

	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL		
	Chapter:	(10) Foster Care	Effective Date: August 2014
	Policy Title:	Childcare Needs	
	Policy Number:	10.16	Previous Policy #: 1011.11 1011.12

CODES/REFERENCES

N/A

REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall determine if a caregiver will require childcare services (less than 24 hours per day) during an open Child Protective Services (CPS) case, when a child not in DFCS custody, or during an open Foster Care Services case, when a child is in DFCS custody. In either case, the child may be eligible for federally funded Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) and a referral shall be made when the childcare need is:

1. Regular and predictable (Full time, part-time, before/after school, etc. as long as it is needed on a regular basis); and
2. For the child to be cared for while the caregiver works outside of the home.

NOTE: CAPS eligibility criteria/guidelines apply. See [CAPS Manual](#).

DFCS shall determine if a prospective caregiver for a child in DFCS custody will require childcare services (less than 24 hours per day) **prior** to placement. CAPS may be provided whether a child is placed in an approved regular or relative DFCS foster home, a Child Placing Agency (CPA) foster home, or an approved relative placement.

CAPS may be provided during an open CPS case for a child living in the home of the primary caretaker in the CPS case. The purpose of the childcare must be to provide a child with an alternative place to stay that is safe and/or to allow a child to be reunited in the home with the primary caretaker. CAPS eligibility criteria/guidelines apply.

CAPS may be provided during an open CPS case when a child moves to the home of a relative or a family friend and DFCS does not have custody. The purpose of the childcare must be to allow the responsible adult caring for the child to work, attend school or training. CAPS eligibility criteria/guidelines apply.

DFCS shall utilize [state funded childcare](#) and reimburse foster parents for childcare expenses via the Foster Parent Invoice Process when CAPS has not been approved and any of the following circumstances exist:

1. Temporary child care is needed while the foster parent or relative caregiver works outside of the home (DFCS has custody). **May be used up to five days** when a child enters foster care or has a change in placement to allow time for the Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) to complete the CAPS referral (Form 57).

2. The foster parent(s) or relative caregiver does not work and attends training or educational classes to assist them in meeting the needs of the child in DFCS custody.
3. The child is placed in an approved foster home in another state.
4. The child is placed in another foster home for **respite** and childcare is needed in a different childcare setting while the respite foster parent works.
5. An occasional provider is used in the event of the child's illness, school closure, or holiday period.
6. The approval of the Informal In-Home/Out-of-Home Provider by CAPS is pending (not to exceed 30 days).

All In-Home/Out-of-home Providers must participate in the CAPS program in order to receive reimbursement for childcare services.

Informal childcare providers must register with [Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning \(DECAL\)](#) if they provide childcare services for more than two children. If an informal provider selected by a foster parent provides childcare services inside the foster home and is not related to the child in foster care (i.e., grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle, or adult sibling), CAPS cannot reimburse for childcare services.

DFCS must notify the regional childcare contact of any changes involving the child or caregiver receiving childcare services within five calendar days of the change.

PROCEDURES

The SSCM will:

1. Discuss the need for childcare with the caregiver prior to placement.
2. Direct caregivers who are not foster parents to www.compass.ga.gov where they may apply for childcare services. Notify the regional childcare contact of a caregiver applying for Childcare assistance and verify there is an open social services case. This will allow childcare staff to identify the caregiver's application as a priority application when received through COMPASS.
3. For CPS cases, consider the appropriateness of utilizing PUP funds for pay for childcare if CAPS eligibility is not met.
4. For Foster Care cases, complete the appropriate sections of the Childcare Referral and Application (Form 57) and submit to the CAPS Case Manager in the county where the child resides within one (1) business day of identifying the need for childcare.
 - a. Include the Georgia SHINES Case ID number on Form 57 so the CAPS Case Manager will have a consistent frame of reference should the SSCM change.
 - b. The caregiver must provide the name of the childcare provider and the childcare rate on the [CAPS Published Rate Form \(Form 61\)](#).
 - c. CAPS will pay no more than the CAPS approved rate.
 - d. CAPS will only pay from the date Form 57 is received by CAPS Case Manager. Failure to submit a timely application will result in the county incurring responsibility for paying past due payment from county funds.
 - e. If CAPS denies the request for childcare, the SSCM should explore other options (e.g., County funds, Prevention of Unnecessary Placement [PUP] funds).
5. Notify the regional childcare contact of any changes in the case as soon as possible, but not later than five (5) calendar days of the reported change. Changes in circumstances may affect the eligibility for childcare and may create an overpayment for the client if not

reported timely.

