REFERENCE GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

POLICY REFERENCES:

A. Enhancement Policy Manual (EPM)
B. Edmonton Region Child and Family Services Regional Guidelines and Procedures
C. Caregiver Rate Schedule FC1263

PROGRAM:

Foster Care/Kinship Care – Edmonton Region Child and Family Services

This guide was developed to clarify support and services to caregivers providing service in the Edmonton Region. The information contained is Ministry policy, with regional practices included. This guide will be distributed to all Edmonton Region caregivers and Child and Family Services staff.

This guide replaces the FINANCIAL MATTERS LETTER 06-02-04.

The term ‘caregiver’ references foster parents, foster to adopt parents, kinship caregivers and adoptive applicants with a child placed in their home under Pre-Placement adoption.
STANDARDS

Service descriptions include the Provincial and/or Regional standards or rates.

COST SHARING

It is the expectation of the Ministry that the child’s caseworker will explore cost sharing with biological parents. In cases where it is the responsibility of the biological parent to obtain specific items, the child’s caseworker will provide the caregiver with information on how the item can be obtained. Older teens may be asked as part of their transitional plan to cover a portion of cost for specific items. This would be done in order to learn about budgeting and planning.

EXCEPTIONS

If a child needs a service that is not discussed in this handbook or that costs more than the standard, exceptions must be approved by the supervisor or manager authorized to approve the exception.

The supervisor or manager must consider:
- the benefit to the child
- other sources of funding
- the cost

When making requests for exceptions it is important that the child's caseworker has examined the benefits and alternatives to the best of their ability to ensure that the supervisor or manager has adequate information to make a reasonable decision.

BASIC MAINTENANCE RATES (EPM Section 2, Chapter 2.4/ 3.3.6) (Caregiver Rate Schedule FC1263)

Basic maintenance and skill fees are paid to Child and Family Services (CFS) foster parents, and basic maintenance only is paid to CFS kinship caregivers, each month automatically through the Region’s Neighbourhood Centres.

Basic Maintenance is a per diem rate paid to foster parents and kinship caregivers to cover all of a child’s day to day needs. Basic maintenance is paid for every day a child is in the home including the day of arrival and the day of removal. Items to be purchased by a caregiver using the basic maintenance include:
- food;
- clothing;
- personal care items (toiletries and hair care products);
- general household costs (wear and tear, cleaning, paper supplies, insurance);
• spending allowance (minor recreation, toys, magazines, records and gifts); and
• gifts to the foster/kinship child and gifts from the foster/kinship child to other family members.

Some of these categories (e.g. clothing, spending allowance) have minimum amounts that the caregiver is required to allocate from their basic maintenance on a monthly or weekly basis for the child. These amounts are outlined in this document under their specific headings.

The basic maintenance rates effective April 1, 2014 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Per Diem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>$23.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>$23.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>$26.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>$27.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>$31.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>$35.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Food**

The caregiver supplies a nourishing diet using the basic maintenance. When a special diet is required for a child at a doctor's direction, a medical note is required as over and above cost incurred are typically approved as a separate item or are included in the special rates. The caseworker for the child will ensure that cost incurred is covered under one of these methods.

**Clothing**

Clothing inventory should be completed to ensure the child has an adequate wardrobe when placed. Initial costs to bring the wardrobe to the standard set by the Region are covered with prior approval. The costs for CFS foster/kinship homes are either covered by re-imbursement of caregiver’s expenditures or by providing a Purchase Authorization (CS0018C) and Invoice to the caregivers to purchase wardrobe items. For Agency homes, agency reimbursement guidelines apply. Outcome Based Service Delivery (OBSD) sites may have their own process for reimbursement and their guidelines would apply.

Regional Policy 3126-5 Clothing to Standard – For a child or youth in which the director has assumed responsibility for the provision and maintenance of clothing, the caseworker, caregiver(s), family of origin and/or the youth themselves (whenever possible) all have a shared responsibility to ensure an acceptable wardrobe exists and is maintained. The maximum dollar amount to bring the clothing to standard is as follows:

| Infants to 1 year | Up to $300.00 |
| 1 – 6 years       | Up to $400.00 |
| 7-17 years        | Up to $600.00 |

After clothing is brought to standard, the caregiver maintains it using the basic maintenance.
The basic maintenance includes the following clothing allowance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Per Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>$26.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>$37.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>$49.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>$68.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>$70.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the child requires clothing after clothing has been brought to standard because of atypical growth, a handicap or behaviour has caused exceptional wear, or the child has moved without adequate clothing, the casework supervisor may approve issue of supplemental clothing. Supplemental clothing is not necessarily approved at the maximum amount of the initial clothing to standard.

**Personal Care**

The caregiver supplies personal care items such as toiletries and hair care products using the basic maintenance.

**Spending Allowances**

Spending money for expenses such as minor recreation, toys, magazines and tapes/CDs, etc. is allotted in the basic maintenance. Spending allowance may be paid directly to child if appropriate. A discussion with the caseworker should occur in regards to the use of these funds. Caregivers may also encourage an older child to earn money in other ways as long as school performance does not suffer. The basic maintenance includes the following spending allowance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>$6.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>$15.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The caregiver may not withhold the spending allowance from a child as a consequence.

**Household**

The caregiver uses the basic maintenance to cover the child's share of general household costs such as wear and tear, cleaning and paper supplies, toiletries, vitamins and insurance.

**Christmas/ Birthday Gifts**

The caregiver purchases the gift from the basic maintenance unless the child was placed after October 31. If the child was placed after October 31, the caregiver is entitled to be reimbursed with a receipt by completing the Child Maintenance Invoice (CS0011) or Purchase Authorization and Invoice (CS0018C) unless the previous caregiver forwarded a
gift. For Agency homes, agency reimbursement guidelines apply. For OBSD sites, their guidelines will apply.

