

Clothing Vouchers

This article addresses the policy concerning clothing allowances for children in foster care or group home settings. Hopefully, you will find the following information helpful.

It is the responsibility of the foster parent or group home setting to provide the standard clothing inventory for children while they are in their program and when they leave their program. Clothing is expected to be adequate, appropriate, in reasonable shape and to fit the child. Parents of children in out of home care will also be encouraged to provide the child's clothing and to contribute to the clothing for their child. Children placed directly in foster homes or group homes after initial removal from their home will have the standard clothing allowance. The provider will maintain an inventory of the child's clothing.

The standard clothing allowance consists of:

7 pairs of socks	5 shirts
7 sets of underwear, 3 bras (girls)	1 seasonal coat
5 pairs of pants	2 pairs of shoes

1. Initial Clothing Purchases

If a child entering out-of-home care doesn't have the standard clothing allowance and the parent has not provided the child's clothing, an initial clothing purchase may be made. A maximum of up to \$200.00 may be used to purchase clothing over a maximum of six months after the child comes into care from home to provide the standard clothing inventory. This authorization is based on the individual needs of the child who is entering a foster home or group home and is NOT automatically authorized for all children who are wards. If a child is placed in an emergency shelter without adequate clothing, the case manager will assess the situation and authorize the purchase of clothing needed to provide for the child for a short period of time. A ward is eligible for the initial clothing allowance, based on his/her needs, each time he/she is placed out of his/her family home. The case manager may authorize an initial clothing expenditure within these guidelines.

2. Special Clothing Allowance

The child in foster care or group home care may receive a special clothing allowance up to \$200. This may be authorized for clothing required because of:

- a. The child's sudden weight loss or gain not associated with normal growth;
- b. The child's loss of clothing due to being AWOL. The care provider and worker will assess the child's needs upon his/her return.

- c. The child's placement in a facility where clothing replacement is not in the contract or where it is not part of the expected care. This includes hospitals, residential treatment centers and treatment group homes.
- d. The child's move from one foster home, group home or medical setting if documented why the previous caregiver did not purchase or send clothing. Documentation should include that appropriate action was taken by Resource Development or other staff regarding the caregiver's failure to purchase or send clothing. (NOTE: The foster care maintenance payment is expected to include clothing replacement. Per contract, group homes are expected to provide replacement clothing.)
- e. The child's clothing was destroyed in a disaster such as a fire or flood or by vandalism, or was stolen while the child was in a facility.

This special clothing allowance may be authorized once in 12 months and only if the case manager documents that one of these situations exists. It can be authorized even if an initial clothing purchase already was provided within the same 12 months. If a child has a guardianship account with the Department, those funds should be used instead of authorizing the purchase from Department funds.

There is no policy allowing for authorization of clothing purchases due to seasonal changes or because a school year is starting. Again, the person to contact about obtaining a clothing voucher would be the child's case manager.