

POLICY VII-M: FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ~~RESOURCE~~ FOSTER PARENTS

031/201224

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS or Division) provides Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments for a child in foster care ~~may cover the~~ to help defray the costs of ~~(and the cost of~~ providing:

- ~~Food~~
- Shelter
- ~~Clothing~~
- ~~D, shelter, daily supervision~~
- ~~S, tandard~~ school supplies,
- ~~A c a~~ child's personal incidentals
- A, reasonable monthly allowance to the child depending on the child's age and other factors
- ~~L~~iability insurance with respect to the child, ~~and~~
- ~~R~~reasonable travel to the child's daycare, school, or extracurricular activities. ~~home for~~

The foster care maintenance payment is more frequently referred to as a monthly board payment. visitation with family or other caretakers. Local travel associated with the preceding list of items is also an allowable expense. The monthly board payment is for the period starting on the first of the month and ending the last day of the month and is paid by the fifteenth of the subsequent month. If a child is absent from the resource home for hospitalization or a trial placement for ten (10) days or less and is to return to that resource home, no change of status in the Division's information management system is necessary.- However, the child's Family Service Worker (FSW) must always be advised of an absence from the home. The agency pays according to the number of nights a child is in the resource home. Payment for stays of less than twenty-four (24) hours will be based upon a daily rate determined by the Division. If a child is in the home for part of a month, a partial board payment will be made.

Resource parents may choose to have their board payment directly deposited into their checking account or issued as a paper warrant and mailed to the resource home. DCFS strongly encourages the use of direct deposit to prevent payment delays when a warrant is lost in the mail or misplaced.

For children who are IV-E eligible and placed in a IV-E reimbursable foster care placement, title IV-E funds the board payment. For children who are either not IV-E eligible or who are placed in

a non-IV-E reimbursable foster care placement, other appropriate funding streams fund the board payment.

Standard Board Rate

DCFS shall pay resource parents a standard monthly board rate according to the chart below. These rates are effective for board payments as of beginning August 2023 and after continuing thereafter.

The Division shall review the amount of payment made for foster care maintenance every five (5) years to assure continued appropriateness.

Birth through 5 years **\$451.00 Monthly**

<u>Board and Care</u>	<u>381.00</u>
<u>Clothing</u>	<u>50.00</u>
<u>Personal Needs</u>	<u>20.00</u>

6 through 11 years **\$484.00 Monthly**

<u>Board and Care</u>	<u>397.00</u>
<u>Clothing</u>	<u>57.00</u>
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12 through 14 years **\$517.00 Monthly**

<u>Board and Care</u>	<u>410.00</u>
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15 through 17 years **\$550.00 Monthly**

<u>Board and Care</u>	<u>425.00</u>
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~~When a youth in foster care has a child who is placed in the same foster home or public/private child placement or child care agency, foster care maintenance payments made on behalf of the youth shall include and be limited to amounts that cover allowable cost (as defined above) for the child.~~

~~The Division shall review the amount of payment made for foster care maintenance every five (5) years to assure continued appropriateness.~~

Special Board Rate

~~The Division shall provide foster parents with a monthly board payment as an aid to cover the items listed above for each child receiving out-of-home placement services. When resourcefoster~~ parents are caring for a child with special needs and the child's needs cannot be met with the ~~standardregular~~ board payment, the Division may provide the ~~resourcefoster~~ parents with a board payment that exceeds the standard board rates listed above. This is referred to as a special board raten additional payment to cover the extra expenses incurred.

Increased Special Board Rates

The amount of ~~these~~ higher, special board rates will be based on the nature and extent of the child's special needs and any additional activities that a resource parent takes part in to support those needs. Increased special board payments may also be considered when the resource parent is directly involved in certain family time activities that support reunification. The amount of this additional monthly payment will not exceed \$460.00 above the standard board rate for the child's age group. However, if the child is SSI eligible, the rate may exceed the SSI rate by up to \$460.00 if approved by the DCFS Assistant Director of Community Services or designee.

To determine the exact amount of an increased special board rate, local DCFS staff will complete the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate after receiving documentation of the child's special needs and any additional activities required of or offered by the resource parents to meet those needs and submit to the DCFS Area Director. The Area Director or designee will have final approval of the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate. The Area Director may consult with the DCFS Foster Care Unit Manager or designee for review and technical assistance as needed. Any special board rate over one thousand dollars (\$1,000) will also be reviewed and approved or denied by the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee.

Other reasons for an increased special board rate that do not require the completion of the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate form may occur under the following situations:

Board Payments to Youth in the Extended Foster Care Program

Refer to Policy VIII-B: Extended Foster Care for requirements to continue board payments for youth ages eighteen to twenty-one (18-21) years of age who participate in the Extended Foster Care Program and may qualify for an increased special board rate based upon his or hertheir individualized budget. Board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave the Extended Foster Care Program or the end of the month of his or hertheir twenty-first (21st)-birthday.

Providing Financial Support for Children of a Minor in Foster Care

When a minor in foster care or young adult in Extended Foster Care has a child of ~~his or her~~ their own who is placed in the same resource home or other provider setting, foster care maintenance payments made on behalf of the youth shall include the board amounts listed above based on the age of the minor or young adult's child.

For youth participating in the Extended Foster Care Program who live independently and have a child or children of their own, the board payment for the youth in the Extended Foster Care Program may also be augmented to assist the youth in caring for their child in their custody. The maximum amount by which the youth's board payment will be increased is the board amount listed above based on the age of the young adult's child. The amount will also take into account the youth's overall budget when determining the additional amount designed to help care for the child of the young adult.

Providing a Comparable Board Rate to a Placement State

Increased special board rates may also be approved for children taken into foster care in Arkansas but placed via the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) with kin in another state. In these situations, the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee may approve an increased special board rate up to the amount of the placement state's standard foster care board rate for the age of the applicable child.

A special board rate becomes effective the day the Area Director or Assistant Director, as applicable, authorizes the rate to become active. -Retroactive payments will be determined on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Area Director or Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee.

While the child remains in the resource home placement, the local DCFS staff will review the continuing need for a special board rate as directed by the Area Director and, if appropriate, resubmit for reevaluation.

