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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
311 WEST SARATOGA STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201

DATE March 1, 2008

CIRCULAR LETTER # SSA 08-17

TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
Assistant Directors of Social Services

FROM: Cathy F. Mols, Executive Director
Social Services Administration

RE: This Circular Letter replaces and supercedes Circular
Letter SSA # 91 – 8 (Daycare Services For Children In
Foster Care)

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: Out-of-Home Placement Services (Foster Care Services)
and Resource Units

ORIGINATING OFFICE: Resource Development Placement and Support Services

ACTION REQUIRED OF: Out-of-Home Placement Services (Foster Care Services),
and Resource Units

REQUIRED ACTION: Local Department of Social Services must implement
these policies and procedures when responding to requests
for Foster Family Daycare Services

ACTION DUE DATE: ➤ March 1, 2008 for Baltimore City and Prince
Georges County
➤ July 1, 2008 for all other jurisdictions

CONTACT PERSON: Kevin Keegan, Director
Resource Development Placement and
Support Services
410 767-7910

Purpose

This circular letter provides new guidelines for the eligibility and payment of daycare services for children in public family foster care and formal kinship placements. NOTE: **Daycare services for private treatment foster care homes and private purchase of care families are not included in this policy.**

Implementation of this policy will provide public foster families and formal kinship providers with supplemental supportive services that will reduce multiple placements and remove barriers that might impede the foster parent recruitment and retention process. Providing daycare will preserve placements and protect children at risk of multiple placements.

Background

Current policy regarding daycare services for children who are committed to the local department went into effect July 1, 1991. This service was specifically for public foster families who provided regular and intermediate foster care services. Due to the limited availability of funding, daycare subsidies for public foster families were not uniformly provided.

Recently, the state of Maryland has initiated a vigorous public foster parent recruitment and retention campaign. A major component of the campaign entails the recruitment of 1,000 Maryland foster homes by 2010. To achieve this goal, it is essential that current and potential foster families be provided with daycare subsidies to defray the cost of daycare for their foster children.

Grandfathering - Currently some local departments use annual flex funds at varying levels to support daycare services for family foster care and formal kinship placements. In cases where flex funds have been utilized prior to the effective date of this letter to support daycare services throughout the year for children ages 6 to 12 years old, this support will continue to be funded using the annual flex fund allotments. This only applies to families with children currently in placement and currently receiving this subsidy, and will maintain support at the current levels and rates. New placements are subject to following the guidelines for eligibility and payment of day care services outlined below.

FOSTER/FORMAL KINSHIP FAMILY DAY CARE SERVICES

DEFINITIONS

Foster /Formal Kinship Family Daycare - a subsidy provided to public foster parents and kinship providers to reduce financial responsibility of providing daycare for children in foster care.

A Daycare Provider - a qualified caregiver licensed or informal and screened in by the local department of social services or the foster family to provide daycare services for children in foster care

Daycare Center - a licensed facility that provides child care services with a capacity for more than eight children, that is:

- (a) Licensed under COMAR 13A.14.02 by MSDE
- (b) Operates under a letter of compliance issued under COMAR 13A.14.05 by the MSDE;
- (c) Licensed by any branch of the military under applicable military child care regulations;
- (d) Operated by a public school; or
- (e) Licensed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene as a youth camp as defined by Health-General Article, §14-401, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Family Daycare –the care given to a child in place of parental care for less than 24 hours a day in a residence other than the child's residence, for which the provider is paid in cash or in kind.

Informal Daycare Provider – a relative or a close friend of the foster parent that can provide daycare services in the foster family's home if certain qualifications are met. In-home care which is:

- (a) Care provided to the customer's children in the customer's home by a non-relative, and
- (b) Exempt from licensing if all children being cared for live in the residence in which care is provided

Training - Any type of instructional program, except for post-college graduate programs, which is approved by the local department, including undergraduate college, vocational program, publicly funded training program, or volunteer activity designed to lead to employment of the participant.

Formal Kinship Care - a child is committed to the local department of social services and placed with a family member that has not undergone the foster home approval process.

