POLICY

Title: Child Related Costs – Outfitting
Policy No.: CPD600-5

Policy Statement:
The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services may provide financial support to children and young people, subject to statutory intervention, in accordance with an approved case plan. In addition, financial support will be in accordance with the following criteria:

- Carers are entitled to the establishment and/or start-up/outfitting allowance when they provide direct care for a child or young person placed in out-of-home care, if they meet the eligibility detailed below.
- Child Related Cost (CRC) reimbursement is approved for costs that are specific to the child or young person's individual needs over and above the financial support provided in the fortnightly caring allowance and the high support needs allowance if this is also provided. However, all other avenues of financial support must be explored first, for example, other government allowances and benefits.
- Decisions regarding access to CRC must be in accordance with the Financial Accountability Act 2009 and all goods and services purchased must be considered reasonable by the relevant financial delegate.
- All CRC expenditure is in accordance with the appropriate financial delegations and standards.
- All transactions are to be substantiated (i.e. receipts) and all reimbursement documentation is to be maintained to ensure an adequate audit trail.
- All items purchased under this category belong to the child or young person.

Principles:

- The safety, wellbeing and best interests, of the child or young person are paramount.
- Carers have the right to receive support that will contribute towards ensuring a safe and caring environment in which the needs of children and young people are met.
- The child or young person has a right to be placed in a care environment that best meets their needs.

Objectives:
To inform child safety officers (CSOs), senior team leaders and Child Safety Service Centre (CSSC) managers of the eligibility criteria for use of the child related costs accounts detailed in this policy to support decision making and case planning.

Scope:
To be eligible for payments under this policy, a child or young person must be placed in out-of-home care and subject to:

- An assessment or child protection care agreement
- A temporary Custody Order
• an adoption care agreement or adoption consent or dispensation of consent
• an assessment or child protection order granting custody or guardianship to the Chief Executive unless otherwise noted.

The term “carer” within this document is inclusive of foster carers, kinship carers and provisionally approved carers.

Roles and Responsibilities:
The child safety officer (CSO) for the child is responsible for responding to requests for support by a child or young person or their carer.

As part of the case planning process, the pre-approval of the financial delegate is required for any child related cost reimbursement or expenditure to proceed. Only these delegated officers, or above, where specified, can authorise the provision of child related costs for children and young people. This is obtained by submitting a Child Related Costs Approval Form (CRC) to the CSSC manager or the relevant financial delegate who can approve the child related costs.

The processing of approved child related costs expenditure or reimbursement is made by submitting the approved CRC form with required payment documentation (receipts, invoice, etc), to a CSSC administration officer who will process the payment or reimbursement according to the Financial Management Practice Manual (FMPM). Once processed the CRC is placed on the client file.

Wherever practical, reimbursement of CRC expenses should be processed when the accumulated total of the receipts is $50 in value or higher.

Carers must be advised by their CSO that receipts for CRC reimbursement should be submitted during the current financial year and therefore be less than 12 months old.

For young people on dual orders (both child protection and youth justice), please refer to the relevant procedures in the Child Safety Practice Manual Chapter 5, What if 10. What if a child is also subject to youth justice intervention?

Cost items
The following categories will be covered in this policy:

• Carer Allowance – Establishment Allowance
• Carer Allowance – Start-Up/Outfitting Allowance
• Client Support – Additional Outfitting.

1. Carer Allowance – Establishment Allowance

The establishment allowance is provided the first time a child or young person is:

• subject to a Child Protection Order granting custody or guardianship to the Chief Executive under the Child Protection Act 1999
• entering guardianship under the Adoption Act 2009.

The establishment allowance is a one-off payment made to a carer for a child or young person when they come into care for the first time. However, this payment can also be used where a child or young person returns into the care of the Chief Executive after an unsuccessful reunification and where the original order has expired.
The payment is to be used for items that will assist the carer establish the long-term placement. It is envisaged that the establishment allowance will be provided as soon the long-term placement is deemed suitable and stable. As a guide the time frame for a long-term placement is one month or more (for short-term placements/interim orders, ie. less than one month, please refer to the Additional Outfitting category below).

A child or young person subject to a Temporary Assessment Order (TAO), Court Assessment Order (CAO) or Temporary Custody Order (TCO) is not eligible for this payment (please refer to the Additional Outfitting below). If however, the child on the TAO, CAO or TCO is subsequently placed on an order, the establishment allowance is to be provided as soon as practicable once a long-term placement is arranged.

This allowance is not conditional on a case plan and receipts are not required, but it should be noted in the case plan that the payment has been made.

If a sibling group or multiple children or young people are simultaneously placed with the same carer for the first time, and all are subject to the custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive, each child or young person is eligible for this payment.

This payment is processed through Carepay by completing the Establishment payment grid in the details screen of the child profile in Carepay.

As a general rule items purchased for the child or young person with the establishment allowance remain the property of the child when changing placements or returning home and should therefore go with the child.

2. Carer Allowance – Start-Up/Outfitting Allowance

The start-up/outfitting allowance is provided to carers in receipt of the fortnightly caring allowance.

