

## FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR THE CHILD OR YOUTH

**Policy no.:** 3.23

**Effective Date:** March 2007

**Date Revised:** October 1, 2013, May 21, 2015; February 6, 2017; March 28, 2018

**Policy Cross References:** Basic Foster Care Rate; Block Funding; Level Fee; Children's Special Allowance; Consent to Travel; Vacation Costs for the Child or Youth In Care or Custody to Accompany the Foster Family on Vacation

**Legislative References:**

**PURPOSE:** To outline the additional funds that may be approved and provided to a foster parent(s) on behalf of a child or youth in the care or custody of a zone manager in addition to the basic foster care rate, Children's Special Allowance, block funding and level fee.

### **POLICY:**

1. A placement allowance shall be provided at the time a child or youth is placed in a foster home to enable the foster parent(s) to purchase necessary items to support the placement.
2. A placement clothing allowance may be provided for a child or youth to ensure they are adequately and appropriately clothed.
3. A Christmas allowance shall be provided to foster parents to purchase Christmas gifts for a child or youth placed in the foster home.
4. A graduation allowance may be provided for a youth graduating from high school to cover the graduation costs such as graduation tickets, clothing, graduation ring, yearbook, etc.
5. The cost of counselling may be provided for a child or youth if assessed as necessary to meet the needs of the child or youth.
6. The cost of tutoring expenses may be provided for a child or youth if assessed as necessary to meet the needs of the child or youth.
7. Funding may be provided for necessary furniture or household items to accommodate a placement.
8. The cost of minor repairs, equipment or renovations may be approved to:
  - a) accommodate a child or youth with a disability or other special need as recommended by a qualified health practitioner;
  - b) accommodate a sibling group to be placed together to avoid separation; or
  - c) enable a placement that may otherwise not be possible.
9. Where it has been determined by the social worker, in consultation with the supervisor, that a child or youth has caused damage to property, funding may be approved to cover the cost of damages.

10. Other child or youth specific costs may be approved for a child or youth in care if assessed as necessary to meet the needs of the child or youth.
11. All financial requests and approvals shall be completed electronically using the Financial Benefit Request (FBR). Financial services outlined in this policy shall be approved for a maximum of a 6 month period, at which time reassessment is required to determine if the service or benefit is still required.
12. All rates outlined in this policy include any applicable taxes (e.g. the clothing allowance includes the cost of clothing and taxes).

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Placement Allowance**

1. A social worker shall approve a placement allowance of \$200 for a foster parent(s) when a child or youth is placed in the home. This is to assist in obtaining items a child or youth may need upon placement (e.g. school items, special foods, personal items, booster seat, bedding, baby gate, etc.). It does not include monies for clothing as this will be assessed as part of the clothing allowance. The placement allowance is not paid when a child or youth goes for respite or is placed in a home on an emergency overnight basis.

### **Clothing Allowances**

2. A social worker shall assess the clothing needs of a child or youth upon placement, and where required, may approve a one-time placement clothing allowance of up to \$300 to be provided to a foster parent to purchase needed clothes for the child or youth. A placement clothing allowance shall only be paid when a child or youth is moving to a new placement, and shall not be paid more than once in a six month period.
3. The social worker shall discuss with the foster parent(s) their responsibility to meet the child or youth's ongoing clothing needs using the basic foster care rate. The social worker is responsible to work with the foster parent(s) to ensure that the child or youth has adequate clothing on an ongoing basis, in accordance with their age and the season of the year.
4. A supervisor may approve an emergency clothing allowance to a maximum of \$300 in exceptional circumstances to meet the clothing needs of a child or youth.
5. The social worker shall explain to foster parents that all clothing (and other personal items) belonging to the child or youth shall move with them to any new placement, or when the child or youth transitions to a new program or returns home. The social worker shall attempt, to the best of their ability, to ensure that all of a child or youth's belongings accompany them when leaving a placement.

### Christmas Allowance

6. A Christmas allowance shall be approved by a social worker and provided to the foster parent(s) to purchase Christmas gifts for a child or youth placed in the home. The Christmas allowance rates are as follows:

Age	Amount
Birth – 4 years	\$200
5 – 11 years	\$300
12 – 18 years	\$400

### High School Graduation

7. A one-time high school graduation allowance of up to \$750 may be approved by a social worker for a youth when they are graduating from high school to cover graduation costs such as graduation tickets, clothing, graduation ring, yearbook, etc.

### Counselling

8. When counselling is required for a child or youth as outlined in the *Plan for the Child* or the *In Care Progress Report*, the social worker shall work with the parent(s) and foster parent(s) to explore available public counselling services to meet the child or youth's counselling needs, including any service the child or youth may be eligible for due to having indigenous status or through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). If public counselling services have been explored but are either unavailable or have a waitlist that would prevent the child or youth from getting required services in a timely fashion, a supervisor may approve up to a maximum of \$300 per month, or a zone manager may approve up to a maximum of \$400 per month, for private counselling services.

### Tutoring

9. Where tutoring is required and recommended by the In Care Planning Team and a child or youth's school, the social worker shall determine the type of service required to adequately meet the needs of the child or youth (e.g. school tutoring program, a private service, a tutoring program offered through a private centre, Homework Havens, etc.). The social worker shall explore whether there are educational supports or services offered through the school or another community program/service that could meet the child or youth's needs.
10. If no other tutoring services that can meet the child or youth's needs are available, a supervisor may approve funding up to a maximum of \$125 per week for tutoring services from a qualified tutor, at a maximum rate of \$25 per hour. This does not cover the cost of the tutor's preparation time, as this is the tutor's own responsibility.
11. In exceptional circumstances where a child or youth requires more than the maximum amount of \$125 per week of tutoring, the Regional Director (RD) may approve additional tutoring hours.

