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June 15, 2009

To: Regional Managers
Directors, Local Offices, Department of Child Services

From: James W. Payne, Director
Douglas Weinberg, Chief Financial Officer
Angela Green, Deputy Director Practice Support
David Judkins, Deputy Director Field Operations
Department of Child Services

Subject: Per Diem and personal allowance payment uses
DCS-09-07

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is committed to meeting the financial needs of all children in foster care and ensuring that all funds distributed for the daily care of children are utilized appropriately. This administrative letter outlines various expenses that resource families may encounter when caring for foster children as well as how the families are expected to pay for these items beginning July 1, 2009.

Per Diem – The amount set by DCS that resource parents are paid per day for each child in their care.

Personal allowance – Each child in placement for 180 consecutive days will receive an annual personal allowance of up to \$100. These funds may be expended annually during each state fiscal year.

Clothing

DCS will ensure that all children are provided with adequate clothing based on their individual needs at the time of removal. DCS may provide the resource family or residential facility with an Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment of up to \$200.00 per child. Funds expended for initial clothing purchases should be based on the child's individual needs. For example, some children who are removed may have an adequate amount of clothing and will not receive any funds to purchase additional clothing. Other children who are removed may have very little or no appropriate clothing and may receive the full \$200 for initial clothing.



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Ongoing clothing needs, including school uniforms, should be paid for out of the per diem. Uniforms for extra-curricular activities (sports, band, etc.) and clothing for special circumstances (prom, weight gain or loss, etc.) may be paid for out of personal allowance funds.

Client Travel Resource parents are expected to pay for typical travel expenses required for the child(ren) out of the per diem payments. Typical travel expenses include, but are not limited to: mileage, parking, tolls, bus passes, transportation vouchers, gas cards, and/or taxis. For trips out of the county in excess of 100 miles, the resource parent or residential provider may complete a new travel reimbursement form and submit it with the monthly standard invoice for reimbursement. DCS local office staff will forward all travel reimbursement forms received to the DCS Local Office Director for approval prior to processing for payment.

Recreation

All recreation expenses for children in foster care may be paid for using personal allowance funds. Recreation expenses include, but are not limited to: team sports leagues, lessons (sports, music, dance), special events, summer camp, musical instruments, sporting equipment, youth club dues, and/or community center dues.

Supplies

Per diem funds will be used to pay for any needed school supplies, personal incidental items, and phone cards.

Education

Per diem funds will be used to pay for educational costs associated with: preschool, day care, alternative schools, computer hardware and/or software required for courses, field trips, driver's education (unless eligible for Emancipation Goods & Services funding through Independent Living services), class pictures, and/or book rental fees.

Personal allowance funds may be used to cover the following educational expenses: summer school/programs, application fees, tutoring, internet classes, and extra-curricular activities.

Appeals for Additional Funding

A Family Case Manager (FCM), Supervisor, or DCS Local Office Director can appeal for funds for a resources parent to cover unusual circumstances and situations. A one (1) page written request must be submitted stating the reasons and circumstances that warrant an exception to policy and the amount of the expenditure being requested. The request must also outline the efforts made to utilize outside funding (i.e., scholarships, donations from local civic organizations, etc.). All appeals will be forwarded to the Regional Manager and Regional Finance Manager with final determination made by the Regional Manager.



If you have any questions regarding the information presented in this administrative letter, please address them to the DCS policy mailbox at DCS.Policy@dcs.in.gov .

Sincerely,

James W. Payne, Director
Department of Child Services

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