



Iowa Department of Human Services

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GENERAL LETTER NO. 17-E-7

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Child Welfare and Community Services,
Division of Adult, Children and Family Services

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 17, Chapter E, ***OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES***, Contents (page 3), revised; and pages 98, 106, 107, 108, 122, 123, 124, 126, and 130, revised.

Summary

Chapter 17-E is revised to:

- ◆ Increase the Supervised Apartment Living (SAL) foster care cluster site staffing costs from \$500 to \$525, with the daily prorated rate changed from \$16.44 to \$17.26.
- ◆ Incorporate into transition planning the requirement that every child in foster care, age 16 and older, receive a copy of any consumer credit report annually until discharged from foster care. The child must be assisted in interpreting the credit report and resolving any inaccuracies.
- ◆ Reflect the increase in foster family care maintenance rates authorized by Senate File 446, section 29, as enacted by the 2013 session of the Eighty-Fifth General Assembly.
- ◆ Increase the SAL monthly maintenance payment from \$750 to \$787.50, with the daily prorated rate increased from \$25 to \$26.25.
- ◆ Increase the SAL initial allowance from \$600 to \$630.

Effective Date

Upon receipt.

Material Superseded

This material replaces the following pages from Employees' Manual, Title 17, Chapter E:

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Contents (page 3)	April 20, 2012
98, 106-108	April 20, 2012
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Additional Information

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Billable services include:

- ◆ Direct face-to-face contact between the service provider and the child;
- ◆ Activities undertaken to assist the child in developing the needed structure and supports to live in this setting;
- ◆ Activities undertaken to assist the child in locating and using other needed services, supports, and community resources; and
- ◆ Consulting and collaborating on service directions on behalf of the child with schools, employers, landlords, volunteers, extended family members, peer support groups, training resources, or other community resources.

If services are purchased, expenses of transporting youth, service management activities, and other administrative functions are indirect costs and are not billable units of service.

Contractors providing a cluster setting shall be paid \$525 per month per child in the setting for agency staffing costs, in addition to monthly billable units of services provided to the child. The contractor shall bill up to \$525 per month per child only when two or more children are in the setting during the month.

- ◆ If a second child enters the cluster setting during the month, the contractor shall bill on a prorated basis for both children beginning with the date when the second child enters the setting.
- ◆ If another child enters the cluster setting during the month the \$525 shall be prorated. The prorated amount per day is \$17.26.
- ◆ If a child exits the setting on or before the last day of the month the \$525 shall be prorated up to the date before the date of exit.
- ◆ If a cluster setting goes down to one child during the month, the contractor shall bill for that one child on a prorated basis based upon the number of days of the month that the two or more children were in the setting.

Procedure:

1. Involve the child in service planning in order to develop the child's ownership. Involve the child's family and significant others whenever appropriate.

Transition Planning

Legal Reference: [Iowa Code section 232.2\(f\)](#); [441 IAC 202.18\(2\)](#), P. L. 110-351; P. L. 111-148; 42 USC 675(5)(I)

Policy:

For a child in foster care who is 16 years of age or older, the case plan must include a written plan of services which will assist the child in preparing for the transition from foster care to adulthood, based upon an assessment of the child's needs. The transition plan and needs assessment must:

- ◆ Be developed with a focus on the services, other support, and actions necessary to facilitate the child's successful entry into adulthood.
- ◆ Include:
 - Appropriate referrals to programs and services for the child in care, and
 - Referrals to ensure that supports are in place upon the child's discharge.
- ◆ Be personalized and developed with the child present, honoring the goals and concerns of the child.
- ◆ Address the following areas of need for the child's transition from foster care into adulthood, including but not limited to all of the following:
 - Education
 - Employment services and other workforce support
 - Health and health care coverage
 - Housing
 - Relationships
- ◆ Provide for the child's application for adult services if the needs assessment indicates the child is reasonably likely to need or be eligible for adult services or other support from the adult services system.
- ◆ Provide for the child's participation in the College Student Aid Commission's program of assistance in applying for federal and state aid if the child is interested in pursuing higher education.
- ◆ Be developed and reviewed by the Department in collaboration with a child-centered transition team.

The membership of the team and the meeting dates for the team must be documented in the transition plan. The transition team must be comprised of:

- ◆ The child,
- ◆ The child's social work case manager,
- ◆ Persons selected by the child,
- ◆ Persons who have knowledge of services available to the child, and
- ◆ Any person who may reasonably be expected to be a service provider for the child when the child becomes an adult or to become responsible for the costs of services at that time (e.g., a provider for aftercare services).

A child in foster care, age 16 and older, shall receive a copy of any consumer credit report annually until discharged from foster care. Assist the child in interpreting the credit report and resolving any inaccuracies.

A child reaching the age of majority (18 or older) who remains in foster care may request their own free credit report. At the child's request, the social work case manager shall assist in obtaining, interpreting, or resolving any inaccuracies in the free credit report. Document if a child age 18 or older objects to having the Department request a credit report.

