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PART 11 - REIMBURSEMENT

A. EXPENDITURE REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

Reimbursements may be available, based on the Agency's budget. Foster parents must talk with the child's foster care worker to confirm the availability of reimbursable funds prior to making a purchase for a foster child when a reimbursement will be expected. Effective January 2006, reimbursements will not be made for orthodontia or tutoring as well as for out -of-state day care that exceeds the Louisiana state rate, set by the Office of Family Support.


There are approvals and procedures involved to receive reimbursement. On a monthly basis, foster parents are to submit the Foster Parent's Supplementary Expenditure Affidavit (OCS Form 435), to make a claim for reimbursement to the child's worker; the form is listed as Appendix H. Receipts or sale slips must be attached verifying purchases of all items over \$1.00. Receipts must show the item(s) purchased, the date and the amount and should be signed by the vendor (person whom item(s) was purchased from). Separate receipts are necessary for each foster child. School supply lists must also be attached with receipts, if these items were purchased. Foster parents must submit odometer readings for reimbursement of transportation involving authorized travel in their personal vehicle. If the transportation involves more than one foster child, the mileage is to be pro-rated for each child. Receipts for any public transportation must be submitted.

Form 435 and receipts are reviewed by the worker and approved if expenditures claimed are in accordance with policy. Remember to get prior authorization and expenditure amounts from the worker. *** Reimbursement requests submitted after a three-month timeframe may not be honored.

Most medical expenses are covered by the child's medical card. The child's medical card may not cover certain prescription drugs and medical emergencies. In these situations, it is preferable for the medical providers to bill the agency directly. The agency will then forward to the medical provider the appropriate payment forms. Foster parents can be reimbursed if the child requires the medication immediately.

Payment and/or reimbursement may be made by check or direct deposit. Foster parents may enroll, cancel or make changes in direct deposit of their payments by completing the OCS DD-1 Form. The form must be submitted along with documentation for the financial institution account to which payment is to be directed. Refer to Appendix H for the OCS DD-1 Form and instructions. Also additional information on direct deposit may be found in the Administrative Manual Chapter 1, Section [1-922](#) and [1-924](#).

A separate document from the payment, called a Remittance Advice, is mailed at the same time that the payment is made to confirm payment. The Remittance Advice is a document containing the amount and description of items/services for which the payment is being made, a Payment Information Number (PIN), a nine digit Payee number, and a check number or a direct deposit tracking number.

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B. BOARD PAYMENT

Payment for the care of foster children is made once a month. Board payment is retroactive and received during the middle of the month for care provided the preceding month. The board payment is computed at a daily rate. Therefore, the board payment will vary slightly in amount according to the number of days in a month.

The daily foster care rate payments shall not be used for expenditures that are not part of the child's needs. The basic rate paid each month is for the child's shelter, food, clothing, monthly allowance, personal items and gift allowance. The following describes each component of the rate:

Room and Board is to defer part of the cost for the child to reside in the home and the provision of food. The room and board amount is based upon the United States Department of Agriculture estimates of the cost of raising a child and budget appropriation from the state legislature.

The **clothing allowance** is to be spent monthly or saved, to be used as needed for clothing (e.g. winter coat/clothes and summer clothes), school uniforms, clothes for Sunday, etc. This payment is only for clothing. The agency will not regularly replace clothing. Clothing should be purchased new and in keeping with community standards as appropriate to the age of the child.

The **child's monthly allowance** is to be paid directly to an age appropriate child or placed in a piggy bank or account each month if the child is not paid directly. This is to occur each month for all children, ages 0 through 17.

Personal items allowance is to cover personal items such as haircuts, shampoo, etc.


The **gift allowance** is to be used to purchase gifts for the child.

The board rate is for four age groups: birth up to age two; two through age five; six through age 12; and 13 years of age or older. The following is a breakdown of the average board payment based on the age of the child.

