



**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES
CHILD WELFARE POLICY**

Chapter 16: Financial Services/Assistance

Section 01: Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care

Effective Date: March 1, 2023

Version: 9

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POLICY OVERVIEW

When a child must be removed from the home, every effort to allow the child to take clothing, and personal items will be made to help with the transition to out-of-home care. Funding may be available to the child to assist in covering the cost of items and services, which are not covered by the foster care per diem to help meet the child's needs and provide normalcy to the child.

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PROCEDURE

All clothing and personal items removed from the home and/or purchased or acquired for the child are the property of the child and/or the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) and will follow the child throughout the life of the case. DCS will not allow a child to take weapons of any kind. All clothing and personal items brought with the child must be documented on the Inventory of Personal Items form.

Exception: If a child is removed from a property used for the illegal manufacture of a controlled substance, clothing and personal items will not be removed.

Upon removal or a change in placement, the Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Ensure the resource parent is aware that the foster care per diem should be used to cover reasonable costs of caring for the child including, but not limited to:
 - a. Food;
 - b. Clothing (e.g., replacement clothing, repairs, mending, and alterations);
 - c. Shelter;
 - d. Supervision that substitutes for daily supervision;
 - e. School supplies (e.g., paper, pens, and calculator); and
 - f. Child's personal incidentals on an ongoing basis (e.g., soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, over the counter medications).
2. Ensure the resource parent is aware that mileage reimbursement is a flat rate, per mile, based on the current State employee approved mileage per-diem, which the resource parent may find on the Indiana Department of Administration (IDOA) Travel Services webpage. Advise the resource parent that Mapquest should be used to obtain the shortest mileage distance for travel;

Note: The resource parent may receive an additional amount of properly claimed travel expenses incurred for a child placed in the resource home when the resource parent

travels over 162 miles in a month. DCS will not reimburse residential facilities for travel expenses as referenced in this policy.

3. Ensure all appropriate clothing and/or personal items go with the child at the time of removal whenever possible;

Note: If DCS is unable to obtain the child's clothing and/or personal items at the time of the removal, the FCM will attempt to obtain those items within 48 hours of the initial removal or change in placement, unless the child was removed from a property used for illegal manufacturing of a controlled substance.

4. Document on the Inventory and Personal Items form and upload into the case management system when clothing and/or personal items are not able to be obtained for the child, and explain to the child the reason why the items are not able to be obtained in a manner appropriate for the child's age and developmental level;
4. Complete a thorough inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items for each placement change (if applicable);
5. Assess whether the child has adequate clothing and/or personal items and make a request to the FCM Supervisor to authorize the purchase of necessary items;

Note: Additional purchases should not be authorized in the event a child is moved from one (1) resource home to another unless a policy exception is requested, as defined below in the Financial Policy Exception section.

6. Review the Inventory and Personal Items form with the resource parent within 10 days of placement;
7. Ensure the resource parent signs the Inventory and Personal Items form to acknowledge receipt of the items listed for the child and that the resource parent understands these items belong to the child; and

Note: All items that belong to the child must go with the child in the event of a placement change.

8. Ensure the resource parent is aware the following funding assistance may be available for the child:
 - a. Educational Needs Funding,
 - b. Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment,
 - c. Personal Allowance, and
 - d. Special Occasion Allowance.

The Foster Care Specialist will:

1. Provide information to the resource parent regarding the availability of Foster Care Liability Insurance; and
2. Ensure the resource parent is provided with the requirements for reimbursement and electronic invoicing.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Staff with the FCM to determine the child's need for clothing and/or personal items; and
2. Review and respond to any requests made for additional funding to meet the needs of the child.

Financial Policy Exception

When a Financial Policy Exception is necessary, the FCM will:

1. Complete a Global Services referral for the requested dollar amount and state the justification of need for:
 - a. Funding greater than the policy limit, and/or
 - b. Funding for expenses not referenced in policy.
2. Submit the referral to one (1) of the following workflow approvers:
 - a. FCM Supervisor, or
 - b. Local Office Director (LOD)/Division Manager (DM).

The workflow approver will:

1. Review the Financial Policy Exception justification;
2. Approve or deny the Financial Policy Exception, as appropriate; and

Note: The referral will proceed to KidTraks Invoicing Unit for payment, upon Financial Policy Exception approval.

3. Notify the FCM via written correspondence if the Financial Policy Exception is denied.

Request for Additional Funding (RAF)

A request for an RAF form is completed when an item requested is greater than the policy limits and above \$1500.