Before the child reaches age 17½, a transition committee for the area in which the child resides must review and approve the transition plan. When a child enters foster care at age 17½ or older, the committee shall be involved in reviewing and approving the child's transition plan within 30 days of completion.

Procedure:

1. Consider the transition plan as a working document. Review the plan:
 - ◆ At a minimum of every six months (during permanency hearing by the court or other formal case permanency plan review);
 - ◆ Within the 90 days before the child reaches age 18; and
 - ◆ During the 90 days immediately before the date the child is expected to leave foster care if the child remains in foster care after reaching age 18.
2. During the plan review conducted within the 90 days before the child reaches age 18, include information and education about the importance of having a durable power of attorney for health care. Provide the child with the option to execute such a document.

- Give the child a copy of ["The Gift of Peace of Mind,"](#) a booklet that includes information and instructions and a legal form assigning a health care power of attorney that the child can complete once the child is 18 years of age or older.
3. When the child leaves out-of home placement at 18 years of age or older, provide to the child:
 - ◆ A free copy of the child's health and education record.
 - ◆ A certified copy of the child's birth certificate and facilitate securing a federal social security card. The state or county registrar shall waive the fee for the certified copy that is otherwise chargeable under Iowa law.
 4. In the final transition plan, specifically identify how the child's need for housing will be met.

See 17-C(1), [Transition Planning for Youth in Placement](#), for more information.

Assessment of needs and transition plan development are also available upon request to children who have exited foster care at age 16 and older in order to be adopted or to enter a subsidized guardianship arrangement. The aftercare program administrator is responsible for meeting the transition needs of this population.

Response to Unauthorized Absence From Placement

Legal reference: The National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990; [Iowa Code Chapter 694](#) and sections [232.2\(11\)](#), [232.19](#), [232.158 \(Article V\)](#), [232.171 \(Article IV\)](#), [233.1](#), and [709A.1](#)

Policy:

The care provider shall notify the Department when a child under the supervision or care of the Department has an unauthorized absence from placement.

Procedure:

Take immediate action to locate a child under the Department's care or supervision when there is an unauthorized absence from placement. For the purpose of these procedures, "unauthorized absence" means any unplanned absence due to:

- ◆ Actions taken by the child (e.g., running away),
- ◆ Actions of others (e.g., abduction), or
- ◆ The lack of attention or supervision by the caretaker.

PLACEMENT TYPE	AMOUNT PAID	WHEN PAID	WHEN PRORATED
Foster family See Foster Family Maintenance Payment for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintenance plus, • siblings, • transportation 	Basic daily rates: Age 0 – 5: \$16.78 Age 6 – 11: \$17.45 Age 12 – 15: \$19.10 Age 16 – 20: \$19.35 Plus add-ons if eligible	At the end of month or when child leaves placement and basic rate paid first month of placement	When child enters after the first of the month or leaves before the end of the month
Group care	Rate set in contract	At the end of month when the facility bills the Department	When child enters after the first of the month or leaves before the end of the month
Supervised apartment living	\$26.25 per day; \$787.50 per month	Beginning of month or when child enters	When child enters after the first of the month
Shelter care	Actual cost of care up to \$96.98 per day combined service and maintenance	End of month or when child leaves	When child enters after the first of the month or leaves before the end of the month

Procedure:

Make payment for the day the child enters placement, but not the day the child leaves placement. (EXCEPTION: See [Reserved Bed Payment](#) and [Supervised Apartment Living Payment](#).) Calculate the number of days paid as follows:

- ◆ Entering care (or in care) on the first of the month and leaving during the month: Date leaving care minus one.

1. Child A is placed in foster family care February 1 and leaves May 1. No payment is made for May. (May 1 minus May 1 = 0)
2. Child B leaves group care placement on June 24. Payment is made for 23 days in June. Summary: 24 minus 1 = 23

- ◆ Entering care sometime during the month and leaving care during the month:
Date leaving care minus the date entered care.

Child C is placed in a foster home on September 4 and leaves September 18.
The foster home is paid for 14 days of care. Summary: 18 minus 4 = 14)

- ◆ Entering care during the month and staying into next month: Last day of the month minus the date entered care, plus one.

Child D is placed in a group care on October 26. For October, the facility is paid for 6 days. Summary: 31 minus 26 plus 1 = 6

When a child enters placement and leaves on the same day, whether due to running away or a change in placement decision, the facility has provided services and shall receive payment. For shelter care, a child is considered to have “entered placement” when an intake has been completed for that child.

Foster Family Maintenance Payment

Legal reference: [441 IAC 156.6\(234\)](#) and [202.6\(2\)](#)

Policy:

Licensed foster families receive monthly payments for caring for children in their home. Payments for placements both inside and outside of Iowa are based on the payment schedule in effect in Iowa.

The basic maintenance payment rate schedule for foster family care is set at the United States Department of Agriculture’s estimate of 65% of the cost to raise a child in the Midwest.

