

Chapter 9: Services for Children in Care

Section:

9.5 Financial Information for Children in Care

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Subsection:

9.5.7 Maintenance Expenditures for Children in Care (Policy 94)

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PURPOSE

While children are in care, the Minister or agency acts as the “wise and conscientious parent” to ensure that their needs are met. Maintenance Expenditures for Children in Care identifies and sets financial rates for a range of items, services and activities required to meet children’s needs.

For other children, not in care but involved with child protection, there may still be circumstances under which the social worker, using their professional judgement, determines the need to expend on the child or family to best meet the child’s needs. For the majority of these circumstances, there is no policy to address expenditures for children not in care.

While planning for a child in care, many of the child’s individual needs are planned for in advance. However, there are occasions where, due to the child’s specific needs, these are not foreseen circumstances, within CYFS policy or they are addressed within policy however the expenses required exceed the established policy maximums for that support. When these expenditures exceed what is clearly defined in policy, or are not addressed in policy, the below process has been established to ensure the social worker’s ability to respond to the child’s needs.

SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Name of Legislation or Regulation	Location within source
<i>Children and Family Services Act</i>	
<i>Children and Family Services Regulations</i>	

POLICY

All children in care, regardless of placement, are eligible to receive funding that addresses their developmental and other needs. All decisions regarding purchases for children in care must be consistent with ongoing planning for the child and reviewed/supported during the case planning process involving the social worker, the child, as appropriate, and the child’s caregiver. When

expenditures exceed what is clearly defined in policy, the decision to exceed policy is made in consultation with the casework supervisor and, as applicable, with the child welfare specialist. If the amount exceeds policy and is also beyond the maximum threshold for the supervisor and the child welfare specialist, approval must be sought from the Director or through other applicable existing processes.

When a child requires approval for an expenditure not specified in policy, the social worker has the ability to approve a discretionary expenditure to respond to the presenting situation. If the expenditure exceeds the prescribed discretionary amount, approval must be sought from the Director, Child Protection and Children in Care as an exception to policy.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Children in care social workers must adhere to the specified expenditure amounts and approval process as listed in the chart and itemized expenditures below.

All items identified as automatic payments must be set up on the ICM child’s placement screen for all children placed in foster care, as detailed below. If a situation arises where a child’s social worker determines that the automatic payment should not be considered, this must be reviewed in consultation with their casework supervisor and the Child Welfare Specialist, with the reasons documented on the child’s file. If a foster parent requests to have the automatic payment disabled in lieu of a different payment process, this also requires a consult with the casework supervisor and the request and rationale is documented on the child’s file.

Expenditure Approval Process:

<p>Monthly foster parent expense claims</p> <p>It is intended that any expenditure approvals being made for children in foster care are made <i>with</i> the foster parents as important partners to the plan.</p> <p>Social workers must be cognizant of the fact that foster parents will be provided with \$200 automatically when a child is placed with them, when the child is initially brought into care, for discretionary spending.</p> <p>As the caretakers for the child in care, foster parents have an integral role in planning for day to day expenses, such as but not limited to recreation, clothing, etc.</p>	<p>Approved by Casework Supervisor</p> <p>Social workers facilitate autopayments within ICM. Other children in care expenses are reimbursed after the foster parent submits receipts. These are approved by casework supervisors, to streamline the reimbursement process, with financial clerks conducting quality control and sign off by supervisors.</p>
<p>All expenses with clearly established financial parameters within policy</p>	<p>Approved by the Social worker</p>
<p>Discretionary Spending up to \$500 per year, per case for items not outlined in policy.</p>	<p>Approved by the Social Worker</p> <p>The \$500 amount applies to children who are in</p>

