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The New York State Citizens Coalition for Children (NYSCCC) has filed a lawsuit to require NYS to set a minimum rate for monthly stipends (board rates) based on the **actual costs** of caring for children. Go to the NYSCCC website for further information. (link below)

Useful Links:

[New York State Citizens Coalition for Children \(NYSCCC\)](#)

This website is first on our list because it is **the most** comprehensive website dedicated to foster and adoptive parents. If you are a foster/adoptive parent, you owe it to yourself and your kids to check it out.

[The Office of Children and Family Services \(OCFS\)](#)

The Office of Children and Family Services serves New York's public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities. We will achieve results by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services.

OCFS publishes the [NYS Foster Parent Manual](#)

[Nassau County Department of Social Services \(DSS\)](#)

[Family Focus Adoption Services](#) If you are open to adopting older children, sibling groups, and/or children with special needs, we recommend that you contact Family Focus Adoption Services. They are absolutely the best at preparing prospective adoptive parents to adopt and for creating families that thrive.

[E-Courts](#)

Click on WebFamily to look up future family court hearing dates. You will need your child's docket number, which can be found on the first page of the permanency hearing report. To follow pending criminal cases, click on WebCrims, and enter the subject's first and last name.

[U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission \(CPSC\)](#)

Information on recalls and other safety issues

[Foster Care and Adoptive Community \(FCAC\)](#)

Online training, support and articles

[Casey Family Programs](#)

Casey Family Programs is the nation's largest operating foundation focused entirely on foster care and improving the child welfare system.

[Rise Magazine](#)

Stories by and for parents affected by the child welfare system. It's good for foster parents to understand the birth family's perspective on foster care.

[NYS Early Intervention Program \(ages 0-3\)](#)

[The Early Years Institute](#)

The Early Years Institute educates all of us--parents, professionals and the public--about the importance of the early years, and brings together community leaders to make bold investments in young children to give them the best start in life

[Parent Magic](#)

Simple, straightforward parenting advice and helpful tips

[Youth Success NYC](#)

A resource for youth in care and after care

[Represent Magazine](#)

The voice of youth in care - true stories by teens



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Frequently Asked Questions (Some of the links don't work yet.) [Contact us](#) if you have any questions that are not listed here.

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1. What is FAPA?

The Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (FAPA) of Nassau County is an organization created for the benefit of children in foster care or who have been adopted through the foster care system. Aside from being a support system for foster and adoptive parents, we are involved in advocacy for children in our care. We also provide recreational activities for foster and adoptive families. and we engage in fundraising that directly benefits the children in our care. Fundraising

...and we engage in fundraising that directly benefits the children in our care. Fundraising is utilized to provide scholarships, support healthy recreational activities, and purchase burial plots in the unfortunate event that a child in our care passes away.

2. How can I join FAPA?

Membership dues are \$25 per calendar year. To become a member, send a check for \$25 made payable to FAPA of Nassau County DSS to: Nassau County FAPA, 148 Doris Ave., Franklin Square, NY 11040. Please include your full name, address, phone number and e-mail address. Email us at ContactUs@dssfapa.org for our membership application.

3. When are FAPA meetings held?

FAPA meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month (September through June) at 6:30 pm at Nassau County DSS (60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Uniondale) in Room E-122.

4. What is the main difference between fostering and adopting?

When fostering, you are actively working with DSS and the birth parent to reunite the family. You do not have the legal standing to make any major decisions for the child in your care. Your commitment may be short or long term. Sometimes foster care placements turn into adoptions when a birth parent's rights are terminated, but this generally takes years. When adopting, you are making a lifetime commitment to a child. Contact with the birth parent may or may not continue, but you would be legally considered the child's parent.

5. How can I become a foster parent?

The first step would be to attend a foster parent orientation class. If you are still interested, you would enroll in a 10-week (30-hour) training class. At the same time, you would undergo a home study and a background check. The process of becoming a certified foster parent usually takes at least 6 months. To get started, you may call Alison Hawley at (516) 227-8291 or Diane Carolina at (516) 227-8284.

6. How can I become an adoptive parent?

Few infants/young children are available for adoption through Nassau County Department of Social Services. Those that are freed for adoption are often adopted by their foster parents. Some people opt to become foster parents for children who are deemed "legal risk". These children most likely will eventually be freed for adoption, but there are no guarantees. There can be a very long wait to obtain a "legal risk" placement. If you are strictly interested in adoption, you may call Kerry Schindler at (516) 227-8273. If you are open to adopting older children, sibling groups, and/or children with special needs, we recommend that you also contact [Family Focus Adoption Services](#).

7. What are the current board rates?

The following monthly rates are effective from 7/1/11 through 3/31/12:

Age 0-5 \$533

Age 6-11 \$628

Age 12 and over \$727

Special Children \$1,169

Exceptional Children \$1,772

8. How does my child qualify for a special rate?

To qualify for special rate, the child must have a physical condition requiring a high degree of physical care; be adjudicated as PINS or JD, be moderately developmentally disabled, emotionally disturbed, or have a behavioral disorder requiring a high degree of supervision; be a refugee or Cuban/Haitian entrant who cannot function because of factors related to that status (e.g. can't speak English well).