The rates are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>$21.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>$25.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>$29.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>$33.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>$38.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-18</td>
<td>$42.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18+</td>
<td>$46.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a child is placed in a placement less than 2 months prior to the child’s birthday, the caregiver is to be reimbursed for the gift at the same rates listed above.

**INFANT CARE COSTS** (EPM Section 2, Chapter 3.3.6) (Caregiver Rate Schedule FC1263)

Foster parents will be reimbursed $150 per child per month for the costs of formula, diapers and basic baby care supplies (baby clothing and items such as bottles, soothers, bunting bags etc.). Prior approval is not required. Foster parents will submit their expenses with receipts to the child’s caseworker. Items specific to the child will go with the child if the child moves from the home.

Kinship care providers will be reimbursed with receipts for the costs of formula, diapers and other basic baby expenses through the Kinship Care Support Plan [FC3899]. If this causes financial difficulties, the caseworker will arrange to pay these costs directly.

**PAYMENT OF PURCHASED SERVICES FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES CAREGIVERS AND AGENCY CAREGIVERS** (EPM Section 1, Chapter 9.5.2)

Child and Family Services (CFS) Caregivers

Reimbursements can be claimed by using the Child Maintenance Invoice (CS0011) whenever a caregiver is required to pay “up front” for eligible expenditures. Many expenditures require prior authorization by the appropriate caseworker. Such authorization might be given in written, electronic or verbal form. If authorization is given verbally, caregivers should note the date, approval amount and the person authorizing the expenditure. Without appropriate authorization, payment might be delayed or possibly refused.

The caregiver must complete the Child Maintenance Invoice (CS0011) and attach any receipts as well as any written authorizations provided. The caregiver then submits the invoice and documentation to the child’s caseworker for payment processing. Caregivers are encouraged to submit claims as accurately and promptly as possible, preferably monthly. This will help to ensure
that reimbursements occur in a timely manner.

In some circumstances the child’s caseworker may provide a Purchase Authorization (CS0018C), a voucher, which the caregiver can then use to obtain goods or services from a vendor.

**Agency Caregivers**

The caregiver speaks to their Foster Care or Kinship caseworker in regards to requests they are seeking or have received approval from the child’s caseworker. The agency will complete an Over and Above approval form to be sent to the child’s caseworker for written approval. The caregiver will provide the receipt to the agency for reimbursement.

In some circumstances the child’s caseworker may provide a Purchase Authorization (CS0018C), a voucher, which the caregiver can then use to obtain goods or services from a vendor. This may be used for CFS and Agency caregivers.

**Note:** OBSD sites may have a different process in place for payment of purchased services. Caregivers will be informed if the file is with an OBSD site and they will follow the process identified by that site for payment of purchased services.

**INITIAL START UP COSTS** (EPM Section 2, Chapter 3.3.6) (Caregiver Rate Schedule FC1263) (Regional Policy 3168-04)

If foster parents accept the placement of a child outside of their current matching criteria, they may be eligible for compensation of costs associated with any equipment or supplies necessary to facilitate or support the placement, with the caseworker’s approval.

**Regional Policy 3168-04 - Initial Foster Care Placement Allowance**

The following information speaks to the intent to provide foster parents and kinship providers with an initial placement allowance to ensure they are able to meet the immediate necessities of children and youth placed in their care. These purchases may be paid up front by the foster parents or kinship provider or a Purchase Authorization (CS0018C) may be provided.

1. When a child is placed in a foster home/kinship home as his/her initial foster care/kinship care placement, foster parents/kinship parents are authorized to spend up to a maximum of $600 (per child/youth) **without prior approval** from the child or youth’s caseworker. Foster parents/kinship parents are required to submit all receipts for purchases made using this funding.
2. To be spent on one-time acquisitions and is not for recurring expenses.
3. Items that are child or youth specific belong to the child or youth. Items that are purchased to support the placement may remain in the home after the child or youth has been moved.
4. The foster care caseworker/kinship worker should be consulted in regards to the disbursement of the allowance in order to help support appropriate policy compliance and the acquisition of required items.
5. The initial foster care/kinship care placement allowance includes the funds available to foster parents/kinship parents that are provided to meet immediate clothing need. Purchases with respect to bringing clothing up to standard must be done in conjunction with Regional Directive 3126-5 Clothing to Standard. (see Clothing section on page 15 of this handbook).

6. To cover the cost of school related expenses including school supplies.

7. The following items may be covered - strollers, high chairs, car seats, booster seats, change tables, beds, age specific toys, birthday gifts and personal incidentals, if the foster parent/kinship parent does not normally care for children in that age group.

8. The following items/services are not covered – respite, travel costs, eye glasses, electronic games or consoles, computers, recreation fees or equipment.

9. If Edmonton Region foster parents/kinship parents are paying for the item or services they must submit their receipts for reimbursement using a Child Maintenance Invoice (CS 0011). Items purchased using this $600 allocation are to be coded using the Initial Placement Allowance coding 5270120 on the invoice. Receipts are to be submitted no later than the first 10 days of the following month. If they are an Agency or OBSD foster home/kinship home, their reimbursement guidelines apply.

Note: Kinship costs may be higher depending on an assessment of need and are to be determined on an as needed basis.

Note: A child returning into care after 1 year will again be eligible to access the Initial Foster Care/Kinship Care Placement Allowance.

Note: This Regional Policy and the Infant Care Initial Expenses identified in Provincial Policy CANNOT be combined.

Infant Care Initial Expenses

Foster parents will be reimbursed with receipts for baby equipment up to a maximum of $500 when an infant (aged 0-36 months) is placed in their foster home. Foster parents may require initial or additional baby equipment in order to accept an infant placement, including a crib, car seat, baby monitor, change table, high chair and/or stroller (or a similar item). The equipment is intended to ready the foster home placement for additional infants and in most cases would remain in the foster home when the child leaves.

Kinship care providers will be reimbursed with receipts for baby equipment and other initial baby expenses through the Kinship Care Support Plan [FC3899]. If this causes financial difficulties, the caseworker will arrange to pay these costs directly.