Birth up to Age 2 years
(\$15.58 per day)

*\$313.77 – room and board
61.50 – diapers
61.50 – clothing
9.72 – child's monthly allowance
15.37 – personal items
5.54 – gift allowance

\$467.40 = Average Monthly Payment**

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Age 2 through Age 5 years
(\$13.57 per day)

*\$314.76 – room and board
61.50 – clothing
9.93 – child’s monthly allowance
15.38 – personal items
5.53 – gift allowance

\$407.10 = Average Monthly Payment **

Age 6 through Age 12 years
(\$14.96 per day)

*\$324.47 – room and board
73.80 – clothing
29.62 – child’s monthly allowance
15.37 – personal items
5.54 – gift allowance

\$448.80 = Average Monthly Payment**

Age 13 years or older
(16.70 per day)

\$351.31 – room and board
80.38 – clothing
46.70 – child’s monthly allowance
16.33 – personal items
6.28 – gift allowance

\$501.00 = Average Monthly Payment


C. SPECIAL BOARD PAYMENT

In some instances special or extra time and effort on the part of the foster parent is required to care for and meet the needs of a child. The child may be physically, emotionally or mentally handicapped. Special board payments are based on the foster parents’ time and effort to care for the child. Two types of OCS foster homes have different approval criteria for special board. These are Alternate Family Care (AFC) and Specialized Homes. Special board for AFC must be approved by State Office; while any special board for specialized homes over \$300 must be approved by State Office. This is necessary due to the agencies expectations and the additional monthly payments paid to these homes.

D. CLOTHES

The clothes a child wears have a lot to do with the image he has of himself. It is essential that the child’s clothes be like those of your own children and the children in the community.

A child, when first placed in foster care, may be in immediate need of clothing. An initial clothing allowance may be provided only once for each child of any age at the time he first enters care.

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The monthly clothing allowance included in the board payment is to be used to replace and add to the child's clothes. Both the initial clothing allowance and the monthly allowance are to be used to purchase school uniforms if uniforms are necessary for school. School uniform purchases by foster parents for either private or public school attendance are not reimbursed to the foster parent.

During placement, a foster child may have need for replacement of his clothing due to an unexpected circumstance. A type of situation for which replacement of clothing could be considered would be if the child's clothing was destroyed by fire or some other natural disaster, or if he has a dramatic change in clothing size due to a significant weight gain (i.e., pregnancy or abnormal growth) or weight loss (such as from illness). Contact your foster care worker to discuss procedures and money amounts.

E. ALLOWANCES

The purpose of an allowance is to help the foster child learn to handle money. The agency provides an allowance for the child in his monthly board payment. It is important that the child receive this money on a regular basis. The child should be helped to use his money wisely and to plan ahead for his purchases. This is an excellent time to introduce the benefits of saving money in a savings account or other secure locations. This allowance is not for school lunches, personal items such as toothpaste, shampoo or deodorant and should never be withheld from him.


When a child deliberately causes damage to property, the child can be expected to pay for the damages out of his monthly allowance with the approval of the OCS supervisor. The child should participate in the development of a payment plan. The supervisor must approve the plan for payment of damages by the child. The payment plan shall be for a portion, but not all, of the child's allowance each month until the agreed upon amount is paid. If the child has earnings, a portion of the earnings may be used in the payment plan. If the child reimburses damages, a request shall not be made to the agency also for reimbursement.

Foster parents may give a foster child extra spending money for special occasions if they wish. You should not ask the foster child to use his money for certain things, such as, when the whole family goes to buy ice cream or to the movies and you are treating everyone else; treat the foster child also.

F. GIFT ALLOWANCE

The agency provides for the foster child a small amount of money in his monthly board payment for gifts for the child. You may want to spend more on Christmas and birthdays, as you will want the foster child to be treated as equally as possible with others in the home.

Foster parents, by nature, are giving people and want to share not only their home and emotional love, but also, wish to give gifts to the child. When gifts are given to the child, then those gifts become his possessions to take with him when he leaves the foster home; the gift should be moveable and separate

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from other persons. Many foster children do not have possessions of their own. Gifts received on special occasions provide the child the opportunity to collect personal possessions.

It should be remembered that gifts should be given with no “strings attached”.

G. TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

Foster parents shall comply with all the state laws for cars including current car inspections, liability car insurance and child restraint systems. All foster children when required by age and size are to comply with the law and safety practices by having the appropriate child passenger restraint systems. Any car seat or other passenger restraint system purchased for the child becomes the property of the child just as any other purchase made on his behalf, i.e., clothing. OCS provides car seats for the child. Discuss with your worker if you need OCS to provide a car restraint system.