MSDE – Maryland State Department of Education – Office of Child Care

Summer Break – As defined by the jurisdiction's public school calendar

Reconsideration – the date when the public foster family initially applied for daycare services and the subsequent dates of reconsideration that are to follow in six-month intervals.

**SERVICE
OFFERRED**

Maryland's public foster care families and formal kinship providers may request daycare services from their local department of social services. Formal kinship providers must first request daycare through the current MSDE Purchase of Care process and will receive daycare assistance from the local department if they are determined to be ineligible as a result of being over scale. Daycare assistance is limited to five (5) days per week. The caretaker must give at least fourteen (14) days advance notice of the request for this planned service. The fourteen (14) day advance notice may be waived in cases where:

- The placement is new
- The placement is at risk for disruption

The local department of social services will make a determination of eligibility using the following criteria:

- The child must be in the custody of a Maryland local department of social services;
- The child must be receiving out-of-home placement services with a public foster family or formal kinship provider;
- The child's age must range from infancy through five (5) years of age;
- In the case of summer break; the age range for the child shall be extended to twelve (12) years of age.

**WHO IS
ELIGIBLE**

There is no income requirement for daycare eligibility. The following individuals are eligible to receive foster family daycare services:

- Public restricted and unrestricted foster families approved by the local department of social services, including all formal placements for which the foster parents receive the full approved board rate.
- Public foster families receiving regular, intermediate, or treatment board rates. This does **not** apply to private purchase of care families or private treatment foster care families.
- Formal kinship caregiver where the child is committed to the local department and placed in a home that has not gone through the foster home approval process. Determination must first be made that the kinship caregiver is not eligible through the MSDE Purchase of Care process.
- A single public foster parent or kinship caregiver who is employed.

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- Public foster families or kinship caregivers where **both** parents are employed
- A single public foster parent or kinship caregiver who is participating in a school or training program
- Public foster families or kinship caregiver where both parents are participating in school or training programs or where one is employed and the other is in school or a training program
- Public foster families or kinship caregivers who care for medically or emotionally fragile foster children and there is a written recommendation from a therapist, psychiatrist, psychologist or a physician that would indicate the need for daycare services

**WHO CAN BE
USED AS
DAYCARE
PROVIDERS**

A daycare provider must be:

- An MSDE licensed, approved, or registered daycare provider;
- An informal day care provider, who is a family member or family friend who is not part of the household, and who has undergone appropriate background checks by the local department of social services; **providing services in the home of the foster/kinship care provider only.**

HOW TO APPLY

The foster parent or kinship provider must initiate the request for day care services. The initial request must be made to the child's caseworker. The child's caseworker will maintain a record of requests for day care services. Copies must be forwarded to the foster/kinship family's home worker within five (5) business days of the request.

**PUBLIC FOSTER
FAMILY
DAYCARE
RATES &
CHARGE CODE**

Daycare services are to be charged as follows:

- 2132 – IV-E eligible foster care
- 7132 – Non-IV-E eligible foster care
- 2193 – IV-E eligible Formal Kinship Placement
- 7193 – Non-IV-E eligible Formal Kinship Placement

Payments are to be made as follows:

1. Payments are to be made to the daycare provider following utilization of services and after a monthly bill has been submitted that includes attendance data indicating number of days attended for the month.

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2. Worker authorizes invoice and submits to the finance office for processing
3. All charges that exceed MSDE payment standards shall be the financial responsibility of the public foster family.
4. Five (5) absences per month will be excused.
5. The local department will not pay for absences that exceed more than five (5) per month.

Rate of Payment and Cost Guidelines

Rates are determined from State Board of Education COMAR (13A.14.06.11) taking weekly rate times 4.3 (weeks in a month) and rounding to the nearest whole dollar. It is important to note that the rates will vary per jurisdiction based on *type of care* and foster parent/kinship provider *status* at enrollment. As noted in COMAR there are currently seven (7) purchase of childcare regions within State that are inclusive of Baltimore City and Maryland counties.

