

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 16: Financial Services/Assistance	Effective Date: August 1, 2017
	Section 1: Clothing, Personal Items, and Permitted Per Diem Expenses	Version: 8

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE THIS POLICY ONLY PERTAINS TO LICENSED RESOURCE PARENTS

When removing a child from his or her home the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make every effort to allow the child to take clothing and/or personal items (e.g., photographs, a blanket, a favorite toy or book, video games, game systems, and CD player). All clothing and personal items removed and/or purchased or acquired for the child are the property of the child and/or DCS and will follow the child throughout the life of the case. DCS will not allow a child to take weapons of any kind. All items (e.g., clothing and personal items) brought with the child must be documented and maintained in the [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF 54315\)](#).

Exception: If a child is removed from a property used for the illegal manufacture of a controlled substance, personal items and clothing will not be removed. See [Indiana Drug Endangered Children \(DEC\) Response Protocol](#) for further guidance.

Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment

DCS will ensure a child is provided with adequate clothing if he or she does not have clothing at the time of initial removal. DCS will only provide the licensed resource parent with an Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment of up to \$200.00 based on an immediate assessment of the child's current clothing need by the Family Case Manager (FCM) at the time of removal.¹ After the initial clothing allotment is expended, the resource parent(s) will use a portion of the monthly per diem to pay for clothing and/or personal items for the child on an ongoing basis.

Personal items at the time of initial placement may include, but are not limited to toiletries, personal hygiene items, undergarments, and hair products (see [Practice Guidance](#)).

Travel

The resource parent may receive an additional amount of properly claimed travel expenses incurred for a child placed in the resource home when the resource parent travels over 162 miles in a month for the below purposes²:

1. Travel between the resource home and the school system in which the child was enrolled before placement and continues to be enrolled while residing with the resource parent(s) if the school system is not required to provide transportation under applicable state law;
2. Travel to and from Headstart, summer school, pre-school, summer camps, and school related extracurricular activities;

¹ DCS will not provide residential facilities with Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment as referenced in this policy.

² DCS will not reimburse residential facilities for travel expenses as referenced in this policy.

Note: Mileage will be eligible for reimbursement to and from these programs only when it is not provided by the school corporation. FCMs may consult with the DCS Educational Liaisons (EL) for information on what school corporations are required to provide for the child.

3. Travel to and from parent and/or sibling visits (including visits to other relatives that are authorized by DCS and are a part the child's case plan) and visits to facilitate the transition to another placement (including pre-placement overnight visits with the child);
4. Travel to and from the following types of health related appointments:
 - a. Doctor (primary care physician and any specialists),
 - b. Dentist (including orthodontist),
 - c. Health clinic,
 - d. Hospital/Emergency Room (including resource parent(s) visits during child inpatient episodes),
 - e. Occupational and Physical Therapy, and
 - f. Behavioral Health Counselor and Therapist;
5. Travel to and from employment or job searching for youth 14 years of age or older;
6. Travel to and from the following types of case activities:
 - a. Administrative case reviews,
 - b. Judicial reviews (court appearances),
 - c. Case conferences,
 - d. Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings,
 - e. Resource parent(s) training sessions, and
 - f. Behavioral Health Counselor and Therapist;
7. Other travel that is extraordinary and has been approved in writing as consistent with the child's case plan by the DCS Local Office Director (LOD)/Division Manager (DM) prior to the travel taking place; and/or

Note: DCS will, upon approval of the Regional Manager (RM), pay per diem, and travel expenses exceeding 162 miles in a month, if visits are maintained, including overnight stays, with a child who is hospitalized for longer than five (5) days. See policy [8.37 Holding a Placement during a Hospitalization](#) for further guidance.

8. Pre-placement overnight visits with the child.

The prospective resource parent may receive an amount of properly claimed travel expenses incurred for a child who will be placed in the resource home when the prospective resource parent travels at least one (1) mile for pre-placement visits between the prospective resource parent and child and when there are no overnight visits.

