

PROCEDURE VII-F1: Financial Support to Foster Parents

DCFS shall pay foster parents a monthly board rate according to the following chart; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:

Birth through 5 years	<u>\$410.00 Monthly</u>
Board and Care	<u>350.00</u>
Clothing	<u>45.00</u>
Personal Needs	15.00
6 through 11 years	<u>\$440.00 Monthly</u>
Board and Care	<u>365.00</u>
Clothing	<u>50.00</u>
School and Personal Needs	25.00
12 through 14 years	<u>\$470.00 Monthly</u>
Board and Care	<u>380.00</u>
Clothing	<u>60.00</u>
School and Personal Needs	30.00
15 through 17* years	<u>\$500.00 Monthly</u>
Board and Care	<u>395.00</u>
Clothing	<u>70.00</u>
School and Personal Needs	35.00

*Refer to Policy VIII-B for requirements to continue board payments for youth age 18-20 (board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave foster care or the end of the month of his 21st birthday).

PROCEDURE VII-F1: Financial Support to Foster Parents

DCFS shall pay F foster parents ~~shall receive~~ a monthly board rate according to the following chart; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:

Birth through 5 years	\$400410.00 Monthly
Board and Care	34550.00
Clothing	4045.00
Personal Needs	15.00
6 through 11 years	\$440425.00 Monthly
Board and Care	355365.00
Clothing	4550.00
School and Personal Needs	25.00
12 through 14 years	\$450470.00 Monthly
Board and Care	365380.00
Clothing	6055.00
School and Personal Needs	30.00
15 through 17* years	\$475500.00 Monthly
Board and Care	375395.00
Clothing	7065.00
School and Personal Needs	35.00

*Refer to Policy VIII-B for requirements to continue board payments for youth age 18-20 (board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave foster care or the end of the month of his 21st birthday).

PROCEDURE VII-F2: Requesting a Special Board Rate

The Family Service Worker will:

- Check documentation of the child's special need(s) and the additional activities required of the foster parents to meet the need(s).
- Complete the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate by determining the level of care needed in each of the three need categories, and adding the three levels.
- Submit the request for a special board rate with documentation attached to the County Supervisor for review and recommendation.
- Once approved, review the continuing need for the request on a quarterly basis and, if appropriate, resubmit for reevaluation by the County Supervisor and the Area Manager.

The County Supervisor will:

- Review the request for completeness and appropriateness and recommend approval or disapproval within 3 working days of receipt.
- If approved, forward the request to the Area Manager for review and approval or disapproval.
- If disapproved, forward the request with a recommendation for disapproval to the Area Manager for review and action as appropriate.
- Once approved, review the continuing need for the request and, if appropriate, resubmit the request on a quarterly basis for reevaluation by the Area Manager.
- Inform the foster parent in writing of the ultimate approval or disapproval of the request and the reason for that decision, noting that approval is only for 90 days and the documentation of continuing need must be reviewed quarterly.

The Area Manager will:

- Receive requests from the County Supervisor.
- Review the request for completeness and appropriateness, consider the County Supervisor's recommendation and either approve or disapprove the request within three working days.
- Have the authority to approve all Special Board Rates up to \$960.00.
- Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for a second-party review if the Area Manager can not decide on approval or disapproval. Inform the requesting County Supervisor of the request's disposition and reasons for approval, disapproval, or referral to the Foster Care Unit Manager. A Special Board Rate becomes effective the day the Area Manager or Assistant Director, as appropriate, approves it. Retroactive payments will be determined on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Assistant Director, Community Services.
- Once approved, assure that the special board rate is reevaluated on a quarterly basis for continued appropriateness.
- Maintain a file for each approved special board rate. The file should contain the requesting memo, supporting documentation, CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate, Notification of Approval memo, and a printout of the computer entry of the special board rate.
- Maintain a log of special board rate approvals including the following column headings: Child's Name, Case Number, County, Effective Date, Termination Date, Rate, and Reason.