Payments for daycare services are to be accessed through the CHESSIE Service Log. All payments must be the same as MSDE daycare rates for hourly/maximum daily rates. For more than 20 hours per week, payment is for the full rate for a family with no countable income. For less than 20 hours per week, payment is made at one-half the full rate for a family with no countable income.

(SEE ATTACHMENT I FOR RATE GUIDELINES)

RESPONSIBILITY OF LDSS

- Keep accurate information regarding IV-E eligibility for each foster child requiring daycare services
- Keep record of all daycare requests
- Document usage on contact notes in CHESSIE
- Maintain current profiles of all informal daycare providers
- Conduct a reconsideration of all daycare plans every six months
- Provide ongoing reassessment of the individual day care programs to evaluate need and appropriateness

RESPONSIBILITY OF DHR/SSA

- Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions in the tracking and monitoring of funds for daycare services
- Provide support, assistance and advocacy
- Maintain ongoing data to assess recruitment and retention outcomes of the usage of daycare services in collaboration with the Maryland Foster Parent Association and the local departments of social services, strategize approaches to improving the utilization of daycare services.

ATTACHMENT I

Rate Guidelines – ATTACHMENT I

A separate childcare provider payment rate is established for each of the following seven purchase of childcare service regions within the State:

- (a) Region U, comprising Cecil, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Talbot, and Washington counties;
- (b) Region V, comprising Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Somerset, and Wicomico counties;
- (c) Region W, comprising Anne Arundel, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, and Prince George's counties;
- (d) Region X, comprising Howard and Montgomery counties;
- (e) Region Y, comprising Baltimore, Frederick, and Harford counties;
- (f) Region Z, comprising Allegany, Garrett, and Worcester counties; and
- (g) Region BC, Baltimore City.

Weekly Rate of Payment and Cost Guidelines—Family Child Care Home

The amount paid to a family child care provider who cares for a child in the provider's home is the lowest of the:

- (a) Regional monthly service unit rates established by this regulation;
- (b) Monthly rate charged to the general public by the provider if that rate is comparable and competitive with the going rate in the community; or
- (c) Actual cost of care.

(1) Rate for a child 24 months old or older:

- (i) Region U—\$90.27;
- (ii) Region V—\$80;
- (iii) Region W—\$111.06;
- (iv) Region X—\$141.78;
- (v) Region Y—\$111.02;
- (vi) Region Z—\$82.29; and
- (vii) Region BC—\$102.68;

(2) Rate for a child up to 24 months old:

- (i) Region U—\$115;
- (ii) Region V—\$95;
- (iii) Region W—\$150;
- (iv) Region X—\$175;
- (v) Region Y—\$140;
- (vi) Region Z—\$90; and
- (vii) Region BC—\$134.75.

Weekly Rate of Payment and Cost Guidelines—Child Care Center

The amount paid to a child care center is the lowest of the:

- (a) Regional monthly service unit rates established by this regulation; or
- (b) Monthly rate charged to the general public by the child care center if that rate is comparable and competitive with the going rate in the community; or
- (c) Actual cost of care.

(1) Rate for a child 24 months old or older:

- (i) Region U—\$103.31;
- (ii) Region V—\$86.74;
- (iii) Region W—\$117.92;
- (iv) Region X—\$159.72;
- (v) Region Y—\$122.77;
- (vi) Region Z—\$82.83; and
- (vii) Region BC—\$106.85;

(2) Rate for a child up to 24 months old:

- (i) Region U—\$165;
- (ii) Region V—\$140;
- (iii) Region W—\$190;
- (iv) Region X—\$250;
- (v) Region Y—\$200;
- (vi) Region Z—\$100; and
- (vii) Region BC—\$180.

