



**BLUE
PRINT**
FOR CHANGE

Caregiver Placement Passport

**Supportive Information
for Foster Care Placement Resources**





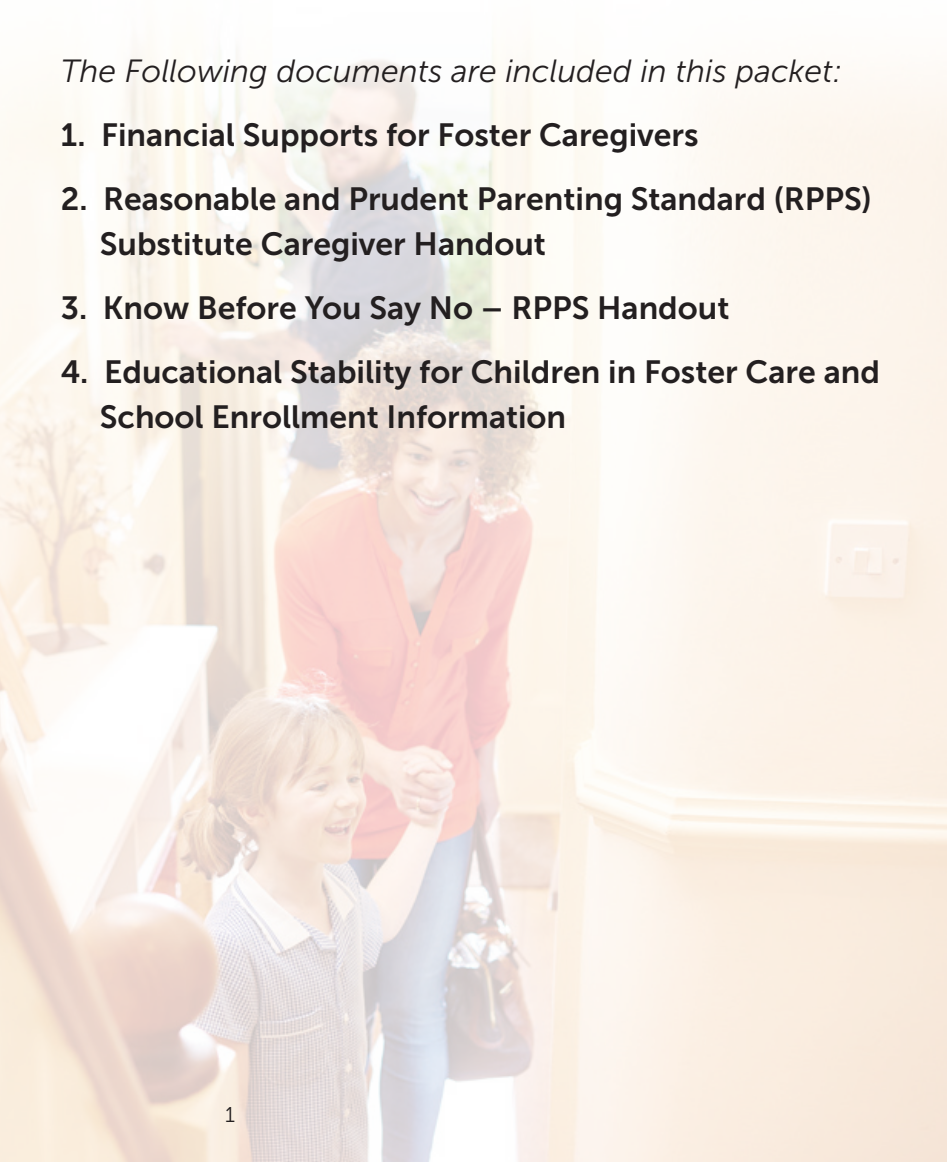
Greetings Placement Resource!

Thank You for partnering with the Division of Family and Children Services to provide a safe and nurturing placement for the child(ren) that were recently placed in your home.

In this packet you will find several documents providing information about resources for caregivers. Please consult your child's case manager to determine which of these resources for which you may be eligible.

The Following documents are included in this packet:

- 1. Financial Supports for Foster Caregivers**
- 2. Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard (RPPS) Substitute Caregiver Handout**
- 3. Know Before You Say No – RPPS Handout**
- 4. Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care and School Enrollment Information**





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Financial Supports for Kinship and Non-Relative Foster Caregivers



1. Financial Supports for Kinship and Non-Relative Foster Caregivers

Providing care and meeting the needs of a child requires significant financial and non-financial resources. The availability of services and support for Kin, Foster, and or Adoptive Resources caring for children in the legal custody of the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) or providing a permanent home to children formerly in DFCS custody must be assessed prior to placement and ongoing until permanency is achieved. The following are some possible resources. Ask your case manager if you would like additional information.

Kinship Caregivers and Non-Relative Placement Resources

Kinship and Non-Relative caregivers interested in becoming a foster parent for a child/children in the agency's custody must attend the IMPACT orientation and 24-hour training course, usually held over a period of 4 to 10 weeks.

The process also involves a home study that includes medical, criminal records (fingerprint), drug screen, financial verification and an in depth assessment of the home and family.

