



RESPITE CARE PAYMENTS

Foster Care Association of Victoria Position:

The Foster Care Association of Victoria believes Respite Care can add strength and relief to any home based care placement. It is very important that carers, their CSO and DHS establish the potential need for respite early in the child's care planning; and monitor this during the placement through regular Care Team Meetings and carer supervision. It is important to note that a decision to place a child or young person in respite care on a regular basis is one that requires case planning endorsement by DHS.

WHAT IS RESPITE?

Respite is the time-limited placement of a child away from their primary carer or current living circumstance.

WHAT RESPITE IS FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES THROUGH CARER REIMBURSEMENTS?

- Respite for a child subject to child protection involvement being cared for by registered foster carers within a funded home based care placement.
- Respite for a child in kinship care as part of an endorsed case plan, where child protection has assessed the respite carer as suitable to provide for the care of a child, including the undertaking of mandatory screening processes.
- Respite for a child not subject to child protection involvement (voluntary) being cared for by registered foster carers within a funded home based care placement.

WHAT ARE THE BUSINESS RULES THAT APPLY TO RESPITE AND CARER REIMBURSEMENTS?

Where a child is subject to child protection involvement and is being cared for by a registered foster carer within a funded home based care placement or by a department assessed and approved kinship carer; the respite carer will receive the same reimbursement rate as the primary carer.

IN WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES CAN PRIMARY AND RESPITE CARERS RECEIVE DUAL REIMBURSEMENTS?

The dual payment of carer reimbursements apply to:

- Registered foster carers of children subject to child protection involvement being cared for within funded home based care placements
- Assessed and approved kinship carers where respite is part of an endorsed case plan.

Where a Community Service Organisation intends to seek dual reimbursements for registered foster carers caring for a child with child protection involvement, dual reimbursement provision must first be negotiated with the regional Placement Coordination Unit (for any respite placement greater than 8 days) before the relevant forms are submitted to the department's Caregiver Reimbursement Helpdesk for processing. For assessed and approved kinship respite carers, dual reimbursements must be approved by a Team Manager.



WHAT ARE THE DUAL PAYMENT PROVISIONS?

- **Respite up to 7 days** – an automatic payment will be made to both the respite and primary carer.
- **Respite between 8 and 28 days** - on negotiation with and approval from Placement Coordination for foster carers and on negotiation with and approval from a Team Manager for kinship carers.
- **Respite over 28 days** - no dual payments occur unless exceptional circumstances exist.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Discussions regarding the provision of dual reimbursement should be first discussed with your Community Service Organisation (for foster carers) or Child Protection Team Manager (for kinship carers). Financial queries regarding carer reimbursements should be directed to the Department of Human Services Caregiver Reimbursement Helpdesk on **1300-552-319**.