Weekly Rate of Payment and Cost Guidelines—Informal Child Care

(a) Rate for a child 24 months old or older:

- (i) Allegany County—\$50.99;
- (ii) Anne Arundel County—\$53.89;
- (iii) Baltimore County—\$57.27;
- (iv) Calvert County—\$53.89;
- (v) Caroline County—\$39.39;
- (vi) Carroll County—\$53.89;
- (vii) Cecil County—\$50.99;
- (viii) Charles County—\$53.89;
- (ix) Dorchester County—\$39.39;
- (x) Frederick County—\$57.27;
- (xi) Garrett County—\$51.23;
- (xii) Harford County—\$57.27;
- (xiii) Howard County—\$72.01;
- (xiv) Kent County—\$39.39;
- (xv) Montgomery County—\$72.01;
- (xvi) Prince George's County—\$53.89;
- (xvii) Queen Anne's County—\$44.46;
- (xviii) St. Mary's County—\$50.99;

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- (xix) Somerset County—\$39.39;
- (xx) Talbot County—\$44.46;
- (xxi) Washington County—\$51.23;
- (xxii) Wicomico County—\$39.39;
- (xxiii) Worcester County—\$41.80; and
- (xxiv) Baltimore City—\$51.95;

(b) For a child up to 24 months:

- (i) Allegany County—\$59.68;
- (ii) Anne Arundel County—\$68.14;
- (iii) Baltimore County—\$68.14;
- (iv) Calvert County—\$68.14;
- (v) Caroline County—\$44.46;
- (vi) Carroll County—\$69.35;
- (vii) Cecil County—\$52.44;
- (viii) Charles County—\$68.14;
- (ix) Dorchester County—\$44.46;
- (x) Frederick County—\$68.14;
- (xi) Garrett County—\$59.68;
- (xii) Harford County—\$68.14;
- (xiii) Howard County—\$86.26;
- (xiv) Kent County—\$44.46;
- (xv) Montgomery County—\$86.26;
- (xvi) Prince George's County—\$68.14;
- (xvii) Queen Anne's County—\$52.44;
- (xviii) St. Mary's County—\$59.68;
- (xix) Somerset County—\$44.46;
- (xx) Talbot County—\$52.44;
- (xxi) Washington County—\$52.44;
- (xxii) Wicomico County—\$44.46;
- (xxiii) Worcester County—\$44.46; and
- (xxiv) Baltimore City—\$65.48.

**FOSTER/KINSHIP FAMILY DAYCARE
APPLICATION/REDETERMINATION**

SECTION I – filled out by family

Date of request: _____

Name of foster/kin caregiver(s): _____

Address & zip code: _____

Caregiver telephone # _____

Caregiver emergency telephone #: _____

Circle placement type: foster family - restricted foster family - formal kinship

Social security # (s): **Primary** _____ **Secondary** _____

Client Identification #: _____

SECTION II – filled out by family

Note: Submit documentation of medical and/or emotional status of child that necessitates day care services

PRIMARY FOSTER/KINSHIP CAREGIVER:

Name of employer and/or school: _____

Address of Employer and/or school: _____

Days and Hours needed: _____

Note: Documentation must be submitted to support daycare services and hours needed

SECONDARY FOSTER/KINSHIP CAREGIVER:

Name of employer and /or school: _____

Address of employer and/or school: _____

Days and hours needed: _____

Note: Documentation must be submitted to support daycare services and hours needed

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SECTION III – filled out by local department staff

Child's Name	Client Identification #	DOB	Name and Address of Day Care Program	Days and Hours of Care

FOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS INDICATE YES OR NO:

Previously used day care/summer camp services for foster/kin care _____

Currently utilizing (foster/kin) day care/summer camp services _____

New request _____

CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY:

Licensed Home

Licensed Center

Informal Provider

Summer Camp Program

Note: If Informal Provider is circled indicate the name and relationship in the space provided.

Name: _____

Relationship (kin or non kin): _____

SECTION IV – filled out by local department staff

Eligible: _____

Ineligible: _____

<u>Signature of Primary Foster/kinship Parent</u>	Date
<u>Signature of Secondary Foster/kinship Parent if Applicable</u>	Date
<u>Caseworker's signature</u>	Date
<u>Supervisor's Signature</u>	Date
<u>Home Worker's Signature if Applicable</u>	Date
<u>Supervisor's signature if Applicable</u>	Date

