

GUIDELINES FOR FOSTER PARENTS AND RELATIVE CAREGIVERS FOR HEALTH CARE AND BEHAVIORAL/MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Foster parents and relative caregivers play an important role in making sure children in foster care get their medical, dental and behavioral health needs met. The guidelines provide an overview of:

- Required health care exams for children in foster care.
- When and how to access behavioral or mental health services.
- Caregiver tips for scheduling and facilitating appointments.

Keep in mind, it is important that the child's parents be included in doctor appointments and notified of the date and time. Ask your caseworker to provide guidelines for the child in your care and determine who invites parent to the appointment.

Physical Health Requirements for Children in Foster Care

Medical Requirements

- All children entering foster care must have an initial comprehensive medical examination within 30 days from the date the child first came into foster care (regardless of the date of his/her last medical exam). This comprehensive medical exam is also known as an Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) or Well-Child Exam.
- A yearly medical exam (EPSDT or Well-Child Exam) for children age 3 through 20 years.
- More frequent medical exams (EPSDT or Well-Child Exam) for children under age 3.

Dental Requirements

- Ages 1 year and older require a dental examination within 90 days of entering foster care unless the child had a dental exam within three months prior to the date.
- A dental exam is required every 6 months for children ages 1 and older.

Foster Parent or Relative Caregiver Responsibilities:

- Arrange for medical and dental appointments within the noted timeframes.
- Inform the doctor/dentist office that the child is in foster care when making the appointment.
- Provide your caseworker with the appointment date for the child's records.
- Contact the caseworker immediately if there is an issue in scheduling or keeping the appointment.
- Give the caseworker a copy of exam results, if provided by the doctor or dentist office.

Behavioral/Mental Health Services

At times, children in foster care may benefit from professional counseling services, therapy or even medications for emotional/behavioral issues. If you are worried about a child in your care, talk with the child's caseworker and ask for help making a referral.

There are a few different places to start:

- The child's primary care doctor – may help with referrals and may consider medication.
- Medicaid Health Plan – has services for children who have mild/moderate difficulties.
- Community Mental Health – has services for children who have severe difficulties.

Whether you call, or your caseworker calls, or you call together during a visit, the mental health provider will need the following information to start the process:

- Your name and relationship to the child (for example "foster parent").
- The specific worries you have (behavior problems, mood, sleep problems, nightmares, mental health concerns).
- All medications the child is currently taking including dosage and the person who prescribed them.
- The kind of help you are asking for (assessment, counseling).
- The child's insurance information including commercial insurance and Medicaid numbers.

Once you and the child have gone through an initial assessment or intake (in person or by phone), the provider will talk about the services available and the choices about where to go for services/treatment.

Important Notes:

- The child's parents should be informed and involved in all behavioral/mental health appointments.
- If you call for services on your own, let the caseworker know about all appointments or if you have any problems getting services.
- The child's parent(s) will need to consent for mental health medications if the child is a temporary court ward and parental rights have not been terminated.
- Foster parents and relative caregivers **cannot** provide consent for psychotropic medication.

Items Required for Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver (notify caseworker if missing any of the below).

In order to access health care for a child in foster care, the following items are needed and are to be provided by the caseworker:

- Date child entered foster care, which may or may not be the date the child was placed in your home.
- Name of the child's Medicaid Health Plan (Medicaid's managed health care program) and Medicaid Dental Health Plan.
- Name and phone number of the child's primary care physician if the child has one. The child must obtain the medical examination by a physician within his/her specific Medicaid Health Plan MHP).
- DHS-3762, *Consent to Routine, Non-Surgical Medical Care and Emergency Medical/Surgical Treatment* card.
- Mihealth card (Medicaid card) and MHP member ID card, if available. If not, the worker will provide the child's Medicaid recipient ID number.

Examples of a phone call to schedule the child's appointment including the needed information:

Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver: "Hello, I would like to make an appointment for a physical exam for my foster child, (supply child's name). He/she came into foster care on (give date child entered foster care) and needs a full well child physical exam before (30 days from the date child entered foster care). His/her Medicaid coverage is through (name of Medicaid Health Plan) and the Medicaid recipient ID number is (provide Medicaid ID number)."

Foster Parent/Relative Caregiver: "I am the foster parent of Johnny Smith. I am calling to schedule an appointment for Johnny to be assessed for services. I am concerned with his behavior as he is having a lot of trouble sleeping, calming down to go to sleep at night, and isn't sleeping through the night. During the day, he is acting out toward other kids and adults and has started to punch/hit/kick when he gets frustrated. Johnny has McLaren health insurance (*Medicaid Health Plan*). He currently takes Concerta, 54 mg., in the morning."

When going to a medical or therapy appointment, be sure to bring:

- **Child's medications.**
- **Child's insurance cards.**
- **DHS-3762 *Consent to Routine, Non-Surgical Medical Care and Emergency Medical/Surgical Treatment* card.**

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