Note: Regional Policy 3168-04 Initial Foster Care Placement Allowance and Infant Care Initial Expenses identified in Provincial Policy CANNOT be combined.
RECREATION, VACATION/CAMP FUNDS (Section 1, Chapter 9.4.3, 9.4.4, Section 2, Chapter 2.4 & 3.3.6) (Caregiver Rate Schedule FC1263)

Recreation

The purpose of recreational activities is to encourage active involvement and socialization, and could include activities considered “hobbies,” depending on interest, capacity and ability to be involved in active–like recreational activities. Some flexibility needs to be considered when a child or youth requests items such as gaming consoles, computers, digital media devices, theater tickets, and so on. These discussions need to occur at a Service Team Meeting or POST meeting with the caseworker, foster care/kinship caseworker and the foster/kinship parent present. The discussion should take into consideration the caregivers understanding of the needs and interests of the child.

Funding is allocated every fiscal year to support children in care to participate in healthy social and recreational activities. The funding levels are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-11 years</td>
<td>$675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17 years</td>
<td>$775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Requests which exceed the recreation allowance require prior approval by the manager responsible for the child’s file.

Recreation requests, regardless of the child’s age, should be consistent with their current developmental stage and reflect the emotional age of the child. Requests must be feasible and should address the specific needs of the child from a social, emotional, behavioral and developmental perspective.

The requested activity must be of interest to the child and must benefit them.

If an item is obtained using a child’s recreation allowance, that item belongs to the child.

As part of the planning for recreation, consideration should be given to any additional costs associated with the requested activity, to determine how those costs will be funded if they exceed the recreation allowance (e.g. costumes, competition fees, extensive travel, etc.)

Mileage claims related to recreational activity are NOT to be included in the recreation allowance and are paid out separately.

Extracurricular school team sports or activities where you represent the school are considered to be part of education costs. The same applies to sporting activities that are part of the curriculum or regular school day. (Weekend ski trips/ camping trips, however, would be considered a recreation cost.)

CFS caregivers need to provide receipts for reimbursement when accessing recreation funds.
For Agency caregivers, agency reimbursement guidelines apply. For OBSD sites, their guidelines will apply.

Cultural connectedness activities are not part of recreation.

**Note:** *All children in care are entitled to recreational funding and costs within the provincially set rate and require no approval. Although approval is not required, the placement provider should inform the caseworker and placement caseworker how the recreation funds will be spent.*

**Camp and/or Vacation**

The director is committed to supporting children and youth in care to attend camp and/or participate with the caregiver family in vacation travel or activities. Once a year the placement provider may claim the annual maximum allowance for a child to attend camp or go on vacation according to the Caregiver Rate Schedule [FC1263]. $425 per child is allocated every fiscal year for this purpose. If the cost is less than the maximum allowable the remainder of the allowance may be used for another camp or vacation within that same year.

Regional caregivers use the Child Maintenance Invoice (CS0011) to claim the allowance. This invoice is submitted to their placement caseworker (Foster care/Kinship caseworker) who submits it the caseworker to pay for camp and/or vacation costs. Alternatively, regional caregivers may request that the caseworker pay the camp fees directly to the vendor via their placement caseworker (Foster Care/Kinship caseworker). For Agency homes, agency reimbursement guidelines apply. For OBSD sites, their guidelines will apply.

Caregivers are expected to discuss the camp and/or vacation plans with their service team and the placement caseworker (Foster Care or Kinship caseworker).

Caregivers are expected to provide the placement caseworker with information regarding the camp’s itinerary or activities, and the length of time the activity spans. The placement caseworker will share the information regarding the plans with the child’s caseworker for review and input.

The child’s caseworker should be consulted in regards to camp selection.

Caregivers formulate vacation plans at their own discretion. If their funding request exceeds the $425 allowance, the worksite responsible for the child’s file must determine whether to approve the additional funds. If the additional funding request exceeds $1000 for a trip within Canada or any amount over and above for a trip outside of Canada, the manager will submit the request to the Travel/Vacation review committee who will then make a recommendation to the CEO regarding the additional funding.

If caregivers opt not to take a child on vacation, they continue to receive their daily rates which they use to pay an alternate caregiver.
If caregivers are not permitted to take a child on vacation, they continue to receive their daily rates.

*Note: Recreation fund and Camp/Vacation funds can be used in any combination.*

**FOSTER CARE SUPPORT PLANS** (EPM Section 2, Chapter 3.3.5)

A Foster Care Support Plan (FC3605) is used to support the needs of a foster home to provide care to a child. Support Plans focus on supports that the foster family identifies as being needed in order to meet the child’s needs. A Support Plan must be developed in the following instances:

- The foster home is classified at Level 1 but the child has 1/3 of the areas marked off in the Level 2 category (Foster Care placement need a Scoring Chart FC3603)
- A Level 1 or 2 home has a child with 1 or 2 areas marked in the specialized category
- The child is classified at the specialized level
- The foster family and the Region identify the need for support based on the needs of the child or the needs of the foster family
- There is approval to assign placements beyond the classification guidelines for the foster home.
- Other instances as agreed to by the caseworker and the home and with the approval of a supervisor

**Procedure:** When it is determined that a home requires a Support Plan, the Support Plan is negotiated by the foster care caseworker, child’s caseworker and the foster parent. In situations where the needs are complex other service team members and the casework supervisor may attend.

- Supports and services provided through the Support Plan must be in accordance with other policies of the foster care program and regional guidelines
- The Region will have financial responsibility for the services provided unless other arrangements are agreed to with the foster parents
- Final approval of the Support Plan is by an expenditure officer
- Support Plans are to be reviewed prior to the end date or at the POST meeting

In the circumstances of denial of a Support Plan by an expenditure officer, foster parents can request a review by the manager of the caseworker. If the matter cannot be resolved at the worksite level, the foster parents can file a Request for an Administrative Review as per legislation and policy.

