



Understanding the Uniform Foster Care Rate

The Uniform Foster Care Rate for Wisconsin's foster care programs was established in pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 48.62(4), to provide consistency in foster care payments. The basic maintenance rates are intended to provide for the basic costs of raising a child in out-of-home care. 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.

There are four parts of the Uniform Foster Care Rate:

Basic Maintenance Rate: a fixed monthly payment intended to cover the costs of caring for the child including food, clothing, shelter, personal care, transportation, recreation, and other expenses.

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 child that exceed typical child development and expectations.

Exceptional Rate*: an additional payment to support the care of a child whose level of needs are above and beyond what is covered by the basic and supplemental portion of the foster care rate. One example of an exceptional rate inclusion is a monthly payment of \$100/child when siblings are placed together in the same home.

Initial Clothing Allowance*: an allowance for the actual cost of clothing needed by a child upon initial entry into out-of-home care or if it has been at least four months since the child was last in out-of-home care. The allowance may not exceed the maximum amount for the child's age. Periodic clothing allowances, such as for seasonal clothing, are not allowed. An amount is included in the Basic Maintenance Rate for this purpose each month.

*Only providers certified above Level One are eligible to receive.

Initial Clothing Allowance

Child Age 0-4	up to \$225
Child Age 5-11	up to \$263
Child Age 12-18	up to \$300

Basic Maintenance Rates Effective January 1, 2026

Kinship Care (child of any age)	\$384
Foster Parent Certified at Level 1 (child of any age)	\$384
Foster Parent Certified Above Level 1 (based on age of child)	See below
Child Age 0-4	\$452
Child Age 5-11	\$495
Child Age 12-14	\$562
Child Age 15-18	\$586

Guidelines for use of the Basic Rate

These specific breakdowns by food, clothing, housing, and personal care, and other expenses are based on the cost of raising a child as calculated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Because the cost of raising a child is more than the amount provided through the Basic Maintenance Rate, these percentages provide only a guide for foster parents. The figures presented are percentages of the Basic Maintenance Rate received for a child in the designated age group.

FOOD		HOUSING	
Age 0 to 4:	17 to 30%	Age 0 to 4:	48 to 58%
Age 5 to 11:	26 to 33%	Age 5 to 11:	Approx. 43%
Age 12 to 14:	Approx. 33%	Age 12 to 14:	Approx. 39%
Age 15+	Approx. 33%	Age 15+	Approx. 36%
CLOTHING		PERSONAL CARE AND OTHER EXPENSES*	
Age 0 to 4:	Approx. 6%	Age 0 to 4:	Approx. 18%
Age 5 to 11:	Approx. 8%	Age 5 to 11:	Approx. 19%
Age 12 to 14:	Approx. 11%	Age 12 to 14:	Approx. 17%
Age 15+	Approx. 13%	Age 15+	Approx. 17%

*Other expenses include but are not limited to haircuts, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and school supplies.

How are the Supplemental and Exceptional Rates determined?

The Supplemental Rate is determined by the child welfare professional gathering information about the child's emotional, behavioral, and medical needs. This information is used in an assessment tool that determines the level of care the child requires and identifies the needs of the child. The level of care and the identified needs of the child establishes the Supplemental Rate.

The Exceptional Rate is an additional payment to support the care of a child who may need additional supports that the reimbursements through the Basic and Supplemental Rates do not provide.

The Uniform Foster Care Rate recommendation shall be made within 30 days after the child's placement in the foster home and no less than every 6 months thereafter. A child's Supplemental and Exceptional Rates may change as their needs change. The monthly payment for the combined Basic Maintenance Rate, Supplemental Rate, and Exceptional Rate may not exceed \$2,000.

What if foster parents do not agree with the rate?

Foster parents may ask that the rate be re-determined at any time. Foster parents may talk about their concerns with the rate setter and the agency director. If foster parents still disagree with the rate, they may appeal through the fair hearing process. The agency director or Foster Care Coordinator will tell foster parents how to ask for a fair hearing.

More questions?

Contact the Child Welfare Professional or Foster Care Coordinator for further explanations. For more information on the Uniform Foster Care Rate, visit DCF's webpage at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/fostercare/ufcr>.

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