



# **Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting Policy**

**Division of Safety and Permanence**

**November 2025**

## Purpose

The Uniform Foster Care Rate for Wisconsin's foster care programs was established in pursuant to [Wis. Stat. s. 48.62\(4\)](#), to provide consistency in foster care payments. The basic maintenance rates are designed to meet the maintenance needs of the child and are intended to provide for the basic costs of raising a foster child (i.e., food, shelter, basic transportation, personal and recreational needs, clothing). DCF reviews the basic maintenance rate amount for continued appropriateness and submits formal adjustment requests for approval by the state legislature through the bi-annual budget process. Foster children who require more than the usual care and supervision may receive a supplemental or exceptional rate payment based on the needs of the child.

For purposes of this policy, the terms "foster child," "foster home," "foster parent," and "foster care" relate to all licensed relative, like kin and non-relative family foster homes. This ensures rate setters set consistent payment amounts for all foster children regardless of their familial connection to the foster home.

## Applicability

This policy applies to children in foster care placed by agencies who have "Placement and Care Responsibility." The agency refers to either a county agency or the department.

This does not apply to a child placed or to be placed into a foster home that is licensed solely for the purpose of adoption of a domestic infant pursuant to [Wis. Stat. s. 48.837](#), or a foreign child pursuant to [Wis. Stat. s. 48.839](#) or [Wis. Stat. s. 48.97](#). Agencies must assure all actions of either agency or contracted provider staff comply with this policy.

## Definitions

### The four components of the Uniform Foster Care Rate are defined as follows:

**Initial Clothing Allowance:** an allowance for the actual cost of clothing needed by a child upon initial entry into foster care. The allowance may not exceed the maximum amount specified for the child's age. If a child re-enters out-of-home care and is placed in foster care 120 days or more after a previous out-of-home care placement episode was terminated, the placement shall be considered an initial placement for the purposes of eligibility for an initial clothing allowance. The maximum rates are established by the Department by this policy.

**Basic Maintenance Rate:** a fixed monthly payment for the usual and customary costs incurred in caring for a foster child (including food, clothing, shelter, personal care, transportation, recreation) as determined by the age of the child. These rates are established biennially by the Wisconsin Legislature and are described in the Uniform Foster Care Rate Brochure ([DCF-P-PFS0142](#)).

**Supplemental Rate:** an additional monthly payment intended to cover the costs of caring for a child based the emotional, behavioral, and physical needs of the foster child that exceed normal child development and expectations. The descriptors are established pursuant to [Wis. Admin. Code s. DCF 56.23\(2\)](#). The funding levels associated with these descriptors are established by the Department by this policy.

**Exceptional Rate:** an additional monthly payment to support the care of a foster child whose level of needs are above and beyond what is covered by the basic and supplemental portion of the foster care rate. Foster parents who get an Exceptional Rate payment are providing care for children who are at-risk of placement in higher level out-of-home care settings. The criteria are established pursuant to [Wis. Admin. Code s. DCF 56.23\(3\)](#). The funding level associated with these criteria is indirectly established by the Department by this policy through the establishment of a maximum monthly foster care payment.

## I. ELIGIBILITY

- Uniform foster care rates shall be determined for all foster children whose cost of care is paid directly to foster parents by a County Child Welfare Agency, the Department of Children and Families, or a private Child Placing Agency under contract with a public child welfare agency.
- If the agency providing services to a child placed in foster care is different than the agency having “placement and care responsibility,” the providing agency, using the criteria set forth in this policy, shall recommend the rate to be paid by the financially responsible agency. A Child Welfare Agency shall determine the payment amount using the Uniform Foster Care Rate criteria consistent with the process pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code s. DCF 56.23(1)(a).
- All the components of the Uniform Foster Care Rate are designed to maintain the child in the foster home and **do not** include service payments to foster parents or licensed child placing agencies. Agencies may enter into purchase of service contracts for services or bed holding costs with individual foster care providers. Such expenses shall not be reported as foster care costs.
- Relatives and like-kin are not required to be licensed to maintain placement. Relatives and like-kin may choose to pursue foster care licensing, and the agency shall license them utilizing the relative and like-kin licensing rule pursuant to [Wis. Admin. Code ch. DCF 56.25](#).
- Payments made on behalf of children placed in institutions, residential care centers, shelter care facilities or group homes are **not** covered by the provisions of the Uniform Foster Care Rate Policy.