Note: To be eligible for reimbursement, the resource parent must document all allowable travel that occurs through the month starting from the first mile on the [Foster Parent Travel Invoice \(SF 54836\)](#).

Personal Allowance

Each child in a licensed resource placement will be eligible to receive an annual Personal Allowance of up to \$300 starting on the 8th consecutive day of placement.³ These funds may be expended and are reset at the beginning of each calendar year. These funds may be used for items such as, but not limited to, computer hardware and/or software, field trips, driver's education (unless eligible for emancipation Goods & Services Funds), class pictures, application fees, extracurricular activities, musical instruments, sporting equipment, electronic devices (e.g., e-readers, laptops, iPod, Xbox, etc.), prom dress or other special occasion clothing, equipment and fees associated with extracurricular activities (including activities for young children), and preschool. The following items are not permitted or reimbursable: piercings, tattoos, tobacco products, alcoholic products or beverages, firearms/weapons, fireworks, lottery tickets, gift cards (e.g., gas, VISA, Wal-Mart, etc.), cash, checks, or money orders.

Educational Needs Funding

Educational Needs Funding is available to cover the cost of securing a High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate, tutoring, and summer school. This is referred in KidTraks through Global Services. Contact the local DCS EL for assistance with school related fees as many may be waived.

Note: When other funding is available for securing an HSE Certificate it should be utilized prior to completing a global services referral.

Special Occasion Allowance

DCS will pay an annual Special Occasion Allowance to licensed resource parent in addition to the per diem for all children in out of home care. This allowance is up to \$50 for birthdays and up to \$50 for the holiday season in December.⁴ In order for the resource parent(s) to receive reimbursement for these funds, the child must be in the resource parent's care on the day of their birthday and December 25th. Allowable items include but are not limited to toys, video games or other electronics, salon services, clothing, jewelry, sporting equipment, birthday party items, tickets to an event, etc. Items not allowable are piercings, tattoos, tobacco products, alcoholic products or beverages, firearms/weapons, fireworks, lottery tickets, gift cards (e.g., gas, VISA, or Wal-Mart), cash, checks, or money orders. DCS will reimburse the special occasion allowance upon receipt of a properly claimed invoice with a receipt attached. No referral is required.

Questions regarding a child's usage of the annual allowance should be directed to the RM and to the local DCS Regional Finance Manager (RFM).

DCS will upon the request of the resource parent make foster care liability insurance available (see [Related Information](#)).

Code References

N/A

³ DCS will not provide a Personal Allowance to residential facilities as referenced in this policy.

⁴ DCS will not pay a Special Occasion Allowance to residential facilities as referenced in this policy.

PROCEDURE

The FCM will:

1. Ensure all appropriate clothing and/or personal items go with the child at the time of removal or placement change whenever possible;
 2. If clothing and/or personal items will not be taken with the child, explain the reason why in a manner appropriate for the child's age and development, notify the FCM Supervisor, and document this on the [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF 54315\)](#) and in the case management system, in contacts;
 3. If it is not possible to take the child's clothing and/or personal items at the time of removal, make efforts to pick the child's clothing and/or personal items up from the removal home within 48 hours;
 4. Complete a thorough inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items at initial placement and each placement change. Inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items should be:
 - a. Taken anytime the child is removed from their home; and
 - b. Reviewed with and signed by the resource parent acknowledging what items belong to the child and were brought with and/or for the child.
 5. Request that the FCM Supervisor evaluate the clothing and/or personal items situation and authorize the purchase of additional clothing;
 6. If the child does not have adequate clothing and/or personal items at the time of removal complete a referral for the Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment to assist the resource parent in acquiring clothing and/or personal items for the child (see [Practice Guidance](#));
- Note:** Additional purchases should not be authorized in the event a child is moved from one resource home to another unless an appeal is requested. All items that belong to the child must be returned with the child in the event he or she is no longer placed in the resource home. The [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF 54315\)](#) should be reviewed and signed by the resource parent when a child is removed from his or her home for the purpose of ensuring all items are returned with the child.
7. Complete a referral for the use of Personal Allowance to assist in reimbursement efforts for the resource parent if funds have not previously been depleted for the child. Questions regarding the amount of funds remaining should be directed to the local RFM.