The basic rate is intended to reimburse the foster family for food, clothing, shelter, school expenses, grooming, ordinary transportation, recreation, and training appropriate for the child’s age.

Add-ons to the basic maintenance payment are available for:

- ◆ [Maintenance plus](#)
- ◆ [Sibling groups](#) (\$1 per day per child)
- ◆ [Transportation for family or preplacement visits](#)

The child's assessment score on form 470-4401, *Foster Child Behavioral Assessment*, determines whether the child is eligible to receive a maintenance plus the basic rate at level 1, 2, or 3:

- ◆ Behavioral needs rated at level 1 qualify for a payment of \$4.81 per day
- ◆ Behavioral needs rated at level 2 qualify for a payment of \$9.62 per day
- ◆ Behavioral needs rated at level 3 qualify for a payment of \$14.44 per day

The following payment schedule shows possible monthly payments including basic maintenance and maintenance plus levels 1, 2, and 3:

Age of Child (years)	Basic Daily Rate	Level 1 Basic Maintenance Plus \$4.81 per Day	Level 2 Basic Maintenance Plus \$9.62 per Day	Level 3 Basic Maintenance Plus \$14.44 per Day
0 - 5	\$16.78	\$21.59	\$26.40	\$31.22
6 - 11	\$17.45	\$22.26	\$27.07	\$31.89
12 - 15	\$19.10	\$23.91	\$28.72	\$33.54
16 - 20	\$19.35	\$24.16	\$28.97	\$33.79

Procedure:

At the initial foster home placement, all placements receive the maintenance payment at the basic rate for at least the first month of foster home placement. The basic rate may include the \$1 sibling and transportation add-ons, which are **only** applicable for a basic rate.

The maintenance plus payments may begin on the first day of the month **after** the *Foster Child Behavioral Assessment* is completed and is approved by the supervisor. Do not enter the new maintenance rate into FACS until your supervisor has signed off and approved the assessment and the rate.

Set payments for placements outside of Iowa based on the payment schedule in effect in Iowa. The service area manager or designee may grant an exception to authorize a payment to the foster family at the rate in effect in the other state if:

- ◆ The child's family lives in that state, and
- ◆ The goal is to reunify the child with the family.

If the child qualifies for a change in maintenance rate because of changing behavioral needs, placement with siblings, or change in transportation expenses, make the change on the foster care Constant Payment screen in FACS.

Procedure:

When determining what is “outside of the community in which the family resides,” use consistency and reasonableness when considering:

- ◆ The number of miles traveled over ten miles
- ◆ The frequency of trips required
- ◆ The expense

Add-on for Maintenance Plus Levels

Legal reference: [441 IAC 156.6\(4\), 156.1\(234\)](#)

Policy:

A maintenance plus payment is a daily payment made in addition to the basic maintenance payment to a foster family who is providing care to a special needs child.

The payment shall be based upon an assessment of the child’s emotional, behavioral and physical care needs made using form 470-4401 or 470-4401(S), *Foster Child Behavioral Assessment*.

To authorize payment to the foster family at a higher level than the basic maintenance rate, the *Foster Child Behavioral Assessment* form shall be signed by the Department worker and the worker’s supervisor.

Procedure:

Complete the *Foster Child Behavioral Assessment*:

- ◆ Within the first 30 days of a child’s initial entry into foster family care.
- ◆ Whenever the child’s behavior changes significantly.
- ◆ When the child’s placement changes.
- ◆ After termination of parental rights, in preparation for negotiating an adoption subsidy or pre-subsidy.
- ◆ Before a court hearing on guardianship subsidy. (The highest guardianship subsidy is limited to Level 2, basic rate plus \$9.62.)

Supervised Apartment Living Payment

Legal reference: [441 IAC 156.8\(2\), 156.12\(1\)](#)

Policy:

The monthly maintenance payment for supervised apartment living for the child's living expenses may be paid to the child or another payee (other than a Department employee). The maintenance payment is \$787.50 per month or \$26.25 per day when the child enters after the first day of the month. The maintenance payment is paid at the beginning of the month or when the child enters a supervised apartment living placement.

When a child is initially placed in supervised apartment living, the service area manager or designee may authorize an allowance not to exceed \$630 if the child does not have sufficient resources to cover initial costs.

When a child enters placement during the month, payment is made for the date of entry through the end of the month, even if the child loses eligibility during the month due to age or no further need for foster care placement.

Procedure:

Determine whether the child or the foster care provider should receive the maintenance payment.

Work with the child in setting up a budget for needed expenditures. Examples of initial costs are rental deposits, purchase of food, utensils, bedding, and cleaning supplies.

Compare the budget with the child's resources, including any funds in the child's escrow account. If the child's resources are insufficient to cover the expected expenses, request an allowance to make up the difference.

- ◆ Obtain approval for the amount to be authorized.
- ◆ Document approval in the child's case record.
- ◆ Generate payment through the FACS system Special Issuance List (SPIL) screen.