When completing a Support Plan please consider the following services which may be included but not limited to:

- Child Care
- Youth Worker
- Aid (1-1)
- In Home Support
Specialized Services (i.e. Family Home Program) are available for children who present with severe disabilities and/or multiple needs and medically fragile. Long-term arrangements and short-term relief care to accommodate the needs of severely disabled, medically fragile children and their families is available through the Family Home Program. A Multi-Disciplinary Team is part of the review of complex cases and assists in determining services that are appropriate to the health and developmental needs of the child. These services include respite services, aide supports, child care supports and health-related supports.

KINSHIP SUPPORT PLANS (EPM Section 2, Chapter 2.4)

A Kinship Care Support Plan (FC3899) must be developed for ALL kinship homes. They must be developed to assist kinship caregivers in meeting the needs of the children in their home.

Procedure: Upon placement, initial and ongoing supports are identified and documented in the Kinship Support Plan (FC3899). The plan is negotiated by the kinship care worker, the child's caseworker and the kinship caregiver. In situations where the needs are complex other service team members and the casework supervisor may attend.

As per EPM Section 2, Chapter 3.3.6 and the Foster Care Rate Schedule FC1263, if a kinship caregiver is requesting funds for infant care initial expenses or infant care costs, this must be negotiated in a support plan.

When completing a Kinship Care Support Plan the following supports and services can be considered which may be included but not limited to:

- **Initial Supports**
  Initial supports may include safety expenses, start-up costs (i.e. crib, beds, dressers, clothing, car seats, food, baby monitors, high chair, and stroller).

- **On-going Supports**
  Ongoing supports may include child care, youth work, one-to-one aides, in-home support, training, cultural advisor/support, a homemaker, exceptional recreation, counselling/assessment, transportation (drivers), formula, diapers and respite.

- **Additional Supports**
  Ongoing informal supports should be identified in the support plan such as the family's
existing support systems, monthly face-to-face contact, increased contact with the home, how and when contact will occur, and child-specific training, etc.

Also to consider:

- Supports and services provided through the Support Plan must be in accordance with other policies of the foster care program and regional guidelines
- The Region will have financial responsibility for the services provided unless other arrangements are agreed to with the foster parents
- Final approval of the Support Plan is by an expenditure officer
- Support Plans are to be reviewed prior to the end date

In the circumstances of denial of a Support Plan by an expenditure officer, kinship caregivers can request a review by the manager of the caseworker. If the matter cannot be resolved at the worksite level, the caregiver can file a Request for an Administrative Review as per legislation and policy.

**TRANSPORTATION AND MILEAGE** (EPM Section 2, Chapter 2.4 & 3.3.6) (Caregiver Rate Schedule FC1263) (Travel Reimbursement Form – Appendix A)

All child related transportation costs (mileage and parking) are reimbursed according to the same rate as Government of Alberta employees and also follow the guidelines in the Provincial CHR Regulation and the Financial Reference Manual 2009. When travel is authorized the most direct, practical and cost effective route and mode of transportation should be used.

Child related transportation includes medical appointments, recreation, cultural activities, family visits and any other transportation required pursuant to the child’s case plan. Caregivers are encouraged, as much as possible, to provide any transportation required for children in their care. The Basic Allowance that caregivers receive does not include any amount to compensate for the costs associated with transporting children, or other trips made on their behalf (e.g. attendance at meetings). The mileage for any trips undertaken solely on behalf of a child in care is to be reimbursed.

Each trip may be claimed on behalf of one child, or the mileage may be split if 2 or more children are involved in the trip. There must be discussion with the caseworker, the placement caseworker and the placement regarding the mileage for activities before they occur so that all parties are aware of the expected expense. Caregivers will be paid mileage for the trips and not gas vouchers, etc.
MEDICAL/DENTAL/OPTICAL COVERAGE/PAYMENT (EPM Section 1, Chapter 9.1.4, 9.1.11, 9.5.2, Section 2, Chapter 3.2.4)

Medical, dental and optical services are covered primarily through the child's Personal Healthcare Number (PHN) through the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP)/ or their Treatment Services Card (TSC). If the child does not have a PHN or a Treatment Services Card, the caregiver must contact the child's caseworker or after hours contact with Edmonton Crisis Unit. It is important to obtain prior approval from the child's caseworker before making any appointments or purchasing any services or supplies for the child if the caregiver does not have their PHN or their Treatment Services Card. Please note that Treatment Services Cards can only be issued for the time frame of the child’s legal status in care. At times due to court adjournments a child’s Treatment Services Card may not be up to date.

Note: Extended medical benefits are provided to children with Treaty status through the Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit Branch of Health Canada. TSC are not issued for Treaty Status children in temporary or permanent care. If the Treaty Card (or the Treaty Card number, if you do not have the physical Treaty Card) does not cover an expense, it is the responsibility of the Neighbourhood Centre to cover those costs via an Over and Above authorization if needed.

Hospital
Caregivers are to provide the hospital with the child's Personal Healthcare Number (PHN) or Treatment Services Card (TSC) to cover any hospitalization costs.

Ambulance
The child’s TSC covers the cost of ground ambulance to the nearest hospital. In the event that the child does not have a TSC and requires an ambulance in an emergency, instruct the ambulance company to invoice the Region directly and provide them with:

- the child’s full name and file number
- the child’s caseworker's name
- the district office’s mailing address

Medication/Supplies
The caregiver must obtain approval from the child's caseworker for any medical supplies or services not covered by Alberta Health or the Treatment Services Card.

The caregiver purchases any needed prescription drugs and medical supplies or services using the Treatment Service Card. If a prescription drug is not covered under the Treatment Services Card, caregivers must obtain prior approval from the child's caseworker and are asked to request the pharmacy to bill the Region directly whenever possible.

