

	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	(10) Foster Care	Effective Date:	August 2014
	Policy Title:	Minor Parent Expecting or Who has a Child While in Foster Care		
	Policy Number:	10.21	Previous Policy #:	1003.11

CODES/REFERENCES

N/A

REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall ensure all expectant mothers in foster care receive appropriate prenatal care.

DFCS shall ensure the mother in foster care and infant are placed together whenever safe and appropriate.

DFCS shall not seek custody of the infant born to a mother in foster care unless a safety concern exists and/or the mother is unable to care for her child with the assistance of the placement resource.

DFCS shall offer expectant fathers in foster care services to assist them in facilitating a relationship with and/or caring for their child.

PROCEDURES

When a minor in care is or becomes pregnant, the SSCM will:

1. If the minor is in a foster home prior to giving birth:
 - a. Arrange for services for the minor including, but not limited to:
 - i. Teen parenting education classes;
 - ii. Counseling to assist in the decision-making and planning related to the pregnancy;
 - iii. Prenatal care.
 - b. Assess the following with the foster parent, child and any relevant collateral contacts:
 - i. Whether or not DFCS needs to obtain custody of the infant at birth to ensure the infant's safety or well-being;
 - ii. Alternative placement options for the minor and/or infant if they cannot remain in the placement or should not be placed together.
 - c. Discuss support person for the child during labor/delivery;
 - d. Discuss the following with the child and foster parent:
 - i. The minor's age/maturity level, protective capacities and desire to care for the infant;
 - ii. The father's involvement and ability to provide support to the infant;
 - iii. The foster parent's willingness to support the minor mother throughout her

- pregnancy and ensure she receives appropriate prenatal care;
- iv. The foster parent's willingness to allow the infant to remain in the home, provide support to the minor in caring for the infant and the foster parent's ability to protect the infant if the minor poses a safety concern;
- v. Alternative placement options for the minor and/or infant if they cannot remain in the placement or should not be placed together;
- vi. Any financial supports available if DFCS does or does not seek custody of the infant.

NOTE: If DFCS does not obtain custody, foster parents can only receive per diem for the infant if the minor is IV-E eligible.

2. Immediately after a minor in care, who resides in a foster home, gives birth:
 - a. Notify the supervisor of the minor giving birth;
 - b. Within 24 hours, conduct a face-to-face with the minor and infant to assess their safety and well-being;
 - c. Contact the foster parents to confirm their willingness to continue caring for the minor and infant;
 - d. Contact the hospital to obtain information on the health of the mother and infant and to obtain any discharge planning information;
 - e. Discuss the assessment with the Social Services Supervisor (SSS) and determine whether or not there is a need to seek custody of the infant; If no safety concerns exist and the minor is able to care for the infant with the support of the foster parent(s), DFCS should not seek custody of the infant;
3. If the minor is in a placement setting other than a foster home:
 - a. Prior to the minor giving birth,
 - i. Arrange for services for the minor including:
 1. Teen parenting education classes;
 2. Counseling to assist in the decision-making and planning related to the pregnancy;
 3. Prenatal care.
 - ii. Discuss support person for the child during labor/delivery;
 - iii. Discuss the following with the child and placement resource:
 1. The placement resource's ability to continue to provide care for the minor and/or her infant after birth;
 2. The minor's age/maturity level, protective capacities and desire to care for the infant;
 3. The father's involvement and ability to provide support to the infant;
 4. Any financial supports available if DFCS does or does not obtain custody of the infant;
 - NOTE:** If DFCS does not obtain custody, placement resources can only receive per diem for the infant if the minor is IV-E eligible.
 5. Alternative placement options for the minor and/or infant if they cannot remain in the placement or should not be placed together.
 - b. Immediately after the minor gives birth,
 - i. Notify the supervisor of the minor giving birth;
 - ii. Within 24 hours, conduct a face-to-face with the minor and infant to assess their safety and well-being;
 - iii. Contact the placement resource to confirm their willingness to continue caring for the minor and infant;

- iv. Contact the hospital to obtain information on the health of the mother and infant and to obtain any discharge planning information;
 - v. Discuss the assessment with the Social Services Supervisor (SSS) and determine whether or not there is a need to seek custody of the infant; If no safety concerns exist and the minor is able to care for the infant with the support of the placement resource, DFCS should not seek custody of the infant.
4. If at any time the following occur, obtain placement authority of the infant:
- a. The infant is separated from the minor parent (i.e., minor parent runs away);
 - b. The infant is placed apart from the minor parent; or
NOTE: If the minor mother and infant are placed separately, ensure regular, consistent visitation to facilitate bonding. (See [Visitation](#))
 - c. The minor parent's protective capacities place the child in danger and the placement resource's protective capacities are not sufficient to assure the safety and well-being of the infant; and
 - d. The other parent is not an appropriate option for the infant.
 See [Placement of a Child](#) if custody of the infant is obtained.
- NOTE:** Make a CPS report if there are any allegations of abuse or neglect.

For minor expectant fathers in foster care, the SSCM will:

- 1. Discuss the upcoming birth with the expectant father and placement resource including:
 - a. The identity of the infant's mother;
 - b. Whether or not the infant's mother is in foster care;
 - c. The mother's plan for her and the infant;
 - d. The involvement the minor father wants to have with his child.
- 2. Assist the youth in planning for his child including any placement recommendations.
- 3. Arrange for the youth to attend teen parenting education classes.
- 4. Once the child is born,
 - a. Assist the youth in legitimating his infant, including DNA testing;
 - b. Allow the youth to participate in planning and placement decisions related to the infant;
 - c. Assist in arranging visitation for the father and his child;
 - d. Provide information regarding any financial supports available if DFCS does or does not obtain custody of the infant;
NOTE: If DFCS does not obtain custody, placement resources can only receive per diem for the infant if the minor is IV-E eligible.
 - e. Inform the father about child support obligations.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

When a minor mother in foster care gives birth to a child, DFCS should consider the age, capabilities and desires of the minor parent to care for the baby if the two are placed together in the same placement. The child shall remain in the custody of his or her minor parent, unless it is otherwise determined that the minor parent's protective capacities place the child in danger and the placement resource's protective capacities are not sufficient to assure the safety and well-being of the infant.

The Title IV-E program allows for states to claim reimbursement for the cost of an infant living in

the same placement of his/her minor parent. (See [Foster Care Maintenance Payments](#)) This provision does not require DFCS to obtain custody of the child. The added cost of care for the child living in the same placement as his or her minor parent is reimbursed through the minor parent's IV-E status. Only one payment is made to the placement provider.

Good practice suggests that a minor parent's case plan include the needs of their child and that these needs are addressed during the periodic reviews and permanency hearings held on behalf of the minor parent. (See [Case reviews and Permanency Hearings](#))

If the child of a minor parent is ever removed and placed apart from his or her parent, judicial placement authority must be obtained. The infant should be entered into SHINES as a foster child and a Medicaid and IV-E Application for Foster Care should have to be submitted to RevMax. If the issues requiring the removal from his/her minor parent in care are addressed and the court sanctions reunification, the child may be placed in the same placement as the minor parent and not lose IV-E eligibility or reimbursability.

FORMS AND TOOLS

N/A