Each foster parent shall be provided with current information regarding the Uniform Foster Care Rate Policy at the time of licensure, when a child is placed and when a rate change occurs. The brochure entitled, [“Understanding the Uniform Foster Care Rate” \(DCF-P-PFS0142\)](#) is available for distribution to foster parents and will meet the requirement under this provision.

## II. INITIAL CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

An initial clothing allowance, in the amount of the actual cost but not exceeding established maximums, may be paid for children initially entering foster care without sufficient clothing. The amount of the initial clothing allowance shall be the actual cost of the clothing not to exceed the maximums listed below.

Pursuant to [Wis. Admin. Code s. DCF 56.23\(4\)\(c\)](#) If a child is placed in foster care 120 days or more after a previous out-of-home care placement episode was terminated, the placement shall be considered an initial placement for the purposes of eligibility for an initial clothing allowance. A child who re-enters foster care within 120 days whose clothing allowance has not been exhausted may use the remaining balance.

**The current maximum rates are:**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Clothing Allowance</b>
0-4	Up to \$225
5-11	Up to \$263
12-14	Up to \$300
15-18	Up to \$300

### III. BASIC MAINTENANCE RATES

The basic maintenance rate for children is statutorily set by the Legislature and published by the department. The “Understanding the Uniform Foster Care Rate” ([DCF-P-PFS0142](#)) brochure provides current basic maintenance rates for children in the following age categories: Birth to 4; 5-11; 12-14; and 15 and older.

#### Changes to the Basic Maintenance Rate for a Child’s Birthday

When a child in foster care attains the age of 5, 12 and 15, the agency shall authorize the next higher basic maintenance rate effective on the date on which the birthday occurs.

This procedure is automated and reflected in eWiSACWIS and will create and prorate the payment to the foster parent based on the child’s birthday.

### IV. SUPPLEMENTAL RATE

A supplemental rate payment for a foster child is determined using the *criteria* established pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code ch. DCF 56.23](#) through the use of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool, the calculation of the child’s Level of Need, and the providers’ Level of Certification.

#### Child’s Identified Needs and Strengths

The agency with “placement and care responsibility” for a child placed in foster care shall determine a child’s identified needs and strengths through the use of the CANS tool. Before administering the CANS tool the person who administers the tool shall first do all of the following:

1. Review the case record.
2. Interview or collect information from an individual who has interviewed the child, child’s family, foster parent or other out-of-home care provider, the child’s team or treatment team, and the licensing agency.
3. Review information gathered in collaboration with the child’s team or treatment team and the licensing agency.

An individual performing the assessment shall be trained and certified in the use of the department’s standardized assessment tool. The assessment requires a certified CANS user to complete a CANS assessment of the information obtained about the child. Re-certification to complete the assessment process must be completed on an annual basis. The full CANS Manuals may be found at the following link: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cans>.

The agency shall use the CANS assessment to determine whether or not a foster child qualifies for a supplemental rate payment. The identified needs and strengths rated a ‘2’ or ‘3’ shall be used to calculate this portion of the supplemental payment. See the [CANS Desk Guide \(DCF-P-5561\)](#) for which items in the CANS tool are specifically used to calculate the child’s assessed needs and strengths for the Supplemental Rate.

In using the CANS tool, the assessor must:

- Determine if the child exhibits characteristics described as a 2 or 3 in **one or more** of the following domains: trauma; life functioning; school; acculturation; behavioral / emotional needs; or risk behaviors. Determine the appropriate level within each applicable domain. The three levels are: basic; moderate; and intensive. In order for a rating to be above basic, characteristics exhibited must be inappropriate for what is deemed developmentally age appropriate for a child who is of a similar age.