To qualify for exceptional rate, the child must require 24-hour-a-day care by a qualified nurse or someone supervised by a qualified nurse; have severe behavior problems and require high levels of individual supervision; have severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia, severe developmental disabilities, brain damage, or autism; or have AIDS or an HIV-related illness.

9. How do I apply for a special board rate?

According to the NYS Foster Parent Manual, "To receive special or exceptional payments, you will need to show your ability to care for children with special or exceptional conditions through past training and experience or by completing special training. You will need to participate in agency training every year and actively participate in case conferences. You must be able to work with the professionals involved in the child's treatment plan and to accept assistance and guidance in caring for the child."

You should ask your caseworker (in writing) to apply for the special rate. To this request attach medical documentation signed by your doctor that includes the child's diagnosis, testing done or needed, medication or medical treatment regimen, follow up needed and if possible a prognosis. Add a statement from you indicating your ability to care for such a child and the training you have or will receive.

10. What expenses are covered?

The board rate is intended to reimburse the foster parent for the cost of caring for the child. In addition, certain expenses may be covered, such as: day care, clothing, mileage for visitation or other extraordinary transportation, school expenses, special activities, special recreational/hobby expenditures, window guards, special furniture/equipment, damage/loss caused by a child in care, camp. Always check with your caseworker for approval of specific expenditures.

Click to read [DSS Payment Policies memo](#) for more detailed information.

11. How many hours of training must I attend annually?

You must attend a minimum of 4 hours of training per year to maintain your certification. Training received at DSS, PTA, online, hospitals, libraries, outside agencies, etc. will all be considered towards the yearly requirement. Additional training may be required for special/exceptional board rate.

12. Where do visits take place?

Initial visits generally take place at the DSS building (60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Uniondale). Two visiting rooms are available for visits. As birth parents make progress towards reunification, visits may take place in less restrictive settings, at the discretion of DSS and/or the court, such as: Long Island's Children's Museum, McDonald's, Eisenhower Park, Chuck E. Cheese, the mall, the birth parent's home, the foster parent's home, etc.

13. Who transports children to their visits?

In most cases, foster parents are expected to provide transportation to and from visits. Mileage

In most cases, foster parents are expected to provide transportation to and from visits. Mileage reimbursement is available.

14. Where can I park when transporting children to DSS for visits?

Foster parents have two numbered parking spots available for their use. Contact Alison Hawley (516) 227-8291 or Erica Marquardt (kiwinut@verizon.net) to obtain a parking permit.

15. What is a Service Plan Review (SPR)?

Every 6 months, a meeting is held at DSS to review the case and to plan for the future. Attendees include birth parents, foster parents, foster care caseworker, CPS caseworker, and an independent reviewer. Depending upon the circumstances, others may be included in the meeting (e.g. supervisor, assistant director, lawyers, relatives). Discussions may include why the children came into care, the progress made toward reunification, visitation, and any specific issues raised by the birth parent, foster parent or DSS. The foster parent may be asked to describe the child's behavior at home and at school, and to provide updates on medical and/or therapeutic care.

16. What is a Permanency Hearing?

Every 6 months, a hearing is held in Family Court to review the progress made in the case and to plan for the future. Attendees include birth parents and their lawyers, foster parents, Deputy County Attorney (lawyer representing DSS), law guardian (lawyer representing the children in care). Sometimes the caseworker is present. Prior to the hearing, a permanency hearing report is prepared by the caseworker and submitted to all parties (including the foster parent). At the hearing, the report is reviewed and decisions may be made about the goal (e.g. reunification, place with a relative, free for adoption), visitation, and any other issues raised by the parties involved.

17. How can I find out when the Permanency Hearing is being held?

You should receive a permanency hearing report two weeks prior to the permanency hearing, along with a letter inviting you to the permanency hearing. On the first page of the permanency hearing report, you will find a docket number. At any time, you can go to the [e-courts website](#) and look up future hearing dates, using the docket number.

18. What does 15 out of 22 months really mean?

The simple answer is that if a child is in care for 15 out of the most recent 22 months, a termination petition (TPR) must be filed. Keep in mind the following:

- this timeline is calculated as starting at the time of finding of abuse or neglect or 60 days after temporary placement in foster care, whichever is sooner
 - there are exceptions, such as:
 - the child is in the care of a relative
 - there is a "compelling reason" why it is not in the child's best interests to have a TPR filed
 - the child is 14 or older and will not consent to adoption
 - there are insufficient legal grounds for a TPR
 - the agency has not provided the services it deems necessary to attempt to reunify
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19. How can I find out more about Termination of Parental Rights?

[TPR article by Margaret Burt, Esq.](#)

20. What are my responsibilities for health care of a child in my home?

If you have not received a placement folder at the time of placement, ask your caseworker to provide you with one folder for each child placed with you. In the placement folder, you will find forms to assist you in managing the health needs of the child:

Yellow/Green form

Have your medical provider fill in this form at each visit. Also, keep a copy of your child's updated immunization record attached to the form. Ask your caseworker how soon after placement the child must have a medical exam. Hospital discharges usually require a follow up visit within 48 hours. You will need to bring your placement letter identifying you as the foster parent and proof of Medicaid or other insurance with you to all appointments.

