

27. Clothing and personal belongings

Procedures

Bringing clothing and personal belongings into substitute care

- Ask the family to provide items and clothing they know their child would want.
 1. Help them understand the importance to their child.
 2. Talk with them about their child – learn more about what the child likes and encourage them to bring their child’s personal items to visits.
 3. Reassure parents that these items will be well cared for and that items will remain with the child.
 4. Also, acknowledge to the parents that things can get lost or stolen while the child is in substitute care. Parents may ask about toys or other electronic devices. Let the parents know there may be a risk of damage or loss of these items if they are sent with the child into care.
- 2. If the parents refuse to provide the child’s clothing, the caseworker can ask the court to order the parents to release the items.


TIP

For children coming into substitute care for the first time or children moving from one placement to another, personal belongings are extremely important. Personal items are a reminder of and connection with home and family.

Tracking clothing and personal belongings

- Inventory a child’s clothes when the child enters care with the substitute caregiver.
 1. The inventory provides the initial list of personal items and the substitute caregiver can add to the list as new items are purchased.
 2. This inventory also helps ensure that, when a child leaves substitute care, all of the personal belongings can go with him/her.
 3. Standard rates for substitute caregivers include money for monthly clothing replacement. (Refer to Child Welfare Policy I-E.5.1 for current rates.)
 - a. It is the substitute caregiver’s responsibility to maintain a child’s clothes with this payment. It is reasonable and appropriate to inquire of the substitute caregiver about the purchase of new clothing for the child.


TIP

Make an effort to ensure the child’s personal items are maintained and stored appropriately. When the child moves to a permanent home, it is very important for the child to have his or her personal belongings accompany him or her when returning home or moving to a new placement.

Additional clothing needs

- Sometimes the local office will have a clothing closet or the local foster parent organization, school or other community programs have clothing closets available for children in substitute care. Use these resources prior to a purchase of clothing.
- If resources have been exhausted, request a one-time-only Emergency Voucher when a child enters substitute care in the initial placement. The supervisor approves this request.
- Coordinate with the substitute caregiver on the best way to issue and deliver the voucher to the substitute caregiver. Often substitute caregivers have preferences regarding the stores in which they shop. If this is the case, the office manager or designee will complete a CF 598 Authorization and Vendor Voucher for the selected store.
- Make the arrangements with the substitute caregiver regarding receipt of the voucher. At the store the substitute caregiver presents the voucher when purchasing the items; the store will complete the CF 598 and send it to DHS accounting for reimbursement.
- When the substitute caregiver intends to shop at more than one store, the substitute caregiver is given the CF 598. The substitute caregiver submits the completed form, along with original receipts, to the address on the form.

Special circumstances

- Under special circumstances, ask the supervisor to approve a one-time Standard Voucher.
 1. Examples of when this request may be appropriate are if items of clothing were stolen or destroyed, or a child has an unusually fast growth spurt.
 2. The process of working with the substitute care provider to arrange for the issuing and receipt of the clothing voucher are the same as above.

Children re-entering care

- If a child is returned home and then re-enters substitute care, and is in need of clothing, request approval from the child welfare branch manager for a Supplemental Voucher. This is issued only once, unless the child welfare branch manager makes an exception to issue a Supplemental Voucher a second time.

Concerns regarding unmet clothing or other needs

- It is ultimately the caseworker's responsibility to ensure the child has basic clothing and needs met – from shoes to underwear and tooth brushes to basic school supplies.
 1. During the face-to-face contact with the child, assess whether these needs are being met. As appropriate, respectfully talk with the substitute caregiver regarding the child's needs and your concerns if the needs are not being met.
 - a. Develop strategies to address these needs.
 - b. Document concerns and the strategies developed with the substitute caregiver.
 - c. Report this information to the substitute caregiver's certifier.
 - d. If the concern persists, re-contact the certifier for assistance in resolving the issue.

- e. At any time the caseworker believes the substitute caregiver is neglecting the child's basic needs, the caseworker must report the concern to a screener in the local office.

The Supervisor's Role

- Review and approve the emergency and standard clothing vouchers when requested.
- Assist in obtaining the approval of the child welfare branch manager when a supplemental voucher is requested.

Forms and references

Legal references

OAR

- I-E.5.2 Payments for Special and/or Extraordinary Needs
http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/i-e52.htm