The DCFS Assistant Director, Community Services will:

- Have the authority to approve or disapprove all Special Board Rates over \$960.00
- Receive completed request packets for special board rates over \$960.00 from Area Managers.
- Check each request packet for completeness to include:
 - A completed CFS-304: Justification for Special Board Rate.
 - Clear and convincing documentation of any emotional, physical and/or auxiliary problems the child has that may justify a special board rate.
 - The Area Manager's dated signature on the CFS-304 as evidence of his review.
 - A Cover Memo from the Area Manager to the Assistant Director that:
 - Identifies the proposed subsidy as over \$960.00.

Excerpt, DCFS Policy Manual

- Provides a justification for the proposed special subsidy, and
- Makes a recommendation regarding approval or disapproval.
- Review the request for appropriateness and consider the Area Manager's recommendation
- Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for technical assistance if desired.
- Reach a disposition regarding the request within three working days.
- Inform the requesting Area Manager in writing of the request's disposition and reasons for approval or disapproval.

The Foster Care Unit Manager will:

- Provide only technical assistance when requested regarding special board rates.
- Return the request to the Area Manager or Assistant Director, as appropriate, for his decision and action.

If the special board rate is approved, the following CHRIS procedures will be taken by the Family Service Worker and Area Manager:

The Family Service Worker will:

- Request a special board rate (e.g., Level 4) on the Difficulty of Care screen and will write a brief justification in the comment field.
- Key the date the special board rate is to begin and enter the total specialized board amount into the Authorized Amount field.
- Make the request by pressing the add button, which will make approval available.
- Press "Request" and click "OK", which sends the request to the Area Manager's inbox for approval.

The Area Manager will click approval.

PROCEDURE VII-F2: Requesting a Special Board Rate

The Family Service Worker will:

- Check documentation of the child's special need(s) and the additional activities required of the foster parents to meet the need(s).
- Complete the CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate by determining the level of care needed in each of the three need categories, and adding the three levels.
- Submit the request for a special board rate with documentation attached to the County Supervisor for review and recommendation.
- Once approved, review the continuing need for the request on a quarterly basis and, if appropriate, resubmit for reevaluation by the County Supervisor and the Area Manager.

The County Supervisor will:

- Review the request for completeness and appropriateness and recommend approval or disapproval within 3 working days of receipt.
- If approved, forward the request to the Area Manager for review and approval or disapproval.
- If disapproved, forward the request with a recommendation for disapproval to the Area Manager for review and action as appropriate.
- Once approved, review the continuing need for the request and, if appropriate, resubmit the request on a quarterly basis for reevaluation by the Area Manager.
- Inform the foster parent in writing of the ultimate approval or disapproval of the request and the reason for that decision, noting that approval is only for 90 days and the documentation of continuing need must be reviewed quarterly.

The Area Manager will:

- Receive requests from the County Supervisor.
- Review the request for completeness and appropriateness, consider the County Supervisor's recommendation and either approve or disapprove the request within three working days.
- Have the authority to approve all Special Board Rates up to \$935960.00.
- Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for a second-party review if the Area Manager can not decide on approval or disapproval. Inform the requesting County Supervisor of the request's disposition and reasons for approval, disapproval, or referral to the Foster Care Unit Manager. A Special Board Rate becomes effective the day the Area Manager or Assistant Director, as appropriate, approves it. Retroactive payments will be determined on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Assistant Director, Community Services.
- Once approved, assure that the special board rate is reevaluated on a quarterly basis for continued appropriateness.
- Maintain a file for each approved special board rate. The file should contain the requesting memo, supporting documentation, CFS-304: Justification of Special Board Rate, Notification of Approval memo, and a printout of the computer entry of the special board rate.
- Maintain a log of special board rate approvals including the following column headings: Child's Name, Case Number, County, Effective Date, Termination Date, Rate, and Reason.

The DCFS Assistant Director, Community Services will:

- Have the authority to approve or disapprove all Special Board Rates over \$935960.00.
- Receive completed request packets for special board rates over \$935960.00 from Area Managers.
- Check each request packet for completeness to include:
 - A completed CFS-304: Justification for Special Board Rate.
 - Clear and convincing documentation of any emotional, physical and/or auxiliary problems the child has that may justify a special board rate.
 - The Area Manager's dated signature on the CFS-304 as evidence of his review.
 - A Cover Memo from the Area Manager to the Assistant Director that:
 - Identifies the proposed subsidy as over \$935960.00.