Daily transportation is the responsibility of the foster parent and is not reimbursable. The foster parent may be reimbursed for transportation expenses under the following circumstances:


- Required or allowed by OCS for the welfare of the child for medical and other professional appointments, authorized family visits or Family Team Conferences within the state; and/or
- Free transportation to school is not available and the local school board will not reimburse the foster parent.

Within policy limitations, foster parents may be reimbursed for mileage expenses incurred on behalf of the foster child. To claim mileage expenses, the odometer reading of the trip must be submitted. Should more than one foster child be involved in the trip, e.g., sibling to a visit, foster children to medical appointment, etc., the trip mileage is to be divided between the involved foster children. An example is two foster children are taken to the doctor’s office and the round trip is 12 miles. Six miles would be claimed for each child on the reimbursement form. An OCS Form 435, provided by the agency, is to be completed by the foster parent for reimbursement. A separate Form 435 is completed on each child. Consult and discuss with your child’s worker allowable expenses and amounts.

H. VACATIONS AND TRAVEL

Foster parents must notify the child’s worker about travel plans when the child will be traveling for more than one day. Foster parents may include a foster child in the family vacation or provide permission for a child to travel with a group for educational and/or personal growth. If the family will be traveling for an extended period of time without the child accompanying them, the foster parents are to inform the child’s worker of alternate childcare arrangements.

OCS must approve all out-of-state travel of a foster child. As much advance notice as possible, preferably at least one month, should be given so necessary parental, court and state office approval can be obtained. Expenses for vacations cannot be reimbursed.

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I. SOCIALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

The maximum socialization and developmental funding for children age six through 17 may vary based on availability of funding and may be spent for the child to participate in formalized developmental or socialization activities. It is not expected that such expenditures will be made on behalf of every child. The activity is to be purposefully planned to meet the child's need in a specific area such as building self-confidence, physical coordination, or improving peer interactions. If such a need is identified, it is to be addressed in the child's case plan. Allowable activities include summer camps, community organization/church/school sponsored trips, membership in organizations such as Scouts or community sport teams and similar activities; self-improvement or skill classes in music, art, dance, gymnastics, or other physical development activities. Funds may be used, if more appropriate, to purchase items needed to participate in developmental or socialization activities.

The following kinds of items/activities are not allowed:

- ✓ Items that cannot be physically moved with the child
- ✓ TV, VCR, Stereo, Electronic devices, Video games
- ✓ Birthday parties and gifts or
- ✓ Christmas gifts.

As reimbursable expenses are limited, activities should be selected through joint discussion with the child's foster care worker, foster parent, and child (if age appropriate). Activities should be selected based upon the ability to meet the child's specific developmental needs. Authorization from the child's foster care worker shall be obtained prior to any purchases. The identified needs of the child, selected activities and use of developmental and socialization funds should be included in the child's case plan.


J. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURES

There are other items funded by the agency. The following items may also be claimed as incidental expenses.

Long distance telephone calls made on behalf of the foster child in accordance with the child's service plan – such as phone calls to arrange appointments for the child and calls to the office to discuss the child. The agency does not pay for unauthorized phone calls made by the foster child on the foster parent's phone.

A suitcase purchased by the foster care worker may be approved on an individual basis when the child's need warrants the purchase. A suitcase cannot be claimed by a foster parent.

Babysitting fees incurred when attending foster parent training sessions required by the agency. Contact your worker for the rates established for the reimbursement of babysitting fees. A maximum amount is reimbursed per fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th) for foster parent in-service training.

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Swimming pool alarms are a reimbursable item for those foster parents who have swimming pools and want the additional security that a pool alarm may provide. Foster parents will be reimbursed a maximum of ***\$25.00*** toward the purchase of a pool alarm or up to ***\$25.00*** toward the purchase of a pool cover, certified as a pool safety device, not just a cover. The expenses will be paid once a child has been placed in the foster home. Examples of situations when a pool alarm may be warranted include the placement of a child with developmental delays, an overly active child, a small child, or any other child who may be unaware of pool safety rules. For children who could be considered at higher risk, foster parents may also wish to provide swimming lessons or water safety classes which would be funded socialization/developmental funds.

Initial placement incidental purchases for such items as shampoo, sanitary napkins, deodorant, shaving cream, toothbrush, etc. can be purchased for the child. There is a maximum allowable amount for the purchase of these items. Contact your child's worker for the allowable amount if you plan on seeking reimbursement of these purchases. These expenses are only reimbursed at the child's initial entry into foster care.