<p><i>This does not apply to any recurring payments for the child nor for any payments that involve contract of services, such as board per diem.</i></p>	<p>the care of the Minister, youth services cases, post care and custody cases, OR \$500 per family for all other child protection cases.</p>
<p>Spending up to \$500 for items with established parameters in policy but exceeding policy limits.</p> <p><i>This does not include recurring payments for the child nor for any payments that involve contract of services (i.e. board, respite, babysitting) and does not apply to Discretionary Funding.</i></p>	<p>Approved by the Casework Supervisor</p>
<p>Spending between \$500 and \$1500 for items with established parameters in policy but exceeding policy limits</p> <p><i>This does not include recurring payments for the child nor for any payments that involve contract of services (i.e. board, respite, babysitting).</i></p>	<p>Approved by the Child Welfare Specialist</p>
<p>Exceptions to policy for spending exceeding \$1,500 for items exceeding maintenance expenditures or not within Policy. The social worker will be required to provide rational and ensure they have explored and exhausted other programs intended for the identified need.</p>	<p>Approved by the Director of Child Protection and Children in Care</p>

The following outlines approved expenditures for Children in Care:

1. Baby Needs

For infants 0-3 years inclusive, the following rates are provided monthly, in advance, as an **automatic payment** for baby needs:

Age	Monthly Rate
0-1	\$150.00
1-3	\$100.00

When expenditures exceed the amount provided by automatic payment, receipts for the entire month are required. Payment will be made for the difference between automatic payment amount and the receipts provided for the monthly expense, paid as a foster parent reimbursement.

2. Babysitting

- (a) Babysitting is child care that is short term and provided to allow foster parents time for recreational activities for themselves; care to children (foster children and birth children)

while a foster parent tends to the needs of children in care or their own children, such as medical/therapy appointments; school appointments; and other needs of a child where it is not possible for the foster parent to attend to these needs with other children present.

- (b) The rate for children 0 to 12 years of age is \$10.60 per hour for one child. An additional amount of \$4 per hour, per child, is provided for every subsequent child placed in the home. These rates are provided for a maximum of 4 children. Any request to exceed these amounts must be considered as an exception to policy and approved by the Director, Child Protection and Children in Care.
- (c) Based on prior approval by the social worker, casework supervisor and/or Child Welfare Specialist.

3. Board Per Diem

- (a) Covers food, lodging, hot water, laundry detergent, etc.
- (b) Daily Rates, paid monthly:
- (c) Any additional board requested must be processed in accordance with the applicable established process (i.e. assessed needs rate process or contracted care rate process). It should be noted there are established maximums related to special needs board rates. For maximums related to contracted levels of care, [See Section 11.1 – Contracted care, Subsection 11.1.10 Overview, Foster care policies](#)

Age	Per Diem
0-9	\$19.00
10+	\$27.50

4. Camps, Club Memberships and Recreation

The following quarterly rates are provided as **automatic payments** in December, March, June and September:

Age	Rate
0-4 years	\$90.00
5-18 years	\$150.00

- (a) These rates are intended to cover the cost of registration for camps, club membership fees, recreation activities and general sports equipment such as bicycles, etc. This amount also covers associated costs for camps and clubs (i.e. uniforms and equipment).
- (b) The total recreation amount available for a child in care is \$600.00 annually, regardless of age. When expenditures exceed the amount provided by automatic payment for 0-4 years, an additional \$240.00 is available to reach the maximum threshold for recreation of \$600.00. Receipts are required for this purpose.
- (c) Consideration to exceed the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

5. Child Care/Day Care

- (a) Day Care/Child Care is a long term, formal arrangement between the foster parent and a child care organization or provider, and is used when foster parents work or attend educational programs and require day care for the child. Day Care/Child Care could also include involvement by a child care organization where the child’s needs for stimulation/socialization or to enhance child development is identified in the child’s case plan or assessment of needs;
- (b) Agency pays full costs.
- (c) When day care/child care is provided in the foster parent’s home for the purposes described in 5(a), the agency pays the day care rate for this service and this includes child care provision for shift work.