## Furniture and Household Items

12. Foster parents are expected to have furniture and household items to accommodate the number and age of the children or youth for which they are approved. A supervisor may approve the cost of additional furniture/items that are required to accommodate a placement of a child or youth (e.g. a foster parent agrees to take a sibling group but requires a bunk bed to accommodate the placement, a foster parent agrees to take an infant and requires a crib, etc.). The items then belong to the child or youth, and if not required for future placements or a return home, the item(s) belong to the Department. The following table provides the maximum cost that a supervisor may approve for such items:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Maximum Cost</b>
Bed	\$500
Bunk Bed	\$1200
Crib	\$750
Car seat/Booster seat	\$200
Stroller	\$300
Dresser	\$500

## Minor Repairs/Equipment/Renovations

13. The cost of minor repairs, equipment or renovations may be approved to:
- accommodate a child or youth with a disability or other special need as recommended by a qualified health practitioner;
  - to accommodate a sibling group to be placed together and not be separated; or
  - to enable a placement that may otherwise not be possible.
14. When the social worker receives a request from a foster parent(s) for minor repairs, equipment or renovations, the social worker shall consult with a supervisor to determine if the request may be supported based on the purpose for the minor repairs, equipment or renovations. If the supervisor agrees with supporting the request, the supervisor shall consult with a zone manager to determine whether the zone manager would also support the request.
15. If the zone manager supports the request, the social worker shall advise the foster parent(s) of the requirement of the foster parent(s) to provide three quotes for the minor repair, equipment or renovation.
16. The social worker shall forward the Financial Benefit Request (FBR) with the three quotes attached, to the supervisor. If the supervisor supports the request, the supervisor shall forward the FBR to the zone manager.
17. The costs of minor repairs, equipment or renovations, may be approved by a zone manager

up to a maximum of \$2500 per year.

18. The RD may approve the cost of minor repairs, equipment or renovations that exceeds \$2500 per year and shall determine whether to utilize a service provider that provided one of the three quotes or to go to Public Tender for the minor repair, equipment or renovation.

**Damages**

19. Where it has been alleged that damage to property has been caused by a child or youth, a social worker shall assess the situation and collect relevant information, observe the damage and/or speak to involved parties to determine whether the child or youth was partially or fully responsible for the damage.
20. Where it has been determined by the social worker that the child or youth was partially or fully responsible for the damage, the cost of repair or replacement may be approved:
  - a) up to a maximum of \$1000 per year by a supervisor;
  - b) up to a maximum of \$2500 per year by a zone manager; or
  - c) by the RD for costs exceeding \$2500 per year.
21. The social worker shall advise the foster parent(s) of the requirement for the foster parent(s) to provide three quotes for repair or replacement costs.
22. Where more than one child or youth was involved in an incident that caused damage to property, only a portion of the costs of repair or replacement will be the responsibility of the Department. For example, where three (3) youth were involved in an incident and only one youth was in care, the zone manager is only responsible for 1/3 of the cost.
23. Where possible, the foster parent(s) and social worker shall work with the child or youth, in an age and developmentally appropriate manner, to determine how they can contribute to the repairs. The contribution of the child or youth may be financial or in kind, such as assisting with cleaning up or repairing the damages.
24. Where payment is to be provided to a foster parent or another party as reimbursement for repairs, the party receiving the payment shall sign the *Release Form* prior to receiving the agreed upon payment. This release acknowledges that payment was provided and that no further action or claim may be made in relation to the identified incident.

**Driver’s Education Program/Road Test/Driver’s License**

25. When a youth in the continuous custody of a zone manager requests funding for a driver’s license, the social worker shall consider the youth’s developmental and maturity levels in determining if the request should be approved. If the social worker, in consultation with the supervisor, determines that the youth has demonstrated the necessary maturity required to be a responsible driver, the social worker may approve the cost of the following:

Item	Maximum Cost
Driver’s education program	\$1250

Road test	Up to the maximum rate set by the Motor Registration division of Service NL
Driver's license	Up to the maximum rate set by the Motor Registration division of Service NL

**Other Child or Youth Specific Costs**

26. Other child or youth specific costs that may be approved by a social worker if deemed necessary to meet the needs of a child or youth include:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Maximum Cost</b>
Extra food costs for a child or youth who requires a special diet due to a medical condition and based on the recommendation of a qualified health professional	\$60 /month
Diapers or disposable underwear for a child over age 4 years who has incontinence issues	\$200 /month
Birth certificate	Up to the maximum rate set by Service NL
Photo identification	Up to the maximum rate set by Service NL
Passport/Passport photo	\$125
Medical examination	\$100
Suitcase	\$100
Professional photos for the use of profiling a child or youth in continuous custody for adoption	\$100

27. Special items or equipment to meet an identified medical or special need, if these costs are not covered by another external source (e.g. MCP, Department of Health and Community Services, a Regional Health Authority program, etc.), may be approved as follows:

- a) up to a maximum of \$250 per year by a social worker;

- b) up to a maximum of \$500 per year by a supervisor;
- c) up to \$2500 per year by a zone manager; or
- d) the RD may approve special items or equipment that exceeds the cost of \$2500 per year.

### **EXCEPTIONS:**

1. In exceptional circumstances, a zone manager may approve a clothing allowance of up to \$300 at the time of a subsequent placement that occurs less than 6 months from the previous placement.
2. In exceptional circumstances where a child or youth has been receiving one-on-one support or the services of a Behavioral Aide, the ADM may approve the continuation of these services if deemed necessary to meet the complex needs of the child or youth.

### **RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:**

- *Passport Canada*  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports.html>
- *Canada Revenue Agency*  
<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/hwpyrllwrks/stps/menu-eng.html>
- *Release* form