	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES MANUAL		<i>Effective Date</i> August 7, 2006	
	Services to Children in Substitute Care		Section 3	Subsection 8

2005-08

CHILDREN IN CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT
3.8 TRANSPORTATION
Revised 8/2006

A. PURPOSE

The purpose for and the funding of transportation of children in the care and custody of the Department is to facilitate access to services outlined in the Child Plan or Family Plan and ensure the safety, permanency, and well being of children and their families. This policy addresses when transportation is used and how travel expenses are to be reimbursed. The rate and method of reimbursement is established for each type of transportation and provider.

REASONS FOR TRAVEL


1. Transportation of Child:

Transportation of foster children is generally reimbursable when related to the case plan. For instance, reimbursement is permitted for purposes of placement, visits, health care appointments, therapy and evaluations, attendance at court, etc. Reimbursement is approved for foster parents, kinship caregivers, or others in the family network approved by the caseworker. The caseworker and the child's team should identify available community resource people who can routinely transport the child. The child can and should be transported by people who are part of his/her foster family or biological family network.

Therapeutic foster homes are responsible for all transportation of children placed in their care. Therapeutic foster parents are reimbursed by their agency, according to the terms of their contract and not directly reimbursed by the Department of Health and Human Services. Contracted transportation services are not to be used by therapeutic foster care agencies.

Use of taxis to transport children in DHHS custody is prohibited under this policy. In after hours or unusual situations, the supervisor can approve exceptions.

Children under six years of age who are not accompanied by an adult responsible for their care will not be transported by transportation agencies. An exception may be made if a volunteer driver has a pre-existing relationship with the child and became a volunteer in order to transport the child. This needs caseworker approval. If, prior to implementation of this policy, a volunteer driver has established a relationship with a child under six for whom s/he has been providing regular transportation, then with caseworker approval this driver may continue to transport this child. Foster parents

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should work with their caseworker and family team to devise a plan of transportation for children under six, including the use of the foster family’s own support system. Children who are six years old or older and who are transported by contracted transportation agencies must be seated in the front of agency vans where the driver can oversee their safety. The driver of the agency van must not allow unrelated teen-age or adult passengers to sit in the same seat as the child during the transport.

Similarly, children who are being transported by volunteer drivers may not sit in the back seat of the driver’s vehicle with unrelated teen-age or adult passengers sharing the back seat. **All efforts should be made to avoid transporting unrelated adults in the same volunteer driver’s vehicle in which children are also being transported to visits and appointments.**

Exceptions to Reimbursement for Child’s Transportation:

Transportation of children for shopping, recreational, or extracurricular activities is the responsibility of the foster parent or caregiver.


Transportation for educational purposes is the responsibility of school. Department of Health and Human Services can reimburse for unusual situations, such as in communities that do not provide transportation for high school students, tutoring, or summer school attendance. Prior approval must be given by caseworker and supervisor.

2. Transportation of Parents:

Generally, parents are to be responsible for the expenses related to visitation with their children and for services arranged as part of the case plan. While not being required to assist parents with expenses related to transportation, the Department may provide assistance when the caseworker determines that the parents are financially unable to furnish or arrange transportation.

Assistance from the Department includes (a) public transportation; (b) referral to contract transportation agencies; (c) transportation provided by a foster parent, kinship caregiver, or other person approved by the caseworker; (d) financial reimbursement to the parent at the established MaineCare rates for mileage, as well as tolls.

The caseworker will assist the parents in connecting to their local transportation agency. The local transportation agency will then determine whether the family or their support network will qualify under the “Family and Friends” category or under MaineCare eligibility for reimbursement of travel expenses. If the family is determined eligible for MaineCare reimbursement, then the “Family and Friends” category is not an option for them.

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3. Travel not Involving Transportation of Child

When approved by the caseworker and supervisor, foster parents and kinship care providers may be reimbursed for travel, which does not include transportation of the child. This may include: travel to pre-placement visits to see a child; travel to visits with a child at a hospital or residential placement prior to discharge; and travel to attend case planning, court hearings, Family Team Meetings, or PET meetings. If the foster parent is a surrogate parent, reimbursement for travel to school meetings is through the Department of Education.

B. APPROVAL OF TRAVEL

1. Within the State

The child's caseworker or supervisor may approve and authorize travel and reimbursement for travel within the state for purposes permitted in this policy.


2. Out-of-State

If the child is transported out of state by his caseworker or other Department employee or travels by himself or with another person, prior approval must be obtained from the Commissioner. To request this approval, the caseworker will submit the forms for out-of-state travel.

C. REIMBURSEMENT RATES AND PROCEDURES

1. Licensed and Unlicensed Foster Parents/Kinship Care Providers and Others in the Out – of- Home Family Network

Licensed and unlicensed foster parents/kinship care providers and others in the out –of-home family network may bill for travel which is reimbursable according to this policy. Billing is to conform to established Department of Health and Human Services procedures on the appropriate billing form (G 31 or BCFSCF-081 N0601). This is to include the billing party's name, address, and Social Security Number; the date and purpose of travel; the place of departure and destination; and the miles traveled if by automobile. This bill is to be submitted monthly to the child's caseworker. These providers will be reimbursed at the same rate per mile as Departmental employees.

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2. Parents

Assistance provided by the Department to parents for travel *is limited to* the rate of fare for public transportation or the established MaineCare rate for mileage, as well as tolls. Bills must be approved by the caseworker. Parents should never be reimbursed at a higher rate of pay than the current standard MaineCare rate per mile.

3. Department Employees

Employees submit their transportation expenses on the appropriate state travel and expense account forms. Weekend and holiday travel need the written approval of the supervisor.

The employee may also charge on his/her expense account for meals purchased for the child in the course of travel. The child's initials and case number must be indicated along with the amount on the employee's expense account. The caseworker needs to save and attach to his/her expense account billing form all receipts for the child's expenses. The employee may not bill on his/her expense account for expenditures for a child that are not directly related to the specific transportation provided to the child by the worker.

4. Public Transportation

When a child is transported by bus, Department of Health and Human Services staff may purchase the bus ticket by using a purchase order or by the provider billing the Department directly. Cost is for the amount of fare only.