6. Clothing

- (a) Careful consideration of the parents’ views regarding clothing should fully be discussed at the time of placement. Evaluate with the family that there may be a possibility that their child will return home with a higher-level expectation of dress than the parents can afford. Where a child is placed pursuant to a Temporary Care Agreement or a Special Needs Agreement and the initial contract is for less than four months, the clothing subsidy will be omitted. In special circumstances where there is a demonstrated seasonal or obvious need, an exception to the policy may be sought via the Director, Child Protection and Children in Care.
- (b) The following quarterly rates are provided as an **automatic payment** in January, April, July and October:

Age	Quarterly Rate
0-4	\$125.00
5-9	\$194.00
10+	\$272.00

- (c) Consideration to exceed the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning with the caregiver and in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

7. Damages

- (a) When a child in care damages property in a licensed child caring facility outstanding costs not covered by the insurance will be paid from the facility’s maintenance and repair budget. In the case of damage to a staff person’s personal property, outstanding costs not covered by a staff person’s personal insurance, may be submitted to the agency and any payments, with prior agency approval, will be issued from the appropriate agency budget depending on the child’s care status.

- (b) When a child in care damages property in a foster home, the foster parent submits their claims directly to Risk Management Services (see [Section 8.6.1 – Claims for Property Damage or Losses, Foster Care Policies](#)) at Internal Services, who apply insurance industry processes and standards.
- (c) When appropriate, the child should make restitution for the damage (i.e., from their spending money or doing chores).

8. Dental

- (a) Costs paid to a dentist for routine examinations, cleaning and preventative care including fillings not covered by provincial health care. Other dental services necessary for the child's health and well-being must be supported by documentation from the involved dentist and reviewed as part of the plan for the child's care. Prior financial approval is required, consistent with the established approval process.
- (b) Orthodontic services only apply to long-term placements, children in permanent care and custody or placed pursuant to a Section 18 care agreement.
- (c) Orthodontic services are based on prior approval by the social worker, casework supervisor and the Director, Child Protection and Children in Care.

9. Driver's Education

- (a) Requests to be reviewed at a case planning meeting with child in care, which must include discussion of the child in care's possible contribution.

10. Driver's License/Insurance

- (a) Cost paid for driver's license;
- (b) Insurance costs are the responsibility of the child. However, should the child in care have an opportunity to be insured on a reliable vehicle, such as their foster parent's car, consideration may be given to covering or assisting the child in covering this cost. This exceptional expense must be submitted for approval by the Director, Child Protection and Children in Care.

11. Emergency Needs When Entering Care

- (a) When a child initially enters care, the social worker will provide the foster parent with \$200 per child to meet emergency needs arising as a result of entering care, i.e. clothing, toothbrushes, toys, etc.
- (b) Consideration to exceed the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

12. Equipment, Furniture & Replacement of Bedding

Equipment (including furniture such as cribs, high chairs, strollers, car seats, beds, dressers, etc.) are expected to be provided by the foster parent, but may be covered by the agency with prior approval, specifying cost and supporting rationale. As necessary household and childcare items can become unsafe or worn out over time, these types of requests may be considered to ensure the child's needs are met (e.g. child has outgrown the car seat, its expiry date is past, or is no longer considered safe per Health Canada). If the foster parent requires equipment or furniture to accept placement of a child of a different age/stage than they normally foster, items may be purchased as required. Should foster parents(s) not have access to a safety approved car seat, the agency will provide one. Decisions to cover the costs of these items should be communicated to the assigned foster care social worker to ensure they are aware of supports provided. Purchases that are specific to a child's needs will remain with the child if they move to a new placement. Replacement of bedding may be provided based on the special needs of the child.

13. Glasses/Contacts

- (a) Eye examinations (10+ years of age);
- (b) Up to a maximum of \$300 every other year
- (c) Consideration to exceed the above stated amount must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

14. Hair Care

- (a) A quarterly rate of \$37.50 is provided as an **automatic payment** in January, April, July and October.
- (b) Consideration to exceed the above stated amount must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart. The identification of why and for what purpose additional resources are required must be reviewed as part of a case planning meeting and reflected in the *Child's Plan of Care*.

