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June 30, 2006

SOCIAL SERVICES COUNTY LETTER NO. 2006-03

TO: County Departments of Family and Children Services
Regional Staff
State Staff

FROM: Martha Okafor, Deputy Director
Programs and Policy

RE: Family Foster Care Per Diem Rate Increase and Sibling Incentive (Sib-I)

PUPROSE:

The purpose of this Social Services County letter is to notify you of the increase in the Family Foster Care (FFC) Basic Service Rate for the Division of Family and Children Services effective July 1, 2006. In addition, a Sibling Incentive (Sib-I) will be provided to promote sibling placements. The Sib-I will be applied to the monthly per diem reimbursement and is effective the month following initiation of the Sib-I. The Sib-I is available **only** to DFCS regular and relative foster homes. Note: The Sib-I is not available to relatives who receive the Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR) or any of the Relative Care Subsidies (Relative Care Subsidy, Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy, Subsidized Guardianship or Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship). Also, there is not an increase in the Adoption Assistance supplement.

DISCUSSION

Effective July 1, 2006, the Family Foster Care (FFC) Basic Service Rate for the Division of Family and Children Services is:

Birth through age 5.....	\$14.18
Age 6 through age 12.....	\$16.00
Age 13 and over.....	\$18.25

As the Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR), Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship (ESG) and the Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy (ERCS) rate are based on 80% of the FFC per diem rate, the following rates are effective July 1, 2006:

Birth through age 5.....	\$11.34
Age 6 through age 12.....	\$12.80
Age 13 and over.....	\$14.60

Sibling Incentive (Sib-I) - A sibling group of three or more receives a Sib-I of \$100.00 for each sibling. For example: Jane, Daniel, Rick and Marla are placed in a DFCS family foster home. The total per diem amount is reimbursed to the foster parent along with the Sib-I of \$400.00 (\$100.00 each for Daniel, Marla, Rick and Jane).

IMPLEMENTATION:

These changes are effective July 1, 2006.

The FFC Basic rate will be applied to the July reimbursement paid in August 2006 for all DFCS foster homes, relative foster homes and approved relative placements that receive the ERR, ESG or ERCS.

To initiate the Sib-I for sibling groups of three or more at the initial placement, the Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) completes the 527 (Initial Authorization of Foster Care) for each child. After including the required information on line 14 – “Authorized Foster Care Per Diem Rate” insert “Sib-I \$100.00”. Submit the form to accounting within the required time period.

To initiate the Sib-I for sibling groups of three or more after the initial placement, use Form 529 (Authorization of Foster Care Status Change/Termination). On line 14 – “Change Authorized Foster Care Per Diem Rate to” insert “Sib-I \$100.00”. Submit the form to accounting within the required time period. Note: Mid-month changes are effective the 1st day of the next month.

The sibling incentive continues as long as the siblings remain together and there are at least three or more siblings that remain in the same DFCS regular foster home or relative foster home. The Sib-I is not applied to respite care or concurrent per diem rates.

To discontinue the Sib-I, use Form 529. On line 14 – Change Authorized Foster Care Per Diem Rate to, insert “Sib-I Discontinued”. Submit the information to accounting within the required time period.

All 529's for siblings groups of three or more in a DFCS regular or relative foster home prior to July 1, 2006 should be completed to initiate the Sib-I no later than July 21, 2006 and submitted to accounting.

Questions regarding the new FFC basic service rates or the Sib-I should be directed to the Field Program Specialist in your region. Regional staff may direct questions to Leslie Cofield at lbcofield@dhr.state.ga.us or 404-657-3445.

INSTRUCTIONS:

A portion of the Foster Care Manual is being revised to reflect the above procedures. Until the revised manual material is received, this County Letter details policy and procedures to be followed.