Excerpt, DCFS Policy Manual

- Provides a justification for the proposed special subsidy, and
- Makes a recommendation regarding approval or disapproval.
- Review the request for appropriateness and consider the Area Manager's recommendation
- Refer the request to the Foster Care Unit Manager for technical assistance if desired.
- Reach a disposition regarding the request within three working days.
- Inform the requesting Area Manager in writing of the request's disposition and reasons for approval or disapproval.

The Foster Care Unit Manager will:

- Provide only technical assistance when requested regarding special board rates.
- Return the request to the Area Manager or Assistant Director, as appropriate, for his decision and action.

If the special board rate is approved, the following CHRIS procedures will be taken by the Family Service Worker and Area Manager:

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- Request a special board rate (e.g., Level 4) on the Difficulty of Care screen and will write a brief justification in the comment field.
- Key the date the special board rate is to begin and enter the total specialized board amount into the Authorized Amount field.
- Make the request by pressing the add button, which will make approval available.
- Press "Request" and click "OK", which sends the request to the Area Manager's inbox for approval.

The Area Manager will click approval.

PROCEDURE VIII-H1: Initial Application for Adoption Subsidy and Re-determinations/Reevaluations

The Adoption Specialist will:

- Follow the same subsidy-related policy and procedures, including subsidies for non-recurring legal expenses, regardless if the adoption is being handled in-state or out-of-state..
- Ensure close coordination with the other state's adoption worker, if applicable.
- Determine that the child has a special need in relation to adoption planning, is between the age of birth to eighteen years, is in the custody of DHS (for state subsidy only), and is legally free for adoption.

These procedures should be followed for federal IV-E adoption maintenance subsidy and state funded adoption maintenance subsidy.

- Determine if the child is eligible for federal IV-E adoption maintenance subsidy first. If ineligible for title IV-E, determine if the child is eligible for state funded adoption maintenance subsidy.
- Determine that a reasonable, but unsuccessful, effort has been made to place the child without providing adoption subsidy. Such an effort might include the use of adoption exchanges, referral to appropriate specialized adoption agencies, or other such activities. There are exceptions to this requirement when applying for a title IV-E maintenance subsidy. These exceptions are (1) It would not be in the best interests of the child because of such factors as the existence of significant emotional ties with prospective adoptive parents while in the care of those parents as a child in foster care, (2) Another circumstance is adoption by a relative, in keeping with the statutory emphasis on the placement of children with relatives.
 - Exceptions for state maintenance subsidy: In the case of a child who has established significant emotional ties with prospective adoptive parents while in their care as a child in foster care. The Department may certify the child as eligible for a subsidy without searching for families willing to take the child without a subsidy.
- Review the adoption subsidy program with the adoptive parent, determine what type of adoption subsidies are needed, and complete all application procedures at the same time the adoption assessment is being completed for a foster parent, provisional foster parent, or relative adoption and within sixty days of placement for all other adoptions
- Review and sign the CFS-425: Application for Adoption Subsidy after the adoptive parent completes it.
- Request title IV-E verification of eligibility from the DCFS Eligibility Unit.
- Assist the adoptive parents in completing the CFS-426: Statement of Income and Resources for Adoption Subsidy
- Attach to the CFS-426 verification of family income when a state funded adoption special subsidy is requested. The CFS-426 is not required for a federal funded adoption maintenance subsidy.
- Review the adoptive parents' health insurance policy if a special subsidy is requested to determine if it will allow for any medical, dental, or psychological costs and, if so, to what extent. Document on the CFS-426.
- Be clear in their discussion with the family that they will only be screening for a determination of special needs, subsidy eligibility, and making a recommendation to the Adoption Services Unit. Under no circumstances will the Adoption Specialist give the adoptive family the subsidy determination prior to receipt of approval from the Adoption Services Unit. The Adoption Specialist must also explore other resources and assistance that may be available for the child and adoptive family when screening for a subsidy.
- Complete the CFS-427: Determination of Eligibility for Adoption Subsidy.
- Attach the following to the CFS-427:
 - Verification of the costs for a private attorney to finalize an adoption whether in-state or out-of-state, if applicable.