The special board rate will also be reviewed in consultation with new resource parents each time a child changes placement, to determine if the new resource placement is providing the same level of care and that the child continues to have the same behaviors or special needs. If the current approved special board rate is still appropriate, the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate does not have to be completed again nor sent through the approval process each time the child changes placement.

DCFS staff will inform the resource parents in writing of the ultimate decision to continue or discontinue any currently approved special board rate and the reason for that decision, noting

that any continued approval for special board rate is for the period designated by the Area Director and the documentation of continuing need must be reviewed accordingly.

Any increased special board rate request for a resource home that will serve as a pre-adoptive placement must be provided to the Area Director or designee for review sixty (60) days prior to a pre-adoptive placement being made.

Decreased Special Board Rates

A special board rate can also be a decrease in the standard board amount. Federal law prohibits any individual from receiving more than one (1) federal payment designed to provide financial assistance for the care of another individual in his or her their care. As a result, DCFS will reduce a child's monthly board payment rate dollar for dollar based on the amount of the monthly federal benefits that a child receives when the resource home provider is the payee for that child. The resource parent will be expected to use the funds for which they are payee on behalf of the child to support the child's care. In instances when the child's federal benefits exceed the standard board amount, the DCFS board amount entered will be zero (0) dollars.

The only exception to reducing the DCFS board amount when the child is receiving other federal benefits is when a child in foster care receives Title II Death Benefits and the resource parent is the payee.

A child's income must be monitored as a resource in the home and the payee for the income must report how the income is used based on the requirement for the issuing source of the income. Resource parents are responsible for completing all reporting requirements to the payment source when becoming payee for a child's benefits. Resource parents are also required to report any change in payee status to DCFS.- To assist in this process, DCFS staff will inquire about payee status during visits to the resource home.

~~A special board rate is approved for a specific placement and need and will be periodically reviewed and adjusted. A change in placement will require a new request and review.~~

Medical Expenses

Medicaid is the primary payment source for medical and dental services for children in foster care, including hospitalization. If a child in foster care is eligible for Medicaid, resource parents are required to use a Medicaid provider for meeting the medical needs of the child. If Medicaid cannot cover such expenses, state funds may be a secondary payment option. Other services or

supplies needed by the child must be authorized and approved by DCFS. A child will not be denied medical services due to being ineligible for Medicaid.

Transportation

Transportation costs associated with the child's case plan, such as attending Family Team Meetings and court well as transporting the child to family time and medical appointments may be reimbursed. Allowable transportation costs are reimbursed to the resource parent at a rate determined by DCFS. To be reimbursed, the resource parent must complete a travel reimbursement request in the designated web-based system. Requests for travel reimbursement must be submitted at least monthly.

Clothing

As stated above, a portion of the monthly board allowance is designed to go toward defraying the cost of clothing for a child placed in a resource home. The portion for clothing costs may be spent monthly or may be saved and used for a larger purchase later. All receipts from the purchase clothes must be retained by the resource parent and given to the resource worker during the resource worker's quarterly visit.

However, when a child first enters foster care, DCFS may issue an initial clothing order for the purchase of new clothing. Initial clothing orders will be issued on a case-by-case basis. Not all children will need to purchase new clothing as they may enter foster care with ample and suitable clothing. The FSW will assess what clothing items are needed.

Supplemental clothing orders may also be approved for circumstances in which a child in foster care needs new clothing items that exceed the amount included in the monthly board payment. Examples include, but are not limited to, when a child has a significant growth spurt, the child has an event for a school, extracurricular, or faith-based event that requires special attire, or the child needs new items for an upcoming season. The resource parent must obtain prior approval from the FSW for supplemental clothing orders. Supplemental clothing orders will be approved no more than once a quarter.

Children will be included in the selection of their own clothing as age and developmentally appropriate. All clothing purchased for a child in foster care will be clean, well-fitting, seasonally appropriate, and comparable to community standards. Any clothing purchased for a child, whether through monthly board payment funds or supplemental clothing orders, and any other personal needs items will be sent with the child upon any change in placement.

Incidental Expense Fund

An Incidental Expense Fund for children ages birth to thirteen (13) years of age exists to provide items and activities intended to help normalize a child's life experience while in care. Examples include but are not limited to, camp fees, extracurricular activities, school uniforms, field trips, and specialized school supplies such as graphing calculators required by the school. However, standard school supplies will be covered by personal needs monies within the board payment.

The Incidental Expense Fund is intended for items or activities that cost twenty-five dollars (\$25) or more and must be accompanied by documentation of need for the expense. Items covered by the monthly board payment or contracts are not eligible for reimbursement from this fund. In addition, the Incidental Expense Fund will not be used for holiday gifts.

The FSW will assist the resource parent in accessing these funding requests when the money is needed for a situation that meets these policy guidelines. These funding requests must also be approved by the DCFS Financial Support Unit. Use of the Incidental Expense Fund will be limited to one (1) request per quarter. Resource parents must have prior approval for such purchases.PROCEDURE VII-M1: Financial Support to Foster Parents

Transitional Youth Services Funded through Chafee

Youth that are fourteen (14) years of age and older in foster care are eligible for John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood funding for a variety of activities designed to promote normalcy, develop leadership skills, or help youth in foster care prepare for adulthood. The maximum amount allowed for Chafee-funded activities is dependent on the particular activity and must receive final approval from the DCFS Director or designee. Generally, the use of Chafee funding will be pre-approved. However, Chafee funding may be provided on a reimbursement basis when necessary if all appropriate documentation is provided.

11/09

~~DCFS shall pay foster parents a monthly board rate according to the following chart; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:~~

Birth through 5 years	\$410.00 Monthly
Board and Care	350.00
Clothing	45.00
Personal Needs	15.00

6 through 11 years	\$440.00 Monthly
Board and Care	365.00
Clothing	50.00
School and Personal Needs	25.00

12 through 14 years	\$470.00 Monthly
Board and Care	380.00
Clothing	60.00
School and Personal Needs	30.00

15 through 17* years	\$500.00 Monthly
Board and Care	395.00
Clothing	70.00
School and Personal Needs	35.00

~~*Refer to Policy VIII-B for requirements to continue board payments for youth ages eighteen to twenty (18-20) (board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave foster care or the end of the month of his 21st birthday).~~

Additional Assistance with Expenses

In addition to the items already described, the following items are allowable with the approval of the County Office Supervisor or designee: **PROCEDURE VII-M2: Requesting a Special Board Rate**

- A. Emergency medical services and drugs that are not covered by Medicaid.
- B. Childcare or baby-sitting fees may also be defrayed with financial support from DCFS, when the resource parent is required to attend resource parent training, if and when funding is available. This does not include childcare for a resource parent's employment as any regular childcare arrangements for a child in foster care will be arranged through the state's Child Care Assistance Program.

