


STATE OF WISCONSIN
Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Children and Family Services

DCFS Memo Series 2008 - 01
January 11, 2008
Re: FOSTER PARENT
TRAINING AND FEDERAL
TITLE IV-E REIMBURSEMENT

Supersedes DCFS Memo 2002-12

To: Area Administrators/ Human Services Area Coordinators
Bureau Directors
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities
Services Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Indian Child Welfare Directors
Licensing Chiefs/Section Chiefs
Tribal Chairpersons/Human Services Facilitators

From: Reggie Bicha 
Administrator

All children placed in out-of home care deserve well-trained and supported foster families. In order to develop the knowledge and skills of foster families, the Foster Parent Training Committee, established by the Wisconsin Training Council and the statewide Out-of-Home Care Committee, is revising foster parent training resources to create Pre-Placement, Foundation, and Ongoing Training for foster families. This memo explains the revisions to foster parent training resources and Title IV-E reimbursement.

Background

At this time, more than 37 counties are implement competency-based foster parent training, delivered by child welfare staff and foster parent co-trainers that meets the criteria to receive Title IV-E pass-through reimbursement as Pre-Service training. The Foster Parent Training Committee distributed surveys to foster care agencies across the state to determine the number of agencies providing training to foster parents, the manner in which training is provided, and the type of curriculum being used.

Using the results of that survey, committee members evaluated the use of existing foster parent training resources and current policy regarding foster parent Pre-Service training outlined in Memo DCFS-2002-12. The revisions to the existing foster parent training resources were developed based upon survey results that indicated many agencies were providing training, but often after a foster family was licensed and after they received a placement. The revisions are explained below.

Revisions to Foster Parent Training Resources

The Foster Parent Training Committee recommended defining three specific phases of training in order to maximize the benefits of training, increase the provision of training across the state, and standardize the training provided to foster parents:

Document Summary

This memo outlines the definitions of Title IV-E reimbursable competency based Pre-Placement, Foundation, and Ongoing training for foster parents. A successful application will result in Title IV-E reimbursement for agencies to assist in the provision of training for foster parents.

PHASE 1:

Pre-Placement Training for foster parents begins prior to the prospective foster parents becoming licensed and must be completed prior to a child being placed in the foster home. Pre-Placement training ranges from 6-15 hours and includes specific competency areas: Agency Systems, Laws, and Process; System Expectations of Foster Parents; and Information Needed by Foster Parents (See the Appendix: Pre-Placement Training Competency Areas for further explanation). The materials include enhanced versions of the Pre-service competencies, an overview of the entire Pre-Service competencies, a basic knowledge of Ch. HFS 56, Adm. Code, licensing requirements and information from the Foster Parent Handbook. The Pre-Placement materials allow agencies to include agency specific information in their training delivery.

PHASE 2:

Foundation Training is completed within the first 24 months of licensure. The Foundation Training materials are an enhanced version of the Pre-Service competencies and curriculum. The length of time, competency areas, and training materials are currently in development and will be piloted during calendar year 2008. The Foundation Training should be finalized by the beginning of 2009.

PHASE 3:

Ongoing Training is the Foster Parent Training Committee's focus for 2008 and policies will be provided in a subsequent memo.

The committee also recommended the development of training materials that are consistent and accessible to agencies statewide. The materials were designed to be used either in a group setting or with individual foster families and to use a flexible delivery format that includes using foster parents as co-trainers or educational resources when co-trainers are not available. The intent of co-training is to encourage connections, support, and resource networks among foster parents.

The training materials and curriculum for each phase of training will be developed, piloted, and finalized in stages over the next two years. The Pre-Placement Training materials for foster parents were piloted and finalized this year. The Foundation Training materials will be piloted by a number of counties beginning in February 2008, and finalized and disseminated by the beginning of 2009. The committee will begin to look at Ongoing Training and materials beginning in 2008 and will make recommendations on materials and pilot them during 2009.

The materials for the Pre-Placement Training will be distributed by the Training Partnerships following the issuance of this memo. All county agencies and child placing agencies will receive a copy of the trainers manual and the participant manual from the training partnerships. The tribes will receive copies through the Indian Child Welfare Training Partnership. Only county agencies are able to apply for Title IV-E Foster Parent Training Reimbursement funding. An electronic copy of the Pre-Placement Training materials will be posted to the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center website under the Professionals Tab, under Training and Other Useful Resources as linked at the end of this memo. The electronic version of the materials will be available in February.

The Foster Parent Training Committee will continue to seek feedback every two years on each of the training phases and materials. The feedback will inform updates to the curriculum and materials allowing the trainings to stay current with agency and foster parent needs, DHFS policies, and best practices.

Title IV-E Reimbursement

Federal funding is available under Title IV-E for training costs to prepare new persons to be foster and adoptive parents and to support ongoing learning for existing foster parents. As the revisions to foster

parent training resources are finalized, the Division will revise the application process for Title IV-E funding to include Foundation and Ongoing Training, as well as the Pre-Placement Training.

Reimbursable activities must be directly related to the preparation or delivery of training to qualify for Title IV-E reimbursement.

The Division will continue to allow pass-through funding for counties who were previously approved for the Pre-Service curriculum while the Pre-Placement and Foundation Trainings are being modified, piloted, and implemented. Agencies that choose to provide the previous method of foster parent training will also continue to receive reimbursement if they provide the training before foster parents receive placements. Counties piloting the revised curriculum will also be able to request Title IV-E pass-through funds.

The Division has revised the existing application process to allow counties to request federal Title IV-E funding for the new Pre-Placement Training. The attached application includes critical components of training for foster parents as recommended by foster parents, as well as county, state, and private child placing agencies.

The fiscal information for the IV-E reimbursement is attached to this memo with instructions for submitting an application that meets the required criteria. For calendar year 2008, reimbursement will be provided at 40% for approved training programs. Reimbursement rates will be dependent upon the federal penetration rate. The requirements for match and the contract procedures are explained in the attachment.

Agencies must submit completed applications by March 31st of 2009. Once an application is approved, Title IV-E reimbursement can be claimed for allowable activities retroactively to the first of this year.

Thank you for your commitment to Wisconsin's foster and adoptive parents.

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT

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