



Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— Making a positive difference through education and service —

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Guidance Letter

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To: SPOE Staff, On-going Service Coordinators, Service Providers

From: Amanda Wogan, Supervisor, and Special Education Compliance

Subject: Family Child Care Assistance (FCCA)*

In order for the family of a child with a disability to develop the capacity to assist their child in meeting his/her developmental needs, the family may need Family Child Care Assistance (FCCA) or other types of care for the child while the family participates in appropriate early intervention activities. FCCA is “a child care-type service provided to enable the family to participate or receive other early intervention services in order to meet the outcomes on a child’s IFSP”. It is not intended to mean “reprieve” or “rest” from the care of the child with a disability.

The family may need in-home or other care arrangements for their child in order for the family to participate in early intervention services that include a defined family component, i.e., family training or counseling services, psychological services, or social work. A family may need to participate in sign language classes in order to assist the child in developing communication skills or meet with a psychologist to design appropriate behavioral management strategies to use when the child engages in inappropriate behaviors. Although the provisions of FCCA or other care arrangements may be necessary for some families to participate in appropriate early intervention activities, FCCA is not intended to serve as child-care or “baby-sitting” assistance in ordinary circumstances.

When identifying the circumstances where and when FCCA is needed, the team members must consider the following:

- FCCA is an early intervention service if it is identified on the IFSP as necessary to enable the family or caregiver to successfully meet the developmental outcomes for their child.

- The family is to arrange for the care and is responsible for paying the care giver. The family will then be reimbursed by the Central Finance Office (CFO).
- As with all Part C services, the team must consider the use of natural supports (family members, volunteers, etc) to meet the need of the child and family. The IFSP team must explore other resources for meeting the needs of the family and give consideration to the most cost effective method to meet the need. Part C should be utilized as a payer source for FCCA services only when there are no other resources for this service. Family members cannot be paid for providing FCCA services. For the purpose of FCCA services under Part C, a family member is defined as: Mother, Father, Sibling, Aunt, Uncle, Grandparents, Step-Relatives and In-laws.
- Due to the liability issues, selection of FCCA service providers and arrangements for delivery of FCCA services are to be made by the family. In no circumstances shall the First Steps providers select a FCCA provider. The provision of FCCA service is an agreement between the family and the provider with the First Steps program providing funding to the family for them to pay for the FCCA service.
- Once the potential need for FCCA services is identified, the service coordinator will facilitate an IFSP meeting to discuss the need for FCCA services as it relates to the child's development and the outcomes in the child's IFSP.
- FCCA is not to be provided to meet daily family needs, such as to allow the family or caregivers to work or run errands. It is not to give families a break from caring for the child due to stress or other priorities unrelated to the implementation of the IFSP and the child outcomes. It is not to be provided to allow family members to attend LICC meetings, RICC meetings, parental support groups, etc.

Instructions on how to authorize FCCA services

After the team has determined there is a need for FCCA services the Service Coordinator and the family will determine how long the service will be needed and how much the service will cost. Using the First Steps procedure codes and rate schedule, the Service Coordinator will authorize the service based on the amount the family indicates they will need to pay the FCCA caregiver. First Steps Procedure Codes and Rates Schedule are located on the First Steps website at: www.eikids.com/mo/matrix/docs/pdfs/MOFSRates.pdf

* So as not to confuse the early intervention service “respite” as described in Part C of IDEA with the respite service provided by Department of Mental Health and elsewhere, First Steps will use the term Family Child Care Assistance (FCCA) in reference to the early intervention services described in this document.