A per diem cannot be paid until the training is completed, all documentation is submitted and the home study is approved. The per diem amount is based on the age of the child. All foster parents must remain in compliance with program standards including yearly re-evaluations, updating verifications and ongoing training requirements. Visit www.fostergeorgia.com to find out how you can become an approved foster/adoptive caregiver:

Per Diem Rates for Children in Foster Care (*Eff. July 2017*)

- Birth to 5 Years - \$25.27 per day
- Child age 6 through 12 years - \$27.26 per day
- Child age 13 and Older \$29.65 per day

Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR)

Enables the agency to provide 80% of the current foster care per diem rate to relatives who meet eligibility criteria including the TANF degree of relationship and are caring for children in DFCS custody.

Subsidized Guardianship (SG/Non-Relative Subsidized Guardianship (NRSG)) enables the agency to provide financial support for a child the juvenile court transfers from the legal custody of DFCS to the permanent guardianship of an approved kinship or a non-relative who meets eligibility criteria. Relatives who do not meet the TANF degree of relationship may receive NRSG as long as all other eligibility criteria are met. In addition to the initial approval, the kinship/non-relative must submit to a six month review and yearly re-evaluation by the agency. The SG/NRSG is paid on a monthly basis.



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF is a cash assistance program available to needy families. Kinship Caregivers within a certain degree of relationship may qualify for a monthly check. If the kinship caregiver is not included in the grant (Payee), there is not a time limit to receive benefits and the relative’s income is not considered. It may take up to 45 days to be certified for a benefit. The amount of the benefit depends on the number of children and the children’s income. You may not receive TANF for a related child in your home, if you receive a Foster Care Per Diem, ERR, or SG. The application must be made in the county of residence of the kin caregiver and only after the child has been physically placed in the kin caregiver’s home. The child must be a US citizen.

Medicaid

Medicaid is a state administered medical assistance program. Most children in the custody of DFCS are eligible for one of the Medicaid programs. While the child is in DFCS’ custody, the case manager is responsible for applying for the child’s Medicaid and ensuring that you receive the card. DFCS is responsible for the medical bills of children in agency custody. If the child needs medical care, before you receive your Medicaid card, contact the case manager immediately for prior approval. Children in DFCS custody who are Medicaid eligible must see physicians who are enrolled as Medicaid providers.

Once a child is no longer in the custody of DFCS, the child’s Medicaid case will be transferred to the county of the legal custodian/guardian. The kinship/non-relative caregiver may contact the county office to have the child added to an already existing Medicaid case or to be considered for their own Medicaid. Most children living with kinship/non-relatives are eligible for one of the two major Medicaid programs – Right from the Start Medicaid (RSM) or Peach Care for Kids. The kinship/non-relative will receive notice from the county when a review of the child’s Medicaid is due if the child is no longer in DFCS’ custody. It is imperative the kinship/non-relative comply with the review process; otherwise, the child may lose Medicaid coverage.

SNAP Kinship/non-relative caregiver caring for a child in DFCS legal custody may apply for SNAP (food stamps) in the county of residence. Eligibility is based on the income of all household members. The payee must meet both the income and the resource limit for their household size in order to be eligible for benefits. It may take up to 30 days for the approval to receive SNAP.

Childcare - Eligibility for CAPS (Childcare and Parent Services) or Other Early Education Program

If the child is in DFCS custody and placed with a kinship/non-relative, the child may be eligible for childcare or other early education programs. The kinship/non-relative should discuss the options available to the children in their care. If the child receives CAPS, it is critical that the DFCS case manager notify the CAPS case manager within 5 calendar days of any changes in custody. If the child is placed in the permanent guardianship of the kinship/non-relative, the kinship/non-relative must apply for childcare assistance at their residence county DFCS office.



Emergency Needs Other help may be available to the family in order to facilitate or maintain the placement. This help is determined by the case manager’s assessment and requires the supervisor’s approval.

Wrap-Around Services may provide temporary therapeutic intervention to support kinship/non-relative foster caregivers and children. These services may include: counseling, behavior management, parent aide services and crisis intervention. The services are provided based on need and funding availability.

Initial Clothing Allowance and Annual Reimbursement

All children in foster care are entitled to an initial clothing allowance. The initial clothing is purchased during the first six months of the removal and placement of a child in foster care. Limits are set according to the age of the child. Kinship/non-relative foster caregivers must receive approval from the case manager prior to purchasing “initial clothing” for a child placed in their home. An annual (cannot be claimed in the same calendar year in which a child enters care) clothing allowance per state fiscal year is available to children who are in DFCS’ custody, but placed in a kinship’s/non-relative’s home.



2

Substitute Caregivers & Overnight Guidelines



2. Georgia Division of Family and Children Services Substitute Caregivers & Overnight Guidelines

The “reasonable and prudent parent standard” (RPPS) applies to both babysitting and overnights for children and youth.

The foster caregiver may approve babysitting and overnight stays without prior approval from the agency as long as it meets the guidelines below.

The RPPS standard characterized is by *careful and sensible* parental decisions that *maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child* while at the same time *encouraging the emotional and developmental* growth of the child, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of the State to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities.