02/12

~~**Note: Any Special Board Rate (SBR) request for a pre-adoptive placement must be provided to the Area Director for review sixty (60) days prior to a pre-adoptive placement being made.**~~

~~**The Family Service Worker FSW will:**~~

- ~~A. Check Verify documentation of the child's special need(s) and the additional activities required of the foster resource parents to meet the need(s).~~

- ~~B. Complete the CFS 304: Justification of Special Board Rate by determining the level of care needed in each of the three two (2) need categories (Behavioral/Emotional, Life Functioning, and Child Risk BehaviorsAccommodations by Resource Home and Resource Family and Characteristics of the Child), and adding the three two (2) levels.~~
- ~~C. Submit the request for a special board rate with documentation attached to the County SupervisorArea Program CoordinatorDirector or designee for review and recommendation.~~
 - ~~— Once approved, review the continuing need for the request on a quarterly basisevery 180 days (unless approval obtained from Area Director for less frequent review based on static youth needs)as designed by the Area Director and, if appropriate, resubmit for reevaluation by the Area County SupervisorProgram Coordinator, Area Program Administrator, or designee and the Area Director.~~
 - ~~— Re-evaluate the SBR in consultation with new Resource Parents each time a child changes placement to determine if the new resource placement is providing the same special care and experiencing the same hardships in caring for the child. This does not mean that the SBR must be resubmitted through the approval process each time the child changes placement if the current approved SBR is still appropriate:~~
 - ~~— FSW and County Supervisor have a responsibility to notify the Area Director or designee if a child's placement or circumstances have changed and would affect the SBR causing the SBR to decrease~~
 - ~~— FSW and County Supervisor have a responsibility to reassess and rekey (SBR ends each time a placement is exited) a standing SBR if a child:~~
 - ~~— Changes resource homes~~
 - ~~— Enters respite and then returns to the resource home~~
 - ~~— Enters acute care and then returns to the resource home~~
 - ~~— When rekeying an appropriate standing SBR, put "child changed placement and SBR continues to be appropriate" in the comments box of the pay scale screen~~
 - ~~— Inform the new resource parent in writing of the ultimate decision to continue or discontinue the current approved SBR and the reason for that decision, noting that any continued approval for Special Board Rate is for the period designated by the Area Director and the documentation of continuing need must be reviewed accordingly~~

~~D. —~~

~~The Area Director, County Area Program Coordinator, Area Program Administrator, or designee Supervisor will:~~

- ~~— Review the request for completeness and appropriateness within fourteen (14) days of receipt and:~~
 - ~~— Recommend recommend approval or disapproval or~~
 - ~~A. Request more information from the submitting DCFS staff within three (3) working days of receipt.~~
 - ~~B. If approved, forward the request to the Area Director for review and approval or disapproval, as necessary.~~

- ~~C. If disapproved, forward the request with a recommendation for disapproval to the Area Director for review and action as appropriate.~~
- ~~D. Once approved, review the continuing need for the request and, if appropriate, resubmit the request with updated information on a quarterly basis for reevaluation by the Area Director.~~
- ~~E. Inform the foster resource parent in writing of the ultimate approval or disapproval of the request and the reason for that decision, noting that approval is only for the period designated by the Area Director 90-180 days and the documentation of continuing need must be reviewed quarterly accordingly. If annual review is approved by the Area Director, then indicate necessary review period in the letter to the resource parent.~~

The Area Director will:

- ~~A. Receive requests from the County Supervisor Area Program Coordinator, Area Program Administrator, or designee.~~
- ~~B. Review the request for completeness and appropriateness, consider the County Supervisor's Area Program Coordinator or designee's recommendation and either approve or disapprove the request within three five (53) working business days.~~
- ~~C. Have the authority to approve all Special Board Rates up to \$96011601000.00.~~
- ~~D. Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for a second party review if the Area Director cannot decide on approval or disapproval. Inform the requesting County Supervisor Area Program Coordinator, or designee of the request's disposition and reasons for approval, disapproval, or referral to the Foster Care Unit Manager. A Special Board Rate becomes effective the day the Area Director or Assistant Director, as appropriate, approves authorizes the rate to become active it. Retroactive payments will be determined on a case by case basis and must be approved by the Area Director or Assistant Director of Community Services.~~
- ~~E. Once approved, assure ensure that the special board rate is reevaluated on a quarterly every 180 days (or as designated by the Area Director) basedis for on continued appropriateness.~~
- ~~F. Maintain a file for each approved special board rate. The file should contain the requesting memo, supporting documentation, CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate, Notification of Approval memo, and a printout of the computer entry of the special board rate.~~
- ~~G. Maintain a log of special board rate approvals including the following column headings: Child's Name, Case Number, County, Effective Date, Termination Date, Rate, and Reason.~~

The DCFS Assistant Director of Community Services will:

- ~~A. Have the authority to approve or disapprove all Special Board Rates over \$9601160000.00.~~
- ~~B. Receive completed request packets for special board rates over \$960116000.00 from Area Directors.~~

~~C. Check each request packet for completeness to include:~~

- ~~1) A completed CFS-304: Justification for Special Board Rate.~~
- ~~2) Clear and convincing documentation of any emotional, physical, and/or auxiliary problems the child has that may justify a special board rate.~~
- ~~3) The Area Director's dated signature on the CFS-304: Justification for Special Board Rate as evidence of his their review.~~

~~— A Cover Memo from the Area Director to the Assistant Director that:~~

~~4) —~~

~~Identifies the proposed subsidy as over \$96011601000.00.~~

~~5) —~~

~~Provides a justification for the proposed special subsidy, and~~

~~Makes a recommendation regarding approval or disapproval~~

~~— Review the request for appropriateness and consider the Area Director's recommendation.~~