The FCM will:

1. Complete the RAF form; and
2. Submit to the FCM Supervisor for approval or denial.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Review and respond to any RAF requests by either approving or denying the request; and
2. Submit the RAF decision to the LOD or DM.

The LOD or DM will:

1. Review and approve or deny the RAF; and
2. Send the RAF to the Regional Manager (RM) for final approval or denial.

The RM will:

1. Review the RAF and make a determination whether to approve the request;
2. Submit a copy of the RAF to the Regional Finance Manager (RFM) if approved; and
3. Notify the LOD/DM of the final determination via written correspondence.

The RFM will process the RAF form upon receipt from the RM.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

N/A

Forms and Tools

- [Automated Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement \(SF 47551\)](#)
- [Claim for Support of Children Payable from Family & Children Funds \(SF 28808\)](#)
- [DCS Foster Care Per Diem Invoice Total Checker](#)
- [Foster Parent Invoice Instructions](#)
- [Foster Parent Travel Invoice \(SF 54836\)](#)
- [Indiana Department of Administration \(IDOA\) Travel Services](#)
- [Indiana Drug Endangered Children \(DEC\) Response Protocol](#)
- [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF 54315\)](#)
- [KidTraks User Agreement](#)
- [Letter to Foster Parents Regarding Per Diem](#)
- [Licensed Foster Parent Resources Web Page](#)
- [Mapquest](#)
- [Request for Additional Funding \(SF 54870\)](#)
- [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Instructions](#)
- [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Q & A](#)
- [W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification](#)

Related Policies

- [8.37 Holding a Placement during a Hospitalization](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

N/A

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 16.01

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Foster Care Liability Insurance

Foster Care Liability Insurance is protection and coverage provided to foster parents upon request. The insurance covers certain risks associated with caring for children under DCS care and supervision. The coverage includes damages to the home or property of the foster parents, harm done by the child to another party, and claims made against foster parents as agents of the State of Indiana.

Foster Care Per Diem

Foster care per diem is not intended and should not be expected or represented to cover costs that would be ordinarily incurred by the resource parent in the absence of a foster care placement. Such costs include, but are not limited to the resource parent's rent, mortgage, car payment, or routine housing maintenance cost. See the Letter to Foster Parents Regarding Per Diem and the DCS Foster Care Per Diem Invoice Total Checker Rates for additional information.

Funding Assistance for the Child:

Educational Needs Funding

Educational Needs Funding is available to cover the cost of securing a High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate, tutoring, and summer school. This referral is made in KidTraks through Global Services. Contact the local DCS Educational Liaison (EL) for assistance with school related fees as many may be waived.

Note: When other funding is available for securing an HSE Certificate it should be utilized prior to completing a Global Services referral.

Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment

DCS will ensure a child is provided with adequate clothing at the time of initial removal. DCS will only provide the licensed resource parent with an Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment of up to \$200.00 based on an immediate assessment of the child's current clothing need by the Family Case Manager (FCM) at the time of removal. After the initial clothing allotment is expended, the resource parent will use a portion of the monthly per diem to pay for clothing and/or personal items for the child on an ongoing basis. Personal items at the time of initial placement may include, but are not limited to toiletries, personal hygiene items, undergarments, and hair products.

Note: DCS will not provide a Personal Allowance to residential facilities.

Personal Allowance

Each child in a licensed resource placement is eligible to receive an annual Personal Allowance of up to \$300 starting on the 8th consecutive day of placement. These funds may be expended

and are reset at the beginning of each calendar year. These funds may be used for items such as, but not limited to:

1. Computer hardware and/or software;
2. Field trips;
3. Driver's education (unless eligible for Emancipation Goods & Services Funds);
4. Class pictures;
5. Application fees;
6. Equipment and fees associated with extracurricular activities including musical instruments and sporting equipment;
7. Electronic devices (e.g., e-readers, laptops, or gaming systems);
8. Prom dress or other special occasion clothing; and
9. Preschool.

Note: The following items are not permitted or reimbursable: piercings, tattoos, tobacco products, alcoholic products or beverages, firearms/weapons, fireworks, lottery tickets, gift cards, cash, checks, or money orders. An **exception** may be made to purchase a gaming system gift card when the child has a gaming console and the only option to purchase a game is through a gaming system gift card.