If an RM Appeal is needed:

1. The FCM will complete the RM appeal on the [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#) form detailing the unusual circumstances and situations prior to the expenditure of any funds and submit to the FCM Supervisor for approval or denial;
2. The FCM Supervisor will review and approve or deny the RM appeal;
3. The FCM Supervisor will submit the RM appeal decision to the LOD/DM for approval or denial;
4. The LOD/DM will approve or deny the RM appeal;
5. The LOD/DM will send the RM appeal to the RM for final approval or denial;
6. The RM will submit a copy to the RFM if approved; and
7. The RM will notify the LOD/DM of the final determination via written correspondence.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Tax Reimbursement

Tax on any purchase made for a ward including clothing and personal items, personal and special occasion allowances is reimbursable. Reimbursement can be claimed for the items plus tax up to the amount listed in policy. For example, the resource parent purchases clothing in the amount of \$180 and paid \$12.60 in tax for a total of \$192.60. The resource parent can claim reimbursement for \$192.60. However, if the resource parent purchased clothing in the amount of \$200 and paid \$14 in tax for a total of \$214, the resource parent can only claim \$200 as outlined in policy. Reimbursement can be claimed for the items plus tax up to the amount listed in policy.

Clothing and Personal Item Allotment

It is allowable for resource parent to initially purchase clothing for the child up to \$200 and be reimbursed if they have received agency approval, even if the approval is received after the purchase of clothing. At times it is necessary for clothing to be purchased prior to DCS approval. Resource parent must present receipts for all purchases. In unique circumstances, an RM appeal may be utilized to purchase clothing beyond the first 60 days of placement. Examples are a sudden weight gain or loss or a change of placement when the FCM has attempted to obtain clothing from the previous placement without success.

Personal Allowance

The purpose of the Personal Allowance is to normalize a child's stay in resource care. As such, the Personal Allowance may be used for a broad array of purchases. The list of personal allowance items in policy are only examples. The options for use are extremely broad.

Educational Needs

Contact the EL for assistance with school-related fees including travel requirements as many may be waived. For fees that may not be waived or may be funded through other means, a global services referral should be completed. These expenses should not come out of the child's personal allowance.

Condition of Clothing

All clothing should be appropriate for the season, in good condition, free from damage and stains, and should fit the child appropriately. Second-hand clothing items that meet these guidelines are acceptable.

Packing Clothing and Personal Items

Every attempt should be made to pack the child's clothing and/or personal items in some form of luggage (e.g., suitcases or duffle bags). Sturdy boxes may be used if luggage is unavailable. However, garbage sacks and other disposable bags are not appropriate and should be used only as a last resort. Use of such items may cause a child to believe that his or her possessions are not valued.

Failure to Return All of Child's Clothing and Personal Items

At the end of a placement, if resource parent fail to return all of the clothing and/or personal items the child had during placement; the FCM should assure a report is made to the LCPA or DCS local office for appropriate licensing action.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Indiana Drug Endangered Children Response Protocol](#)
2. [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF 54315\)](#)
3. [Request for Additional Funding \(SF 54870\)](#)
4. [Licensed Foster Parent Resources Web Page](#)
5. [Foster Parent Travel Invoice \(SF 54836\)](#)
6. [Foster Parent Travel Invoice Instructions](#)
7. [Claim for Support of Children Payable from Family & Children Funds \(SF 28808\)](#)
8. [Automated Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement \(SF 47551\)](#)
9. [W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification](#)
10. [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Q & A](#)
11. [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Instructions](#)
12. [KidTraks User Agreement](#)
13. [Letter to Foster Parents Regarding Per Diem](#)
14. [DCS Foster Care Per Diem Invoice Total Checker- 2020 rates](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Foster Care Per Diem