The purpose of this allowance is to provide financial support to carers for initial set up costs to establish appropriate accommodation and resources for a new placement greater than five night's duration.

At the discretion of the CSSC manager, the start-up/outfitting allowance can be provided for placements less than five nights in duration depending on child need and the individual circumstances of the carer.

This allowance is not paid in relation to dual placements, that is, for dual placements greater than five nights only the carer who provides respite and support receives the start-up/outfitting allowance.

This allowance is paid through Carepay by completing the Start-up allowance grid in the Payment management screen of the carer profile or child profile in Carepay. Receipts are not required to substantiate expenses covered by this allowance.

3. Client Support – Additional Outfitting

Predictive day to day or reasonable outfitting expenses, including school uniforms, are included in the fortnightly caring allowance

For the purchase of school uniforms or school related clothing under extraordinary or emergent circumstances please refer to the Child Related Costs – Education Support policy.

The purpose of this category is to provide financial support for a child or young person to enable the purchase of non-school related clothing in extraordinary or emergent circumstances. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- a child or young person arriving at, or returning to, a placement with little or no clothing/belongings
• maternity clothing for a young woman in out-of-home care who is pregnant
• a child or young person suffering from a medical condition causing extreme weight gain or loss (where the high support needs allowance is not provided)
• loss of clothing, ie theft
• a period of rapid growth
• a young person is living independently
  o they possess insufficient income to adequately outfit themselves
  o they are ineligible for the Youth Allowance (young persons living independently aged 15 and above should be accessing the Youth Allowance through Centrelink).

Provision of support under this category is paid at the discretion of the delegated officer.

This payment is based on the needs of the child or young person at the time and must be noted or included in a case plan. As a guide, payments should generally not exceed $250.00.

Subject to CSSC manager approval, a prepaid essential gift card may be used where an emergent situation has arisen requiring the purchase of items by or on behalf of a child or young person. Emergent situations may include the purchase of clothing where:
• children and young people are placed with carers where carer payments have not yet commenced
• children and young people are placed in emergent accommodation
• young people are living independently where they have not yet received a Centrelink allowance.

Prior to purchasing a gift card, other methods of purchase must be considered, such as corporate card, purchase order or petty cash.
• The gift card must prohibit the purchase of alcohol or tobacco.
• The Woolworths Essential Card is the preferred type of prepaid gift card. Kmart, Coles and Target brand gift cards may also be purchased.
• Coles/ Myer gift cards must not be purchased.

For further details, refer to the financial procedure ‘Prepaid gift cards’ for guidance on the purchase, control and issue of prepaid gift cards.

**Personal Assets: When a child or young person leaves a placement**

As a general rule all clothing, gifts and personal items purchased for the child or young person should go with the child or young person to their next placement, when they transition from care, or return home to their family.

However, in cases where a carer purchases shared items or gifts for the carer family, these items need to be detailed in the child’s case plan and their status agreed on with the CSO as these items will stay with the carer. Such items may include, but are not limited to:
• bedding/towels
• bunk beds
• book shelves
• swing sets.

In order to facilitate this, carers should be encouraged to maintain a personal assets list in order to assist them with managing items purchased for the children and young people in their care.
Authority:
Child Protection Act 1999, Section 159
Financial Accountability Act 2009
Adoption Act 2009

Delegations:
Deputy Director-General, Child, Family and Community Services and Southern Cluster Operations
Deputy Director-General, Child, Family and Community Services and Northern Cluster Operations
Regional Executive Director
Regional Director, Child Safety
Manager, Child Safety Service Centre
Manager, Child Safety After Hours Service Centre

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Date to be reviewed: 6 May 2019

Office: Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
Help Contact: Child Protection & Adoption Design and Commissioning

Links:
Related Policies
Child Related Costs – Medical (596)
Child Related Costs – Carer support (597)
Child Related Costs – Client support and family contact (598)
Child Related Costs – Travel (595)
Child Related Costs – Education support (599)
Child Related Costs – Long-term guardian support (608)
Child Related Costs – Placement funding (628)
Child Related Costs – Placement support funding (629)
Child Related Costs – In-home support funding (630)
Expenses - Fortnightly caring allowance and interstate foster payments (365)
Regional and remote loading for carers (379)
Dual payment of carer allowances (289)
High Support Needs Allowance (296)
Complex Support Needs Allowance (612)
Special payments (including Ex-gratia) (FSE009)
Financial Delegations Schedule

Related Legislation or Standard
Adoption Act 2009
Child Protection Act 1999
Financial Accountability Act 2009

Related Government Guidelines or Policy
Child Safety Practice Manual
Financial Management Practice Manual
Statement of Commitment Between the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and the foster and kinship carers of Queensland 2012

Forms
Child Related Costs Approval Form
Care Agreement – Form 1 (CA)

Rescinded Policies
Reference Guide to Child Related and Program Related Costs
230-2 Expenses – Child Related Costs – Outfitting
600-1 Child Related Costs – Outfitting & Establishment
600-2 Child Related Costs – Outfitting
600-3 Child Related Costs – Outfitting
600-4 Child Related Costs – Outfitting

Michael Hogan
Director-General