the home is licensed in less than 30 days, in order that service to the children served in the former location not be interrupted.

(3) A family day care home provider in operation on rental or leased property as of January 1, 1997, shall notify the landlord or property owner in writing at the time of the annual license fee renewal, or by March 31, 1997, whichever occurs later.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, upon commencement of, or knowledge of, the operation of a family day care home on his or her property, the landlord or property owner may require the family day care home provider to pay an increased security deposit for operation of the family day care home. The increase in deposit may be required notwithstanding that a lesser amount is re-
required of tenants who do not operate family day care homes. In no event, however, shall the total security deposit charged exceed the maximum allowable under existing law.

(5) Section 1596.890 shall not apply to this subdivision.

1597.43. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Family day care homes operated under the standards of state law constitute accessory uses of residentially zoned and occupied properties and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the underlying residential uses. Family day care homes draw clients and vehicles to their sites during a limited time of day and do not require the attendance of a large number of employees and equipment.

(b) The uses of congregate care facilities are distinguishable from the uses of family day care homes operated under the standards of state law. For purposes of this section, a “congregate care facility” means a “residential facility,” as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 1502. Congregate care facilities are used throughout the day and night, and the institutional uses of these facilities are primary uses of the facilities, not accessory uses, and draw a large number of employees, vehicles, and equipment compared to that drawn to family day care homes.

(c) The expansion permitted for family day care homes by Sections 1597.44 and 1597.465 is not appropriate with respect to congregate care facilities, or any other facilities with quasi-institutional uses. Therefore, with these provisions, the Legislature does not intend to alter the legal standards governing congregate care facilities and these provisions are not intended to encourage, or be a precedent for, changes in statutory and case law governing congregate care facilities.

1597.44. A small family day care home may provide care for more than six and up to eight children, without an additional adult attendant, if all of the following conditions are met:

(a) At least one child is enrolled in and attending kindergarten or elementary school and a second child is at least six years of age.

(b) No more than two infants are cared for during any time when more than six children are cared for.

(c) The licensee notifies each parent that the facility is caring for two additional schoolage children and that there may be up to seven or eight children in the home at one time.

(d) The licensee obtains the written consent of the property owner when the family day care home is operated on property that is leased or rented.

1597.45. All of the following shall apply to small family day care homes:

(a) The use of single-family residence as a small family day care home shall be considered a residential use of property for the purposes of all local ordinances.

(b) No local jurisdiction shall impose any business license, fee, or tax for the privilege of operating a small family day care home.

(c) Use of a single-family dwelling for purposes of a small family day care home shall not constitute a change of occupancy for purposes of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 17910) of Division 13 (State Housing Law) or for purposes of local building codes.

(d) A small family day care home shall not be subject to Article 1 (commencing with Section 13100) or Article 2 (commencing with Section 13140) of Chapter 1 of Part 2, except that a small family day care home shall contain a fire extinguisher and smoke detector device that meet standards established by the State Fire Marshal.

1597.46. All of the following shall apply to large family day care homes:

(a) A city, county, or city and county shall not prohibit large family day care homes on lots zoned for single-family dwellings, but shall do one of the following:

1. Classify these homes as a permitted use of residential property for zoning purposes.

2. Grant a nondiscretionary permit to use a lot zoned for a single-family dwelling to any large family day care home that complies with local ordinances prescribing reasonable standards, restrictions, and requirements concerning spacing and concentration, traffic control, parking, and noise control relating to those homes, and complies with subdivision (e) and any regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to that subdivision. Any noise standards shall be consistent with local noise ordinances implementing the noise element of the general plan and shall take into consideration the noise level generated by children. The permit issued pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted by the zoning administrator, or if there is no zoning administrator by the person or persons designated by the planning agency to grant these permits, upon the certification without a hearing.