Substitute Caregiver Guidelines

- Make a reasonable and prudent decision regarding the substitute caregiver (ie, babysitter).

A substitute caregiver:

- Must be at least 18 years old, reliable and competent to provide care needed.
- Prepared and able to meet the needs of children placed in their temporary care.
- Explained the DFCS discipline policy and provided with behavior management instructions.
- Provide information regarding care needs as well as emergency contact information.

Note: Substitute caregivers providing “routine care” must be screened¹ and approved by the agency. Routine care means care provided more than once a week, usually at designated times. These individuals must be screened by DFCS case manager. They must also undergo a State Criminal History Screening. ([See DFCS Child Welfare Policy Section 14.18: Supervision of Children](#))

Overnight/ Sleepovers Guidelines

- Make a reasonable and prudent decision regarding the overnight/sleep over request.
- May not exceed two nights without permission of the agency.
- Caregiver must be able to meet the needs of children placed in their temporary care.
- Explained the DFCS discipline policy and provided with behavior management instructions.
- Out of state travel regardless of length must be pre-approved by DFCS and the court.
- Provide information regarding care needs as well as emergency contact information.

¹ Screenings must include DFCS CPS records (DFCS foster homes only), Sexual Offender’s Registry, Board of Pardons and Parole, Department of Corrections, and Georgia Criminal History Screenings.



3

Know Before You Say No (RPPS Handout)



3. Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards: KNOW Before You Say NO!

KNOW: The goal of the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards is to ensure that children and youth in foster care have as normal a childhood experience as possible. In order to accomplish this goal, foster caregivers are empowered to make typically parenting decisions without having to obtain administrative approvals from DFCS or a CPA. So, before you say “no”, KNOW what that you can consider saying “yes” if the activity is age and developmentally appropriate and falls within the reasonable and prudent parenting guidelines.

Before you say “no,” think about the following:



- Is it age appropriate?
- Is it developmentally appropriate?
- Will it enhance the child’s social, emotional, or developmental well-being?
- Does it fall within your decision-making power (RPPS)?
- Has the child been placed long enough for you to make reasonable and prudent decisions about them?
- Do you understand the child’s developmental needs?
- What information has DFCS or agency provided you about that child? Have they shared any precautions that you need to consider?
- Will the activity expose the child to undue risk or safety issues?
- What would it mean for the child if said “no” or if you said “yes”?
- If this were your child, would you approve the request?
- Would the average parent in your community make the same decision?

Those are just a few questions to think about; the list is not exhaustive. Foster caregivers have to continually weigh decisions against many factors including each individual child’s needs, abilities, maturity, and other factors. **Remember, if you need help making the decision, it’s okay to still ask DFCS or your CPA.**



4

Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care and School Enrollment Information



4. Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care and School Enrollment Information



For many children school is a haven for safety, consistency, nourishment and encouragement. Children and youth in foster care, like all other children and youth, need and deserve a positive school experience.

A new school means getting to know more strangers, acclimating to even more life changes, navigating new social norms and possible changes in grading standards, books and expectations—all while dealing with the fact that they are in foster care. Placement without regard to the educational implications can mean that the child is unnecessarily negatively impacted by having to attend a new school.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (FCA) requires that children who enter foster care remain in the same school they were attending prior to the removal.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 requires State and local educational agencies to work with DFCS to ensure educational stability for children in foster care. Consequently, educational and child welfare agencies have a joint responsibility in this endeavor that requires consistent collaboration.

To Enroll a child placed in your home into school (if a change in their present education setting has been deemed appropriate by the parties above) you will need the following documents/ Information:

- 1. Proof of Child’s Age**
- 2. Certificate of Immunization**
- 3. Certificate of Eye, Ear and Dental Examinations**
- 4. Proof of residence:**

It is recommended that documents used to prove residency include the name of the parent, guardian, grandparent, or other person enrolling the student (or the name of the emancipated minor) and a street address. The person enrolling the student or in the case of an emancipated minor, the student, should provide a current utility bill and any one of the items on the following page.



LEAs should consider accepting the following at a minimum, but can accept additional documents not included in this list:

- a. Current lease/rental agreement;
- b. Most recent income tax return;
- c. Current paycheck stub;
- d. Current Medicaid card;
- e. Current residential property tax statement or bill;
- f. Current warranty or quick claim deed;
- g. Current home purchase agreement;
- h. Third-person affidavit of residency (notarized affidavit shall be completed and signed by parent, guardian or other person, as well as the legal owner or lessor of the property where the student and the parent, guardian, or other person reside); or
- i. Current homeowner's insurance policy.

5. Social Security number (SSN) or Signed Waiver:

State law requires a school to request that a person enrolling a student provide the enrolling student's Social Security number or a signed statement stating that the individual does not wish to provide the Social Security number. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-150(d).

6. Transportation options:

Explore all transportation options available to maintain a child in their current school placement (e.g., foster parent, school district, private provider, etc.).

7. Continuing in the same school:

Make arrangements for school-age children to continue in the same school they were attending prior to entering foster care or changing placements, except when it is not in the best interest of the child.