Determine ratings for each item within the domains listed in the “Point Distribution Table” below.

- Assign points only once for each item in each domain (e.g., points cannot be given at both the “moderate” and “intensive” level for any one item within a domain).
- Calculate the child’s identified needs and strengths Supplemental Points based on adding the items rated a 2 or 3 on the domains listed in the “Point Distribution Table.” The sum is then multiplied by \$8.00 to determine the child’s portion of the Supplemental payment. The calculation of the supplemental points and the subsequent rate will be automated for all placements that exist in eWiSACWIS.

## Point Distribution Table

	Basic	Moderate	Intensive	Total Items Rated 0-5 years	Total Items Rated 5 – 17 years
<b>CANS RATING</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>CANS DOMAIN</b>					
Trauma	0-1	2	3	5	5
Life Domain Functioning	0-1	2	3	30	37
School	0-1	2	3	7	4
Acculturation	0-1	2	3	1	1
Behavioral / Emotional	0-1	2	3	7	11
Risk Behaviors	0-1	2	3	8	18
Strengths	0-1	2	3	8	17
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>66</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Maximum Points</b>				<b>198</b>	<b>279</b>

### IV. SUPPLEMENTAL RATE

**Providers Level of Care / Child’s assessed Level of Need Value:** When the providers’ Level of Care (LOC) Certification for Level of 3 or 4 exceeds a child’s assessed Level of Need (LON), a LOC/LON value of \$100.00 will be added to the supplemental portion of the foster care rate.

**Total Supplemental Rate:** The total value of the Supplemental Rate is determined by adding the child’s identified needs and strengths to the LOC/LON value.

### V. EXCEPTIONAL RATE

The placing agency may determine the frequency and amount of an exceptional payment necessary to meet one or more of the purposes listed below, provided no total monthly payment to the foster parent exceeds the \$2,000.00 maximum amount determined by the department in this policy. Exceptional costs are those costs that are above and beyond what is covered by the Basic and Supplemental portions of the foster care rate.

The exceptional payment may be made for time-limited durations or for the average monthly costs. Any use of an exceptional payment must be accompanied by a justification by the agency rate setter of the costs and what it is to be used for.

Pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code s. DCF 56.23\(3\)\(a\)](#), a placing agency may make an exceptional payment to a foster parent to accomplish any of the following:

1. **Least Restrictive (Supervision, Time, and Training)** Enable the child to be placed or remain in a foster home instead of being placed or remaining in a more restrictive setting. When considering this section, the following areas and its intensity level should be considered; this is not an exhaustive list:
  - **Additional supervision** the foster parent must provide the foster child based on their needs.
    - Supervision that is beyond what other children of a similar age would require.
    - Examples include discharge from residential care, children with multiple previous placements, etc.
  - **Additional time** the foster parent is expected to participate for or with the foster child including, but not limited to:
    - Specialized activities to support the needs of the child.
    - Loss of work hours / losing sleep at night due to the child’s needs.
    - Increased frequency and interaction with the school (weekly or more).