The caregiver purchases any needed non-prescription drugs using the basic maintenance.
**Infant Formula**

Some infants have medical conditions that result in difficulties absorbing fats, digesting proteins and/or utilizing essential amino acids. These infants require special formulas to meet their basic nutritional and digestive needs. Prescription formulas are costly and therefore placement providers may require additional supports to purchase them. If the Treatment Services Card or Health Canada does not cover the cost of the formula then the manager must approve an over and above request. The placement provider will submit a Child Maintenance Invoice Form [CS0011] and be reimbursed for the cost of the formula.

**Dental/ Orthodontic Coverage**

The Treatment Services Card covers the cost of dental care for a child. If the child does not have a Treatment Services Card, caregivers are to contact the child’s caseworker to inform them of the pending appointment. The Personal Healthcare Number covers the cost of any required dental surgery resulting from injuries or disease.

If the dentist recommends orthodontic work, the dentist refers the child to an orthodontist. The orthodontist diagnoses the condition and sends an estimate of the services needed to the Orthodontist Screening Committee (ADSC). If the Committee agrees with the orthodontist's recommendation, the Committee establishes the fee to be paid through the Alberta Dental Association.

**Optical Coverage**

Caregivers pay for eye examinations using the child's PHN. Caregivers pay for eyeglasses using the Treatment Services Card. The Treatment Services Card covers the cost of one pair of eyeglasses per calendar year. Please ensure that the optical store is made aware of how the eyeglasses are to be paid for.

If in the event that a child may for any reason need more than one pair of eyeglasses in one calendar year, if the child requires eyeglasses that are not covered by the Treatment Services Card, or if the child has no Treatment Services Card, approval and arrangement for payment must be obtained from the child’s caseworker prior to any purchase. When possible, arrange for the Optometrist/optical store to submit the bill to the child’s caseworker.

**Medical Services Payment when not covered by a TSC**

Payment may be necessary in situations where:

- the child does not yet have coverage
- the costs exceeds the fee schedule
- the hospital has an admission fee
- the service provider refuses a TSC
- special infant formula is prescribed by a doctor
- prosthetic equipment, appliances and wheelchairs are not covered by Alberta Aids to Daily Living
• a physician completes a Medical Report [CS0006] – a charge for filling out the form may be paid in addition to the charge for the examination
• the child does not have a TSC but requires dental work

The caregiver is to obtain prior approval from the caseworker for all services that are not covered by the child’s PHN or TSC.

With prior approval the placement providers may submit expenses for a child in their care on a Child Maintenance Invoice [CS0011]. Receipts for the purchased goods or services must be attached to the invoice.

Caseworkers may provide the caregiver with a voucher to purchase services that are not covered by the child’s PHN or TSC.

The caregiver may also request (with prior approval) that the service provider bill the caseworker directly.

BED BUGS

The Director acknowledges that the cost of exterminating bed bugs is high. In order to alleviate the concern effectively, the child’s caseworker must assess all environments the child is exposed to, in order to determine the source of the problem and also target the solution. The caregivers must contact Alberta Health Services to request that a Health Inspector assess the situation and provide an expert opinion on the best course of treatment. When intervention is required, the caregiver must gather information on related costs and contact the caseworker for approval. The cost of the treatment will covered by the director and handled on a case by case basis depending on the number of children in the home and the number of Neighbourhood Centres involved. With prior approval the cost of treatment may be invoiced directly to the Neighbourhood Centre or paid back to the caregiver via a Child Maintenance Invoice [CS0011] with receipts attached to the invoice.

If the caregiver is living in a rented home, they must report bedbug concerns to their landlord or property manager. In Alberta, (rental) property managers and landlords are required by law to hire a licensed pest control operator to address confirmed bedbug infestations. The pest control service hired by the landlord/property manager will provide instructions on properly preparing the suite.

General Tips for Bed Bug infestation:
A licensed pest control professional can be hired to inspect and address infestations. Certain treatments may only be applied by certified pest control operators.

To help eliminate bedbugs without chemicals, homeowners can:
• Machine wash bedding, curtains, rugs, towels and clothes separately in the hottest water and dry on the hottest recommended cycle.
• Dry clean materials if needed and alert the dry cleaner of any infested clothing.
• Store clean items in plastic bags.
• Scrub mattress seams with a stiff brush to dislodge bedbugs and their eggs.
• Remove bedbugs and eggs from mattresses, bed frames, furniture, floors, and carpets, using a vacuum cleaner. Discard the used vacuum bag in a sealed plastic bag immediately after clean-up.
• Repair or seal cracks in the wall and repair loose wallpaper.

For more information and tips on how to treat bed bug infestations, caregivers can call HealthLink Alberta, toll-free, at 1-866-408-5465.

LICE

The treatment of lice can vary from situation to situation. There are some lotions, shampoos and conditioners covered by the child’s Treatment Services Card but issues may arise when the lice becomes chronic and cannot be brought under control without support. In order to alleviate the concern effectively, the child’s caseworker must assess all environments the child is exposed to in order to determine the source of the problem as well as to target the solution. The caregivers must contact Alberta Health Services to obtain an expert opinion on the best course of action. If the cost of the treatment is not covered by the child’s Treatment Services Card, any additional costs will be covered by the director and handled on a case by case basis depending on the number of children in the home and the number of Neighborhood Centers involved. Outside support resources such as Nit Pickers, homecare, etc., must be approved via a Support Plan.

Caregivers must consult with a medical professional for treatment options for children ages 2 and under. The safety of head lice medications has not been tested in children 2 years of age and under.

For more information and tips on how to treat lice, caregivers can call HealthLink Alberta, toll-free, at 1-866-408-5465.

EDUCATION (EPM Section 1, Chapter 9.2, Section 2, Chapter 3.3.6)

School Transportation

If a child is in a school board operated program, the Department of Education is responsible for transportation costs. However, there may be exceptional circumstances requiring CFS to support a child’s transportation to and from school. This is to be discussed with the caseworker and decisions regarding payment for school transportation would be made on a case by case basis depending on the exceptional circumstance for the child.

Educational Expenses

CFS pays for supplies, fees and text book rentals for children in care. Payment is made based on the actual cost of the service or supply with the provision that these costs are deemed
reasonable by the caseworker and their supervisor.

