

Children & Family Services / FOSTER CARE BENEFITS

Foster Care benefits provide cash aid on behalf of needy children in foster care who meet the eligibility requirements established by County, State and Federal law and regulation. Foster Care benefits are only paid when the child meets one of the conditions below:

1. The child is a ward of the Juvenile Court who is placed and supervised by the Probation Department
2. The child is a dependent of the Juvenile Court who is placed and supervised by this Department
3. The child is voluntarily placed by his/her parent through this Department
4. The child is living with a nonrelated legal guardian and is supervised by this Department

Relative caregivers may be eligible to receive foster care benefits in certain circumstances. The child must meet certain eligibility criteria.

Basic Foster Care Rates

The basic monthly amount paid for eligible children in foster family homes is based on the child's age. The rates are:

Age	Basic Monthly Rate
0-4	\$446
5-8	\$485
9-11	\$519
12-14	\$573
15-18	\$627

Difficulty of Care (DOC)

Children in foster family homes who are eligible for foster care benefits may qualify for a supplemental payment if the child requires special care above the level that the foster caregiver would normally be expected to provide for a child that age. The child's special care needs may be due to physical, emotional or behavioral problems.

The level of the payment is based on both the extent of the child's problems and what the foster caregiver is doing to help correct the problems, including how much extra time is involved. Rates in Contra Costa County range from \$5 per month to a maximum of \$1,014 per month in addition to the basic rate. Contra Costa County does not pay DOC to legal guardians.

The type and amount of specialized care rates vary by county. The rate paid is the one that applies to the county in which the child is placed.

Clothing Allowance

Children in foster care may qualify for clothing allowances. The type and amount of clothing allowances vary by county. The rate paid is the one that applies to the county in which the child is placed.

The clothing allowances in Contra Costa County as of January 1, 2008:
Initial and Supplemental allowances are \$252 for foster children of all ages. The annual clothing allowance payment is based on the child's age.

Annual Clothing Allowance			
Child's Age	0-4	5-11	12-18
Amount	\$94	\$190	\$224

Adoptions Assistance Program (AAP)

The Adoptions Assistance Program (AAP) was developed to make it easier for a family to adopt a child who would otherwise remain in long-term foster care. AAP provides cash aid to families who are willing and able to adopt a child but need financial assistance to do so. To be eligible, the child must meet one of the following conditions that make it difficult for him or her to be adopted without financial aid:

- The child is a member of a sibling group to be adopted by one family
- The child is unlikely to be adopted due to ethnic background, race, color, or language
- The child has a physical, medical, mental or emotional handicap
- The child is age three or older
- The child has adverse parental background, for example, a parent was drug addicted or suffered from a mental illness.

The AAP payment amount, plus any income available to the child (e.g., SSI) cannot be more than what would have been paid if the child had remained in foster care.

Kin-GAP

The Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment program (Kin-GAP) is a new permanency option for children in long-term foster care placements with relative caregivers who have become the child's legal guardian. To be eligible to receive a Kin-GAP payment all of the following conditions must be met:

- The child was a dependent of the Juvenile Court placed with the relative for at least 12 consecutive months before the guardianship was ordered by the Juvenile Court and before dependency was dismissed
- The social worker assessed the relative caregiver and determined that he or she no longer needed the supervision of a social worker or the Juvenile Court and was ready and able to leave the foster care system
- The relative guardianship was ordered by the Juvenile Court
- The juvenile court dependency was dismissed on or after January 1, 2000
- The child is a US citizen, US national or has lawful immigration status

Kin-GAP payments are equal to the basic foster care rate for the county in which the child resides. Children receiving Kin-GAP are eligible to Difficulty of Care (DOC) only if they were in receipt of it while in foster care. Children receiving Kin-GAP are now eligible to receive clothing allowances.