~~6) —~~

~~7) — Makes a recommendation regarding approval or disapproval.~~

~~D. — Review the request for appropriateness and consider the Area Director's recommendation~~

~~E. Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for technical assistance if desired.~~

~~F. Reach a disposition regarding the request within three five (35) working business days.~~

~~G. Inform the requesting Area Director in writing of the request's disposition and reasons for approval or disapproval.~~

The Foster Care Manager will:

~~A. Provide only technical assistance when requested regarding special board rates.~~

~~B. Return the request to the Area Director or Assistant Director, as appropriate, for decision and action.~~

CHRIS Division Information Management System Procedures

~~If When the special board rate is approved for the initial entry date at the Provider placement service, the Family Service Worker Program Coordinator, Program Administrator, or designee will complete the Provider Recommendation Placement Pay Scale Screen screen in CHRIS. The FSW will:~~

~~A. — In the Payment Scale Information grouping, select the Child requires Special Rate checkbox.~~

~~B. — Enter the total approved Special Board Rate monthly amount in the Monthly Authorized Amount field.~~

~~C. — Select the appropriate Reason for Special Rate pick list value of Special Board Rate Justification or Other.~~

~~Enter a brief justification for the Special Board Rate in the Explanation for Special Rate text box.~~

~~D. Provide brief description of the behaviors, medical conditions, and hardships on the resource home requiring a SBR. This is mandatory if 'Other' is selected as the Reason for Special Rate.~~

~~E. Click Add button.~~

~~Click Approval button to check the Request for Approval checkbox.~~

~~F. _____~~

~~If the special board rate is approved after the initial entry date at the Provider placement service, the Family Service Worker will complete the Payment Scale screen in CHRIS. This can also be completed if the Special Board Rate was approved but was not entered on the Provider Recommendation screen as it should have been.~~

~~The FSW will:~~

~~A. Enter the End Date of the open Payment Scale (such as Normal or Clothing and Personal Allowance) and click Change button;~~

~~B. Select the Ok button to the following message:~~

~~382 This is the open placemen for this client. Please open a new Payment Scale or remove the End Date for the last Payment Scale.~~

~~C. Click Clear button to complete the following:~~

~~• Select the Child requires Special Rate checkbox.~~

~~• Select the appropriate Reason for Special Rate pick list value of Special Board Rate Justification or Other.~~

~~• Enter the total approved Special Board Rate monthly amount in the Monthly Authorized Amount field.~~

~~• Enter a brief justification for the Special Board Rate in the Explanation for Special Rate text. This is mandatory if 'Other' is selected as the Reason for Special Rate.~~

~~• Enter the start date of the approved Special Board Rate in the Begin Date field.~~

~~• Enter the Review Date if deemed necessary.~~

~~D. Click Add button~~

~~E. Click Approval button to check the Request for Approval checkbox.~~

~~The Special Board Rate Approvals are three tier FSW Requests, Supervisor Recommends, and Area Director Approves. The FSW Request portion was described in the procedures above. To complete this three tier process, the following operations should occur:~~

~~A. Family Service Worker Supervisor will:~~

~~1) Highlight the Payment Scale Request for Approval in their Supervisor Approvals' Box and click Show button~~

~~2) Review information for accuracy and click Approval button to click Recommend checkbox~~

~~3) If information is not accurate, click Approval button to click Deny checkbox and enter Denial~~

~~Reason. If denied, the denied Special Board Rate Payment Scale must be end dated and a new one entered.~~

~~B. Area Director will:~~

~~1) Highlight the Payment Scale Request for Approval in their Supervisor's Box and click Show button.~~

~~2) Review information for accuracy and click Approval button to click Approve checkbox.~~

~~3) If information is not accurate, click Approval button to click Deny checkbox and enter Denial~~

~~Reason:~~

~~If denied, the denied SBR Payment Scale must be end dated and a new one (1) entered~~

~~If denied, the denied Special Board Rate Payment Scale must be end dated and a new one entered.~~

MARKUP

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031/201224

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a non-IV-E reimbursable foster care placement, other appropriate funding streams fund the board payment.

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DCFS shall pay resource parents a standard monthly board rate according to the chart below. These rates are effective for board payments as of beginning August 2023 and after continuing thereafter.

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The amount of ~~these~~ higher, special board rates will be based on the nature and extent of the child's special needs and any additional activities that a resource parent takes part in to support those needs. Increased special board payments may also be considered when the resource parent is directly involved in certain family time activities that support reunification. The amount of this additional monthly payment will not exceed \$460.00 above the standard board rate for the child's age group. However, if the child is SSI eligible, the rate may exceed the SSI rate by up to \$460.00 if approved by the DCFS Assistant Director of Community Services or designee.

To determine the exact amount of an increased special board rate, local DCFS staff will complete the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate after receiving documentation of the child's special needs and any additional activities required of or offered by the resource parents to meet those needs and submit to the DCFS Area Director. The Area Director or designee will have final approval of the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate. The Area Director may consult with the DCFS Foster Care Unit Manager or designee for review and technical assistance as needed. Any special board rate over one thousand dollars (\$1,000) will also be reviewed and approved or denied by the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee.

Other reasons for an increased special board rate that do not require the completion of the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate form may occur under the following situations:

Board Payments to Youth in the Extended Foster Care Program

Refer to Policy VIII-B: Extended Foster Care for requirements to continue board payments for youth ages eighteen to twenty-one (18-21) years of age who participate in the Extended Foster Care Program and may qualify for an increased special board rate based upon his or hertheir individualized budget. Board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave the Extended Foster Care Program or the end of the month of his or hertheir twenty-first (21st)-birthday.

Providing Financial Support for Children of a Minor in Foster Care

When a minor in foster care or young adult in Extended Foster Care has a child of ~~his or her~~ their own who is placed in the same resource home or other provider setting, foster care maintenance payments made on behalf of the youth shall include the board amounts listed above based on the age of the minor or young adult's child.

For youth participating in the Extended Foster Care Program who live independently and have a child or children of their own, the board payment for the youth in the Extended Foster Care Program may also be augmented to assist the youth in caring for their child in their custody. The maximum amount by which the youth's board payment will be increased is the board amount listed above based on the age of the young adult's child. The amount will also take into account the youth's overall budget when determining the additional amount designed to help care for the child of the young adult.