Edmonton Region caregivers can pay for these supplies/fees/textbook rentals and submit receipts through a Child Maintenance Invoice (CS0011) to the caseworker for reimbursement. For Agency caregiver, agency reimbursement guidelines apply. For OBSD sites, their guidelines apply. They may also choose to have the school the child is attending bill the caseworker’s office directly.

With prior approval from the caseworker, costs covered can include:
- Bus passes;
- text rentals;
- field trip fees;
- school pictures;
- examination fees;
- Mathematical Calculator (Grade 10);
- student union and locker fees;
- indoor and outdoor footwear for physical education programs;
- needed supplies appropriate for the child’s grade level (as per the supply list provide by the school including a back pack);
- special lunch events;
- specialized or course specific supplies; or
- recreational or cultural courses if the student also takes credit courses.

**Educational Trips**

Prior to approving payment for a school-approved student exchange program, out of province/country travel/activity or school trip outside of normal school hours, the caseworker must be consulted and approval must be given. The following will be considered prior to approving:
- Activity is a requirement for a course and is not supplemental (cost to be paid under education)
- The cost
- Whether the child will participate in any organized fund-raising project
- Contributions by the child
- Contributions by the parent
- Use of recreation allowance for sports or band trips
- The appropriateness for the child’s development
- The community standard
- Out of province/country approval required

**Graduation (Regional Policy 3260-5 Graduation Expenses)**

Graduation costs for a child graduating from a junior or senior high or post-secondary program are covered as follows:
- Grade 9: up to $400 for costs and $100 for a gift
- Grade 12: up to $800 for costs and $250 for a gift
Post-secondary up to $800 for costs and $300 for a gift

Graduation costs can include graduation attire, hair and makeup, photos and dinner.

Edmonton Region caregivers can be reimbursed for approved costs by providing receipts attached to a completed Child Maintenance Invoice (CS0011) or with prior approval have the costs billed directly to the caseworker’s office by the service providers. For Agency caregivers, agency reimbursement guidelines apply. For OBSD sites, their guidelines will apply. These rates apply to all children in care regardless of placement type.

**Tutor**

The caregiver needs to contact the child’s caseworker to obtain approval for a tutor. Prior to approving a tutor a letter of support will be required by the educational program the child attends that identifies learning needs and how a tutor can address these needs. Alternatives such as a volunteer, peer tutor, after hours teacher assistance must be explored before authorization is given for a tutor. Tutors are paid as per the Fee for Service guidelines.

**Pre-school/Daycare**

Playschool/daycare costs may be covered in order to meet the child’s developmental needs. If a child is identified as requiring additional support for developmental and/or social needs a discussion will occur between the caregiver and caseworker. The caseworker will seek approval and once approval is given the caregiver will arrange for registration. Pre-school/daycare programs can bill the caseworker’s office directly or an CFS caregiver can submit receipts monthly by completing a Child Maintenance Invoice (CS0011) form. For Agency homes, agency reimbursement guidelines apply. For OBSD sites, their guidelines will apply. In some situations pre-school/daycare can be approved under the Support Plan even if development or social needs are not the primary reasons.

**Distance/ Correspondence Learning**

The caseworker will consult with the local educational program in order to determine if this method of education will meet the child’s needs. Once approval is given the caseworker will cover the cost of the programs and needed supplies.

**Summer School**

The caseworker must approve cost for summer school. Discussion regarding enrolment in summer school would occur at a Service Team Meeting.

**Private School/ Special Interest School**

Discussions regarding enrolling a child in a private or special interest school will occur prior to placement or at Service Team Meeting. If more than one child in the home is being considered for enrolment, the discussion is to occur at a Placement Oriented Service Team (POST) meeting. Consideration must be given to the role of the Department of Education to covering the cost for the program. Transportation to the school program must also be taken into consideration. Approval is provided by the caseworker’s office manager.
**Post-Secondary**

Post-Secondary schooling is part of the youth’s transition planning. Options for funding include Advancing Futures Bursary, Alberta Foster Parent Association (AFPA) Bursary and other sources of funding such as grants. The caregivers and youth will explore with the caseworker all funding available to youth as they reach the age of majority.

**DRIVER’S LICENSE/ DRIVER TRAINING** (EPM Section 1, Chapter 9.3.3 and Section 2, Chapter 2.4 & 3.3.6)

Appropriate consent must be obtained for a child in the care of the director to obtain a license to operate a vehicle. Any child requires the consent of a guardian to obtain a class seven learner’s driver’s license. Consent is not required for obtaining a class five driver’s license as the consent provided at the time of obtaining a learner’s license remains sufficient.

Driver Training may be approved after considering the benefits for the child. Payment for a driving course must be through an accredited driving school and prior approval will be required by the caseworker. If approved, cost for the driving course will be covered.

Caregivers must investigate the cost of insurance in having a young person with a driver’s licence in their home. Additional cost for insurance can be negotiated in the child’s concurrent plan.

**APPROVED ABSENCE) / APPROVED TEMPORARY ABSENCES** (EPM Section 1, Chapter 7.3.4, Section 2, Chapter 3.3.6) (Regional Policy 3168-6 Approved Temporary Absence from Foster Care as a Result of a Placement Resource Investigation)

The foster parents/kinship care providers are eligible to receive basic maintenance and skill fees (foster parents only) during a child’s approved temporary absence from the placement, providing the intent is for the child to return to the placement and excluding foster parent/kinship parent relief or holidays. Temporary absences include hospitalization, extended visits, assessment and treatment programs, secure services, a youth justice placement, or when a child is removed from a foster home during an assessment of care concern. In the above-mentioned situations, the following rates will apply:

- The full basic maintenance and any skill fee (foster parent only) following the first 7 days; and
- 50% of the basic maintenance and 50% of any skill fee (foster parent only) for an additional 7 days;
- If the foster parent/kinship caregiver is actively involved with a child who is hospitalized the manager may approve an extension of maintenance and/or skill fee (foster parent only) payments.
- Under an assessment of care concern, the foster /kinship care home from which the child was removed will receive full basic maintenance and any skill fee or special rate (foster parent only) for the first 7 days following the child’s removal. After the first 7 days, the care
provider receives 50% of the basic maintenance and 50% of the skill fee or special rate up to an additional 33 days. If the approved temporary absence needs to be extended beyond the initial 40 days, authorization is required by the manager. The manager will document the length of the authorized extension in a Contact Log on the electronic information system. Payment during the authorized extension occurs at 50%.

