



DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER CARE SPECIAL ENTITLEMENTS POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Family Services is committed to supporting foster children and their families based on need and in the best interest of the child. This policy outlines the additional entitlements that may be approved to meet the needs of a child or youth in the care.

2. PRINCIPLES

This Policy is based on the following principles:

- (a) The Department is committed to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit concepts of *Pijitsirniq* (serving and providing for family and/or community), *Aajiiqatigiingniq* (decision-making through discussion and consensus), and *Havaqatigiingniq* (working together for a common cause).
- (b) Foster care in Nunavut will support *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq* (respecting others, relationships, and caring for people) by facilitating relationships between children and foster families, and where possible, prioritizing familial relationships in foster care.
- (c) The Department will work in close cooperation with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, as described in Article 32 of the Nunavut Agreement, and in accordance with *Iqqanaijaqatigiit*.
- (d) Programs and services for foster children must be holistic and uphold cultural values and traditions, and language. The entitlements under this Policy are intended to support not only the basic needs of children in care, but maintain the cultural identities of children in care.
- (e) All roles and responsibilities associated with foster care entitlements are clearly defined, and the process is open and transparent to the public.
- (f) Foster care will operate in a way that is accountable, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of Nunavummiut.
- (g) All efforts must be made by the Department of Family Services to identify financial supports available for children in care with high and/or complex needs. This includes items that would be covered by Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) or Canada's Child First Initiative.

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3. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to:

- Children under any Court Order including a Supervision Order, Temporary Custody Order, or Permanent Custody Order;
- Youth (between 16-19) under a Support Services Agreement; and
- Young Adults (between 19-26) under an Extended Support Agreement.

4. DEFINITIONS

Court Order

Court Orders are utilized when a child is at significant risk (as defined in the *Child and Family Services Act*), accessed when there are persistent and ongoing child protection concerns. There are 3 types of Court Orders, including a Supervision Order, Temporary Custody Order, and Permanent Custody Order.

Child in Care

A child who is in the care or custody of the Director of Child and Family Services through Service Agreements (Voluntary Support Agreement, Support Services Agreement, Extended Support Agreement) or through Court Orders (Supervision Order, Temporary Custody Order, Permanent Custody Order).

Client

A resident of Nunavut who has entered into a Service Agreement with the Department of Family Services, and/or is involved with the Department through a Court Order. For the purposes of this Policy, reference to a client can mean a child, youth, young adult, or the approved foster parents/kinship/customary caregivers.

Community Social Service Worker (CSSW)

A Community Social Service Worker (CSSW) is responsible for overseeing the client's file and coordinating service provision.

Executive Director of Family Wellness

Member of the Executive Management Committee of the Department of Family Services. Immediate supervisor of the Director of Family Wellness. Designated under the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)* and accountable to the Minister and Deputy Minister.

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Territorial Director of Family Wellness

The Territorial Director is delegated authority to operationalize territorial services to children in care.

Foster Parents

Approved caregivers for children in the care of the Director of Child and Family Services.

Kinship/Customary Caregivers

An extended family home that's approved to care for a child or youth in care. The caregiver must have a family relationship or significant connection to the child – for example, grandparent, aunt or close family friend. Supports for kinship care are the same as the supports provided to a child and caregivers in foster care.

Minor repairs

Means repair performed for maintenance or replacement purposes on an existing structure. No building permit is required for work to be performed which is deemed minor repair.

Permanency Planning Review Committee (PPRC)

Provides support and direction to Family Wellness staff in placing children, youth and young adults in care and/or support service agreements. The Committee membership consists of the Executive Director for Family Wellness, the designated CSSW/Case Manager, the appropriate Territorial Specialist, and other appropriate Service provider as needed (Mental Health, School, RCMP, etc)

Regional Director of Family Wellness

A member of the Senior Management Team of the Department. Delegated regional authority under the *Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*.

5. AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Executive Council

The Executive Council shall approve program provisions and/or any exceptions to this Policy.

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6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Minister

- (a) The Minister of Family Services is accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy.

Deputy Minister

- (a) The Deputy Minister of Family services is accountable to the Minister for the administration of this Policy;

Executive Director Family Wellness

- (a) The Executive Director may approve exception to this Policy, that do not impact any financial rates unless otherwise approved by the Financial Management Board (FMB);
- (b) The Executive Director of Family Wellness is responsible for approving any expenditures over the maximum amounts cited in this policy.

Territorial Director Family Wellness

- (a) The Territorial Director of Family Wellness or designate is responsible for oversight and administrative compliance with the terms of this Policy.

