



October 01, 2021

Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal No. 2021-05

To: County Departments of Family and Children Services
DFCS District Directors
DFCS Regional Directors
State Office Staff

From: Candice Broce, Director ^{CB}_{CB}
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

Re: Child Welfare Policy Manual: Family First Prevention and Services Act (FFPSA):
Limitations on title IV-E Foster Care Maintenance Payments

Purpose

The purpose of this Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal (CWSMT) is to announce updates to the Child Welfare Policy Manual resulting from the enactment of the FFPSA that are effective October 1, 2021.

Discussion

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) is responsible for ensuring the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children served. DFCS continually makes responsive changes to the Child Welfare Policy Manual to align with federal and state laws. The FFPSA made a number of changes to titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act with various effective dates. One such change includes the limitations on title IV-E foster care maintenance payments for placements that are not foster family homes. Specifically, title IV-E foster care maintenance payments are limited to the first 14 days that an eligible child is placed in a child caring institution (CCI), unless the CCI is:

1. A qualified residential treatment program (QRTP), a trauma-informed treatment model that is designed to address the needs of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders or disturbances;
2. A setting specializing in providing prenatal, postpartum, or parenting supports for youth;
3. A supervised setting in which the child is living independently (in the case of a child who has attained 18 years of age); and
4. A setting providing high-quality residential care and supportive services to children and youth who have been found to be, or are at risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims.

DFCS has not implemented QRTPs, therefore will only claim title IV-E foster care maintenance payments for the initial 14 calendar days (two weeks) that an eligible child is placed in a CCI, unless the CCI is:

1. A setting specializing in providing prenatal, postpartum, or parenting supports for youth; or
2. A setting providing high-quality residential care and supportive services to children and youth who have been found to be, or are at risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims.

DFCS does not claim title IV-E foster care maintenance payments for supervised settings for children living independently who have attained 18 years of age.

NOTE: DFCS' ability to claim title IV-E foster care maintenance payments does not impact the ability to place a child in a CCI.

The following reflects the updates to the Child Welfare Policy Manual:

9.1 Eligibility: Foster Care Maintenance Payments (FCMPs)

1. Adds sections 471(a)(15) and 472(j)(1) of title IV-E of the Social Security Act Codes/References.
2. Adds a requirement that updates placement types that are allowable for title IV-E FCMP.
3. Adds a requirement that DFCS will claim title IV-E FCMPs for the initial 14 calendar days (two weeks) that an eligible child is placed in a CCI unless the CCI is a setting:
 - a. Specializing in providing prenatal, postpartum, or parenting supports for youth; or
 - b. Providing high-quality residential care and supportive services to children and youth who have been found to be, or are at risk of becoming, sex trafficking victims.
4. Adds a note explaining that Georgia has not implemented QRTPs.

10.4 Foster Care: Selecting a Placement Resource

1. Adds the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996 (MEPA-IEAP) to Codes/References.
2. Adds a requirement to consider whether a child may be subject to Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) when selecting a placement for a child in foster care.
3. Updates the definition of a CCI to incorporate the FFPSA provision.
4. Notes that Georgia has not implemented QRTPs.

10.23 Foster Care: Case Planning

1. Notes that DFCS has not implemented QRTPs and therefore provisions for case planning for children placed in a QRTP will be incorporated at such time the program is implemented.

16.0 Room Board Watchful Oversight (RBWO): Introduction to RBWO

1. Adds sections 472(k)(4) and 475A(c) of title IV-E of the Social Security Act to Codes/References.
2. Updates the description of the maternity and parenting and support programs.

3. Adds a description of a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP), noting that DFCS is not currently implementing QRTPs.
4. Clarifies that Annual Comprehensive Reviews (ACR) are conducted without prior notice.
5. Adds a safety desk check to the type of reviews conducted on contracted CCIs/CPA and Independent Living Programs (ILP) by the Office of Provider Management (OPM).

16.1 Room Board Watchful Oversight (RBWO): Program Designation Types

1. Adds the Family First Prevention and Services Act (P.L. 115-123) to Codes/References.
2. Updates the chart listing the RBWO program designation types.
3. Updates the description of a child served under the Maximum Watchful Oversight (MWO) program designation to include a child found to be, or at risk of becoming, a victim of sex trafficking.

17.2 Case Review/Permanency Planning Hearings

1. Adds section 475(c)(4) of the Social Security Act to Codes/References.
2. Notes that DFCS has not implemented QRTPs therefore provisions for case reviews and permanency plan hearings for children placed in a QRTP will be incorporated at such time the program is implemented.

Implementation

This policy update is effective upon the release of this manual transmittal and is available on the Online Directives Information System (ODIS) at <http://odis.dhs.ga.gov/>. Regional and County Leadership shall provide opportunities for staff to review and discuss the updated policy to ensure implementation. Please refer to policy [1.3 Administration: Access, Distribution and Review of Child Welfare Policies](#) for the applicable requirements and procedures for policy review.

Please direct questions regarding this policy release to the Field Program Specialist in your region. Regional staff shall submit questions to the Policy and Regulations Unit at PPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov.