



10570 S. Federal Hwy., Suite 300• Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
www.ckkids.net

Series 300 Child and Family Services

Policy Name: Adoptions Assistance

Policy Number: 309

Origination Date: 6/30/2017

Revision: 04/16/2024

Regulations: 65C-16 F.A.C. and 409.166, FS

Policy: It is the policy of Communities Connected for Kids to facilitate the adoption of special needs children under its' supervision, and to ensure that supports are arranged or planned in advance to anticipate and best support the future needs of the child.

The Florida's Legislative Intent is "To protect and promote each child's right to a security and stability of a permanent family home. Adoption assistance, including financial aid, is available to prospective adoptive parents to ensure them to adopt a child in the state's foster care system who, because of his or her needs, have proven difficult to adopt." S.409.166 (1),f.S. The purpose of adoption subsidy is to make available to prospective adoptive parent's financial aid which could enable them to adopt a special needs child. Every adoptive family must be advised of the availability of an adoption subsidy and the purpose for which it is intended. Placement without subsidy must be the placement of choice unless it can be shown that such placement is not in the best interest of the child. No child shall remain unnecessarily in foster care while Communities Connected for Kids searches for a non-subsidized placement, if a family who can meet the special needs of the child is available, but requires a subsidy.

1. Adoptions **assistance**

A. At or prior to the first meeting with the adoptive family to begin the homestudy process, The adoption packet given to the prospective adoptive parents to initiate the" form, CF-FSP 5071, July 2021, which avaiable on line at <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-13385>. Communities Connected for Kids' subcontracted agency adoption staff (Specialist) shall inform prospective adoptive parents of the availability of all of the benefits listed below.

- 1) Maintenance Subsidy - A monthly payment may be made for support and maintenance of a special needs child until the child's 18th birthday.
- 2) Post Adoption Services which shall include:
 - (a) Temporary case management;
 - (b) Adoptive parents' support groups or newsletters;

Our mission is to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being for all children in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast through a community network of family support services. Our vision is to eliminate child abuse, neglect and abandonment in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast so all children grow to their full potential.



10570 S. Federal Hwy., Suite 300• Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
www.ckkids.net

(c) Information and referral requests; and,

(d) Assistance to cover the cost of medical, surgical, hospital and related services needed as a result of a physical or mental health condition of the child which existed prior to the adoption and is listed on the Adoption Assistance Agreement (AAA).

- 3) Other Medical Services - Other medical services available may include on-going Medicaid coverage and continuing eligibility with Children's Medical Services for children who were receiving such services prior to adoption and is listed on the Adoption Assistance Agreement (AAA).
- 4) Reimbursement for Non-recurring Adoption Expenses - Nonrecurring adoption expenses are those necessary adoption fees, court costs, attorney's fees, and other expenses that are directly related to the legal adoption of a special needs child.
- 5) Tuition Waiver - Children who were in the custody of the Department and who were adopted from the Department after May 5, 1997, are eligible for an exemption of undergraduate college tuition fees at Florida universities or community colleges as stated in Section 1009.25, F.S.
- 6) Federal Adoption Tax Credit - Families that adopt children with special needs are eligible for a tax credit based on expenses related to the adoption or a reimbursable amount based on the year of the adoption finalization. Staff must inform adoptive parents of this tax benefit and the website www.irs.gov to obtain Form 8839 and the instructions for completing Form 8839.

B. Adoption Assistance for eligible children will be paid irrespective of the child's state of residence. Adoptive parents receiving adoption assistance are obligated to notify the Department or CBC of any change of address.

2. Negotiation of Initial Maintenance Adoption Subsidy

A. Requests for subsidy up to 100% of the Board Rate

- 1) In addition to aiding in identifying an adoptive placement, the child study is also documentation of the child's special needs for subsidy purposes and serves as a vehicle for sharing the child's history with the adoptive family. The child study must include current and projected or future needs of the child based on all available information regarding the child and the birth family's medical and social history.
- 2) The Adoption specialist will conduct negotiations of subsidy beginning at \$417 and may be approved up to 100% of the currently effective monthly foster board rate, which is tiered based upon the child's age. Current foster board rates are available upon request from Communities Connected for Kids finance department. A subsidy may exceed 100% of the statewide foster care board rate when an exception is granted by the Department's Family Well Being Director or designee, 65-16.013, F.A.C.

Our mission is to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being for all children in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast through a community network of family support services. Our vision is to eliminate child abuse, neglect and abandonment in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast so all children grow to their full potential.



10570 S. Federal Hwy., Suite 300• Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
www.ckkids.net

- 3) While documentation of specific costs is not required to justify subsidies greater than \$417, the specialist must ensure that special medical or mental health conditions are documented on the child study, disposition sheet and child summary as well as the adoption assistance agreement (AAA) to ensure that documented need is established prior to finalization in the event that any future needs emerge.

B. Requests that exceed 100% of the foster board rate (Enhanced Subsidy)

- 1) Requests that exceed 100% of the board rate require the approval of the Department of Children and Families.
- 2) In addition to the steps 2. A. 1)-3) above, request for enhanced subsidy must be supported with specific documentation justifying the request.
- 3) The adoption specialist will instruct the family regarding the specific information that will be needed to complete a consideration of a request exceeding 100% of the foster board rate, using the Adoption Subsidy Checklist to guide the completion of the information.
- 4) Upon receipt of the supporting documentation, the specialist will submit the request and supporting documentation to the Communities Connected for Kids Director of Finance, or designee. Submitted requests will include the Adoption Subsidy Increase Checklist and the subcontracted agency's written recommendation regarding action on the enhanced subsidy.
- 5) Communities Connected for Kids Director of Finance or designee will review the request and determine if the request is adequately supported with appropriate documentation. Communities Connected for Kids COO or designee will submit the request to the regional director of DCF or designee with supporting documentation outlining the needs of the child/family.

C. Medical assistance

- 1) The need for medical assistance must be established prior to the adoption placement, although the service might not actually be needed until a later date. An analysis of the potential need for Medical subsidy shall be a component of each MAS negotiation.
- 2) For all cases, regardless of whether future medical assistance needs are anticipated, the adoption specialist will ensure the Child Summary Form and Disposition sheet include current services, current providers and the cost per session, and projected duration of the needed service, if not covered by Medicaid. This form also needs to identify the projected needs of the child in the future as they grow older. If medical subsidy needs are anticipated, the medical or mental health conditions, diagnosis, and service needs shall be detailed on the disposition sheet and child summary as well as noted on

Our mission is to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being for all children in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast through a community network of family support services. Our vision is to eliminate child abuse, neglect and abandonment in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast so all children grow to their full potential.



10570 S. Federal Hwy., Suite 300• Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
www.ckkids.net

the Adoption Assistance Agreement (AAA) to ensure that documented need is established prior to finalization.

- 3) Medical assistance requests must be supported with specific documentation justifying the request. For behavioral health needs, a CBHA or other mental health assessment submitted as supporting documentation must have been conducted within the previous 12 months. For medical conditions, a physical or other medical evaluation must be within the past 12 months.
- 4) The cost for a service will not be paid when those costs can be or are covered by the adopting family's medical insurance, Children's Medical Services, Children's Mental Health Services, Medicaid, Agency for Persons with Disabilities or local school districts.
- 5) Services which are eligible for coverage from any of the above entities, and for which the family is requesting medical assistance coverage, will be evaluated on a case by case basis, which may include but not be limited to a review of comparable available services in the adoptive family's community.
- 6) Services which are approved for medical subsidy cannot be included in costs for enhanced maintenance adoption subsidy.
- 7) The adoptive parents must obtain Communities Connected for Kids approval prior to planning for the use of a service if the adoptive parents will be seeking reimbursement.

D. Timeline for initial subsidy requests

- 1) Adoption specialists will conduct negotiations in a timely manner to ensure that required approvals do not delay finalization of the adoption.
- 2) Subsidy requests within 100% of the foster board rate should be submitted to Communities Connected for Kids at a minimum of 15 working days prior to adoption finalization. Enhanced subsidy and medical assistance requests should be submitted a minimum of 30 days prior to adoption finalization to all time for DCF review and action.
- 3) The child's and the family's need for subsidy must be determined prior to the adoptive placement and no subsidy payment may be made prior to all parties signing the AAA.

3. Post adoption MAS increases and medical assistance requests

A. Post adoption MAS increase request

Our mission is to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being for all children in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast through a community network of family support services. Our vision is to eliminate child abuse, neglect and abandonment in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast so all children grow to their full potential.



10570 S. Federal Hwy., Suite 300• Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
www.ckkids.net

- 1) Adoptive parents may request an increase in the maintenance subsidy after the initial subsidy agreement was approved, and after finalization of the adoption. The request should identify increased needs related to conditions of the child that were identified prior to the adoptive placement, or should identify circumstances of the family that may have changed and require additional support in order to meet the special needs of the child.
- 2) Any post-adoptive parent may request 100% of the board rate and be granted the increase without any documentation to support the additional need.
- 3) Should an increase in the MAS to 100% of the board rate be sufficient to address the stated needs, the post adoption specialist or Communities Connected for Kids Director of Finance may assist the parent with initiating the request. The Communities Connected for Kids eligibility department will ensure an updated AAA is completed and executed.
- 4) Post-finalization request for increases that exceed the Board rate must include required documentation as outlined in section 2. B above.

B. Medical assistance requests

- 1) The adoptive parent must obtain approval of Communities Connected for Kids prior to planning a service if the adoptive parents seek reimbursement.
- 2) Should a post-adoptive family request assistance for a service or need, the request will be directed to the Communities Connected for Kids Post Adoption Specialist. The post adoption specialist will discuss with the family what has already been attempted, and/or suggest no cost or low cost interventions to serve the family's need.
- 3) If the request appears to meet the requirements for Medicaid assistance as outlined in 2.C. above, the post adoption specialist will work with the family to draft a summary request or service plan that identifies all services, costs and duration, and other related supporting documentation.
- 4) The service plan will be reviewed and approved by Caregiver and Adoptions support supervisor or designee. Should the total funding request exceed \$2,000, the request will be reviewed with Licensing Director, or designee, for approval.
- 5) The post adoption specialist will ensure that check requests and supporting documentation is completed and provided to finance department or contract department as appropriate to either arrange direct vendor payment or to reimburse a parent for incurred costs.
- 6) Should a need be presented that was not documented or known prior to the finalization of the adoption, the post adoption specialist will seek to identify other available community or Communities Connected for Kids resources to address the need, subject to the availability of funds.

Our mission is to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being for all children in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast through a community network of family support services. Our vision is to eliminate child abuse, neglect and abandonment in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast so all children grow to their full potential.



10570 S. Federal Hwy., Suite 300 • Port St. Lucie, FL 34952
www.ckkids.net

4. Appeal Process

- A. The adoptive parent has the right to appeal the denial of an enhanced subsidy request or medical assistance request through a fair hearing pursuant to Chapter 120, F.S.
- 1) Requests which are recommended for denial by Communities Connected for Kids' subcontracted adoption agency or Communities Connected for Kids' post adoption specialist, will be reviewed by Communities Connected for Kids, or designee.
 - 2) If this review results in a decision that supports the original denial recommendation, Communities Connected for Kids CEO or designee shall make the final Communities Connected for Kids recommendation to the Department of Children and Families.
 - 3) DCF is responsible for the final decision, and for ensuring that the adoptive parent is notified, including, for denials, the adoptive parents' right to appeal the denial pursuant to Chapter 120, F.S.

B. Enhanced subsidy denials

For enhanced subsidy, if the outcome of the Chapter 120, F.S. appeal process determines that the subsidy increase was wrongfully denied, the effective date of the new subsidy will be the date the increase request was received by Communities Connected for Kids. A new subsidy agreement must be signed by all parties with the new approved subsidy amount documented.

C. Medical service denials

For Medical services requests, if it is found the service was wrongfully denied, through the Chapter 120, F.S., the effective date of the approval will be the date the family officially requested the service. Retroactive payment dating back to the date of placement will not be approved.

DocuSigned by:

Approved: _____
Carol Deloach, CEO

April 16, 2024

Our mission is to enhance the safety, permanency and well-being for all children in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast through a community network of family support services. Our vision is to eliminate child abuse, neglect and abandonment in Okeechobee & the Treasure Coast so all children grow to their full potential.