

Introduction

This section contains provincial policies and standards with respect to the placement of children into foster homes and, when applicable, family residences (including agency staff) used as a [place of safety](#).

[Legislation](#)
[Policy](#)
[Standards](#)

Legislation

[Subsection 2\(1\)](#) of *The Child and Family Services Act* lists relevant matters that must be considered in determining the *best interests* of a child. A child may come into the care of a child and family services agency in one of four ways under the Act:

- voluntary placement under [section 14](#)
- voluntary surrender of guardianship under [section 16](#)
- apprehension under [section 21](#)
- order of guardianship under [section 38](#)

The [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#) contains provisions relating to the placement of children in a foster home as follows:

Section	Placing Children into Foster Care
6.1	Written consent of licensing agency required to place a child in a foster home
7	Total number of foster children allowed. Sibling placements. Total number of dependent residents (children and adults) allowed. Limits re children under two and five years of age.
8	Use of mixed facilities – children and adults
9	Licensing agency approval to use a foster home for day care, school or day treatment programs
21	Complaints and grievances – Licensing agency to have written grievance policy for foster children
22	Incidents defined and requirements for reporting and reviewing listed

Policy

[Resource Use and Sharing](#)
[Number and Ages of Children](#)

Volume 1: Agency Standards
Chapter 5: Foster Homes
Section 3: Foster Home Placements

1.5.3

Approved: 2008/07/02
Last Revised: 2008/09/08

[Foster Care Child Maintenance](#)
[Basic Maintenance](#)
[Special Rate/Needs and Exceptional Circumstances Funding](#)
[Planned and Unplanned Absences](#)

Resource Use and Sharing

Agencies and their mandating authorities are encouraged to work together in the development and use of foster homes. This collaboration is mandatory with respect to the designation of an agency to provide joint intake and emergency services under [section 21](#) of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*.

Sharing of foster home resources licensed by designated intake agencies is essential. A child may remain in the same home for a period of time following a case [transfer](#) to the agency that will provide ongoing services.

Numbers and Ages of Children

Section 7 of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#) limits the number of children that can be placed in a foster home and the total number of dependent residents allowed. Licensing agencies are required to obtain prior approval in writing from their mandating authorities before allowing exceptions to the number and ages of children under subsections 7(4) and (5) of the regulation.

Agencies are expected to place siblings together when possible unless it is clearly not in the best interests of a child. Factors that may make it inadvisable to place siblings together include:

- safety issues such as unresolved incest or sibling violence or emotional abuse
- serious medical problems
- moving children from placements where they have formed attachments
- a child requests a separate placement or does not recognize the sibling link
- significant age differences

Foster Care Child Maintenance

Child maintenance refers to funding provided for the care and supervision of [children in care](#). It does not apply to children who remain in their own homes through an order of supervision under [clause 38\(1\)\(a\)](#) or for whom an order of private guardianship is obtained under [section 77](#) of *The Child and Family Services Act*.

Volume 1: Agency Standards
Chapter 5: Foster Homes
Section 3: Foster Home Placements

1.5.3

Approved: 2008/07/02
Last Revised: 2008/09/08

This section provides an overview of child maintenance funding for children in foster care. Child maintenance policies and rates are covered in detail in Section 1.4.4, [Child Maintenance](#).

Foster care child maintenance consists of [basic maintenance](#) and, when required, [special/rate needs and exceptional circumstances](#) funding.

Payments made to foster parents are normally not taxable and are seen by [Canada Revenue Agency](#) (CRA) as personal expenses unless the person is in the business of providing this service.

Basic Maintenance

Basic maintenance is intended to compensate foster and place-of-safety parents for the cost of providing care for a child in care. The Foster Parent Chart of Accounts for basic maintenance consists of a *basic amount* paid to a care provider and an *agency allowance* to be used for children in care. The Child Protection Branch notifies all relevant parties by letter whenever there is a change or increase in basic maintenance.

The *basic amount* depends on the age of the child and the location of the home. Foster parents are entitled to the full basic amount each month. Agencies are not allowed to withhold any portion of it. For example, the allowance for replacement clothing is to be issued monthly rather than quarterly or semi-annually.

The *agency allowance* may be paid to foster parents or administered by the agency. The agency allowance is to be used for costs for children in care related to activities such as sports and music, education costs including school supplies, special occasions such as birthdays and holidays, and other special costs.

Foster parents are paid basic maintenance for the day a child is placed. They are not paid for the day a child is discharged or removed from the home unless a child is placed and removed from a home on the same day. Agencies are responsible for identifying situations where a foster parent receives a duplicate payment or is overpaid and for recovering these funds.

Special Rate/Needs and Exceptional Circumstances Funding

Funding Allocations – For children who are a provincial financial responsibility, the province allocates funds for additional maintenance for children in care through *Special Rates/Needs* and *Exceptional Circumstances* funding. These allocations are described in detail in Section 1.4.4, [Child Maintenance](#).