(b) Require any large family day care home to apply for a permit to use a lot zoned for single-family dwellings. The zoning administrator, or if there is no zoning administrator, the person or persons designated by the planning agency to handle the use permits, shall review and decide the applications. The use permit shall be granted if the large family day care home complies with local ordinances, if any, prescribing reasonable standards, restrictions, and requirements concerning the following factors: spacing and concentration, traffic control, parking, and noise control relating to those homes, and complies with subdivision (e) and any regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to that subdivision. Any noise standards shall be consistent with local noise ordinances implementing the noise element of the general plan and shall take into consideration the noise levels generated by children. The local government shall process any required permit as economically as possible.

Fees charged for review shall not exceed the costs of the review and permit process. An applicant may request a verification of fees, and the city, county, or city and county shall provide the applicant with a written breakdown within 45 days of the request. Beginning July 1, 2007, the application form for large family day care home permits shall include a state-
ment of the applicant’s right to request the written fee verification.

Not less than 10 days prior to the date on which the decision will be made on the application, the zoning administrator or person designated to handle the use permits shall give notice of the proposed use by mail or delivery to all owners shown on the last equalized assessment roll as owning real property within a 100-foot radius of the exterior boundaries of the proposed large family day care home. A hearing on the application for a permit issued pursuant to this paragraph shall not be held before a decision is made unless a hearing is requested by the applicant or other affected person. The applicant or other affected person may appeal the decision. The appellant shall pay the cost, if any, of the appeal.

(b) In connection with any action taken pursuant to paragraph (2) or (3) of subdivision (a), a city, county, or city and county shall do all of the following:

1. Upon the request of an applicant, provide a list of the permits and fees that are required by the city, county, or city and county, including information about other permits that may be required by other departments in the city, county, or city and county, or by other public agencies. The city, county, or city and county shall, upon request of any applicant, also provide information about the anticipated length of time for reviewing and processing the permit application.

2. Upon the request of an applicant, provide information on the breakdown of any individual fees charged in connection with the issuance of the permit.

3. If a deposit is required to cover the cost of the permit, provide information to the applicant about the estimated final cost to the applicant of the permit, and procedures for receiving a refund from the portion of the deposit not used.

(c) A large family day care home shall not be subject to the provisions of Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code.

(d) Use of a single-family dwelling for the purposes of a large family day care home shall not constitute a change of occupancy for purposes of Part 1.5 (commencing with Section 17910) of Division 13 (State Housing Law), or for purposes of local building and fire codes.

(e) Large family day care homes shall be considered as single-family residences for the purposes of the State Uniform Building Standards Code and local building and fire codes, except with respect to any additional standards specifically designed to promote the fire and life safety of the children in these homes adopted by the State Fire Marshal pursuant to this subdivision. The State Fire Marshal shall adopt separate building standards specifically relating to the subject of fire and life safety in large family day care homes which shall be published in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. These standards shall apply uniformly throughout the state and shall include, but not be limited to: (1) the requirement that a large family day care home contain a fire extinguisher or smoke detector device, or both, which meets standards established by the State Fire Marshal; (2) specification as to the number of required exits from the home; and (3) specification as to the

1597.465. A large family day care home may provide care for more than 12 children and up to and including 14 children, if all of the following conditions are met:

(a) At least one child is enrolled in and attending kindergarten or elementary school and a second child is at least six years of age.

(b) No more than three infants are cared for during any time when more than 12 children are being cared for.

(c) The licensee notifies a parent that the facility is caring for two additional school age children and that there may be up to 13 or 14 children in the home at one time.

(d) The licensee obtains the written consent of the property owner when the family day care home is operated on property that is leased or rented.

1597.47. The provisions of this chapter shall not be construed to preclude any city, county, or other local public entity from placing restrictions on building heights, setback, or lot dimensions of a family day care facility as long as such restrictions are identical to those applied to other single-family residences. The provisions of this chapter shall not be construed to preclude the application to a family day care facility for children of any local ordinance which deals with health and safety, building standards, environmental impact standards, or any other matter within the jurisdiction of a local public entity. The provisions of this chapter also shall not be construed to prohibit or restrict the abatement of nuisances by a city, county, or city and county. However, such ordinance or nuisance abatement shall not distinguish family day care facilities from other single-family dwellings, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.