



CDSS

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

December 22, 2015

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-94-15

TO: ALL COUNTY CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

SUBJECT: CHILD CARE FUNDING FOR FOSTER AND RELATIVE
CAREGIVER RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND SUPPORT

REFERENCE: [ASSEMBLY BILL \(AB\) 403 \(CHAPTER 773, STATUTES OF 2015\);](#)
[SENATE BILL \(SB\) 97 \(CHAPTER 11, STATUTES OF 2015\);](#)
EDUCATION CODE (EDC) SECTIONS [8208](#) AND [8263](#); [ALL COUNTY LETTER \(ACL\) 15-76](#)

This All County Information Notice (ACIN) provides counties with information and guidance regarding child care funding for foster and relative caregiver Recruitment, Retention, and Support (FPRRS) provided by SB 97, the Budget Act of 2015. The SB 97 appropriated \$14.5 million dollars to be made available to county child welfare departments for foster and relative caregiver recruitment, retention and support activities. The allowable uses for this funding explicitly included “child care for licensed foster parents, approved resource families, and relative caregivers.” The ACL 15-76 listed all of the allowable uses of the funding, including child care, and directed county child welfare departments to submit to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) plans outlining the activities which they proposed to implement utilizing FPRRS funding.

A majority of counties have submitted plans to the department, and a significant number have proposed to use FPRRS funds to provide subsidized child care to caregivers. However, CDSS determined that proposals for child care activities would not be initially approved, but rather would be deferred for further consideration. This decision was motivated by two factors:

- the need to ensure that, given the limited amount of funds available, as many core FPRRS activities as possible were accommodated, especially relating to congregate care transitions; and

- the need to develop a more precise interpretation of the appropriate parameters of child care within the FPRRS context, while ensuring that approval for other proposed activities was not delayed.

The decision to defer consideration of child care proposals does not extend to proposals to provide child care in relation to caregiver attendance at required training sessions or other caregiver support events. Nor does it extend to proposals to provide respite care. To the extent allowed by the finite nature of available funding, CDSS has been providing preliminary allocation letters in response to the submitted county plans.

Following discussions with the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), CDSS has formulated the following general interpretations concerning the appropriate scope of child care as it relates to the specific FPRRS funding made available by SB 97.

The CDSS recognizes and acknowledges that in today's world, child care can often be an integral component of childrearing, and therefore its availability can be a determining factor in the ability of a prospective caregiver to accept a foster care placement. However, it must also be recognized that the specific FPRRS funding contained in SB 97 was provided primarily to assist counties in implementing the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) effort enacted by AB 403, specifically the need to transition current group home residents to home-based settings, and secondarily to improve overall recruitment efforts in light of the temporary surge in foster home demand resulting from CCR implementation. Accordingly, CDSS has determined that the provision of child care made possible by this funding should be prioritized, as needed¹, towards:

- eligible children transitioning from group home care to home-based placements;
and
- eligible children entering foster care.

Current FPRRS funding must be expended during the 2015-16 fiscal year. Therefore, as with other aspects of their county plan, counties should include only transitions and entries through June 30, 2016 when calculating the amount of child care funds to request.

The CDSS is aware that counties' efforts to make child care available to foster caregivers on an ongoing basis have been complicated by a number of factors, including lack of available supply, limited funding, and differing interpretations of the

¹ Child care is considered necessary so that the foster caregivers may work out-of- the- home and/or attend school.

“at-risk”² prioritization for subsidized child care currently provided for in statute³ relating to Department of Education. The CDSS is committed to efforts to reduce these obstacles where feasible, and will work with the California Department of Education, CWDA and other stakeholders to ensure that caregivers who need child care receive priority for subsidies; including, if necessary, developing and pursuing a statutory remedy. In light of this, to the extent that FPRRS funds remain after other core activities and CCR-related child care needs are addressed, CDSS will accommodate county proposals - on an ongoing basis - to offer child care for children who had entered foster care prior to these funds becoming available.

In order to maximize limited supply and funding, counties wishing to provide ongoing child care are strongly encouraged to do so only on a case-by-case basis, when the availability of child care has been identified as a determining factor in the viability, or continuation of an otherwise stable, placement.

The CDSS, CWDA, and other stakeholders are committed to pursuing ongoing efforts to address identified obstacles to expanding the availability of child care to foster caregivers. However, the outcome of these efforts cannot be guaranteed. Counties contemplating an expansion of child care subsidies are therefore advised to give due consideration to potential fiscal uncertainties which may arise in the future.

Counties which have already submitted child care proposals will be contacted individually by CDSS to discuss in detail the extent to which those proposals address either CCR-specific or more general child care needs, and to determine each county’s intentions moving forward regarding child care.

For questions concerning the information in this letter, please contact the Foster Care Support Services Bureau at (916) 651-7465 or via email at kinship.care@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

CAROLE MINCHEW, Chief
Child and Youth Permanency Branch
Children and Family Services Division

² Education Code (EDC) section 8208 (k) defines “at risk” as: “*Children at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation*” means children who are so identified in a written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency, or emergency shelter.

³ EDC section 8263 prioritizes “at risk” children as defined above to receive a child care subsidy.