Special Occasion Allowance

DCS will pay an annual Special Occasion Allowance to the licensed resource parent in addition to the per diem for all children in out-of-home care. This allowance is up to \$50 for birthdays and up to \$50 for the winter holiday season. For the resource parent to receive reimbursement for these funds, the child must be in the resource parent's care on the child's birthday and on the date of the winter holiday. Allowable items that may be bought using the Special Occasion Allowance include, but are not limited to:

1. Toys;
2. Video games or other electronics;
3. Salon services;
4. Clothing;
5. Jewelry;
6. Sporting equipment;
7. Items for a birthday party; and
8. Tickets to an event.

Note: Items not allowable are piercings, tattoos, tobacco products, alcoholic products or beverages, firearms/weapons, fireworks, lottery tickets, gift cards, cash, checks, or money orders. An **exception** may be made to purchase a gaming system gift card when the child has a gaming console and the only option to purchase a game is through a gaming system gift card.

DCS will reimburse the special occasion allowance upon receipt of a properly claimed invoice with a receipt attached. No referral is required. Questions regarding a child's usage of the annual allowance should be directed to the RM and to the local DCS RFM.

Invoicing Electronically via KidTraks e-Invoicing

Resource parents who are comfortable using a computer are encouraged to submit invoices electronically using KidTraks e-Invoicing. The resource parent must first become a vendor via submission of W-9 and Direct Deposit forms. Then, submission of the KidTraks User Agreement allows direct access to KidTraks, including the ability to submit invoices electronically via KidTraks e-Invoicing.

Note: Mileage reimbursement must be submitted via the paper Foster Parent Travel Invoice, but all other invoicing may be submitted electronically via KidTraks e-Invoicing, including Per Diem, Personal Allowance, Birthday/Holiday Allowance (i.e., Special Occasion Allowance), and Initial Clothing & Personal Items Allotment. KidTraks e-Invoicing guides are available on the Licensed Foster Parent Resources web page.

Requirements for Reimbursement

All resource parents need to complete the Automated Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement and W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification to receive reimbursement from the state. All resource parents should utilize the standard invoice, the Claim for Support of Children Payable from Family & Children Funds or submit via KidTraks e-Invoicing and attach all receipts in order to receive reimbursement for funds such as the Personal Allowance, Special Occasion Allowance, and Initial Clothing Allotment. Additional information on completing the W-9 may be found on the W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Q & A.

Travel

Additional travel may be claimed when the resource parent travels over 162 miles in a month for the below purposes:

1. Travel between the resource home and the school system in which the child was enrolled before placement and continues to be enrolled while residing with the resource parent if the school system is not required to provide transportation under applicable state law;
2. Travel to and from Headstart, summer school, pre-school, summer camps, and school-related extracurricular activities;

Note: Mileage will be eligible for reimbursement to and from these programs only when it is not provided by the school corporation. FCMs may consult with the DCS EL for information on what school corporations are required to provide for the child.

3. Travel to and from parent and/or sibling visits (including visits with incarcerated parents or to other relatives that are authorized by DCS and are a part of the child's Case Plan/Prevention Plan) and visits to facilitate the transition to another placement;
4. Travel to and from the following types of health-related appointments:
 - a. Doctor (primary care physician and any specialists),
 - b. Dentist (including orthodontist),
 - c. Health clinic,
 - d. Hospital/Emergency Room (including resource parent visits during child inpatient episodes),
 - e. Occupational and Physical Therapy, and
 - f. Behavioral health counselor or therapist.
5. Travel to and from employment or job searching for youth 14 years of age or older;
6. Travel to and from the following types of case activities:
 - a. Administrative case reviews,
 - b. Judicial reviews (court appearances),
 - c. Case conferences,
 - d. Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings, and
 - e. Resource parent training sessions.

7. Other travel that is extraordinary and has been approved in writing as consistent with the child's Case Plan/Prevention Plan by the DCS LOD/DM prior to the travel taking place; and/or

Note: Upon approval of the Regional Manager (RM), DCS will pay per diem and travel expenses exceeding 162 miles in a month (including overnight stays) if visits are maintained with a child who is hospitalized for longer than five (5) days. See policy 8.37 Holding a Placement during a Hospitalization for further guidance.

8. Pre-placement overnight visits with the child.

The prospective resource parent may receive an amount of properly claimed travel expenses incurred for a child who will be placed in the resource home when the prospective resource parent travels at least one (1) mile for pre-placement visits between the prospective resource parent and child and when there are no overnight visits.

Note: To be eligible for reimbursement, the resource parent must document all allowable travel that occurs through the month starting from the first mile on the Foster Parent Travel Invoice.

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