- Transportation for family interaction, court events, or agency related activities that are greater than 30 miles.
  - **Additional training** the foster parent is expected to complete or participate in.
    - Specialized trainings / care knowledge, outside of licensing requirements the foster parent is expected to know and be able to complete, such as shared parenting that assists with family interaction.
    - Administration and supervision of medication that requires specialized training.
  - Property destruction (it should be noted that if this is included in the foster care rate, then the foster parent may not seek a claim through the Foster Parent Insurance Program for damage that is foreseen/expected and included in the foster care rate).
  - **Personal incidentals** for the child not covered under the basic maintenance or the supplemental payments, such as:
    - Costs to allow the child to attend a camp, participate in sports, drivers' education classes, etc.
    - Increase in laundry or cleaning materials due to a child's specialized needs.
    - Specialized foods to meet a child's dietary needs (i.e. gluten free products, supplements, or cultural needs).
  - **Child care costs not covered by Wisconsin Shares** under the following circumstances:
    - The costs to the foster parent for child care are not covered by the child care subsidy program; Shares.
    - A foster parent shall use a child care provider that is licensed under [Wis. Admin Code ss. DCF 250, 251, or 252](#) or certified under [Wis. Admin Code ch. DCF 202](#). If any of the following conditions are met, a licensing agency may grant an exception on the foster home license for the foster parent to use an unregulated child care provider.
      - There is no licensed or certified child care provider within 15 miles of the foster home.
      - There is no opening available at any licensed or certified child care provider that is within 15 miles of the foster home, and the foster child has been placed on a waitlist.
      - The supervising agency determines that care by the unregulated child care provider is in the best interest of the child.
    - Prior to the foster parent using an unregulated child care provider for regular child care outside of the home, the supervising agency has approved an unregulated child care provider and the licensing agency has documented an exception on the foster home license pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code s. DCF 56.09\(11\)\(b\)](#). An approval and exception shall only be granted if all of the following conditions are met:
      - The agency has completed background checks under [Wis. Stat. s. 48.685\(2\)\(am\)](#) for the unregulated child care provider and under [Wis. Stat. s. 48.685\(2\)\(b\)](#) for any nonclient resident of the unregulated child care provider who will have regular, direct contact with the foster child.
      - The agency has verified that the unregulated child care provider is not providing child care for more than 3 unrelated children under the age of 7 for compensation for less than 24 hours per day.
      - The agency has obtained the child care provider's agreement to abide by [Wis. Admin. Code ss. DCF 56.09\(2\)\(a\)](#) and [\(b\)1, s. DCF 56.09\(14\)](#), and [s. DCF 56.09\(15\)](#).
2. The payment will enable the **placement of siblings or minor parent and minor children together**.
    - \$100 payment may be added to each sibling's rate when placed in the same home.
    - For minor parents placed with their minor children who are not on their own court order, the basic rate for the minor child, if that child were placed in foster care, shall be added to the minor parent's foster care rate to provide for the needs of the minor child.
  3. The payment will assist with **transportation to the school the of origin** that child was attending prior to placement in out-of-home care.
    - To promote the educational stability of children in foster care, agencies may provide payments for costs associated with transporting a child to and from the school the child was enrolled in (school of origin) at the time of placement into out-of-home care. This cost shall be documented under the Exceptional Payments under Transportation to School of Origin.
    - To qualify, the transportation shall be out of the foster parent's normal route and longer than would normally be expected for a prudent parent to travel to take a child to school, such as a distance greater than 20 miles each way. The agency shall use the average monthly miles multiplied by the agencies transportation rate for foster parents to determine the amount to be included.
  4. To **replace a child's basic wardrobe** that has been lost or destroyed in a manner other than normal wear and tear.

- An as-needed exceptional rate payment for wardrobe replacement is appropriate for reasons such as sudden growth spurts that are not equated with average growth of the child.
- For children with special circumstances that result in unusual wear and tear of clothing (such as wearing prosthesis), beyond what is accounted for in the supplemental rate.

While it would be somewhat unusual, there is nothing to prohibit a child from receiving an exceptional payment without also receiving a supplemental payment. Additional guidance on the allowable cost under the [Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting: Exceptional Narrative](#) can be found on the [eWiSACWIS Knowledge Web](#).

## VI. TOTAL UNIFORM FOSTER CARE RATE

The Uniform Foster Care Rate is the total of the basic maintenance, supplemental, and exceptional rates.

The total foster care payment (including the basic maintenance, supplemental and exceptional rates) **shall not exceed \$2,000 per month per child**. Any costs that exceed this limit shall be documented under "Costs > Spending Limit" in eWiSACWIS and are not IV-E reimbursable. Any payment for a placement that is less than a full calendar month shall be pro-rated based on the actual numbers of days in that month.