If a regular or relative foster parent is ineligible for CAPS, upon receipt of the Form 526 Foster Care Invoice, the SSCM will:

1. Review the *Foster Care Invoice* Form 526 for accuracy and coding and submit it to the approving authority for signature.
2. Forward the approved Foster Care Invoice Form 526 to Accounting for payment.
3. Request written approval from the County Director/designee for a cash advance if the reimbursement method of payment places an undue hardship on the foster parent or relative.

To evaluate, approve, and monitor an Informal In-Home/Out-of-Home provider, the SSCM will:

1. Conduct a face-to-face contact with the proposed childcare provider within two (2) business days of the caregiver's request and complete a safety assessment.
 - a. If the person plans to provide childcare in his/her own home, this contact must be made in the person's home.
 - b. Document the results of the Safety Assessment in the Contact Detail in Georgia SHINES, the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System.
2. Discuss the following areas and summarize on the Contact Detail page in Georgia SHINES as a "Supplemental Supervision Evaluation":
 - a. Identifying information: Name, sex, age (must be at least 21 years old), address, telephone number, and Social Security Number;
 - b. Health Status;
 - c. Environment: Home must be clean and hazard-free, with vented heaters, sufficient space, working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, etc.;
 - d. Criminal Records Checks (CRC):
 - i Informal In-Home providers must have a Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) and a National Crime Information Center (NCIC) fingerprint check (See [Criminal Records Checks](#))
 - ii Out-of-Home providers as well as any other adult (18 years old or over) in their household must have a GCIC and NCIC fingerprint check.
 - e. Background Screening:
 - i Child Protective Services (CPS) history;
 - ii Sexual Offenders Registry;
 - iii Bureau of Pardons and Parole;
 - iv Department of Corrections;
 - f. Child Development: Document the degree to which the provider understands and has knowledge of the child's developmental stage.
 - g. DFCS Discipline Policy
 - i Review the Discipline policy with the provider and provide them with a written copy.
 - ii Document the provider's agreement to adhere to the discipline policy.
 - h. Number, sex, and ages of children in the home with the child who is in foster care. Document that the provider is able to adequately care for additional children;
 - i. Other adults who will be present (they must undergo CRC and background screening);
 - j. Amount of fee for childcare services; Rates must be consistent with the state's

- maximum reimbursable rate based on the county where the provider is located;
- k. Approval or Non-Approval;
- l. Requirements for CAPS approval:
 - i. Interview with the CAPS Case Manager;
 - ii. Home visit by a representative from Bright From the Start (BFTS);
 - iii. Completion of safety and health training.
- 3. Make a face-to-face contact at the site where childcare services are being provided within two weeks after the child's initial day of placement. Discuss and document the child's initial adjustment and assess the quality of care being provided.
- 4. Continue to monitor for appropriateness of care no less frequently than once every six months.
- 5. On an ongoing basis, evaluate whether the provider is meeting the needs of the child and the caregiver. If not, provide assistance to the caregiver in making other childcare arrangements.
- 6. Collaborate with the Resource Development (RD) Case Manager to ensure a formal evaluation of the childcare provider is included as part of the Foster Home re-evaluation process.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)

Bright from the Start: DECAL is responsible for meeting the childcare and early education needs of Georgia's children. Among other things, Bright from the Start oversees the licensing and monitoring of all center-based and home-based childcare facilities, including investigating complaints of childcare programs and reports of unlicensed childcare. For more information visit their website at <http://decals.ga.gov/BftS/About.aspx>.

Types of Childcare Programs

Family Day Care Home: This is a program that operates in a private residential home less than 24 hours per day. It provides care for three (3), but no more than six (6) children under the age of eighteen (18) years old, for pay.

Group Day Care Home: This is a program operated by a person, society, agency, corporation, institution, or group that receives pay for group care. The group day care home cares for 7 to 18 children under the age of eighteen (18) years old for less than 24 hours per day.

Childcare Learning Center: This is a program operated by a person, society, agency, corporation, institution, or group that receives pay for group care. It cares for 19 or more children under the age of eighteen (18) years old for less than 24 hours per day.

NOTE: DECAL requires employees and adults eighteen (18) years of age and older living in the home or who have routine contact with the children in care to have background checks through the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC).

State funded Childcare (Supplemental Supervision)

State funded childcare is different from childcare defined in the CAPS Manual in that:

1. It reimburses the caregiver who directly pays the childcare provider (including registration fee). Receipts are attached to the monthly Foster Care Invoice (Pre-bill for CPAs) to claim reimbursement. CAPS childcare payments are made directly to the childcare

provider.