- Verification of court costs to finalize an adoption if applicable.
- Complete the:
 - CFS-429: Special Adoption Subsidy Needs Assessment to verify the child's medical, dental, psychological, etc. condition by a professional which includes the diagnosis, prognosis, and costs of treatment for one (1) year if a special subsidy is requested.
 - Statement that lists the child's financial resources source and amount other than foster care board payment, if applicable.
 - Special needs subsidy based on a "high risk" condition - Children at high risk for the development of a serious physical, mental, developmental, or emotional condition may be considered special needs if documentation of the risk is provided by a medical professional specializing in the area of the condition for which the child is considered at risk, but no subsidy payment will be made without documentation that the child has developed the actual condition. In order to be eligible for special needs subsidy based on developmental delay, documentation must be provided, current within 6 months, attesting to the fact that the child has a delay of 24% or more in two major developmental categories.
 - Verification from the appropriate agency which explains the child's eligibility for financial benefits (SSI, other types of Social Security benefits, VA, etc.) once the adoption is finalized, if applicable (provide the agency with the amount of the adoptive parent's income in order that a statement can be prepared.). Once a child has been determined eligible for a federal subsidy, the adoptive parents cannot be rejected for adoption assistance or have payments reduced without their agreement because of their income or resources or the child's resources.
 - Verification from Children's Medical Services (CMS) which explains the child's eligibility for services once the adoption is finalized, if applicable (provide CMS with the amount of the adoptive parent's income in order that a statement can be prepared).
- For state-funded subsidies, utilize the scale that is established and published annually by the Adoption Services Unit. The scale shall be 300% of the yearly published Federal Poverty Level for the state of Arkansas.

The adoptive parent's income is an eligibility criterion for state funded adoption maintenance subsidy.

The adoptive parent's income is not an eligibility criterion for a federally funded adoption maintenance subsidy (i.e., a child who is title IV-E or SSI eligible)

- Special subsidies are state funded, and the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, will consider the child's eligibility on a case-by-case basis. The consideration will be based on the information developed during the Adoption Specialist's determination of the child's special needs in relation to adoption planning. The adoptive parent's gross income will be considered as well as other financial resources and health insurance in determining eligibility for a special subsidy
- Complete the CFS-426: Statement of Income and Resources for Adoption Subsidy for all special subsidy requests.
- Utilize the following scale to determine the amount of a full monthly adoption maintenance subsidy payment based upon the standard foster care board payment; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:

<u>AGE of CHILD</u>	<u>Amount of MONTHLY Maintenance</u>
Birth through 5 years	\$410.00
6 through 11 years	\$440.00
12 through 14 years	\$470.00
15 through 17* years	\$500.00

*Refer to Policy VIII-B for requirements to continue board payments for youth age 18-20 (board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave foster care or the end of the month of his 21st birthday).

- Request a larger monthly adoption maintenance subsidy for the child who has received a higher than standard monthly foster care board payment. A monthly subsidy payment cannot exceed the child's foster care board rate which is in effect at the time a subsidy is approved.

Special Board Rate formulas and procedures will be used strictly as guides in determining an appropriate nonstandard rate to discuss with the family and to use in negotiating a lower rate (when appropriate). No subsidy will exceed \$460.00 above the standard board rate for the child's age group. However, if the child is SSI eligible, the rate can go up \$460.00 above the SSI rate.

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- Ensure close coordination with the other state's adoption worker, if applicable.
- Determine that the child has a special need in relation to adoption planning, is between the age of birth to eighteen years, is in the custody of DHS (for state subsidy only), and is legally free for adoption.

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- Determine if the child is eligible for federal IV-E adoption maintenance subsidy first. If ineligible for title IV-E, determine if the child is eligible for state funded adoption maintenance subsidy.
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- Complete the CFS-427: Determination of Eligibility for Adoption Subsidy.
- Attach the following to the CFS-427:
 - Verification of the costs for a private attorney to finalize an adoption whether in-state or out-of-state, if applicable.

