



Guide for Relative Caregiver Supports

Meeting the needs of and caring for a child requires significant financial resources. The availability of services and support for relatives caring for children in the legal custody of the Department of Family and Children Services must be explored prior to placement and assessed throughout the child's placement with the relative. The following are some possible resources. Ask your case manager, if you would like additional information.

Relative Foster Care A relative who is interested in becoming a foster parent for a child in the agency's custody must attend the IMPACT orientation and 20-hour training course, usually held over a period of seven (7) weeks. The process also involves a home study that includes medical, criminal records (fingerprint), drug screen, financial verification and an in depth assessment of the home and family. A per diem cannot be paid until the training is completed, all documentation is submitted and the home study is approved. The per diem amount is based on the age of the child. All foster parents must remain in compliance with program standards including yearly reevaluations, updating verifications and meeting on-going training requirements.

Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR) enables the agency to provide 80% of the current foster care per diem rate to relative caregivers of children in DFCS custody.

Relative Care Subsidy (RCS) and Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy (ERCS) Program enables the agency to provide financial support for children transferred from the legal custody of the department, by the courts, to the permanent custody of an approved relative (custody until the child reaches age eighteen). In addition to the initial approval, the relative must submit a yearly renewal report to the agency and participate in a court hearing every three years. The relative care subsidy/ERCS is paid on a monthly basis.

Subsidized Guardianship (SG) and Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship (ESG) enables the agency to provide financial support for a child transferred from the legal custody of the department, by the juvenile court, to the guardianship of an approved relative. In addition to the initial approval, the relative must submit to a yearly report to the agency. **The ESG or SG is paid on a month basis.**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a cash assistance program available to needy families. Relatives within a certain degree of relationship may qualify for a monthly check. If the relative is not included in the grant (Payee), there is not a time limit to receive benefits and the relative's income is not considered. It may take up to 45 days to be certified for a benefit. The amount of the benefit depends on the number of children and the children's income. You may not receive TANF for a related child in your home, if you receive a Foster Care Per Diem or Relative Subsidy. The application must be made in the county of residence of the relative caretaker and only after the child has been physically placed in the relative caregiver's home. The child and caregiver must be US citizens. Relative Rate, Subsidized Guardianship, Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship, Relative Care Subsidy or Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy.

Medicaid is a state administered medical assistance program. For the most part, children in the custody of DFCS are eligible for one of the Medicaid programs. As long as the child is in the custody of DFS, the case manager is responsible for applying for the child's Medicaid and ensuring that you receive the card. DFCS is responsible for the medical bills of children in agency custody. If the child needs medical care, before you receive your Medicaid card, contact the case manager immediately for prior approval. Children in DFCS custody who are Medicaid eligible must see physicians who are enrolled as Medicaid providers. Once a child is no longer in the custody of DFCS, the relative caregiver is responsible for applying for Medicaid for the child. Most children living with relatives are eligible for one of the two major Medicaid programs – Right from the Start Medicaid (RSM) or Peach Care for Kids. You may apply at your county of residence DFCS office. You do not have to receive TANF to qualify for Medicaid.

Food Stamps Relatives caring for a child in DFCS legal custody may apply for food stamps in the county of residence. Eligibility is based on the income of all household members. The payee must meet both the income and the resource limit



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for their household size in order to be eligible for benefits. It may take up to 30 days for the approval to receive food stamps.

Childcare - Eligibility for CAPS (Childcare and Parent Services) If the child is in DFCS custody and placed with a relative, the relative must meet the need (work requirements) and residence criteria. The relative’s income is not applicable. It is critical that the DFCS case manager notify the CAPS case manager within 5 working days of any changes in custody. The relative must apply at their residence county DFCS office.

Emergency Needs Other help may be available to the family in order to facilitate or maintain the placement. This help is determined by the case manager’s assessment and requires the supervisor’s approval.

CCFA Wrap-Around Services may provide temporary intervention to support relative caregivers and children. These services may include counseling, behavior management, parent aide services, and crisis intervention. The services are provided based on need and funding availability.

Initial Clothing Allowance and Annual Reimbursement All children in foster care are entitled to an initial clothing allowance. The initial clothing is purchased during the first six months of the removal and placement of a child in foster care. Limits are set according to the age of the child. Relatives must receive approval from the case manager prior to purchasing “initial clothing” for a child placed in their home. An annual (cannot be claimed in the same calendar year in which a child enters care) clothing allowance per state fiscal year is available to children placed in a relative’s home.

Strengthening Outcomes for Families and Children

I have read and understand the supports and resources available to me if I decide to accept placement of my relative.

_____/_____
Signature of Relative Caregiver Date

_____/_____
Signature of SSCM Date