

# A Georgia Foster Parent's Rights and Benefits

As a foster parent in the state of Georgia, you have various rights and benefits regarding payment, education, expenses and other matters.

## PAYMENTS TO RELATIVE CAREGIVERS

- Relatives who become caregivers for a foster child are eligible for financial support if they meet the required criteria for placement. Contact the child's caseworker for applications and eligibility information.



- Before being approved as foster parents, and depending on the status of care, relative caregivers may be eligible for reimbursements and financial support through the Enhanced Relative Rate, Relative Care or Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy Payments, Subsidized Guardianship, or Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship Payments.
- Relatives who choose to become foster parents must complete the required process and be approved within 180 days of the child's placement. Once approved as foster parents, relatives receive the same reimbursement/benefits as non-relative foster parents.



## EDUCATION

- All children in foster care are entitled to free school lunches.
- You have a right to (a) information about how the child is doing in school through the child's local Board of Education and DFCS, (b) attend Individual Educational Plan Meetings (IEP) and (c) advocate for Student Support Team (SST) meetings where you are free to discuss the child's behavior and academic performance.
- It is recommended that you contact the child's Case Manager regarding reimbursement for education expenses; prior approval is required. Contact the school guidance counselor for fee waivers for activities, SAT, MARTA and other education-related expenses.

## EXPENSES

- An initial clothing allowance is allocated during six months of the first placement. Thereafter, this allowance is received annually.
- Before hiring childcare, talk with the child's Case Manager to learn about the set fee allocated for childcare. Also, you may be eligible to participate in the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program. You are not eligible for CAPS if you are unemployed or work from home.
- With pre-approval from the Case Manager, you may receive reimbursements for car seats, safety helmets, various training expenses, required drug screens, physicals and other expenses.



## INSURANCE

DFCS provides liability insurance to foster parents, as well as property damage insurance for any damage a foster child causes to your personal property.

## ADOPTION

**Monthly Assistance:** For parents who adopt "difficult to place children," financial support may be available for adoption-related expenses.

- Parents must apply with DFCS before the adoption is final and must prove that the child meets federal criteria and the State definition of "special needs."
- Medicaid may be available for "difficult to place children" until age 26 if they remain a full-time student.

- For more information, contact the DFCS office in your county and/or refer to Section 109 of the Adoption Policy Manual provided by the Georgia Department of Human Services, Social Services Administration Unit.

## GEORGIA AND FEDERAL ADOPTION TAX CREDITS

Individuals who adopt a child may be eligible for adoption tax credits. To apply for the federal adoption tax credit, use IRS form 8839.



Georgia residents may claim a maximum tax credit of \$2,000 per child per year until the child is 18 years old. Use form IND-CR.

This card was developed by Georgia Appleseed and Families First, two groups that help protect your rights. For information updates and links to resources, please visit [www.GaAppleseed.org/fostercarerights](http://www.GaAppleseed.org/fostercarerights). 12.14