The resource parent should utilize the per diem to cover reasonable costs of caring for the child including, but not limited to:

1. Food;
2. Clothing (e.g., replacement clothing, repairs, mending, alterations, etc.);
3. Shelter;
4. Supervision that substitutes for daily supervision;
5. School supplies (e.g., paper, pens, calculator, etc.); and
6. Child's personal incidentals on an ongoing basis (e.g., soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, and over the counter medicine).

Foster care per-diem is not intended and should not be expected or represented to cover costs that would be ordinarily incurred by the resource parent in the absence of a foster care placement; such costs include and are not limited to the resource parent's rent, mortgage, car payment, or routine housing maintenance cost. See the [Letter to Foster Parents Regarding Per Diem](#) and the [DCS Foster Care Per Diem Invoice Total Checker – 2020 Rates](#), for additional information.

Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment

Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment is defined as a dollar amount, up to \$200, that is to be paid for use by the resource parent to meet the immediate needs of the child when the child is initially removed from his or her home and placed in out-of-home care. An Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment referral or voucher may be requested within 60 days after the initial removal. If the resource parent receives a voucher from DCS, the resource parent has 30 days to utilize the voucher for the child.

Special Occasion Allowance

Special Occasion Allowance is funds made available to licensed resource parents in addition to per-diem annually for each child in out of home care. The special occasion allowance is up to \$50 for a child's birthday and up to \$50 for the holiday season in December.

Personal Allowance

Personal Allowance is funds made available to licensed resource parent annually for each child in out-of-home care on the 8th consecutive day of placement. The personal allowance is up to \$300 dollars based on the individual circumstances of the child and may be reimbursed in increments.

Foster Care Liability Insurance

Foster Care Liability Insurance is protection and coverage provided to foster parents upon request. The insurance covers certain risks associated with caring for children under DCS care and supervision. The coverage includes damages to the home or property of the foster parents, harm done by the child to another party, and claims made against foster parents as agents of the State of Indiana.

Mileage Reimbursement

Mileage reimbursement is a flat rate per mile based on the current State employee approved mileage per-diem. Resource parent may check for the most current rate at: <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2459.htm>. Mapquest at www.mapquest.com should be used to obtain the shortest mileage distance for trips.

Requirements for Reimbursement

All resource parents need to fill out an [Automated Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement \(SF47551\)](#) and [W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification](#) in order to receive reimbursement from the state. All resource parents should utilize the standard invoice, [Claim for Support of Children Payable from Family & Children Funds \(SF28808\)](#) (or submit via KidTraks e-Invoicing) and attach all receipts in order to receive reimbursement for the Personal Allowance, Special Occasion Allowance, Initial Clothing Allotment, etc. Additional information on completing the W-9 may be found on the [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Q & A](#).

Invoicing Electronically via KidTraks e-Invoicing

Resource parents who are comfortable using a computer are encouraged to submit invoices electronically using KidTraks e-Invoicing. The resource parent must first become a vendor via submission of W-9 and Direct Deposit forms. Then, submission of the [KidTraks User Agreement](#) allows direct access to KidTraks, including the ability to submit invoices electronically via KidTraks e-Invoicing. Please note that mileage reimbursement must be submitted via the paper [Foster Parent Travel Invoice \(SF54836\)](#), but all other invoicing may be submitted electronically via KidTraks e-Invoicing, including Per Diem, Personal Allowance, Birthday/Holiday Allowance (i.e., Special Occasion Allowance), and Initial Clothing & Personal Items Allotment. KidTraks e-Invoicing guides are available on the [Licensed Foster Parent Resources Web Page](#).