

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: January 1, 2012
	Section 19: Clothing, Personal Items, and Permitted Per Diem Expenses	Version: 5

POLICY [REVISED]

When removing a child from his or her home the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make every effort to allow a child to take clothing and/or personal items, (e.g., photographs, a blanket, a favorite toy or book, video games, game systems, CD player, etc.). Any and all clothing and/or personal items removed and/or purchased or acquired for the child is 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 (i.e. clothing, personal items, etc.) brought with the child must be documented and maintained in the [Clothing/Personal Items Inventory List](#).

Exceptions: If a child is removed from a home that is the site of a meth lab, personal items and clothing will not be removed. See [Indiana Drug Endangered Children \(DEC\) Response Protocol](#).

[REVISED] DCS will ensure that 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 foster family with a one time Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment of up to \$200.00 based on an immediate assessment of 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 foster family 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.

[NEW] The foster parent may receive an additional amount of properly claimed travel expenses incurred for a child placed in the foster home when the foster parent travels over 162 miles in a month for the below purposes:²

1. Travel between the foster family home and the school in which the child was enrolled before placement and continues to be enrolled while residing with the foster family if the school is not required to provide transportation under applicable state law.
2. 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;
3. Travel to and from the following types of health related appointments:
 - b. Doctor (primary care physician and any specialists)
 - c. Dentist (including orthodontist)
 - d. Health clinic

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.

- e. Hospital/Emergency Room (including foster visits during child inpatient episodes)
 - f. Occupational and Physical Therapy
 - g. Behavioral Health Counselor and Therapist
4. 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 meetings
 - e. Foster parent training sessions
 - f. Behavioral Health Counselor and Therapist
 5. Other travel approved in writing in advance by the DCS. The above travel must be consistent with the child's case plan or a court order to be claimable.

[REVISED] Note: DCS will reimburse the foster parent once they exceed the monthly mileage allowance. The foster parent must document travel from the 1st mile.

DCS will not pay for the child to take trips with the foster family.

DCS will upon the request of the foster parent make foster care liability insurance available.

[REVISED] Each child in a licensed foster care placement will be eligible to receive an annual Personal Allowance of up to \$300 starting on the 8th consecutive day of placement³. These funds may be expended annually for items for the child such as but not limited to musical instruments, sporting equipment, electronic devices (e-readers, laptops, etc.), high chairs, car seats, other baby equipment, prom dress or other special occasion clothing, school pictures, summer school, other school related events/fees, equipment and fees associated with extracurricular activities (including activities for young children), toll fees, bus passes, and parking fees related to miscellaneous travel for the child. The Personal Allowance should be exclusively used for purchasing items directly for the child.

The Personal Allowance shall not be utilized to purchase items for the child such as: piercings, tattoos, tobacco products, alcoholic products or beverages, firearms/weapons, fireworks, lottery tickets, gift cards (gas, visa, Wal-Mart, etc.), cash, checks or money orders. DCS will reimburse the personal allowance upon receipt of a properly claimed invoice with a receipt attached. If the child moves placements mid-year, the new foster parent can be reimbursed for any personal allowance that is remaining for the year. The Personal Allowance resets at the beginning of each calendar year and requires a referral by the FCM.

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

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.

[REVISED] In special circumstances, additional funding may be approved if the FCM, Supervisor, or DCS Local Office Director submits an appeal in advance for additional funds to allow the foster parent to cover unusual circumstances and situations.

Code References

1. [IC 20-50-3 Transportation for Students in Foster Care](#)

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager 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 Supervisor, and document this on the [Clothing/Personal Items Inventory List](#) and in the Indiana Child Welfare Information 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 them up within 48 hours;
4. Complete a thorough inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items at placement and changes. Inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items should be:
 - a. Taken anytime the child is removed from their home;
 - b. Reviewed with and signed by the foster parent acknowledging what items belong to the child and were brought with and/or for the child.
5. Request that the 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 a one-time Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment to assist the foster family in acquiring clothing and/or personal items for the child;

[REVISED] Note: Additional purchases should not be authorized in the event a child is moved from one foster 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 foster home. The [Clothing/Personal Items Inventory List](#) should be reviewed and signed by the foster parent when a child is removed from their home for the purpose of ensuring all items are returned with the child.

7. **[NEW]** Complete a referral for the use of Personal Allowances to assist in reimbursement efforts for the foster family if a need is identified and the item(s) requested is an allowable expense and funds have not previously been depleted for the child. Questions regarding a family's usage of allowances should be directed to the local Regional Finance Manager (RFM).

[NEW] Note: Prior to completing referrals for the use of Personal Allowance funds, the FCM should verify that the requested amount does not exceed the child's available Personal Allowance balances.

[REVISED] Appeals for Additional Funding:

1. The FCM will complete the [Appeal for Additional Funding](#) ⁵form detailing the unusual circumstances and situations prior to the expenditure of any funds and submit to the Supervisor for approval or denial;
2. The Supervisor will review and approve or deny the appeal for additional funding. The Supervisor will immediately notify the FCM if the request is denied. If the Supervisor approves the appeal for additional funding, it will be submitted to the DCS Local Office Director for approval or denial.
3. The DCS Local Office Director will approve or deny the appeal of additional funding. If the DCS Local Office Director approves the appeal for additional funding, the written request will be sent to the Regional Manager (RM) and if approved the RM will send a copy to the RFM.
4. The RM will notify the Local Office Director of the final determination via written correspondence.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

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, duffle bags, etc.). 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 a foster family fails to return all of the clothing and/or personal items that the child had during placement; then, the FCM should assure that a report is made to the LCPS or DCS local office for appropriate licensing action.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Indiana Drug Endangered Children Response Protocol](#)
2. [Clothing/Personal Items Inventory List](#)
3. [Appeal for Additional Funding](#)
4. [Foster Family Resource Guide](#) (for instructions on invoicing the above items)
5. [Foster Parent Travel Invoice SF54836](#)
6. [Foster Parent Travel Invoice Instructions](#)

⁵ Birthday/Holiday/Personal Allowances for children in Residential Care must be submitted to the RM for review through the appeal process.

RELATED INFORMATION

Foster Care Per Diem

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

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

[REVISED] Foster parent per-diem is not intended and should not be expected or represented to cover costs that would be ordinarily incurred by the foster parent in the absence of a foster care placement; such costs include and are not limited to the foster parent's rent, mortgage, car payment, or routine housing maintenance cost.

Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment

Defined as a dollar amount, up to \$200, that is to be paid for use by the foster 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 can be requested within 60 days after the initial removal. When the foster family receives a voucher from DCS, the foster family has 30 days to utilize the voucher for the child.

[NEW] Special Occasion Allowance

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

[REVISED] Personal Allowance

Funds made available to licensed foster parents annually for each child in out of home care on the 8th consecutive day of placement. The personal allowance is up to \$300 dollars and is based on the individual needs of the child. The annual Personal Allowance can be reimbursed in increments, up to \$300.

[REVISED] Foster Care Liability Insurance

Protection and coverage provided to foster parents upon request; the insurance covers certain risks associated with caring for children under the 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.