Providing a Comparable Board Rate to a Placement State

Increased special board rates may also be approved for children taken into foster care in Arkansas but placed via the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) with kin in another state. In these situations, the Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee may approve an increased special board rate up to the amount of the placement state's standard foster care board rate for the age of the applicable child.

A special board rate becomes effective the day the Area Director or Assistant Director, as applicable, authorizes the rate to become active. -Retroactive payments will be determined on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Area Director or Assistant Director of Field Operations or designee.

While the child remains in the resource home placement, the local DCFS staff will review the continuing need for a special board rate as directed by the Area Director and, if appropriate, resubmit for reevaluation.

The special board rate will also be reviewed in consultation with new resource parents each time a child changes placement, to determine if the new resource placement is providing the same level of care and that the child continues to have the same behaviors or special needs. If the current approved special board rate is still appropriate, the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate does not have to be completed again nor sent through the approval process each time the child changes placement.

DCFS staff will inform the resource parents in writing of the ultimate decision to continue or discontinue any currently approved special board rate and the reason for that decision, noting

that any continued approval for special board rate is for the period designated by the Area Director and the documentation of continuing need must be reviewed accordingly.

Any increased special board rate request for a resource home that will serve as a pre-adoptive placement must be provided to the Area Director or designee for review sixty (60) days prior to a pre-adoptive placement being made.

Decreased Special Board Rates

A special board rate can also be a decrease in the standard board amount. Federal law prohibits any individual from receiving more than one (1) federal payment designed to provide financial assistance for the care of another individual in his or her their care. As a result, DCFS will reduce a child's monthly board payment rate dollar for dollar based on the amount of the monthly federal benefits that a child receives when the resource home provider is the payee for that child. The resource parent will be expected to use the funds for which they are payee on behalf of the child to support the child's care. In instances when the child's federal benefits exceed the standard board amount, the DCFS board amount entered will be zero (0) dollars.

The only exception to reducing the DCFS board amount when the child is receiving other federal benefits is when a child in foster care receives Title II Death Benefits and the resource parent is the payee.

A child's income must be monitored as a resource in the home and the payee for the income must report how the income is used based on the requirement for the issuing source of the income. Resource parents are responsible for completing all reporting requirements to the payment source when becoming payee for a child's benefits. Resource parents are also required to report any change in payee status to DCFS.- To assist in this process, DCFS staff will inquire about payee status during visits to the resource home.

~~A special board rate is approved for a specific placement and need and will be periodically reviewed and adjusted. A change in placement will require a new request and review.~~

Medical Expenses

Medicaid is the primary payment source for medical and dental services for children in foster care, including hospitalization. If a child in foster care is eligible for Medicaid, resource parents are required to use a Medicaid provider for meeting the medical needs of the child. If Medicaid cannot cover such expenses, state funds may be a secondary payment option. Other services or

supplies needed by the child must be authorized and approved by DCFS. A child will not be denied medical services due to being ineligible for Medicaid.

Transportation

Transportation costs associated with the child's case plan, such as attending Family Team Meetings and court well as transporting the child to family time and medical appointments may be reimbursed. Allowable transportation costs are reimbursed to the resource parent at a rate determined by DCFS. To be reimbursed, the resource parent must complete a travel reimbursement request in the designated web-based system. Requests for travel reimbursement must be submitted at least monthly.

Clothing

As stated above, a portion of the monthly board allowance is designed to go toward defraying the cost of clothing for a child placed in a resource home. The portion for clothing costs may be spent monthly or may be saved and used for a larger purchase later. All receipts from the purchase clothes must be retained by the resource parent and given to the resource worker during the resource worker's quarterly visit.

However, when a child first enters foster care, DCFS may issue an initial clothing order for the purchase of new clothing. Initial clothing orders will be issued on a case-by-case basis. Not all children will need to purchase new clothing as they may enter foster care with ample and suitable clothing. The FSW will assess what clothing items are needed.

Supplemental clothing orders may also be approved for circumstances in which a child in foster care needs new clothing items that exceed the amount included in the monthly board payment. Examples include, but are not limited to, when a child has a significant growth spurt, the child has an event for a school, extracurricular, or faith-based event that requires special attire, or the child needs new items for an upcoming season. The resource parent must obtain prior approval from the FSW for supplemental clothing orders. Supplemental clothing orders will be approved no more than once a quarter.

Children will be included in the selection of their own clothing as age and developmentally appropriate. All clothing purchased for a child in foster care will be clean, well-fitting, seasonally appropriate, and comparable to community standards. Any clothing purchased for a child, whether through monthly board payment funds or supplemental clothing orders, and any other personal needs items will be sent with the child upon any change in placement.

Incidental Expense Fund

An Incidental Expense Fund for children ages birth to thirteen (13) years of age exists to provide items and activities intended to help normalize a child's life experience while in care. Examples include but are not limited to, camp fees, extracurricular activities, school uniforms, field trips, and specialized school supplies such as graphing calculators required by the school. However, standard school supplies will be covered by personal needs monies within the board payment.

The Incidental Expense Fund is intended for items or activities that cost twenty-five dollars (\$25) or more and must be accompanied by documentation of need for the expense. Items covered by the monthly board payment or contracts are not eligible for reimbursement from this fund. In addition, the Incidental Expense Fund will not be used for holiday gifts.

The FSW will assist the resource parent in accessing these funding requests when the money is needed for a situation that meets these policy guidelines. These funding requests must also be approved by the DCFS Financial Support Unit. Use of the Incidental Expense Fund will be limited to one (1) request per quarter. Resource parents must have prior approval for such purchases.PROCEDURE VII-M1: Financial Support to Foster Parents

Transitional Youth Services Funded through Chafee

Youth that are fourteen (14) years of age and older in foster care are eligible for John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood funding for a variety of activities designed to promote normalcy, develop leadership skills, or help youth in foster care prepare for adulthood. The maximum amount allowed for Chafee-funded activities is dependent on the particular activity and must receive final approval from the DCFS Director or designee. Generally, the use of Chafee funding will be pre-approved. However, Chafee funding may be provided on a reimbursement basis when necessary if all appropriate documentation is provided.