Permanency Planning Review Committee (PPRC)

The PPRC is responsible for development and oversight of the plan of care for each child in care of the Department. The PPRC shall review and approve the levels of special rates provided for children placed in foster homes.

7. PROVISIONS

Eligibility

Eligibility for this Policy is restricted to:

- Approved foster parents and approved kinship/customary caregivers with children in their care;
- Children under a Voluntary Support Agreement with the Department of Family Services;
- Children under any Court Order including a Supervision Order, Temporary Custody Order, or Permanent Custody Order;

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- Youth (between 16-19) under a Support Services Agreement; and
- Young Adults (between 19-26) under an Extended Support Agreement.

(a) Special Allowance

Special Foster Care entitlements (Schedule A-1) may be provided in order to accommodate additional care needs in the following two areas:

- 1) Physical Care
- 2) Child Management

Special Foster Care entitlements are determined through consultations with the Case Manager and approved by the Permanency Planning Review Committee (PPRC). These rates, once applied, are reviewed annually or sooner as warranted by individual circumstances.

Items covered include:

- A placement clothing allowance may be provided for a child or youth to ensure they are adequately and appropriately clothed.
- A holiday allowance shall be provided to foster parents to purchase holiday gifts for a child or youth.
- A graduation allowance may be provided for a youth graduating from high school to cover graduation costs such as graduation tickets, clothing, graduation ring, yearbook, etc.
- 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.
- 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.
- Funding may be provided for necessary furniture or household items to accommodate a placement.
- 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.

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- 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.
- The costs associated with implementing a Cultural Connection Plan may be approved for an Indigenous child or youth where these costs are not already covered in the basic foster care rate.
- 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.

Exceptions: In exceptional circumstances and in emergency situations, additional funding may be approved where it is assessed, by the Executive Director of Family Wellness, as necessary based on the needs of the child/youth and/or foster family.

Appeals:

In the case of appeals, foster parents can fill put their concerns in writing to the Executive Director of Family Wellness. The Executive Director will provide the Deputy Minister with all relevant information based upon which the Deputy Minister will decide the Appeal outcome. A written response will be provided regarding the appeal within 30 days of its submission to the Executive Director.

General Conditions

- a) Foster parents are responsible for the management of monies issued on behalf of the child in their care, and for ensuring that the daily needs of the child are met.
- b) Foster parents cannot claim any expenses they have been reimbursed for under this Policy on their Income Tax Return submitted to Canada Revenue Agency.
- c) All furniture and fixtures are properties of the Government of Nunavut.
- d) All information or material supplied to or obtained by the recipient, as a result of the agreement with the government, must be treated confidentially.
- e) Prior to payment issuance, foster parents shall sign a Foster Parent Application Package, which contains their roles and responsibilities as foster parents for the best interest of the child.
- f) In cases of errors and overpayment, the foster parent will notify their CCSW immediately and will reimburse the Department within 30 days of notification.
- g) Community Social Service Workers are responsible for ensuring all payment back up documentation (ie, receipts and invoices) are collected and consolidated on a monthly basis.

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Financial Considerations

- (a) All relevant provisions contained in the *Financial Administration Act* and the Government of Nunavut's Financial Administration Manual shall apply to the financial administration of all funds issued by the Department of Family Services under this Policy.
- (b) All relevant provisions contained in the Foster Care Rates Policy and the Support Service Extended Service Agreement Policy shall apply to the financial administration of all funds issued by the Department of Family Services under this Policy.

8. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Financial resources required under this Policy are conditional on the approval of the Main Estimates by the Legislative Assembly and on the availability of funds in the appropriate annual budget.

9. PREROGATIVE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting the entitlements for foster care program of the Department of Family Services outside the provisions of this Policy.

10. SUNSET CLAUSE

This Policy shall be in effect from the date of the signature until March 31, 2025.

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A-1: Foster Care Special Entitlements

All clients in the care of the Department of Family Services are entitled to the services and material resources listed in the table below where they support the clients' needs being met in line with best practice and legislative expectations. Reasonable exceptions may be made on a case by case basis with approval from the Placement Planning Review Committee where required to maintain the best interests of the client.

- 1) Clothing Allowance: 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 \$750 to be provided to foster parents 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.
 - a. The social worker is responsible to work with the foster parents 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.
 - b. 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.
- 2) Holiday Allowance: A allowance (\$100 per child) shall be approved by a social worker and provided to the foster parents to purchase gifts for a child or youth placed in the home
- 3) High School Graduation Allowance: 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.
- 4) Counselling Allowance: 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 parents and foster parents to explore available public counselling services to meet the child or youth's counselling needs. If public counselling services have been explored but are either unavailable or have a

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waitlist that would prevent the child or youth from getting required services in a timely fashion, up to a maximum of \$500 per month may be approved for private counselling services.

