



**STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**Division of Family and Children Services**

**Nathan Deal**  
Governor

**Bobby D. Cagle**  
Director

August 22, 2017

**Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal No. 2017-10**

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

**From:**  Bobby D. Cagle, Director  
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

**Re:** Child Welfare Policy Manual:

Chapter 10: Foster Care  
10.13 Educational Needs

Chapter 12: Adoption Assistance  
12.3 Adoption Assistance – Specialized Rate  
12.9 Continuation, Renegotiation, or Termination of Adoption Assistance Benefits

Chapter 16: Room Board Watchful Oversight (RBWO)  
16.3 RBWO Placement Referral  
16.4 Specialty Program Designations  
16.5 Specialized Foster Care Per Diem

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Child Welfare Services Manual Transmittal (CWSMT) is to announce revisions to the aforementioned policy sections in the Child Welfare Policy Manual to align with changes in practice.

**Discussion**

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) strives to improve the quality of care being provided to children in foster care and ensure that supports are available to provide for their needs. To that end, enhancements in practice are continually assessed and changes made to facilitate improvements. The following policy sections have updated provisions to align with practice changes:

1. Policy 10.13 Foster Care: Educational Needs

- a. Incorporates the Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation (EPAC) online referral process.
  - b. Emphasizes the completion of the Education Action Plan which is developed jointly by the Education Support Monitor, local educational agency, Social Services Case Manager, parent, and placement resource within 30 calendar days of the child entering foster care.
2. Policy 12.3 Adoption Assistance – Specialized Rate:
  - a. Removes all references to the former RBWO Program Designation and Waiver Application.
  - b. Identifies the Universal Application as one of the criteria required to submit an requests for an adoption assistance application specialized rate.
3. Policy 12.9 Continuation, Renegotiation or Termination of Adoption Assistance Benefits:
  - a. Removes all references to the former RBWO Program Designation and Waiver Application.
  - b. Identifies the Universal Application as one of the criteria required when renegotiating an adoption assistance rate increase.
4. Policy 16.3 RBWO Referral Application:
  - a. Establishes the Universal Application as the single document for requesting RBWO placement.
  - b. Removes all references to the former common referral application RBWO Match Screening Summary (MSS).
  - c. Adds the RBWO Universal Application and Referral Form and instructions in Forms and Tools.
5. Policy 16.4 Specialty Program Designation:
  - a. Removes all references to the former RBWO Program Designation and Waiver Application.
  - b. Establishes the use of the Universal Application as the means to request program designations higher than Base, Traditional, and Additional Watchful Oversight.
  - c. Identifies the Placement Resource Operations (PRO) Unit as the point of contact for RBWO program designation waiver requests involving children with significant levels of mental, emotional, and physical needs.
6. Policy 16.5 Specialized Foster Care Per Diem:
  - a. Establishes the use of the Universal Application as one of the criteria for submitting an application for a Specialized Foster Care Per Diem.
  - b. Removes all references to the former Specialized Foster Care Per Diem Application.
  - c. Identifies the PRO Unit as the point of contact for specialized foster care per diem applications and decisions.
  - d. Modifies the timeframe for application decision by PRO from four business days to five business days.

### **Implementation**

The policy updates are effective upon the release of this manual transmittal and are 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 [PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:PPPDUnit@dhs.ga.gov).