**Absent Without Leave (AWOL)**

Where a child is AWOL, foster parents/kinship caregivers receive the basic maintenance rate and skill fee (foster parents only) for a maximum of five days in any calendar month.

**CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS** (EPM Section 2, Chapter 3.4) (Caregiver Rate Schedule FC1263)

Caregivers may require resources to provide child care while they attend appointments, other responsibilities and to allow for breaks from the day-to-day demands of parenting.

Caregivers may utilize child care options that fall along a spectrum, ranging from babysitting, relief care, respite care to alternate care providers. Each child care type is used for a different purpose and has distinct expectations for approval and reimbursement.

The caregiver must:

- provide the child’s caseworker with information about the child care arrangements they make; and
- provide the child care provider they use with emergency contact information for themselves and the child’s caseworker.

**Babysitting**

Caregivers may hire babysitters when attending to personal needs and commitments, taking a short reprieve from the demands of family life, or when participating in business related to their foster parent/kinship parent role.

Caregivers may hire babysitters at their discretion for up to 12 hours on any one occasion, excluding overnight care.

Payment for babysitting related to performance of the caregiver role (meetings, appointments, etc.) will be reimbursed as per the Caregiver Rate Schedule (FC1263).

**Relief Care**

A relief care provider is chosen by the placement caregiver. This individual takes on the primary care giving role while the caregiver is away/unavailable for an extended period of time (e.g. overnight, a weekend, a week at a time). The caregiver is expected to consider the skills and experience of the relief provider, as well as the specific needs of the children involved.
The caregiver informs the child’s caseworker and their foster care/kinship caseworker of the plan to use a relief care provider, prior to it occurring. The caregiver is required to provide:

- the name, address and contact information of the relief care provider;
- the dates/times the child will be in relief care;
- the names of any other persons in the relief care provider’s home;
- consent of the relief care provider, and any other adult in their home, to an Intervention Record Check (CS2687);
- any additional information requested by the caseworker.

Payment arrangements may vary, according to the reason for utilizing relief care. If relief care is necessary due to business associated with the foster care/kinship caregiver role (e.g. meetings, facilitating visits, etc.); the caregiver will be reimbursed for child care costs as per the Caregiver Rate Schedule (FC1263).

Relief care may be negotiated in a Foster Care/Kinship Care Support Plan and paid directly or reimbursed through the support plan, if there are exceptional circumstances such as:

- the home has child placements beyond the classification level
- personal illness
- sickness or death within the immediate family
- the caregiver and the regional authority identify the need for support
- no other suitable arrangements can be made for the children.

**Respite Care**

Respite is intended to provide caregivers with a break from the complex behavioural, medical or physical needs of a child in their care, and/or to assist in meeting the child’s needs.

Respite care **MUST** be provided out of the caregiver’s home, by licensed caregivers, residential facilities, or in programs defined under the Child Care Act, to ensure the appropriate level of skill, knowledge and ability to meet the needs of the child.

Respite is paid for through reimbursement or directly through a Foster Care/Kinship Care Support Plan.

**Automatic Relief/Respite**

All foster parents and kinship caregivers will be reimbursed for one day a month of relief or respite for each child placed in their home. Edmonton Region reimburses caregivers at a rate of **$65/day per child**. Prior approval is not required and the caseworker must be informed of the provider. Foster parents and caregivers can bank up to 3 days of relief/respite to be used at one time. This automatic relief/respite is available to all caregivers not receiving relief or respite supports through a Support Plan.

**$2.60 per diem**

Authority foster homes and kinship homes also receive a per diem of $2.60 per day per child in addition to Basic Maintenance. This funding is intended to enable and encourage foster
parents/kinship caregivers to take necessary and healthy breaks from the day-to-day demands of caregiving.

This amount is not intended to pay for child specific or caregiver specific respite that may be required and would be negotiated as part of a foster care or kinship care support plan.

**TRAINING & COMPENSATION FOR TRAINING COSTS** (EPM Section 2, Chapter 3.3.7) (Caregiver Rate Schedule FC1263)

Foster parent training falls into 3 categories:

1. **Level 1 (Core) Training**, 2. **Supplemental training** to maintain required hours as per policy, and 3. **Training to meet individual needs** to address the specialized needs of a child.

**Note:** Although training for Kinship homes is not mandatory, kinship caregivers are highly encouraged to also participate in training and will be reimbursed at the same rates as foster parents.

1. **Core Training**
   
   Reimburse a foster parent’s costs according to the category. If the foster parent was approved to take core training other than parent preparation training or attends a regional conference and completes at least 6 hours (or shorter if that is approved) core training, reimburse the following costs:
   
   - babysitting for the foster parent’s children and the foster children:
   - up to $6.50 per hour per child;
   - up to $65.00 per day per child;
   - up to $195.00 per day per home;
   - any needed lodging if a receipt is provided;
   - any required transportation and meals according to the AFPA agreement.

   For CFS homes, the trainer obtains the AFPA claim forms from the regional training designate and sends completed claims to the AFPA for processing. For Agency homes, agency reimbursement guidelines apply.

2. **Supplemental Training**
   
   Approve supplemental training based on the areas of skill development needed by, and of interest to, the foster parent. Registration fees for supplemental training to meet the need of a specific child may be paid through the child’s file (e.g. FASD training). Cover babysitting for the foster child/ren and biological child/ren as per the rates identified in the Caregiver Rate Schedule (FC1263).