- 5) **Tutoring Allowance:** 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.). To meet the child or youth's needs, a maximum of \$175 per week for tutoring may be approved. In exceptional circumstances where a child or youth requires more than the maximum amount of \$175 per week of tutoring, additional tutoring hours may be approved.
- 6) **Cultural Connection Plan Allowance:** The social worker shall assess if a cost associated with implementing the Cultural Connection Plan (e.g. family visiting, books, toys, clothing, cultural events/activities) is covered by the Basic Foster Care Rate. Costs associated with implementing the Cultural Connection Plan (e.g. activity, materials, toys, cultural clothing, community event, etc.) may be approved up to a maximum of \$500 per year.
- 7) **Furniture and Household Items Allowance:** 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. The cost of additional furniture/items that are required to accommodate the placement of a child or youth (e.g. foster parents agrees to take a sibling group but requires a bunk bed to accommodate the placement, foster parents agree to take an infant and requires a crib, etc.) may be approved. The items then belong to the child or youth, and if not required for future placements or a return home, the items belong to the department. The following table provides the maximum cost that a supervisor may approve for such items:

ITEM	MAXIMUM COST
Bed	\$1000
Bunk Bed	\$2000
Crib	\$850
Car Seat/Booster Seat	\$400
Stroller	\$500
Dresser	\$600
Washer/Dry Machines	\$5000

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- 8) Minor Repairs/Equipment/Renovations Allowance: 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) to accommodate a sibling group to be placed together and not be separated; or c) to enable a placement that may otherwise not be possible. When the social worker receives requests from foster parents 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 to a maximum of \$1000.
- 9) Damages Allowance: 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. 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 by the Executive Director to a maximum of \$1000.
- 10) Other Child or Youth Specific Costs Allowance: 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:

ITEM	MAXIMUM COST
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	\$250 /month
Diapers or disposable underwear for a child over age 4 years who has incontinence issues	\$200 /month
Medical examination	\$175
Suitcase	\$200
Professional School photos	\$100
Laptops or tablets	\$1200
Bicycles and Helmets	\$500

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Special items or equipment to meet an identified medical or special need, if these costs are not covered by another external source (e.g. Nunavut Health Benefits, NIHB, etc) may be approved up to a maximum of \$2500 per year. Items exceeding that amount may be approved on a case by case basis.

- 11) Social/Recreational Allowance: Contributions toward non-routine social/recreational costs for a child or youth in care may be covered:

- a) Specialized uniforms and costumes;
- b) tickets for social/recreational concerts/shows outside of the community;
- c) trips out of territory for social/recreational activities;
- d) family trips outside of the community, activities and outings;
- e) day or weekend trips outside of the community, summer camps, school related travel

To a maximum of \$200 per item listed above or \$1000 per year total.

- 12) Child Care Allowance: Child care is a regularly scheduled arrangement to provide care to a child under the age of 13 years, or in exceptional circumstances for a child 13-15 years of age that is unable to be left unattended due to a special need. The social worker shall assess the need for child care services on a case by case basis and funding may be approved for child care services for foster parents where:

- a) the foster parents require child care for employment or educational/employment training purposes; or
- b) a health practitioner has recommended the child attend a child care facility to meet an identified special need, and the recommendation is supported by the social worker and the Placement Planning Review Committee.

Where child care is approved to accommodate the employment or educational/employment training of foster parents, the social worker shall obtain the name, address and contact number for the employer or training institution of the foster parents.

Where full-time child care is approved, the social worker shall work with the foster parents to secure a placement for the child in a regulated child care centre or regulated family child care home that can best meet the needs of the child and the foster family, with consideration of the rates and any potential transportation costs that may apply.

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Where possible, siblings shall be cared for by the same child care provider. If the foster parents' own child(ren) is already being cared for by a non-regulated child care provider and the foster parents prefers to have all the children be cared for by the same provider, or if there is no space available in a regulated child care centre or regulated child care home, a non-regulated child care provider may be used. If the foster parents have not known the person for at least one year, they are required to obtain two references from non-relatives who have known the potential babysitter for at least one year to assist in their assessment of whether, based on the person's age, maturity and skills, the babysitter will meet the needs of the child and provide quality care for the duration that babysitting is required.

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