



CDSS

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GOVERNOR

March 22, 2011

RESIDENTIALLY BASED SERVICES LETTER No. 02-11

TO: SELECTED COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 SELECTED COUNTY FISCAL OFFICERS
 SELECTED COUNTY CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM
 MANAGERS
 ALL RESIDENTIALLY BASED SERVICES PROVIDERS
 COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

SUBJECT: ADOPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (AAP) PAYMENTS TO
 RESIDENTIALLY BASED SERVICES (RBS) PROGRAM CLIENTS

REFERENCE: WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 18987.7;
 ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE (ACIN) I-91-08, DATED
 NOVEMBER 26, 2008; RBS LETTER NO. 03-10 DATED
 JUNE 21, 2010

The purpose of this letter is to provide guidance to RBS Project pilot demonstration counties regarding the receipt of AAP benefits for children enrolled in the RBS Project.

Background:

The AAP was created to remove the financial disincentives for families to adopt foster children with special needs. Eligible children may receive a federally funded adoption assistance subsidy under Title IV-E or a state-funded subsidy per California guidelines.

When adoptive families apply for AAP, the responsible public agency determines the child's eligibility for participation in AAP. If the child is deemed eligible, the responsible public agency negotiates a signed AAP Agreement with benefits or a deferred AAP Agreement following the adoptive placement and prior to adoption finalization. The AAP benefits may begin any time after the signing of the Adoptive Placement Agreement and AAP Agreement. The date AAP benefits may begin is the date stated on the AAP Agreement.

The question has been raised of how to handle AAP for children and youth participating in the RBS Project. Since the RBS Project was constructed to test the impact of RBS program designs and fiscal models on the state's Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care funded foster care program, none of the approved RBS plans incorporated AAP funding into their fiscal models. Recognizing adoption as one of the desired permanency outcomes for RBS-enrolled children, it was envisioned that once adoption is achieved, the case is to be considered a success under the RBS Project and the child is to be disenrolled as a successful graduate of the program. Consequently, the following will apply unless RBS pilot demonstration counties negotiate with the California Department of Social Services to amend existing Memoranda of Understanding to revise their Voluntary Agreements and Funding Models to incorporate AAP cases within their unique RBS pilot programs.

Impact of AAP on an RBS Case:

Pre-Adoptive Placement: Prior to formal adoptive placement, children are not eligible for AAP. Therefore, when placed in the home of a family preparing to adopt the RBS-enrolled child, RBS services should continue as appropriate.

Formal Adoptive Placement: Once formal adoptive placement is made, the adoptive family may apply for AAP and, if determined eligible, may opt to either begin AAP benefits immediately or defer the start of those benefits. The RBS pilot demonstration county should ensure that the adoptive family fully understands both its options with regard to continuance in the RBS Project and the consequences of each option to the child and family.

If the family opts to begin AAP benefits immediately, then the child can no longer participate in the RBS Project. The youth should be considered a successful graduate of the RBS Project and disenrolled. The family may choose to utilize the AAP payments to purchase similar services from the former RBS provider or from any other source at their discretion. However, for the purposes of the RBS pilot demonstration project that child is no longer an RBS participant. If the family subsequently uses AAP to fund a temporary placement out of the adopting family's home, that placement is considered a relapse for RBS Project evaluation purposes.

If the adoptive family elects to defer the start of AAP benefits, the child may continue in the RBS pilot demonstration project until the child has completed the RBS program or the child's adoption is finalized, whichever is sooner.

Adoption Finalization: Once an RBS-enrolled child's adoption is finalized by the court, that child is a successful RBS graduate and must be disenrolled from the RBS Project.

The adoptive family may use AAP for traditional Wraparound services if additional services are deemed necessary. As long as the child remains safely in the adoptive family's home, the child continues to be considered a successful graduate for RBS Project purposes. For more information on the use of AAP for Wraparound, please see ACIN I-91-08.

Disenrollment Codes:

Formal Adoptive Placement: If the adoptive family elects to begin receiving AAP benefits prior to finalization of the adoption, indicate RBS disenrollment by entering into the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) the RBS Special Project Code "S-RBS-Exit- Graduation".

Adoption Finalization: If AAP is deferred until finalization of adoption for an RBS case, enter into CWS/CMS the RBS Special Project Code "S-RBS-Exit-Graduation" when the adoption is finalized.

Should you have questions about any of the above, please contact Megan Stout, RBS Consultant, at (916) 654-1883. For additional information about RBS Special Project Codes and other reasons for disenrollment, please refer to RBS Letter No. 03-10.

Sincerely,



KAREN B. GUNDERSON, Chief
Child and Youth Permanency Branch
Children and Family Services Division