


31.17, Childcare Assistance	
Application: DCS Foster Care, Child Protective Services, Family Support Services, Family Crisis Intervention, Resource Linkage, Extension of Foster Care, Juvenile Justice and Adoption Subsidy Staff	
Authority: TCA: 37-5-105 (3), 37-5-106	Standards: COA: PA-CFS 9.0; PA-CFS 26.02; PA-CFS 29.01; PA-CFS 29.03-29.04; PA-PRG 5
Commissioner: 	Date: 01/9/2026
Original Effective Date: 04/26/2000 Current Effective Date: 02/09/2026	Supersedes: 6/23/2023 Last Review Date: 7/14/2025
Glossary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <u>Childcare Services:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A service involving the care, supervision, education and guidance of a child on a regular basis for periods of less than 24 (twenty-four) hours per day in a place other than the child's home. Under these circumstances the state provides payment to a licensed childcare provider who is caring for DCS custodial and non-custodial children, if the child meets the criteria. 	

Policy Statement:

Upon determination of eligibility and approval, the use of childcare services shall be acquired through the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) Child Care Certificate Program.

Purpose:

Childcare services may be used as an appropriate intervention and prevention service for children receiving non-custodial services in order to preserve their in-home placement, for custodial children placed in a DCS or contract agency foster home to, promote a successful and stable placement, and for children adopted through DCS, to provide ongoing support.

Procedures:

A. Childcare Services for Custodial Children/Youth

1. Children/youth under the age of 13 (thirteen) and in foster care are eligible to receive childcare services.

2. Custodial children/youth, ages 13 (thirteen) to 18 (eighteen), that are physically or mentally incapable of self-care are eligible for childcare services.
3. Childcare for custodial children/youth is approved for a period of 12 (twelve) months.
 - a) If a child exits custody prior to the approval period ending, the child/youth will continue to receive childcare services for the remainder of the approved 12 (twelve) month timeframe.
4. Custodial children/youth placed in a family-like setting may be eligible to receive financial assistance for summer camp programs in efforts to address childcare needs during the summer months.

B. Childcare Services for Children/Youth Adopted from Foster Care

1. Children/youth under the age of 13 (thirteen) and receiving adoption assistance are eligible to receive childcare services.
2. Childcare for children/youth receiving adoption assistance is approved for a period of 24 (twenty-four) months.
 - a) If a child/youth is determined to no longer be eligible for adoption assistance prior to the end of the reporting period, the child/youth will continue to receive childcare services for the remainder of the approved 24 (twenty-four) month timeframe.

C. Childcare Services for Non-Custodial Children/Youth

1. Non-custodial children/youth with an open DCS case are eligible to receive childcare assistance in situations where not receiving childcare services could jeopardize the child/youth's safety, permanency, or well-being.
2. Non-custodial childcare payments may be approved for up to three (3) months.

D. Childcare Services Children/Youth with Developmental Delays or Disabilities

1. Children/youth with developmental delays and/or disabilities may be referred to the Child Care Certificate Program.
2. Children under the age of three (3) must also be referred to Tennessee's Early Intervention System (TEIS).

E. Redeterminations and Termination of Childcare Services

1. It is the responsibility of the DCS worker for both custodial and non-custodial cases to complete the redetermination or termination of childcare services in a timely manner.
2. Redeterminations for custodial cases must be completed at 12 (twelve) month intervals to continue childcare services. The referral for redetermination should be submitted prior to the end of each 12 (twelve) month interval to avoid a disruption in services.
3. Redeterminations for non-custodial cases must be completed at three (3) month intervals to continue childcare services.
4. Terminations are completed when the child/youth is no longer eligible to receive childcare services.

F. Resources

1. For information regarding the process of applying for childcare services, as well as redeterminations and terminations, and specific tasks and responsibilities, refer to the [*Protocol for Childcare Assistance Referral and Authorization*](#).

Forms:

[CS-0556-1, Childcare Assistance Referral and Authorization](#)

[CS-0556-2, Non-Custodial Childcare Assistance Referral and Authorization](#)

[CS-0811, Tennessee Early Intervention System \(TEIS\) Referral](#)

[CS-4231, Application, Referral, and Authorization for Adoption Childcare Assistance](#)

Collateral Documents:

[Protocol for Childcare Assistance Referral and Authorization](#)