Consent to Medical Care form

Foster parents must obtain birth parent or DSS consent for hospital admissions, for sedation, and for invasive medical procedures. Routine doctor visits to specialists, emergency department visits

and routine testing (e.g. x-rays, blood work, EEG, EKG, MRI) do not need specific consent. Sedated testing, medication for ADHD, surgery, etc. require specific consent. Nassau University Medical Center requires DSS written consent on a NUMC form for the first routine care visit.

Medical Emergencies

Foster parents are not authorized to sign any consents should a child require hospitalization, sedation or surgery. If such a situation occurs, provide the Emergency Department staff with the number for your caseworker, supervisor or after hour DSS emergency number (572-3143). The Emergency Department medical staff will make the official request on the child's behalf. It is the responsibility of DSS to notify the birth parents unless other prior arrangements have been made.

Avoid collection letters

In order to avoid billing problems, do not use your home address when filling out medical forms. Use the DSS address:

Nassau County DSS
60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd.
Uniondale, NY 11553

Please note that if your address and phone number do not appear on the medical forms you will not receive reports, prescriptions or telephone reminders.

Contact information

Keeping a list of all specialists, with address, phone number, and dates of all appointments will help both you and the caseworker whenever contact needs to be made and will be invaluable in the child's next placement. Your folder contains a sleeve designed to hold doctor/office cards

Dental

Children 3 years old and older must have a dental examination by a dentist each year.

21. What should I do if the child in my care does not have a Medicaid card?

It will be very difficult for you to obtain medical care for a child without the Medicaid card (or number). If a child is placed in your home without a Medicaid card, do not delay in contacting your caseworker who should be able to give you a temporary card or a Medicaid pending letter. If you are not having success, you should contact your caseworker's supervisor or your homefinder for assistance. If there is an unavoidable delay in obtaining a Medicaid card, contact foster parent

for assistance. If there is an unavoidable delay in obtaining a Medicaid card, contact foster parent Alicia Bulger (516-902-2327) for some suggestions on how to obtain medical care/prescriptions in the interim. Some doctors accept straight Medicaid and some only accept Medicaid with an assigned HMO. It is important for you to clarify this information and share it with the medical office prior to your appointment.

22. What is WIC?

All children in foster care under the age of 5 are automatically eligible for WIC, a food assistance program. By enrolling in WIC, you will receive "checks" which can be used to purchase a variety of foods, such as formula, milk, cereal, juice, cheese, and eggs. Call the Growing Up Healthy Hotline to locate the WIC local agency nearest to you: 1-800-522-5006.

FAPA recommends checking out the WIC office located at 400 Lakeville Road (next to LIJ Cohen's Children's Hospital - formerly Schneider's Hospital) in New Hyde Park. Workers are friendly and there is minimal waiting time! A Farmer's Market is located in the parking lot during the summer months. Call the LIJ WIC office at (516) 470-4620 WIC requires you to bring your child, your placement letter, Medicaid information, and a completed medical referral form signed by a doctor (in your placement folder). A different form is required for special formula or special diet requests. If you are having difficulty finding specialty formulas or supplements call Alicia Bulger (735-1816). If your child is already known to WIC, their previous file must be officially closed before a new file can be opened for you.

23. What should I do if I'm having trouble with my caseworker?

Sometimes foster parents and caseworkers have different opinions on how a case should be managed. It is always best to first try to work things out in a tactful manner with your caseworker. Your homefinder is an excellent resource for assistance in working out problems with the caseworker, so try your homefinder next. If you are still not successful/satisfied, you can contact the caseworker's supervisor. Your caseworker's voicemail should mention his/her supervisor's name and phone number. If necessary, you can continue to go up the "chain of command", and you can request a meeting as well. For suggestions on how to handle your specific case, you can call foster parent Erica Marquardt ((516) 352-5801).

24. What is a homefinder?

A homefinder is the foster family's caseworker. Your homefinder will stay the same, no matter what placements you have in your home (if any). The homefinder's job is to assist you in being the best foster parent you can be. Your homefinder is also responsible for recertifying your home. He/she is the best resource for you to begin with whenever you are having a problem with your case.

25. Are there foster parents I can call if I need to talk?

Sometimes you may have questions/concerns, but are reluctant to speak to anyone at DSS because you are not sure how you will be viewed. Sometimes you may need to hear from someone who is going through or has gone through the same situation you find yourself in. The following foster parents are available to you at any time:

- Alicia Bulger (516) 902-2327 (specializing in infant care, medically involved children, out-of-race and cross cultural foster care/adoption)
- Erica Marquardt (516) 352-5801 (specializing in developmentally delayed children, sibling groups, support for "new and confused" foster parents)
- Betty Shands (516) 481-2049 (specializing in multiple placements, working with birth families, parenting "tweens" and teens)