

Kids First Early Childhood Resource Center Complaint Policy



KIDS FIRST

CHILDCARE RESOURCE CENTER

Complaint Review & Determination of Referral Status

Kids First will request licensing complaints on all licensed providers in Pitkin County on a quarterly basis. Providers that have three complaints of a similar nature within a 6-month period will be placed on “do not refer” in the Kids First database. Kids First Advisory Board will determine the proper course of action, improvement plan, and timeline for reinstatement on Kids First referral list.

Provider status may be changed to “do not refer” when:

1. Kids First is waiting for a response from the licensing agency concerning licensing violations or allegations of neglect or abuse.
2. Kids First determines that the immediate health and safety of the children in care is in question.
3. The number of complaints indicates an inability to correct substandard conditions. Letter number 1 will be sent to the provider. When the provider responds to the letter, a committee of staff and Advisory Board members will determine if the provider shall remain on the database or not.

Providers may be permanently removed from the database:

1. When licensing authority has revoked permanent license.
2. When there has been no response within 30 days to letter number 1.

When removed, the provider will be notified in writing of the action (letter number 2) and will be informed of the process for appealing the decision or obtaining reinstatement.

Appeals and Review

A provider who has been permanently removed from the database or status changed to “do not refer” may appeal the decision to the Kids First Advisory Board. The provider has the right to information that led to the decision to remove his/her name, so that he/she may respond.

A provider may be reinstated when an investigation shows:

1. The complaint was determined to be unfounded by the licensing agency.
2. The licensing agency indicates a violation has been corrected.
3. The appeals process concludes with the recommendation the provider be reinstated.
4. Kids First Advisory Board determines reinstatement is appropriate.

Complaints Against Providers Reported to Kids First

Kids First is not a regulatory agency. When complaints are brought to us or if a staff member witnesses a situation that endangers children we will report complaints to the proper regulatory agencies. Colorado Division of Child Care or the child protection team is responsible for the investigating and follow up.

Complaint Process

Initial Contact

Any person may register a concern or complaint to any Kids First staff member. Complaints may be received in person, by phone, or in writing. Complaints may also be received indirectly such as while doing a referral or update call.

If the person wishes to remain anonymous, they will be informed that Kids First is not a regulatory agency and cannot pass on anonymous complaints. Kids First staff must emphasize to the complainant that Child Abuse Hotline or Department of Human Services will not accept anonymous complaints.

Forms and Record Keeping

1. A standard complaint form will be used to document each complaint received. All reports will be documented in writing. The staff taking the report will remain neutral and listen without implying that they agree or disagree. Kids First staff will be as thorough as possible in gathering details and direct quotes whenever possible and first hand facts & observations.
2. Complaints will be classified as health and safety or business practices by Kids First staff with the complainant.
3. A copy will be forwarded to division of Child Care Licensing and the local child protection team.
4. Notes will be kept of follow up steps taken and dates, for example a. Further conversations with complainant and/or with provider
 - b. Suspension of provider from referral listing
 - c. Findings of any investigation
 - d. A provider appeal of a decision, any action taken
 - e. Reinstatement or permanent removal of provider from database
5. Kids First will confirm that licensing received the complaint and keep an index of complaints made. Inquiries regarding complaints will be directed to the proper agency.

Complaint Resolution

Business Practice Complaints:

In consultation with the Director, Kids First staff may:

1. Ask whether the individual has talked with the person closest to the problem. Describe the chain of command concept. Let the individual know that issues are often best resolved at the level closest to the people involved.
2. Offer suggestions or techniques that may be helpful in reaching a mutually satisfying solution.
3. Notify provider regarding the complaint
4. Take no action

Health and Safety Complaints

Complainant should be urged to notify the appropriate regulatory agency immediately: for licensing violations, Colorado Division of Childcare licensing, for suspected abuse or neglect the Child Abuse Hotline at the Department of Human Services. Kids First may report complaints, which does not preclude the complainant from reporting also. Notification to the childcare provider of a serious complaint will not be made until the investigation by the authority has been made. Inquiries into complaints under investigation will not be commented on by Kids First staff, but will be referred to the proper authority.

NOTE: Kids First cannot be held responsible for inadvertently referring to providers under investigation without the investigating agency notifying Kids First of an ongoing investigation.