



State of California

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

Section 11461.6

11461.6. (a) The Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children is hereby established, to be implemented at the discretion of each county, for the purpose of stabilizing foster children with families at the time of placement by providing a time-limited payment or voucher for child care following the child's placement, or for a child whose parent is in foster care, and by providing the family with a child care navigator to assist the family in accessing long-term subsidized child care.

(b) The Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children shall be administered by county welfare departments that choose to participate in the program.

(c) (1) As determined by the county welfare department, and consistent with guidance issued jointly by the State Department of Social Services and the State Department of Education, counties may establish local priorities and may either provide payment directly to the family or child care provider, or contract with a local alternative payment program to distribute vouchers for child care.

(2) Counties that elect to provide payment directly to a family or child care provider shall pay commensurate with the regional market rates, as described in Section 8357 of the Education Code.

(3) For counties that elect to contract with a local alternative payment agency, as described in Section 8220 of the Education Code, to distribute child care vouchers, the vouchers shall be in an amount commensurate with the regional market rates, as described in Section 8357 of the Education Code and the contract shall not displace, or result in the reduction of, an existing contract with a current local alternative payment program.

(d) (1) Participating county welfare departments shall determine eligibility of a child for the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children using the criteria outlined in paragraphs (2) and (3).

(2) Family placements eligible to receive payment or a voucher for child care include all of the following:

(A) Approved resource families, as defined in Section 16519.5 and Section 1517 of the Health and Safety Code, and families that have a child placed with them in an emergency or for a compelling reason, as described in Section 16519.5.

(B) Prior to January 1, 2020, licensed foster family homes or certified family homes.

(C) Prior to January 1, 2020, approved homes of relatives, as defined in Section 319, or nonrelative extended family members, as described in Section 362.7.

(D) Parents under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, including, but not limited to, nonminor dependent parents.

(3) A participating county welfare department may provide a payment or voucher if work or school responsibilities preclude resource families from being at home when the child for whom they have care and responsibility is not in school or for periods when the family, as described in paragraph (2), is required to participate, without the child, in activities associated with parenting a child that are beyond the scope of ordinary parental duties, including, but not limited to, attendance at administrative or judicial reviews, case conferences, and family training.

(e) Each child receiving a monthly child care payment or voucher shall be provided with a child care navigator, pursuant to paragraph (5) of subdivision (a) of Section 8212 of the Education Code, who shall work directly with the child's family, social worker, and the child and family team to assist in accessing child care at the time of placement as well as long-term, subsidized child care for the child, as necessary.

(f) Each child receiving a monthly child care payment or voucher shall be eligible to receive the payment or voucher for up to six months. If the child and family access long-term, subsidized child care prior to the end of the six-month period covered by the payment or voucher, eligibility for the monthly payment or voucher shall terminate upon enrollment in long-term, subsidized child care.

(g) Eligibility for the monthly payment or voucher may be extended beyond the initial six-month period for an additional six-month period, not to exceed 12 months in total, at the discretion of the county welfare department, if the child and family have been unable to access long-term, subsidized child care during the initial six-month period.

(h) The department shall seek all federal approvals necessary to claim federal reimbursement under Title IV-E of the federal Social Security Act in order to maximize state and local funding for child care.

(i) This section shall not be interpreted to create an entitlement to child care payment or voucher.

(j) The program established pursuant to this section is intended to complement county child welfare agency efforts to recruit, retain, and support resource families as described in Section 16003.5, and any funding provided to counties pursuant to this section shall supplement those county activities to support the goals of Chapter 773 of the Statutes of 2015 and Chapter 612 of the Statutes of 2016.

(k) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2018.

(Added by Stats. 2017, Ch. 24, Sec. 35. (SB 89) Effective June 27, 2017. Section operative January 1, 2018, by its own provisions.)