11/09

~~DCFS shall pay foster parents a monthly board rate according to the following chart; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:~~

Birth through 5 years	\$410.00 Monthly
Board and Care	350.00
Clothing	45.00
Personal Needs	15.00

6 through 11 years	\$440.00 Monthly
Board and Care	365.00
Clothing	50.00
School and Personal Needs	25.00

12 through 14 years	\$470.00 Monthly
Board and Care	380.00
Clothing	60.00
School and Personal Needs	30.00

15 through 17* years	\$500.00 Monthly
Board and Care	395.00
Clothing	70.00
School and Personal Needs	35.00

~~*Refer to Policy VIII-B for requirements to continue board payments for youth ages eighteen to twenty (18-20) (board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave foster care or the end of the month of his 21st birthday).~~

Additional Assistance with Expenses

In addition to the items already described, the following items are allowable with the approval of the County Office Supervisor or designee: **PROCEDURE VII-M2: Requesting a Special Board Rate**

- A. Emergency medical services and drugs that are not covered by Medicaid.
- B. Childcare or baby-sitting fees may also be defrayed with financial support from DCFS, when the resource parent is required to attend resource parent training, if and when funding is available. This does not include childcare for a resource parent's employment as any regular childcare arrangements for a child in foster care will be arranged through the state's Child Care Assistance Program.

02/12

~~**Note: Any Special Board Rate (SBR) request for a pre-adoptive placement must be provided to the Area Director for review sixty (60) days prior to a pre-adoptive placement being made.**~~

~~**The Family Service Worker FSW will:**~~

- ~~A. Check Verify documentation of the child's special need(s) and the additional activities required of the foster resource parents to meet the need(s).~~

- ~~B. Complete the CFS 304: Justification of Special Board Rate by determining the level of care needed in each of the three two (2) need categories (Behavioral/Emotional, Life Functioning, and Child Risk BehaviorsAccommodations by Resource Home and Resource Family and Characteristics of the Child), and adding the three two (2) levels.~~
- ~~C. Submit the request for a special board rate with documentation attached to the County SupervisorArea Program CoordinatorDirector or designee for review and recommendation.~~
 - ~~— Once approved, review the continuing need for the request on a quarterly basisevery 180 days (unless approval obtained from Area Director for less frequent review based on static youth needs)as designed by the Area Director and, if appropriate, resubmit for reevaluation by the Area County SupervisorProgram Coordinator, Area Program Administrator, or designee and the Area Director.~~
 - ~~— Re-evaluate the SBR in consultation with new Resource Parents each time a child changes placement to determine if the new resource placement is providing the same special care and experiencing the same hardships in caring for the child. This does not mean that the SBR must be resubmitted through the approval process each time the child changes placement if the current approved SBR is still appropriate:~~
 - ~~— FSW and County Supervisor have a responsibility to notify the Area Director or designee if a child's placement or circumstances have changed and would affect the SBR causing the SBR to decrease~~
 - ~~— FSW and County Supervisor have a responsibility to reassess and rekey (SBR ends each time a placement is exited) a standing SBR if a child:~~
 - ~~— Changes resource homes~~
 - ~~— Enters respite and then returns to the resource home~~
 - ~~— Enters acute care and then returns to the resource home~~
 - ~~— When rekeying an appropriate standing SBR, put "child changed placement and SBR continues to be appropriate" in the comments box of the pay scale screen~~
 - ~~— Inform the new resource parent in writing of the ultimate decision to continue or discontinue the current approved SBR and the reason for that decision, noting that any continued approval for Special Board Rate is for the period designated by the Area Director and the documentation of continuing need must be reviewed accordingly~~

~~D. —~~

~~The Area Director, County Area Program Coordinator, Area Program Administrator, or designee Supervisor will:~~

- ~~— Review the request for completeness and appropriateness within fourteen (14) days of receipt and:~~
 - ~~— Recommend recommend approval or disapproval or~~
 - ~~A. Request more information from the submitting DCFS staff within three (3) working days of receipt.~~
 - ~~B. If approved, forward the request to the Area Director for review and approval or disapproval, as necessary.~~

- ~~C. If disapproved, forward the request with a recommendation for disapproval to the Area Director for review and action as appropriate.~~
- ~~D. Once approved, review the continuing need for the request and, if appropriate, resubmit the the request with updated information on a quarterly basis for reevaluation by the Area Director.~~
- ~~E. Inform the foster resource parent in writing of the ultimate approval or disapproval of the request and the reason for that decision, noting that approval is only for the period designated by the Area Director 90-180 days and the documentation of continuing need must be reviewed quarterly accordingly. If annual review is approved by the Area Director, then indicate necessary review period in the letter to the resource parent.~~

The Area Director will:

- ~~A. Receive requests from the County Supervisor Area Program Coordinator, Area Program Administrator, or designee.~~
- ~~B. Review the request for completeness and appropriateness, consider the County Supervisor's Area Program Coordinator or designee's recommendation and either approve or disapprove the request within three five (53) working business days.~~
- ~~C. Have the authority to approve all Special Board Rates up to \$96011601000.00.~~
- ~~D. Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for a second party review if the Area Director cannot decide on approval or disapproval. Inform the requesting County Supervisor Area Program Coordinator, or designee of the request's disposition and reasons for approval, disapproval, or referral to the Foster Care Unit Manager. A Special Board Rate becomes effective the day the Area Director or Assistant Director, as appropriate, approves authorizes the rate to become active it. Retroactive payments will be determined on a case by case basis and must be approved by the Area Director or Assistant Director of Community Services.~~
- ~~E. Once approved, assure ensure that the special board rate is reevaluated on a quarterly every 180 days (or as designated by the Area Director) basedis for on continued appropriateness.~~
- ~~F. Maintain a file for each approved special board rate. The file should contain the requesting memo, supporting documentation, CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate, Notification of Approval memo, and a printout of the computer entry of the special board rate.~~
- ~~G. Maintain a log of special board rate approvals including the following column headings: Child's Name, Case Number, County, Effective Date, Termination Date, Rate, and Reason.~~

The DCFS Assistant Director of Community Services will:

- ~~A. Have the authority to approve or disapprove all Special Board Rates over \$9601160000.00.~~
- ~~B. Receive completed request packets for special board rates over \$960116000.00 from Area Directors.~~

~~C. Check each request packet for completeness to include:~~

- ~~1) A completed CFS-304: Justification for Special Board Rate.~~
- ~~2) Clear and convincing documentation of any emotional, physical, and/or auxiliary problems the child has that may justify a special board rate.~~
- ~~3) The Area Director's dated signature on the CFS-304: Justification for Special Board Rate as evidence of his their review.~~

~~— A Cover Memo from the Area Director to the Assistant Director that:~~

~~4) —~~

~~— Identifies the proposed subsidy as over \$96011601000.00.~~

~~5) —~~

~~— Provides a justification for the proposed special subsidy, and~~

~~— Makes a recommendation regarding approval or disapproval~~

~~— Review the request for appropriateness and consider the Area Director's recommendation.~~

~~6) —~~

~~7) — Makes a recommendation regarding approval or disapproval.~~

~~D. — Review the request for appropriateness and consider the Area Director's recommendation~~

~~E. Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for technical assistance if desired.~~

~~F. Reach a disposition regarding the request within three five (35) working business days.~~

~~G. Inform the requesting Area Director in writing of the request's disposition and reasons for approval or disapproval.~~

The Foster Care Manager will:

~~A. Provide only technical assistance when requested regarding special board rates.~~

~~B. Return the request to the Area Director or Assistant Director, as appropriate, for decision and action.~~

CHRIS Division Information Management System Procedures

~~If When the special board rate is approved for the initial entry date at the Provider placement service, the Family Service Worker Program Coordinator, Program Administrator, or designee will complete the Provider Recommendation Placement Pay Scale Screen screen in CHRIS. The FSW will:~~

~~A. — In the Payment Scale Information grouping, select the Child requires Special Rate checkbox.~~

~~B. — Enter the total approved Special Board Rate monthly amount in the Monthly Authorized Amount field.~~

~~C. — Select the appropriate Reason for Special Rate pick list value of Special Board Rate Justification or Other.~~

~~Enter a brief justification for the Special Board Rate in the Explanation for Special Rate text box.~~

~~D. Provide brief description of the behaviors, medical conditions, and hardships on the resource home requiring a SBR. This is mandatory if 'Other' is selected as the Reason for Special Rate.~~

~~E. Click Add button.~~

~~Click Approval button to check the Request for Approval checkbox.~~

~~F. _____~~

~~If the special board rate is approved after the initial entry date at the Provider placement service, the Family Service Worker will complete the Payment Scale screen in CHRIS. This can also be completed if the Special Board Rate was approved but was not entered on the Provider Recommendation screen as it should have been.~~

~~The FSW will:~~

~~A. Enter the End Date of the open Payment Scale (such as Normal or Clothing and Personal Allowance) and click Change button;~~

~~B. Select the Ok button to the following message:~~

~~382 This is the open placemen for this client. Please open a new Payment Scale or remove the End Date for the last Payment Scale.~~

~~C. Click Clear button to complete the following:~~

~~• Select the Child requires Special Rate checkbox.~~

~~• Select the appropriate Reason for Special Rate pick list value of Special Board Rate Justification or Other.~~

~~• Enter the total approved Special Board Rate monthly amount in the Monthly Authorized Amount field.~~

~~• Enter a brief justification for the Special Board Rate in the Explanation for Special Rate text. This is mandatory if 'Other' is selected as the Reason for Special Rate.~~

~~• Enter the start date of the approved Special Board Rate in the Begin Date field.~~

~~• Enter the Review Date if deemed necessary.~~

~~D. Click Add button~~

~~E. Click Approval button to check the Request for Approval checkbox.~~

~~The Special Board Rate Approvals are three tier FSW Requests, Supervisor Recommends, and Area Director Approves. The FSW Request portion was described in the procedures above. To complete this three tier process, the following operations should occur:~~

~~A. Family Service Worker Supervisor will:~~

~~1) Highlight the Payment Scale Request for Approval in their Supervisor Approvals' Box and click Show button~~

~~2) Review information for accuracy and click Approval button to click Recommend checkbox~~

~~3) If information is not accurate, click Approval button to click Deny checkbox and enter Denial~~

~~Reason. If denied, the denied Special Board Rate Payment Scale must be end dated and a new one entered.~~

~~B. Area Director will:~~

~~1) Highlight the Payment Scale Request for Approval in their Supervisor's Box and click Show button.~~

~~2) Review information for accuracy and click Approval button to click Approve checkbox.~~

~~3) If information is not accurate, click Approval button to click Deny checkbox and enter Denial~~

~~Reason:~~

~~If denied, the denied SBR Payment Scale must be end dated and a new one (1) entered~~

~~If denied, the denied Special Board Rate Payment Scale must be end dated and a new one entered.~~

MARKUP

POLICY VIII-I: ADOPTION SUBSIDY

031/20231

SUBSIDY AMOUNT

If eligible, the Division will make adoption assistance payments to adoptive parents in amounts so determined through an adoption assistance agreement. The amount of such payment:

- 1) Will take into account the circumstances of the adopting parents and the needs of the child being adopted;
- 2) May be adjusted periodically with the concurrence of the adoptive parents to reflect changing circumstances; and
- 3) May not exceed the child's foster care maintenance payment that is in effect at the time a subsidy is approved (if the child with respect to whom the adoption assistance payment is made had been in a resource home).

The standard foster care maintenance board rate scale is found below. ~~These rates are effective for board payments made November 2009 and after.~~ New rates will not be paid until the child reaches the next age range.

Age of Child Maintenance	Amount of Monthly
Birth through five (5) years	\$45110.00
Six (6) through eleven (11) years	\$48440.00
Twelve (12) through fourteen (14) years	\$517470.00
Fifteen (15) through seventeen (17) years	
\$5500.00	

POLICY V-C: FAMILY SUPPORT FUND

036/20242

The Division of Children and Family Services will ensure that staff has prompt access to the Family Support Fund to prevent support birth, post-adoptive, and resource families. The purpose of the fund is:

A. To prevent children from entering or remaining in Out-of-Home Placement foster care due to the parents' financial inability to meet the children's basic needs or to participate in case plan services. Examples may include short-term assistance with utilities, gas cards, or purchases for the home to help ensure the safety of children (such as a crib to ensure a safe sleep environment for an infant). All requests will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Requests to access the Family Support Fund for families involved in child maltreatment investigations and any type of case services will be made via the assigned Family Service Worker's chain of command.