2. It provides the reimbursement of childcare when the foster parent is attending foster parent training or the relative caregiver attends training to manage the needs of the child.
3. It requires the SSCM to assume certain roles and responsibilities related to evaluating and monitoring Informal In-Home/Out-of-Home providers of Supplemental Supervision.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Child is a citizen or legal resident of the U.S.;
2. Child must be placed in a DFCS or CPA approved Family Foster Home (Regular or Relative);
3. Child must be under age 13 years;
4. Child must have special needs to receive childcare services up to age 18;
5. Foster parent(s) must need regular, on-going childcare in order to work and to attend monthly foster parent training (does not include conferences, respite, etc.) even when those hours total less than 24 hours per week.

NOTE: Children in regular or relative Family Foster Homes who need supplemental supervision are to receive priority services and are not to be denied due to a lack of funding. Children placed in other settings, such as therapeutic foster care, intermediate treatment centers, relative homes, etc. are not eligible for Supplemental Supervision.

Child Placement Agencies (CPA)

CPA foster parents are entitled to the same DFCS services that DFCS approved foster parents receive, which includes Supplemental Supervision.

All foster parents (DFCS approved or CPA) must meet the CAPS eligibility requirements. The CAPS CM and SSCM will follow the same procedures for referring and processing all providers who care for children in DFCS custody.

If the CPA foster parent needs to register a child care provider with CAPS or apply for Supplemental Supervision, they **must** contact the SSCM. The CPA foster parent may provide care for other children in their home who are not in DFCS custody. Therefore, all communication must come through the SSCM to ensure that all children receiving CAPS Supplemental Supervision are in Georgia DFCS custody.

Types of care eligible for CAPS and State Funded childcare:

The CAPS program can authorize reimbursement to approved providers when regular, predictable childcare is needed while the foster parent(s) works. The childcare can be full-time, part-time, before/after school, etc., as long as it is needed on a regular basis. Childcare can also be reimbursed for foster parents to attend their annual foster parent training. Occasional care means care provided once a week or less with no more than three occurrences. Routine care means care provided more than once a week, usually at designated times. Short-term care means care is provided for less than four hours per day.

DFCS shall screen each substitute caregiver providing **occasional**, short-term, in-home/out-of-home childcare for Child Protective Services (CPS) history. After providing childcare for the third time (regardless of timeframe), the “occasional” provider is considered to be “routine” and is subject to the screening requirements for a routine provider which are the same as for a foster

parent (See [Supervision of Children](#)). Examples of types of care include:

1. Childcare (full time);
2. Night-time;
3. Weekend;
4. Before/after school;
5. Special needs;
6. Full-day service for school-age;
7. Part-time.

Types of providers from whom childcare services may be purchased:

1. Commissioned or licensed center-based and group home providers;
2. Registered family child care home providers;
3. Legally operating child care programs (Head Start, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, YWCAs, non-governmental after-school programs, etc.);
4. Informal providers (relative and non-relative);
 - a. The SSCM is responsible for evaluating and monitoring informal providers.
 - b. The evaluation of the provider must be completed before childcare begins.
 - c. In order to be reimbursed through the CAPS, providers must be at least 21 years of age.
 - d. Occasionally, caregivers will informally arrange for babysitters to care for children in their home for short periods of time. The cost of babysitting services is **not** a reimbursable expense.
 - e. In order to ensure the safety and appropriate care of children, babysitters used on a routine basis for children in DFCS custody must be at least 18 years of age, knowledgeable of child development, and understand the DFCS Discipline Policy.
 - f. CPS history must be obtained and reviewed prior to an individual being used for babysitting. Babysitters who provide “routine care” are subject to the same screening requirements as a foster parent (See [Supervision of Children](#)).

Receiving childcare payments for children placed in the home of the childcare provider

Some foster parents or relative caregivers provide childcare in their own homes or in the home of others. Since foster parents already receive a per diem for the supervision of children placed in their home, foster parents **may not** receive additional payment for providing childcare to those same children. Likewise, relative caregivers **may not** claim childcare payments for providing childcare for a related child placed in their home.

FORMS AND TOOLS

[Childcare and Parent Services Manual:](#)

http://www.odis.dhr.state.ga.us/3000_fam/3540_caps/caps.htm

[The Child Care Maximum Reimbursement Rate Charts](#)

[CAPS Published Provider Rate Form \(Form 61\)](#)

[Application for CAPS \(Form 57\)](#)

[CAPS Waiver Fact Sheet](#)

[CAPS Waiver Request Form](#)