Volume 1: Agency Standards
Chapter 5: Foster Homes
Section 3: Foster Home Placements

1.5.3

Approved: 2008/07/02
Last Revised: 2008/09/08

Agency Approval Processes – Agencies are required to have internal processes for reviewing and approving special rate/needs funding requests. These processes provide for a consistent and rational approach to decision making. Agencies are encouraged to establish panels or committees consisting of a supervisor, a resource coordinator, an agency financial person, and designated front-line staff.

Placing Agencies – Placing agencies are responsible for assessing whether a child requires additional funding over basic maintenance in accordance with [Standard 10](#) in this section. In this regard, placing agencies are also encouraged to consider funding agreements and contracts as well case planning factors such as home visits and parental contact.

Managing Agencies – When placing a child in a home managed by another agency, a placing agency should consult with the [managing agency](#) in deciding whether special needs funding is required and, if so, the rates and items to be paid. Managing agencies are responsible for coordinating services provided to the child and foster home including the use of alternative care providers for [respite](#).

Care and Expenditure Reviews – Care plans should be reviewed at least every six months to ensure they have been implemented and to make necessary changes based on an updated [assessment](#) of the child. Special rate funding must be reviewed at least once a year.

Planned and Unplanned Absences

Absences may be planned or unplanned. Examples of planned absences are summer camp and home visits. Unplanned absences include missing children. Policies and standards pertaining to absences are covered in detail in Section 1.4.5, [Incidents and Absences](#).

Placement Planning – Placement planning for a child in care must include planning for planned and unplanned absences. Plans are discussed and agreed to in advance by the child's worker and foster parent. For unplanned absences, the worker and foster parent discuss and agree as to what action is to be taken in the event a child goes missing. The plan identifies who is responsible for notifying the family or significant others of a child's absence and return.

Reporting a Missing Child – Foster parents are required to immediately report a child as missing to the police and the placing or managing agency when a missing child is believed to be at risk or in danger due to such factors as the child's age, medical condition, psychological state, history or behavioural patterns, and to other factors such as extreme weather.

Volume 1: Agency Standards
Chapter 5: Foster Homes
Section 3: Foster Home Placements

1.5.3

Approved: 2008/07/02
Last Revised: 2008/09/08

Reporting Return of a Missing Child – When a missing child is found or returned, the foster parent, placing agency and, when applicable, managing agency immediately notify the others as the case may be. Also, the placing agency or, when applicable, the managing agency ensures that the police and appropriate others are informed.

Basic Maintenance during Absences – A placing agency may pay basic maintenance to a foster home for planned or unplanned absences up to 14 days providing the child is expected to return to the home. When a child is visiting his or her family as part of a discharge plan, the agency may continue to pay basic maintenance to the foster home for up to one month. A decision to continue to pay maintenance beyond 14 days should be made in advance by the placing agency. The foster parent should be advised of this decision and any changes in payment.

Fee for Service and Absences – When a fee for service is part of the payment, a decision must be made whether or not it is continued. As a general rule, special rate funding is discontinued during a planned or unplanned absence unless the foster parent is expected to continue providing services such as visiting the child in hospital, searching for a missing child, and meeting with workers or parents.

Preparing Foster Parents – It is important that provincial and agency absence policies be discussed with and clearly explained to foster parents as part of their [orientation](#) and when a child is placed in the home.

Standards

1. **Foster Home Selection** – Selecting a foster home involves the following steps:
 - a preliminary assessment of the needs of the child or, if available, a review of a completed [child assessment](#),
 - identifying potential foster homes based on the needs of the child and the [placement priorities](#) in Section 1.1.1, Intake,
 - selecting a foster home with the assistance and, if required by agency policy, approval of an agency foster home coordinator or supervisor,
 - providing the prospective foster parent with information about the child (see Standard 2 below),
 - obtaining agreement of the foster parent to place the child.

Volume 1: Agency Standards
Chapter 5: Foster Homes
Section 3: Foster Home Placements

1.5.3

Approved: 2008/07/02
Last Revised: 2008/09/08

2. **Information on Child Shared with Prospective Foster Parent** – Except for emergency placements, a placing agency ensures that a prospective foster parent is provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision about accepting a child. At a minimum, this information includes:

- the child's name, age and legal status
- the child's culturally appropriate authority and authority of service
- why the child is being moved or taken into care
- previous placement experiences of the child
- expected length of stay
- family and extended family member involvement
- medical problems and medication required
- school grade and educational needs
- the child's social and recreational needs
- the child's strengths and interests
- the child's social adaptation and coping skills
- behavioural management issues if any
- any indicators that a child may pose a risk to self or others

When a child is placed in a foster home on an emergency basis, detailed information about the child is given to the foster parent at the time of or as soon as it is available following the placement.

