Department of Children's Services

POLICY

16.29 Foster Home Board Rates	
Application: DCS Regional Foster Care Staff and Contract Agencies	
Authority: TCA 37-5-105; 37-5-106, TCA 37-4-201-207 Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, P.L. 109-239 Safe & Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006, and P.L. 110-351 Fostering Connections to Success; Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008.	**Standards: COA**: None
Commissioner:	**Date:**
Original Effective Date: 12/01/00 Current Effective Date: 05/13/24	Supersedes: DCS 16.29 04/11/24 Last Review Date: 05/13/24

Glossary:

- Foster Care Rates
  - Foster care rates are foster care maintenance payments provided to traditional and kinship foster families to provide ongoing care of children placed in their home.

Policy Statement:

Foster parents providing out of home care for children in state custody or in guardianship will be paid a board rate based on the needs of the child and the funding. This includes families providing out of home care for children in TN state custody or guardianship who move to another state during the period of placement via the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). All foster parent payment room and board rates, including the rates of foster parents under the supervision of Contract Agencies, at a minimum meet USDA Standards and are adjusted and modified annually to be no lower than USDA Standards for the cost of raising children within the region.

Purpose:

This policy informs Department of Children Services (DCS) staff and foster families of the board rates, payment process, and the process of requesting rates above the regular rate. It also outlines the expectations around utilization of the board payments.

Procedures:

A. Contract

1. No child may be placed in a foster home either in-state or out-of-state without form ***CS-0565, Daily Rate Child Placement Contract*** or form ***CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement and Well-Being Information and History***.
2. Network Development staff provides the contract, form ***CS-0565, Daily Rate Child Placement Contract,*** to staff transporting the child to the foster home.
3. Both Network Development and regional staff have a role in preparing the ***CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement and Well-Being Information and History***.
4. Upon placement in a foster home, the foster parent must be provided a copy of ***CS-0565, Daily Rate Child Placement Contract*** for Special/Extraordinary Rates and Regular, KEEP, and Kinship Foster Parents Approved to Provide Temporary Care, and ***CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement and Well-Being Information and History***. The foster parent signs two copies of the contract providing one copy to the DCS worker placing the child/youth and keeps the second copy for their records.
5. The DCS worker who placed the child should provide the contract to the designated staff to upload in the system within one (1) business day of the placement.

B. Foster Home Board Rate Determination

1. Foster Home Board Rates are based on the age of the child and a review of the child's documented level of need and are not linked to the means of the foster family.
2. The DCS Foster Home Board Rates are categorized in four (4) levels:
   a) **Expedited State Board Rates**: An expedited home receives a board payment reimbursement from DCS at the rate of $14.12 per day/per child until the expedited foster home is fully approved.
   b) **The Regular Board Rates**: Check the following web link for the most current Foster Home daily board rate: ***https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/dcs/documents/foster_care/TN_FCBoardRate.pdf***
   c) **The Special Circumstance Board Rates**: Check the following web link for the most current Foster Home daily board rate: ***https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/dcs/documents/foster_care/TN_FCBoardRate.pdf***
   d) **The Extraordinary Board Rates**: Will be determined on a case by case basis, but will not exceed $60.00 per day.
      - Refer to the ***Protocol for Foster Care Special Extraordinary Rate Request*** to determine the process for requesting a Special or Extraordinary rate for a custodial child who is deemed in need of additional therapies, services and

supports and may qualify for an increased rate due to their special/extraordinary needs.

3. Foster care rates are reviewed annually by the Director of Foster Care to determine continued appropriateness of the rate. Recommendations for adjustments are made as appropriate. During the review, the Director will assure that foster care rates provided to approved relative/kinship homes are equivalent to what would be provided to a non-relative approved foster home for the same child.

C. Clothing Allowance

1. Each child entering state custody and in need of clothing are eligible for the initial clothing outlay, regardless of placement plans.
2. Children in DCS foster homes receive their clothing allowance from the board payment made to the foster parents. If there is a unique need outside the base payment, a request should be made to the Fiscal Department, utilizing the steps outlined in the ***Protocol for Clothing and Allowance.***
3. Custodial children in Contract Agency placements receive clothing allotments through the per diem rate paid to the agency. Since the Contract Agency has already been paid the per diem rate, it is their responsibility to ensure children have adequate clothing after placement into the program.

D. Child's Personal Allowance

1. All custodial children in DCS foster homes, both in-state and out-of-state, receive a personal allowance from the board payment that is paid to the foster parents. Their personal allowance is factored into the daily board rate and should be given to the child by the foster parents at a rate consistent with the steps outlined in the ***Protocol for Clothing and Allowance.***
2. Custodial children in Contract Agency placements receive their personal allowance through the per diem rate paid to the agency. Since the Contract Agency has already been paid the per diem rate, it is the agency's responsibility to ensure children receive a personal allowance.

E. Routine Transportation

Routine transportation that is within thirty (30) miles one-way is incorporated in to the foster home board rate for all children, including those placed via ICPC. Refer to DCS Policy ***16.8, Responsibilities of Approved Foster Homes*** and the ***Protocol for Routine Transportation***.

Forms:

CS-0540, Clothing Purchase Authorization

CS-0565, Daily Rate Child Placement Contract

CS-0674, Special or Extraordinary Rate Request

CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement and Well-Being Information and History

CS-0934, Special or Extraordinary Rate Justification Form

FA-0080, Claim for Travel Expenses

Collateral Documents:

31.5, Organization of Family Case Files

16.8, Responsibilities of Approved Foster Homes

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Practice and Procedure Manual

Protocol for Clothing and Allowance

Protocol for Routine Transportation

Protocol for Foster Care Special/Extraordinary Rate Request