*Example:*

*A child is 15 years old and has characteristics that result in actionable items for the domains rated in supplemental rates. In addition, it is determined that the foster parent should receive an exceptional rate payment because of placement of siblings together and to provide placement to enable the child to live in the least restrictive environment. In numerical terms this example is expressed on the next page:*

Basic Maintenance Rate:	\$572
+	
Supplemental Rate:	\$700
• Child's Assessed Needs (75 points x \$8.00=\$600)	
• Child LON/Provider LOC (\$100)	
+	
Exceptional Rate:	\$250
• Transportation to School of Origin (\$50)	
• Siblings and least restrictive (\$200)	
<hr/>	
Total Uniform Foster Care Rate:	\$1,522

## VII. INITIAL DETERMINATION AND RE-DETERMINATION

The initial determination of the child's Level of Need and value of supplemental points shall be made within 30 days of the child's placement in a foster home and no less frequently than every 6 months thereafter.

A foster parent or a private child placing agency on behalf of a foster parent may request a redetermination at any time by providing a description and evidence of changes to the child's condition or needs.

A description of the child's condition, justification for any supplemental or exceptional rate payment recommendation and the recommended rate must be submitted to the designated agency rate setter for approval in eWiSACWIS. This information shall also be placed in the child's case record. Documentation in eWiSACWIS of the information shall be considered documented in the child's record.

Supplemental and exceptional rate payments must be based on the child's current situation. As such, it is always possible and probable that the rates could increase or decrease as the result of a determination. If approved the supplemental or exceptional rate payment shall be made from the agency's foster care account. All supplemental or exceptional rate payments shall be made to the foster parent for the care of the child.

## VIII. AGENCY RATE SETTER RESPONSIBILITY

Each agency shall designate a person to determine supplemental and exceptional rates for foster children. The rate setting function shall be performed by an administrator, supervisor or advanced social work practitioner. The designated rate setter shall not have an active foster care caseload.

When a child is placed with a licensing agency that is different than the placing agency, such as a private child placing agency or another county agency, then the rate setter shall allow the licensing agency of the foster parent to participate in

the determination of supplemental and exceptional payments as required pursuant to [Wis. Admin. Code s. DCF 56.16\(2\)\(c\)](#) by allowing the licensing agency to:

- Review the payment amount that a placing agency is proposing for a child's placement and discuss the child's needs with the placing agency.
- Inform a prospective foster parent of the placing agency's proposed payment amount.
- Recommend any modifications to the payment amount that the placing agency has proposed.
- Participate with the placing agency, foster parent, and treatment team members in the redetermination of the payment amount following a reassessment.
- At a foster parent's request, assist a foster parent in resolving a disagreement between the foster parent and the placing agency regarding a payment amount before the foster parent requests a fair hearing.

The rate setter, after reviewing the recommendation and documentation submitted by the child welfare professional, and if applicable the licensing agency, shall approve, deny or modify the uniform foster care rate payments according to this policy.

## IX. FAIR HEARING

The foster parent has the right to request a fair hearing if he or she disagrees with the result of a determination or redetermination. The procedures for requesting a fair hearing are described pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code ch. DCF 56.10](#).

## X. UNALLOWABLE COSTS FOR SERVICES OR OTHER PAYMENT SOURCES

A Child Welfare Agency may not make any payments for maintenance items in addition to the basic maintenance, supplemental and exceptional rate payments and the initial clothing allowance.

Agencies may not include the following in the foster care rate:

- Services, such as respite care,
- Medicaid reimbursable services that should be covered through Medicaid, such as medical equipment, transportation to medical / therapeutic appoints, etc.
- Medical services not covered by Medicaid such as therapies.
- Periodic clothing allowances, other than those described in this policy

An amount for clothing is included in the initial clothing allowance, the basic maintenance rate and, possibly, the supplemental or exceptional rate. Any additional payment for clothing would be considered a duplicate payment and subject to financial disallowance.