   To maintain a home’s classification, the foster parent must complete the following hours of supplemental training each year:
3. **Training to Meet Individual Need**

If a foster parent takes approved training to meet an individual child’s needs cover babysitting for the foster child/ren and biological child/ren as per the rates identified in the Caregiver Rate Schedule (FC1263).

For CFS homes, the placement caseworker provides prior approval for the training costs and forwards the AFPA claim form to the regional training designate for processing. For Agency homes, agency reimbursement guidelines apply.

**EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS** (EPM Section 2, Chapter 3.3.6) (Foster Parent’s Compensation Guide)

An ex-gratia payment is a financial payment that is made by Children and Family Services when there is no legal obligation to make a payment, but the region may feel they have a moral reason to support a payment.

Some examples of an ex-gratia payment being claimed by a caregiver may include:

- Reimbursement of legal fees incurred by foster parents who have successfully defended themselves in a criminal matter arising from their foster care duties.
- Damage caused to the home of a caregiver by a child in care of the director.

Children and Family Services staff must ensure that all alternative solutions are explored prior to seeking an ex gratia payment. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Foster parents should carry adequate private home insurance to cover damage caused by a child placed in their home. Foster parents should notify their insurance company and make a claim before seeking compensation from the Ministry. Proof of rejection is required for an ex-gratia request to be considered.
- Where the foster parent’s own insurance policy declines responsibility for a claim resulting from damage caused by a foster child, the Alberta Foster Parent Association (AFPA) has a rider policy to cover malicious damage caused to a foster parents home or property by a foster child. Claims under $10,000 will be forwarded to the Region for consideration of reimbursement. Claims over $10,000 will be processed through the AFPA rider policy.
- A caregiver who can demonstrate that every reasonable effort to obtain insurance was unsuccessful may request an ex gratia payment. Also, if a caregiver has paid a deductible within the last 3 years, that caregiver may request an ex gratia payment of up to $100 to cover a subsequent deductible.
- Foster parents dispute resolution mechanism through the Alberta Foster Parents Association.
- Administrative Review Process for Children and Family Services
• If there is a claim for damage due to the actions of a child in the care of the director then the ability of the child to provide compensation may be considered.

When it is determined that an ex-gratia payment may be necessary or can be supported, specific support documentation must be assembled. This material must accompany any request to approve an ex-gratia payment. If a caregiver requests an ex gratia payment, advise the person to send a written request to the Regional Director. If it is regarding a legal matter, include a certified copy of the disposition. If a child in the care of the director has caused damage to property and the insurance company has denied the claim, include the statement from the claimant’s insurance company noting that the claim is not covered under an insurance policy.

Caregivers should be informed that:
• a request may need approval of the Minister or Treasury Board, depending on the amount; and
• the approval process can take up to three months.

Ex-gratia payments cannot be given to the recipient unless the person to whom the payment is made releases, in writing, any and all future claims, rights, and demands against Child and Family Services and the Government of Alberta arising from the matter in respect of which the payment is made. Alberta Justice must be requested to provide assistance in drafting a release document for signing.

**LEGAL COSTS** (EPM Section 2, Chapter 3.3.8)

The Legal Assistance program provides for financial assistance to foster parents and their adult children who are charged with a criminal offence (abuse) perpetrated against a foster child or former foster child.

In order not to be seen as pre-judging a case, the Department will not pay legal costs for a foster parent before the disposition. After a foster parent is found not guilty of a criminal charge and the appeal period expires, that foster parent may request an ex gratia payment of the legal costs.

If a foster parent requests an ex gratia payment, a written request should be submitted to their foster care caseworker with a certified copy of the disposition.

**Note:** Contact the AFPA for specific details on foster parent entitlement under this program.
**TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT FORM – Appendix A**

**Use this travel form for mileage reimbursement to activities/appointments where the foster child is the primary participant involved. Extraordinary travel must be pre-approved by the Child and Family Services Caseworker. Do not use this form for more than one child unless they are a sibling group or you have more than one child with the same caseworker. SEND THE COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES CASEWORKER for authorization of payment.**

Name of Caregiver: ____________________________

Name of Caseworker: ____________________________

Office: ____________________________

Office Address: ____________________________

List foster children in your home:

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<th>Child’s Caseworker</th>
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<tr>
<th>Date (yyyy/mm/dd)</th>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Description of Trip</th>
<th>KM</th>
<th>Parking</th>
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*Continue on back if more room is needed*

Total KM _________ X 0.505 = _________ + parking _________ = Total Cost _________

Name of Foster Parent: ____________________________

Signature of Foster Parent: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

Child/Youth Caseworker: ____________________________

Supervisor/Expenditure Officer: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________

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Edmonton Region Child and Family Services
Travel Reimbursement
Updated: 2015-03-25
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<th>KM</th>
<th>Parking</th>
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*Total from page 1*
## WARDROBE GUIDELINES – Appendix B

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<th>RECOMMENDED UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>ARTICLE</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED QUANTITY</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED UNIT PRICE</th>
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<td>50.00</td>
<td>Snowsuit (2 pc)</td>
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<td>75.00</td>
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<td>Socks</td>
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<td>7.00/3 pkg</td>
<td>Jacket (heavy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undershirts</td>
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<td>30.00/10 pkg</td>
<td>Jacket (light)</td>
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<td>30.00</td>
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<td>Sleepers</td>
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<td>Skirts/Pants</td>
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<td>Bonnet/Hat</td>
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<td>Jeans/Overalls</td>
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*exception: daily maintenance

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<th>RECOMMENDED UNIT PRICE</th>
<th>ARTICLE</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED QUANTITY</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED UNIT PRICE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Undershirts</td>
<td>3 pkgs</td>
<td>20.00/4 pkg</td>
<td>Bathrobe</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.00</td>
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<td>Shoes/Runners</td>
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<td>10.00</td>
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<td>Rain Boots</td>
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### WARDROBE GUIDELINES

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