- Verification of court costs to finalize an adoption if applicable.
- Complete the:
 - CFS-429: Special Adoption Subsidy Needs Assessment to verify the child's medical, dental, psychological, etc. condition by a professional which includes the diagnosis, prognosis, and costs of treatment for one (1) year if a special subsidy is requested.
 - Statement that lists the child's financial resources source and amount other than foster care board payment, if applicable.
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- Special subsidies are state funded, and the Adoption Subsidy Coordinator, Adoption Services Unit, will consider the child's eligibility on a case-by-case basis. The consideration will be based on the information developed during the Adoption Specialist's determination of the child's special needs in relation to adoption planning. The adoptive parent's gross income will be considered as well as other financial resources and health insurance in determining eligibility for a special subsidy
- Complete the CFS-426: Statement of Income and Resources for Adoption Subsidy for all special subsidy requests.
- Utilize the following scale to determine the amount of a full monthly adoption maintenance subsidy payment based upon the standard foster care board payment; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:

AGE of CHILD	Amount of MONTHLY Maintenance
Birth through 5 years	\$400.00/410.00
6 through 11 years	\$425.00/440.00
12 through 14 years	\$450.00/470.00
15 through 17* years	\$475.00/500.00

*Refer to Policy VIII-B for requirements to continue board payments for youth age 18-20 (board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave foster care or the end of the month of his 21st birthday).

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- Request a larger monthly adoption maintenance subsidy for the child who has received a higher than standard monthly foster care board payment. A monthly subsidy payment cannot exceed the child's foster care board rate which is in effect at the time a subsidy is approved.

Special Board Rate formulas and procedures will be used strictly as guides in determining an appropriate nonstandard rate to discuss with the family and to use in negotiating a lower rate (when appropriate). No subsidy will exceed \$460.00 above the standard board rate for the child's age group. However, if the child is SSI eligible, the rate can go up \$460.00 above the SSI rate.

Excerpt, PUB 30-changes to board payments

DCFS shall pay foster parents a monthly board rate according to the following chart; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:

Board Payment Chart

Birth through 5 years	<u>\$410.00</u> Monthly
Board and Care	<u>350.00</u>
Clothing	<u>45.00</u>
Personal Needs	15.00
6 through 11 years	<u>\$440.00</u> Monthly
Board and Care	<u>365.00</u>
Clothing	<u>50.00</u>
School and Personal Needs (Personal supplies; allowance)	25.00
12 through 14 years	<u>\$470.00</u> Monthly
Board and Care	<u>380.00</u>
Clothing	<u>60.00</u>
School and Personal Needs (Personal supplies; allowance)	30.00
15 through <u>17*</u> years	<u>\$500.00</u> Monthly
Board and Care	<u>395.00</u>
Clothing	<u>70.00</u>
School and Personal Needs (Personal supplies; extracurricular activities, allowance)	35.00

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Board Payment Chart

Birth through 5 years

	\$400 10.00 Monthly
Board and Care	345350.00
Clothing	4045.00
Personal Needs	15.00

6 through 11 years

	\$425 440.00 Monthly
Board and Care	355365.00
Clothing	4550.00
School and Personal Needs (Personal supplies; allowance)	25.00

12 through 14 years

	\$454 750.00 Monthly
Board and Care	365380.00
Clothing	6055.00
School and Personal Needs (Personal supplies; allowance)	30.00

15 through ~~17~~*21 years

	\$475 500.00 Monthly
Board and Care	375395.00
Clothing	7065.00
School and Personal Needs (Personal supplies; extracurricular activities, allowance)	35.00

*Refer to Policy VIII-B for requirements to continue board payments for youth age 18-20 (board payments must end the day the youth elects to leave foster care or the end of the month of his 21st birthday).

Money to Foster Parents

Foster care maintenance payments for a child in foster care may cover the costs of (and the cost of providing) food, clothing, shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, a child's personal incidentals, liability insurance with respect to the child, and reasonable travel to the child's home for visitation with family or other caretakers. The amount of the child's allowance is decided by the foster parent, based on the child's age.