*As stated above, respite care should not be included in the foster care rate for the child because it is a service to the foster parents. Child welfare agencies can make payments to foster parents to purchase their own respite care or agencies can pay the respite care provider directly. Under either payment method, the respite care payment is a service payment and not a foster care maintenance payment.*

*Foster care maintenance payments are not reportable as taxable income. Service payments, however, are reportable as taxable income. If the child welfare agencies make more than \$600 annually in payments to a provider for respite care, the agencies have to issue a 1099 form. The 1099 form should go to the respite care provider that provided the service. If the child welfare agency is paying the foster parent who in turn pays the respite care provider, the agency should track the providers of respite care so the 1099 form can be issued to the appropriate respite care provider(s). The agency should also issue a letter to the foster parent so if there are any tax questions about whether the respite care payments need to be included in the foster parent's income, the foster parent has a letter to show the tax authorities.*

# ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

## XI. SUPPLEMENTAL RATE FOR ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

For an adoption assistance agreement pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code ch. DCF 50](#) entered into on or after February 21, 2011, the child has needs that have been identified as moderate or intensive in the areas listed pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code s. DCF 56.23(2)(a)2.a. or 56.23(2)(a)2.b. in the rate schedule as determined through the use of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths tool.

### Child’s Identified Needs

The agency with “placement and care responsibility” for a child for whom an adoption assistance agreement is being entered into shall determine a child’s identified needs through the use of the CANS tool. Before administering the CANS tool the person who administers the tool shall first do all of the following:

1. Review the case record.
2. Interview or collect information from an individual who has interviewed the child, child’s family, proposed adoptive parent or other out-of-home care provider, and the child’s team or treatment team.
3. Review information gathered in collaboration with the child’s team or treatment team.

An individual performing the assessment shall be trained and certified in the use of the department’s standardized assessment tool. The assessment requires a certified CANS user to complete a CANS assessment of the information obtained about the child. Re-certification to complete the assessment process must be completed on an annual basis. The full CANS Manuals may be found at the following link: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cans>.

The agency shall use the CANS assessment to determine whether or not a child qualifies for a supplemental rate payment.

See the [CANS Desk Guide \(DCF-P-5561\)](#) for which items in the CANS tool are specifically used to calculate the child’s assessed needs for the Supplemental Rate for an adoption assistance agreement / amendment for a child whose original agreement is entered into on or after February 21, 2011.

In using the CANS tool, the assessor must:

- Determine if the child exhibits characteristics described as a 2 or 3 in **one or more** of the following domains: trauma; life functioning; school; acculturation; behavioral / emotional needs; or risk behaviors.
- Determine the appropriate level within each applicable domain. The three levels are: basic; moderate; and intensive. In order for a rating to be above basic, characteristics exhibited must be inappropriate for what is deemed developmentally age appropriate for a child who is of a similar age.
- Determine ratings for each item within the domains listed in the “Point Distribution Table” below.
- Assign points only once for each item in each domain (e.g., points cannot be given at both the “moderate” and “intensive” level for any one item within a domain).
- Calculate the child’s identified needs Supplemental Points based on adding the items rated a 2 or 3 on the domains listed in the “Point Distribution Table.” The sum is then multiplied by \$8.00 to determine the child’s portion of the Supplemental payment.

	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Intensive</u>	<b>Total Items Rated 0-5 years</b>	<b>Total Items Rated 5 – 17 years</b>
<b>CANS RATING</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>CANS DOMAIN</b>					
Trauma	0-1	2	3	5	5
Life Domain Functioning	0-1	2	3	28	31
School	0-1	2	3	7	4
Behavioral / Emotional	0-1	2	3	7	11
Risk Behaviors	0-1	2	3	6	18
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>53</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Maximum Points</b>				<b>159</b>	<b>207</b>

## XI. SUPPLEMENTAL RATE FOR ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

### Adoption Agreement Amendments

For Adoption Agreement Amendments entered into on or after February 21, 2011 the Department, after receiving the Behavioral Review Forms from the applicant for an amendment, shall review them pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code s. DCF 56.23\(2\)\(a\)1](#). to establish whether any modification to the supplemental portion of the adoption assistance agreement shall be made pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code ch. DCF 50](#).

