

SECTION 6: FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

DCS provides a daily foster care payment, clothing allowance, and personal allowance for all foster children placed with licensed foster parents. The Child Placement Rates and Special Allowance Approval Matrix has the current foster care rates and is located in the DCS Policy and Procedure Manual in Chapter 4, Section 10, Foster Care Rates, Allowances, and Payments. The DCS Policy and Procedure Manual can be accessed online under www.azdcs.gov, then under the "About" tab (See Appendix 3 Page H, I).

FOSTER CARE PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Foster Caregivers should receive a billing document form around the 1st of the month for children in the home during the previous month. The billing document should contain the number of days the child was in the foster caregivers' home during the previous month, as well as their placement rate for licensed homes, (i.e. Basic, Special, Mother/Infant, Medically Fragile). If any information on the monthly billing document is incorrect, the foster caregiver must enter the correct information on the billing document in Guardian, sign the document, and resubmit the form for payment as soon as possible.

Payments should be forthcoming in approximately 15 days.

FOSTER CARE RATES

There is a "basic" daily foster home rate paid on behalf of each foster child placed in a licensed foster home. The "basic" rate is between \$19.68/day/child and \$27.15/day/child, depending upon the age of the child. Children who require a higher level of family foster home care and supervision may be eligible to receive a "special" daily rate, based upon the child's health and developmental needs (physical, emotional, educational, social, behavioral, special medical care and needs, and level of required supervision). The DCS Placement Administration is responsible for determining the child's eligibility for a "special daily rate". The payment level may be re-evaluated based upon new information and diagnoses.

There is also a daily clothing and personal allowance for each foster child, including children placed with licensed foster parents or unlicensed kinship foster caregivers. The daily clothing and personal allowance is based upon the child's age and ranges from \$19/month/child to \$80/month/child, depending upon the age of the child.

SPECIAL ALLOWANCES

DCS provides "special allowances" for specific expenses incurred on behalf of foster children residing with licensed and unlicensed caregivers. "Special allowances" have a maximum amount per state fiscal year (the 12-month period from July 1st through the following June 30th), must be requested through the DCS Specialist, and include the following:

- Emergency Clothing Allowance: Not to exceed \$150/child/state fiscal year
- Extra Emergency Clothing Allowance: Not to exceed \$100/child/state fiscal year
- Books and Education Allowance: Not to exceed \$82.50/child/school year for books and school supplies
- Supplemental School Tuition: Not to exceed \$165/session. For use during summer sessions or interim sessions at year-round schools
- Graduation Allowance: Not to exceed \$220/child/available for high school graduation-related fees (cap, gown, ring, yearbook, etc.)
- Special Needs Allowance: \$22.50/child/to use for child's birthday, holiday, and special occasion.
- Passport: One-time reimbursement per child for the actual cost of obtaining a passport book or card. Receipts are required.
- Diapers for Children with "Special Medical Needs": \$62.50 maximum/month/with medical documentation. (Please Note: The Mercy Care CHP section of this Guide provides information on medically necessary diapers and briefs.)

For convenience, the Department offers both Web Billing, to submit monthly Guardian Billing Forms, and Direct Deposit, to receive payments directly into a savings or checking account. These options, while both electronic, are exclusive of each other.

Foster Caregivers may choose to participate in one without participating in the other. To sign up for web billing (Electronic Bill Submission), the foster caregivers must have received a paper billing form. It will have a reference number in the box under the signature line that is required to set up web billing. The foster caregivers should follow the instructions in that box to sign up. Note: The Provider ID requested during registration, is the foster caregiver's SSN.

To sign up for direct deposit, the Foster Caregiver must complete the DCS Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization Agreement and submit it with required documentation to the DCS Payment Processing Unit per the instructions on the form. The direct deposit form can be found at <https://dcs.az.gov/data/dcs-forms> form number CSO-1030A.

If additional information about either of these processes is needed, contact the DCS Payment Processing Unit at (602) 255-3300.

ADOPTION SUBSIDY

DCS administers an Adoption Subsidy Program to assist adoptive parents who adopt a child with special needs from foster care. Your DCS Specialist can assist you in determining if a child meets the special needs criteria established in Arizona state law. If a child is eligible for Adoption Subsidy, the child may receive medical and dental coverage through AHCCCS (Arizona's Medicaid Program) and a monthly adoption subsidy maintenance payment to help with some of the expenses of raising a child with special needs. The non-recurring legal expenses incurred by adoptive parents when adopting a child from foster care may be reimbursed through the Adoption Subsidy Program, up to a maximum of \$2,000. Efforts must be made to place a child with prospective adoptive parents without adoption subsidy unless: the child is being adopted by the foster parents or kinship caregiver with whom the child is placed, the child has developed significant emotional ties to that family, and it would not be in the child's best interest to look for another adoptive family.

GUARDIANSHIP SUBSIDY

DCS administers a Guardianship Subsidy Program to assist permanent guardians of children exiting foster care for guardianship. Guardianship subsidy provides a monthly payment to a person appointed as a permanent guardian through the juvenile court for a child who was a party in a dependency action and left foster care for guardianship. Guardians interested in applying for this benefit should complete a Guardianship Subsidy Application, DCS Form CSO1028A. State law requires the guardian to apply for any federal or state benefits on behalf of the child as these benefits need to be deducted from the guardianship subsidy payment amount. This subsidy is for guardianships granted under Title 8 by a Juvenile Court. Title 14 guardianships granted by a Probate Court are not eligible for this subsidy.

INCOME TAX STATUS

Foster Caregivers may be able to claim a child in their care as a dependent on their federal income taxes. DCS is unable to provide tax advice but encourages Foster Caregivers to review Internal Revenue Services (IRS) publications or to consult with a tax professional for dependent child eligibility requirements. The IRS website is at <http://www.irs.gov>.