15. Independent Living Costs

The cost of furniture to establish a child in an independent living situation requires prior approval. Consideration must be given to obtaining these furnishing in a cost-effective manner, in compliance with independent living guidelines as with Child Welfare Specialist. Please see the [Independent Living Framework](#).

Consideration to exceed the amounts identified within the Independent Living Framework must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

16. Medical Equipment

The cost of equipment not covered by MSI (i.e., wheelchair, prosthesis, etc.) reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

17. Non-prescription Items

- (a) Includes cold remedies, basic acne remedies, skin creams, pain/fever medication, band-aids, tooth brushes, sanitary products, deodorant, razors, shaving cream, etc.
- (b) A rate of \$30/month is provided as an **automatic payment**. Requests to exceed this limit must be reviewed and supported via a case planning meeting, consistent with the child's plan of care.
- (c) Consideration to exceed the above stated amount must be reviewed and documented as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart,

18. Post-Secondary Education

Please see [Section 9.2.3 – Post-Secondary Education - Educational Bursary Program, Child Protection and Children in Care Policies](#) and [Section 9.2.5 – Extension to the Educational Bursary Program, Child Protection and Children in Care Policies](#).

19. Prescriptions

- (a) Prescriptions for children in care who are placed outside of their parents' home will be covered by Pharmacare. Pharmacare provides prescription drug coverage for those drugs listed in the Nova Scotia Formulary. Pharmacare generally covers generic drugs. If there is a need for a drug that is not listed, the physician may be able to obtain approval by contacting Pharmacare. Alternate medication that is covered by Pharmacare should be explored with the child's physician. If there is no acceptable alternative, a request for exception to policy must be submitted to the Director, Child Protection and Children in Care, or their designate. Consideration will include whether the drug is classified as narcotic, illegal, experimental or an unproven treatment, and/or is required to relieve a child's pain or infection and whether it is needed urgently.
- (b) In extraordinary circumstances, Pharmacare benefits may be extended to children in care whose placement is with a parent or other party, i.e. when a child is placed with a parent or third party under Section 48(8) (c) and (d). This is intended to ensure that all children in care receive necessary medication. However, this is intended only in circumstances when planning is in place for the child to return to the care of their parent and consultation with the child welfare specialist is required. This consultation must be documented on the child's file.

20. Respite and Temporary Short-Term Placement

- (a) Provides relief to foster parents;
- (b) Respite is defined as overnight care for a maximum of four consecutive nights;

- (c) Providers can be other approved foster parents, foster parent respite exclusive, or conditionally approved respite foster parents (see [Section 8.3.2 – Payment for Alternate Care, Foster Care Policies](#));
- (d) Foster parents receiving temporary short-term placement services will receive the basic board per diem, along with any assessed special needs rates, up to 14 days per year. In extraordinary circumstances (i.e. family illness) the foster care social worker may request approval for a further extension, to a maximum of 30 days for the continuation of the children in care per diem, only. This must be submitted as an exception to policy request for approval by the Director, Child Protection and Children in Care.
- (e) A rate of \$56 per night is provided per child for each 24-hour period. Additional hours to be paid at \$14 for any quarter day or part thereof;
- (f) For temporary short-term placement, 4-14 nights, the first four nights are paid at the respite rate, and the remainder are paid at the per diem plus any assessed special needs.
- (g) Any request to exceed these amounts must be considered as an exception to policy and approved by the Director, Child Protection and Children in Care.

21. School Activities & Items

- (a) The cost of approved school related items such as class and school trips, school pictures, additional supplies, special equipment, etc.;
- (b) A rate of \$100 is provided semi-annually as an **automatic payment** in January and September;
- (c) Consideration to exceed the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

22. School Supplies

- (a) For those items, such as pens, pencils, crayons, paper, math sets, calculators and other items required for the classroom;
- (b) The following annual rates are provided as an **automatic payment** in August:

Grade	Annually
P-6	\$120.00
7+	\$150.00

- (c) Consideration to exceed the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

23. Special Occasion Costs

- (a) The following special occasions costs are provided as an **automatic payment**:

Special Occasion	Rate	Timing
Birthday	\$125.00	Child's birthday
Grading	\$50.00	June
Religious	\$20.00	March

(b) The following Christmas funding is provided annually as an **automatic payment** in November:

Age	Amount	Comments
0-5	\$150.00	Paid to foster parent or caregiver
6-10	\$195.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$175 to foster parent or caregiver to purchase child's gifts • \$20 for child to purchase gifts
11+	\$240.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$200 to foster parent or caregiver to purchase child's gifts • \$40 for child to purchase gifts

(c) Graduation Costs

(i) Graduation photos, school ring, prom outfit, etc.

(ii) Based on prior approval by the social worker, casework supervisor and/or Service Delivery Manager upon review of the established financial approval threshold;

(iii) Up to maximum. (Senior - \$400, Junior - \$200);

(iv) Consideration to exceed this limit must be reviewed at a case planning meeting;

(v) Clothing is cost shared from clothing allowance with certainty of a successful school completion.

(d) Consideration to exceed any of the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

(e) Cost paid for cultural events reviewed and documented as part of with the child's plan of care.

24. Spending allowance for children

(a) The following monthly rates are provided as an **automatic payment**:

Age	Monthly	Paid to
0-5	\$10.00	Foster parent or caregiver
6-11	\$15.00	Foster parent or caregiver
12-15	\$25.00	Child
16+	\$40.00	Child

(b) Consideration to exceed the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

25. Telephone

- (a) May be used to maintain contact with birth family and significant others determined by child's worker and caregiver;
- (b) A rate of \$30 per month is provided as an **automatic payment**;
- (c) Based on prior approval by the social worker and casework supervisor upon review of the maintenance budget;
- (d) Consideration to exceed the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

26. Transportation

- (a) A monthly **automatic payment** of \$50 is provided for mileage. When expenditures exceed the amount provided by automatic payment, mileage details for the entire month are required. Payment will be made for the difference between the automatic payment amount and the mileage information provided for the monthly expense, paid as a reimbursement.
- (b) Transportation will be reimbursed for any event or activity related to the *Child's Plan of Care* or the following:
 - (i) Child's medical appointments;
 - (ii) Child's counselling appointments;
 - (iii) School-related meetings/activities;
 - (iv) Legal: attending court hearings with the child, attending legal counsel or guardian ad litem appointments. If called to testify in court; attending child protection hearings if required;
 - (v) Access visits;
 - (vi) Case conferences;
 - (vii) Transportation to and from child's employment/volunteering;
 - (viii) Transportation to cultural and religious events where the child participates where this is not an event the care giver would normally participate;
 - (ix) Travel for informal recreation that is outside what would be considered regular family activities or for activities for the child in care that the foster parent wouldn't otherwise participate in; e.g. foster parent with no birth children at home taking a child in care to the playground;
 - (x) Transporting children to school must be part of the child's plan with rationale for why there is no other option and requires prior approval.
- (c) At the current provincial government rate, with no drop-in rate at 16,000 km;
- (d) When children are required to travel long distances with their foster parents to attend medical appointments, therapeutic appointments or access events, meals for both foster parents and children in care will be reimbursed at the approved government rate.

27. Vacation

- (a) Based on prior approval by the social worker and casework supervisor upon review of the maintenance budget;
- (b) A rate of \$300 is provided as an **automatic payment** in June;
- (c) Consideration to exceed the above stated amounts must be reviewed as part of case planning in accordance with the expenditure approval process chart.

EFT Payments – Potential Privacy Breaches

When a care provider indicates that they did not receive their expected payment information by email, and the email is found to be incorrectly noted on ICM, a potential privacy breach must be reported. To report a potential privacy breach, an email is sent to CS_Privacy@novascotia.ca. This email must include the name of care provider, both incorrect and correct email address, as well as payment information from the ICM Payment History page.

APPENDICES / OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Name	Location	Document Type
Independent Living Framework	Hyperlink	Reference