Foster parents shall receive a monthly board rate according to the following chart; these rates are effective for board payments of November 2009 and after:

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Personal Needs	15.00
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Board and Care	<u>355365.00</u>
Clothing	<u>4550.00</u>
School and Personal Needs	25.00
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How DCFS is Set Up

Children and Family Services (CFS) is the Division within the Department of Human Services (DHS) that is responsible for child welfare programs. These programs include child protection, family preservation, foster care, adoptions, Interstate Compact on Placement of Children, Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance and Child Welfare Agency Licensing.

The Director of the Department of Human Services appoints the DCFS Director. The DCFS Director has an Executive Staff, which consists of four Assistant Directors, each over a section.

Direct and contract services are provided through the Office of Community Services. The state is divided into ten (10) multi-county or multi-office areas, each of which is managed by an Area Manager. The Area Manager oversees the County Supervisors, who each manage one county with one or more county offices. The Area Manager also supervises some area-wide staff that delivers services or support across the entire Area.

DCFS has three other sections:

- The Office of Program Excellence is responsible for the provision of administrative and programmatic support for the state's network of children and family services. Program Excellence is responsible for leadership in all program areas, and is responsible for professional development, comprehensive short- and long-term planning and policy development. It is comprised of the following units: Prevention Support and Substance Abuse, Specialized Placements, Policy, Professional Development, Foster Care, Adoptions, Child Protective Services, Planning, and Mental Health.
- The Office of Finance and Administrative Support provides administrative and management support to DCFS through personnel administration, budget monitoring, resource control, and contract administration. The Office of Finance and Administrative Support includes the following units: Personnel, Contracts, and Financial Management.
- The Central Operations section is responsible for the smooth and timely functioning of the operational facets of the Division. It consists of the Eligibility Unit, Information Technology, Vehicle Safety Program, Criminal Records, and Central Registry.

Foster Care Services are provided by Family Service Worker (FSW) Trainees, FSW Workers, and FSW Specialists along with FSW Supervisors who monitor the everyday activities of the foster children.

County and area staff are responsible for weekly visits to the foster homes, monthly visits to the residential facilities and therapeutic foster homes, medical appointments, providing transportation to foster children and parents, and ensuring all educational, mental, health and emotional needs are being met. County and area staff are responsible for case

planning, staffings, attending court hearing, helping families with housing, transportation, cash assistance, visitation between parents and sibling visits, and Family Preservation Services. County and area staff are also responsible for making referrals for day care services, Intensive Family Services, respite care, health assessments, and Therapeutic Foster Home and group home referrals.

How DCFS is Set Up

Children and Family Services (CFS) is the Division within the Department of Human Services (DHS) that is responsible for child welfare programs. These programs include child protection, family preservation, foster care, adoptions, Interstate Compact on Placement of Children, Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance and Child Welfare Agency Licensing.

The Director of the Department of Human Services appoints the DCFS Director. The DCFS Director has an Executive Staff, which consists of four (4) Assistant Directors, each over a section program and administrative offices.

Direct and contract services are provided through the Office of Community Services. The state is divided into ten (10) multi-county or multi-office areas, each of which is managed by an Area Manager. The Area Manager oversees the County Supervisors, who each manage one county with one or more county offices. The Area Manager also supervises some area-wide staff that delivers services or support across the entire Area.

DCFS has three other sections DCFS Offices support the Office of Community Services:

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- The Office of Finance and Administrative Support provides administrative and management support to DCFS through personnel administration, budget monitoring, resource control, and contract administration. The Office of Finance and Administrative Support includes the following units: Personnel, Contracts, and Financial Management.
- The Central Operations section is responsible for the smooth and timely functioning of the operational facets of the Division. It consists of the Eligibility Unit, Information Technology, Vehicle Safety Program, Criminal Records, and Central Registry.
- The Office of Finance and Administrative Support is organized into the following units— Personnel, Financial Support, Contracts Management, and Medicaid & IV-E Eligibility.
- The Office of Community Support consisting of the following units— Foster Care, Adoptions, Behavioral Treatment, Independent Living, Interstate Compact (ICPC), CAPTA and Central Registry.

~~◦The Office of Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning consisting of the Policy Unit, Planning Unit, Quality Assurance Unit, Training / Professional Development Unit, Child Welfare Agency Licensing and COA Accreditation.~~

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