A parent may request a **time-limited amendment** to their child's monthly adoption assistance subsidy if all of the following criteria are met:

- The parent has a signed Wisconsin Adoption Assistance Agreement in effect for their child
- It has been at least one year since the adoption was finalized
- The monthly adoption assistance subsidy is less than \$2,000
- The parent believes the child's special care needs have increased since the time of adoption
- The child is receiving less than the maximum allowable subsidy for special care needs. *The Amendment Specialist can advise whether this is the case.*

For more information on Adoption Assistance amendment requests, please see the [Adoption Assistance Information for Families Guide \(DCF-P-PFS0105\)](#) sheet.

# Subsidized Guardianship

## XII. SUPPLEMENTAL RATE FOR SUBSIDIZED GUARDIANSHIP PAYMENT

For subsidized guardianship payments received through an agreement pursuant to [Wis. Stat. s. 48.623](#), entered into on or after August 1, 2011, the child has needs that have been identified as moderate or intensive in the areas listed pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code s. DCF 56.23(2)(a)2.a. or 56.23(2)(a)2.b. in the rate schedule as determined through the use of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths tool.

### Child’s Identified Needs

The agency with “placement and care responsibility” for a child for whom a subsidized guardianship payment is being made shall determine a child’s identified needs through the use of the CANS tool. Before administering the CANS tool the person who administers the tool shall first do all of the following:

- Review the case record.
- Interview or collect information from an individual who has interviewed the child, child’s family, proposed guardian or other out-of-home care provider, and the child’s team or treatment team.
- Review information gathered in collaboration with the child’s team or treatment team.

An individual performing the assessment shall be trained and certified in the use of the department’s standardized assessment tool. The assessment requires a certified CANS user to complete a CANS assessment of the information obtained about the child. Re-certification to complete the assessment process must be completed on an annual basis. The full CANS Manuals may be found at the following link: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cans>.

The agency shall use the CANS assessment to determine whether or not a child qualifies for a supplemental rate payment. There must be identified needs, rated a ‘2’ or ‘3’, that shall be used to calculate this portion of the supplemental payment.

See the [CANS Desk Guide \(DCF-P-5561\)](#) for which items in the CANS tool are specifically used to calculate the child’s assessed needs for the Supplemental Rate for a subsidized guardianship payment under the agreement / amendment for a child whose original agreement is entered into on or after August 1, 2011.

In using the CANS tool, the assessor must:

- Determine if the child exhibits characteristics described as a 2 or 3 in **one or more** of the following domains: trauma; life functioning; school; acculturation; behavioral /emotional needs; or risk behaviors.
- Determine the appropriate level within each applicable domain. The three levels are: basic; moderate; and intensive. In order for a rating to be above basic, characteristics exhibited must be inappropriate for what is deemed developmentally age appropriate for a child who is of a similar age.
- Determine ratings for each item within the domains listed in the “Point Distribution Table” below.
- Assign points only once for each item in each domain (e.g., points cannot be given at both the “moderate” and “intensive” level for any one item within a domain).

Calculate the child’s identified needs Supplemental Points based on adding the items rated a 2 or 3 on the domains listed in the “Point Distribution Table.” The sum is then multiplied by \$8.00 to determine the child’s portion of the Supplemental payment.

	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Intensive</u>	<b>Total Items Rated 0-5 years</b>	<b>Total Items Rated 5 – 17 years</b>
<b>CANS RATING</b>	<b>0-1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>CANS DOMAIN</b>					
Trauma	0-1	2	3	5	5
Life Domain Functioning	0-1	2	3	28	31
School	0-1	2	3	7	4
Behavioral/Emotional	0-1	2	3	7	11
Risk Behaviors	0-1	2	3	6	18
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>53</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Maximum Points</b>				<b>159</b>	<b>207</b>

## XII. SUPPLEMENTAL RATE FOR SUBSIDIZED GUARDIANSHIP PAYMENT

### Subsidized Guardianship Payments under an Agreement Amendment

For amendments to Subsidized Guardianship Agreements payments pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code ch. DCF 55](#), from the applicant for an amendment, the child welfare agency shall review them pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code s. DCF 56.23\(2\)\(a\)1](#). to establish whether any modification to the supplemental portion of the subsidized guardianship payment under the agreement shall be made.