B. To pay for Out-of-Home Placement incidental items that exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) and are both outside of the contracting process and not covered by board payments. Examples include school field trips, camping dues, dance supplies, musical instruments, registration fees, specialized school supplies such as graphing calculators required by the school. However, standard school supplies will be covered by personal needs monies within the board payment; sport fees or equipment, social club fees, summer programs, specialized art supplies, and school pictures.

1) Providers will be required to provide documentation of the need for the expense. For example, a school letter requiring material purchase, or a camp registration form.

RULES SUBMITTED FOR REPEAL

Rule #1: Appendix 9 - Support Payments to
Provisional Resource Payments

Rule #2: Policy XI-C Child Welfare Students Stipend
Program

APPENDIX 9: SUPPORT PAYMENTS TO PROVISIONAL RESOURCE PARENTS

11/2022

For relative and fictive kin resource homes (referred to collectively as kinship homes) that are opened on a provisional basis, the Division will provide a monthly support payment in the amount of \$240 per child placed in the home. The monthly support payment is designed to help defray costs associated with meeting the immediate needs of children placed in the provisional resource home. The support payment will be prorated, as applicable, based on the placement and exit dates of the child in the provisional kinship home service. Eligibility for support payments is limited to a maximum of six consecutive months per placement episode. When a kinship home moves from being provisionally approved to fully approved, the support payment will cease, and the fully approved kinship home will receive a full foster care maintenance payment for the children placed in their home.

POLICY XI-C: CHILD WELFARE STUDENT STIPEND PROGRAM

01/2010

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) participates in a child welfare student stipend program in order to hire more employees with degrees in social work and social work-related fields on a state-wide basis to work in DCFS programs serving title IV-E eligible children. Any student awarded a stipend is under contract with the Division and will be required to work for DCFS after graduation. During the one year of employment following graduation, the employee (former student) shall not be placed as a primary investigator or protective services worker per Title IV-E regulations.

Eligible applicants may attend any participating degree program in the State of Arkansas. The Division and the University Partnership will determine yearly the number of stipends awarded. The Division, in conjunction with title IV-E university staff, will determine which students will receive stipends.

Students in the BSW and other participating bachelor's degree programs are awarded stipends during their senior year.

DCFS may approve stipends for second year MSW students provided that any DCFS educational leave positions are not filled and the number of MSW stipend students does not exceed the number of vacant educational leave positions.

The following information provides the procedures governing the Child Welfare Student Stipend Program.

PROCEDURE XI-C1: Process for Receiving a Stipend

Students interested in the Child Welfare Student Stipend Program are required to complete the CFS-4332: Child Welfare Student Stipend Application. Applications are reviewed and recommendations made by the title IV-E university staff and the DCFS Area Directors. Upon selection the university will submit a copy of the CFS-4332: Child Welfare Student Stipend Application and the original CFS-4330: Child Welfare Student Stipend Agreement to the DCFS Professional Development Unit for review. After review, the DCFS Professional Development Unit will forward the CFS-4330 to the DCFS Director for approval and signature.

The student is required to enter into a contract with the Division upon awarding of the stipend. The student must sign and adhere to the provisions of the CFS-4330: Child Welfare Student Stipend Agreement. If the student violates the terms of the contract, the Division will employ remedies to address the identified breach.

PROCEDURE XI-C2: Selection Criteria

The decision to award a stipend will be based on the following:

- A. Academic success. The student cannot be on probation or in jeopardy of not graduating.
- B. Interest in child welfare; e.g., volunteer work, attendance at workshops, special training, related work experiences, independent study projects.
- C. Completion, or plan to complete, one or more courses/seminars with an emphasis in child welfare.
- D. Willingness to work, following graduation, in any county based on the needs of the Division.
- E. Agreement by student to complete the number of hours required by the university for field placement, while based in an assigned DCFS county office under the joint supervision of a university field instructor and DCFS supervisor.
- F. The approval of MSW stipends will occur as outlined in Procedure XI-B6 "The Selection Process".

PROCEDURE XI-C3: Student Commitment to DCFS

- A. The student commits to fulfill field hours in a DCFS county office, as required by the participating university program.
- B. The student commits to accept employment with DCFS for a minimum of one year following graduation.

PROCEDURE XI-C4: DCFS Commitment to Student

The Division agrees to provide the student with the opportunity to complete the required field hours at a DCFS county office under the joint supervision of a university field instructor and DCFS supervisor.

PROCEDURE XI-C5: Employment with DCFS

- A. All stipend recipients must complete a "State of Arkansas Employment Application" and send it to the DCFS Professional Development Unit six weeks prior to the expected date of graduation.
- B. DCFS reserves the right to designate counties where staff are needed and require students to apply in those counties identified by DCFS.
- C. DCFS reserves the right to specify the minimum number of counties in which students must state on the "State of Arkansas Employment Application" that they will accept employment.
- D. On the State employment application, the student will list the job title as "Family Service Worker" and designate the minimum number of counties required by DCFS in which the student is willing to accept employment.
- E. Students must accept interviews, answer questions, and otherwise actively participate in the hiring process in an ethical manner. The university designee will coordinate with the DCFS Professional Development Unit to keep students abreast of employment opportunities with the Division and help them follow-through with their commitment to the Division.

- F. If the student is not offered a Family Service Worker position within 60 days following graduation, the student no longer is obligated to accept employment or repay the stipend.
- G. The student must repay any stipend monies received if a field placement is terminated or employment is denied due to the results of:
- 1) An Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry check,
 - 2) An Arkansas State Police Criminal Record check (and if required, an FBI Background Check),
 - 3) A drug/alcohol screen, or
 - 4) The provisions of the State Vehicle Safety Program are violated.
- H. If the student becomes employed by DCFS but chooses to leave prior to fulfilling the stipend commitment, the student must repay the stipend pro-rated according to the number of months worked.