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|  | <b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES<br/>CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>         |                                     |
|   | <b>Chapter 8:</b> Out-of-Home Services                                       | <b>Effective Date:</b> June 1, 2009 |
|   | <b>Section 19:</b> Clothing, Personal Items, and Permitted Per Diem Expenses | <b>Version:</b> 3                   |

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| <b>POLICY</b> |
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When removing a child from his or her home the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make every effort to allow a child to take clothing and personal items, (e.g., photographs, a blanket, a favorite toy or book, video games, game systems , CD player, etc.). Any and all clothing and personal items removed and/or purchased for the child is the property of the child and/or DCS. All items (i.e. clothing, personal items, etc) brought with the child must be documented and maintained in the [Clothing/Personal Items Inventory Checklist](#).

**Exceptions:** If a child is removed from a home that is the site of a meth lab, personal items and clothing will not be removed. See [Indiana Drug Endangered Children \(DEC\) Response Protocol](#).

DCS will not allow a child to take weapons of any kind.

DCS will ensure that a child is provided with adequate clothing if he or she does not have clothing at the time of removal. DCS may provide the resource family or residential facility with an Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment by way of a voucher/p-card of up to \$400.00 based on the child's need. The voucher/p-card shall be used to purchase the appropriate supply of clothing and/or personal items for the child and is not intended to provide a complete wardrobe for the child. Instead, the voucher/p-card is only intended to meet the immediate needs of the child that are adequate and appropriate to the season and the child's age and gender. After the funds are expended, the resource family will use a portion of the monthly per diem to pay for clothing and personal items for the child on an ongoing basis.

**[REVISED]** The resource parent should utilize the per diem to cover expenses of caring for the child including, but not limited to:

1. Food;
2. Clothing (replacement clothing, repairs, mending, alterations, etc.);
3. School supplies (activity fees, class dues, paper, pens, books, calculator, etc.);
4. Personal Incidentals (comb, brush, tooth brush, soap, shampoo, conditioner, sanitary needs, haircuts, sundries, etc.); and
5. Items related to extracurricular activities (fees, uniforms, etc.) the child may be involved in.

Foster parent per-diem is not intended and should not be expected or represented to cover the resource parent's rent, mortgage, routine housing maintenance cost, etc.

In special circumstances, additional clothing and/or personal item allotments may be provided based on the Supervisor and/or the DCS Local Office Director's approval.

Additionally, children in out-of-home care (including residential care) should have items specific to their age. DCS will also ensure that all of a child's clothing and personal items, including items purchased for the child while in out of home care, go with the child in the event that he or she returns home or moves to another placement.

#### Code References

N/A

### **PROCEDURE**

The Family Case Manager will:

1. Ensure all appropriate clothing and/or personal items go with the child at the time of removal or placement change whenever possible;
2. If clothing and/or personal items will not be taken with the child, explain the reason why in a manner appropriate for the child's age and development, notify the Supervisor, and document this on the [Clothing/Personal Items Inventory Checklist](#) and in ICWIS 'Contacts';
3. If it is not possible to take the child's clothing and/or personal items at the time of removal, make efforts to pick them up within 48 hours;
4. Complete a thorough inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items. Inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items should be:
  - a. Taken anytime the child is removed from their home;
  - b. Reviewed with and signed by the resource parent acknowledging what items belong to the child and were brought with and/or for the child;

**Note:** The steps provided above should also be completed if the child is placed in a residential facility.

5. Request that the Supervisor evaluate the clothing and/or personal items situation and authorize issuance of a voucher/p-card if necessary;
6. If the child does not have adequate clothing and/or personal items at the time of removal provide the resource family or residential facility with an Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment (voucher/p-card) and assist the resource family or residential facility in acquiring clothing and/or personal items for the child;
7. Ensure that an inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items is taken in the event that the child returns home or moves to another placement; and

**Note:** Additional vouchers/p-cards cannot be issued in the event a child is moved from one resource home or residential facility to another. All items that belong to the child must be returned with the child in the event he or she is no longer placed in the resource home or residential facility. The [Clothing/Personal Items Inventory Checklist](#) should be reviewed and signed by the resource parent or residential facility employee when a child is removed from their home for the purpose of ensuring all items are returned with the child.

8. If the foster family home is licensed through a Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA) notify the licensing agency if there are:
  - a. Concerns about the quantity and/or condition of the child's clothing and/or personal items, and

- b. Problems gathering all the child's clothing and/or personal items prior to a placement change.

The Supervisor will provide assistance in evaluating the clothing and/or personal items situation if necessary.

If the child leaves the placement (e.g., returns home, moves to another placement, adopted by someone else, etc.) the resource family or residential facility will return all clothing and personal items to DCS, the child, or the child's new caregiver depending upon the situation.

Special Circumstance Request:

1. The FCM will prepare a written request (email is acceptable) and submit to the Supervisor for approval or denial;
2. The Supervisor will review and approve or deny the Special Circumstance Request:
  - a. He or she will immediately notify the FCM if the request is denied, or
  - b. If the Supervisor approves the Special Circumstance Request, then he or she should submit the written request to the DCS Local Office Director for his or her approval or denial.
3. The DCS Local Office Director will approve or deny the Special Circumstance Request and notify the Supervisor of his or her decision.

#### **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

N/A

#### **FORMS AND TOOLS**

1. [Indiana Drug Endangered Children Response Protocol](#)
2. [Clothing/Personal Items Inventory Checklist](#) - Not Yet Available

#### **RELATED INFORMATION**

##### **Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment**

Defined as a dollar amount, up to \$400, that is to be paid for use by the resource parent or residential facility to meet the immediate needs of the child when the child is initially removed from his or her home and placed in out-of-home care.

##### **Special Circumstance**

Examples of special circumstances include clothing needed to accommodate unique circumstances such as a sudden large weight gain or loss due to medication, pregnancy, etc

##### **Condition of Clothing**

All clothing should be appropriate for the season, in good condition, free from damage and stains, and should fit the child appropriately. Second-hand clothing items that meet these guidelines are acceptable.

### **Packing Clothing and Personal Items**

Every attempt should be made to pack the child's clothing and personal items in some form of luggage (e.g., suitcases, duffle bags, etc.). Sturdy boxes may be used if luggage is unavailable. However, garbage sacks and other disposable bags are not appropriate and should be used only as a last resort. Use of such items may cause a child to believe that his or her possessions are not valued.

### **Failure to Return All of Child's Clothing and Personal Items**

At the end of a placement, if a resource family or residential facility fails to return all of the clothing and personal items that the child had during placement; then, the FCM should assure that a report is made to the appropriate LCPA or DCS local office for entry into the resource home's or residential facility's file.

### **Voucher/P-Card**

A voucher/p-card is issued to DCS to fund initial expenses related to obtaining needed items for a child requiring out-of-home care.

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