## XIII. Monitoring and Compliance

All placing, licensing, and supervising agencies are required to comply with the requirements pursuant to [Wis. Admin. Code ch. DCF 56.23](#) and the Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting policy as required pursuant to [Wis. Stat. s. 48.62\(4\)](#) and [48.62\(8\)\(c\)](#).

Changes were made to the Administrative Code and the Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting policy in 2011 that included:

1. Supplemental Points calculation based on the CANS;
2. Adding two categories to the Exceptional Payment: Transportation to School of Origin and to promote the placement together of Minor Parents with their Minor Child or Siblings;
3. Removed the ability of private Child Placing Agencies to establish maintenance rates without adhering to the Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting policy.

Licensing Agencies shall no longer participate in:

1. Recruitment efforts that set forth specific dollar amount foster parents may expect to receive for each child placed with them.
2. Standardized cost calculations or contracts for child maintenance payments for placements with their foster parents; rather each child placement shall be based on that foster parent and that child.
3. Specific rate demands with the threat of “notice to remove the child.”

### Protocol for Concerns

The Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care (BPOHC) has developed the following protocol when concerns are raised to the Bureau and agencies involved cannot come to resolution or feel that state law or policy are not being adhered to:

1. An email can be sent to the Out-of-Home Care Program and Policy Analyst (PPA) with BPOHC to the general foster care email box at DCF [DCFDSPPGeneralFosterCare@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFDSPPGeneralFosterCare@wisconsin.gov). The BPOHC PPA will review the situation with the requesting party to see if the state law or policy is being adhered to.
  - a. In this review the OHC PPA will ask what efforts were made by the requesting agency to remedy the situation with the other agency / foster parent.
  - b. The BPOHC PPA will then contact the other agency to understand their side of the situation.
  - c. Response:
    - i. If it is concluded that the county agency is not in compliance with state law or policy the central office staff will work with the Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO) to:
      - **Incident 1:** Provided targeted technical assistance.
      - **Incident 2:** If concerns continue to persist, then BRO will request a corrective action plan from the county agency.
      - **Incident 3:** If concerns continue to persist, then DSP will consider fiscal with holdings.
    - ii. If any of the above mentioned behaviors are identified as actions of a Child Placing Agency (CPA), the BPOHC staff will refer the situation to Child Welfare Licensing Staff for enforcement.
      - **Incident 1:** written letter to cease actions not in compliance.
      - **Incident 2:** citation and the CPA will no longer be able to accept new placements until a “Plan of Correction” is filed and accepted by DCF.
      - **Incident 3:** citation and possible revocation process.
      - Note: Financial penalties and the Right to Appeal may apply as allowed by state statute and administrative rule.

- iii. If the Division finds a foster parent is threatening “notice to remove the child” based on rate setting alone, the Division will request the foster care licensing agency to:
- **Incident 1:** provide a verbal warning to the foster parent of the requirement pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code s. DCF 56.05\(7\)\(a\)10](#), s. [DCF 56.23](#), and review the Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting Policy and discuss with foster parents how rates are established. If there is a concern on reliance of foster care maintenance to support the foster parent, then this shall include the prohibition on reliance on the foster care maintenance payments to support their own financial needs. Evaluate the appropriateness of continuing a foster care license.
  - **Incident 2:** provide a written notice of violations pursuant to [Wis. Admin Code s. DCF 56.05\(7\)\(a\)10](#), s. [DCF 56.23](#). Complete an [Out-of- Home Care Support Plan DCF-F-CFS2130-E](#) and evaluate the appropriateness of continuing a foster care license.
  - **Incident 3:** Place the home on hold, complete an [Out-of- Home Care Support Plan DCF-F-CFS2130-E](#) and evaluate the appropriateness of continuing a foster care license.

Note: If a licensing action is taken against the foster parent they shall be provided the right to appeal pursuant to [Wis. Admin. Code ch. DCF 56](#).

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please call the Division of Safety and Permanence at (608) 266-8787. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department.