3. **Foster Home Pre-Placement Process** – Except in the case of an emergency requiring the [immediate placement](#) of a child, the worker responsible for placing a child in a foster home:

- when possible, arranges pre-placement visits to the home including an overnight, depending on the age and needs of the child,
- unless prior approval is given to arrange for an alternate worker, accompanies the child for all pre-placement visits and admissions to the home,
- when circumstances permit and it is in the child's [best interests](#), arranges for the child's parent, guardian or previous caregiver to accompany the child on at least one pre-placement visit, and
- records information on the pre-placement visit process on the child's file including dates, who accompanied the child, and the child's responses

4. **Making Foster Home Placements** – When placing a child or children in a foster home, the placing worker:

Volume 1: Agency Standards
Chapter 5: Foster Homes
Section 3: Foster Home Placements

1.5.3

Approved: 2008/07/02
Last Revised: 2008/09/08

-
- arranges for each child's personal belongings to be brought to the home in an appropriate carrying bag (for example, a cloth or gym bag),
 - arranges for a follow-up visit to the home with the foster parent based on the needs of each child and consistent with frequency of contact requirements (see [Standard 3](#) in Section 1.1.4, Service Provision, and
 - completes a provincial [child care instruction sheet](#) for each child placed in the foster home

5. Managing Foster Home Placements – Responsibilities for the management of a foster home placement include but are not limited to:

- initial and ongoing [assessment](#) of the child's progress in the foster home
- ongoing [planning](#) for the care of the child in collaboration with the foster parent and other members of the care team
- ongoing [contact](#) with the foster parent and the child
- placement [monitoring and review](#)
- discharge planning including, when applicable, management of reunification plans requiring ongoing involvement and contact with the child's family

These responsibilities may be shared between a placing agency and a managing agency.

6. Sharing of Foster Home Resources – When a placing agency is not the agency that licensed a foster home, the placing agency:

- obtains the written consent of the licensing agency pursuant to section 6.1 of the [Foster Homes Licensing Regulation](#),
- completes the prescribed [Sharing Foster Home Information](#) form and forward a copy to the licensing agency and, when applicable, the managing agency, and
- provides additional information to the licensing agency that it has requested.

The written consent may be in the form of a contract with the licensing agency when the placing agency is a designated intake agency or the foster home is managed as part of a foster home program operated by a managing agency.

Volume 1: Agency Standards
Chapter 5: Foster Homes
Section 3: Foster Home Placements

1.5.3

Approved: 2008/07/02
Last Revised: 2008/09/08

-
7. **Information on Foster Children in Foster Care Management Records** – Information and documentation in a [foster care management](#) record concerning a child placed in the home is limited to the following:
- name, age, gender, date of birth, legal status, identification number and culturally appropriate authority for each child placed in the home
 - kinship relationships when applicable with other children in the home and with the foster parent
 - basic maintenance and special rate/need letters or authorizations
 - the placing agency and, when applicable, the managing agency
 - information and dates relating to the placement, [absences](#) discharge or [removal](#) of a child
 - comments regarding how foster parents are meeting the needs of each child and dealing with challenging behaviours
 - information and dates relating to a foster parent appeal regarding the [removal](#) of a child
8. **Current Information on Foster Care Management Record** – Information and documentation required under Standard 7 above is provided to the licensing agency within five working days from the date a child is placed, there is change in circumstances regarding the child, or the foster parent appeals the removal of a child. The licensing agency updates the foster care management record within five working days of receiving the information or documentation.
9. **Informing Foster Parents of Payments** – The placing agency ensures that a foster parent is informed in writing of foster care payments they will receive including:
- the amount and effective date of payments
 - an explanation or breakdown of the daily rate (per diem) for basic maintenance and, when applicable, for [special rate/needs funding](#)
 - confirmation of one-time only items approved through special rate/needs funding
 - increases or decreases in the monthly payment due to age changes, length of the month, needs of a child and [absences](#)

Volume 1: Agency Standards
Chapter 5: Foster Homes
Section 3: Foster Home Placements

1.5.3

Approved: 2008/07/02
Last Revised: 2008/09/08

-
- 10. Assessing Special Rate/Needs Funding** – Except for emergency foster homes retained by an agency designated to provide joint intake and emergency services and flat rate homes operated by a [managing agency](#), the placing agency determines the need for [special rate/needs funding](#). When the foster home is licensed by another agency, the placing agency consults with the licensing agency in determining the amount of special rate/needs funding based on the following considerations:
- the needs of the foster child (see [child assessment](#) in Section 1.1.2, Assessment)
 - special rate/needs funding already in place for other foster children in the home
 - the skills and experience of the foster parent
- 11. Absences and Missing Children** – An agency follows provincial policies and procedures stated in this section of the manual for [planned and unplanned absences](#).