



POLICY TITLE:	Youth Personal Allowance		
 	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY		
Approved By:	Date Approved:	Original Effective Date:	Last Revision:
Brenda Donald	August 13, 2020	November 1, 2013	August 11, 2020

I. AUTHORITY	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws, regulations, including but not limited to provisions in Title 4 of the DC Official Code, Chapters 60 and 62 of Title 29 of the DC Municipal Regulations, and the <i>LaShawn A. v. Bowser Implementation & Exit Plan</i> .
II. APPLICABILITY	All CFSA staff, contract agency personnel.
III. RATIONALE	Providing a monthly personal allowance for youth in foster care (along with services and supports around financial literacy) can be an effective means of promoting normalcy for the youth, and for helping to develop the vital financial management skills while in care to become self-sufficient following the youth's exit from care.
IV. POLICY	<p>It is the policy of CFSA to provide a monthly personal allowance of \$100 to youth between the ages of 15 and 21 years who are placed in a foster home or congregate care setting. If the youth enters a placement in the middle of the calendar month, the allowance is to be pro-rated accordingly.</p> <p>The allowance is intended to cover the youth's discretionary spending. Youth are not to be required to use the allowance to cover basic necessities, such as food, clothing, school supplies, toiletries, or hygiene products.</p> <p>The youth is required to meet behavioral, case planning and household engagement criteria each month to receive the allowance.</p> <p>The placement resource provider (i.e., resource parents or group home operators) is responsible for distributing the allowance, and for applying the reasonable and prudent parent standard for decisions pertaining to it. Funds for the allowance are included in the existing contractual or otherwise CFSA-approved foster care board payment.</p> <p>CFSA is to offer financial literacy services and supports to allowance recipients.</p> <p>Resource providers are expected to coach and support youth on effective budgeting and financial management, which should be included in Youth Transition Plans for older youth.</p> <p>Resource providers may withhold the allowance for cause, as defined herein.</p> <p>Social workers are expected to inform youth and resource providers on their case load that there is a policy regarding personal allowances, and to discuss the requirements around allowances at team meetings.</p>

<p>V. CONTENTS</p>	<p>A. General Requirements for Receipt of the Personal Allowance B. Budgeting and Financial Literacy for Allowance Recipients C. Distribution, Monitoring and Tracking of Allowances D. Withholding of Allowances E. Complaints and Grievances</p>
<p>VI. SECTIONS</p>	<p>Section A: General Requirements for Receipt of the Personal Allowance</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The resource provider is to determine whether the youth is eligible to receive a personal allowance in a given month based on the youth’s satisfaction of the following behavioral criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. There shall be no unexcused absences from school or excessive tardiness (according to the school attendance policy). b. There is to be no new involvement in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system, and there is to be full compliance with the requirements of any individual plans (such as probation plans) in place because of the youth’s pre-existing involvement in the juvenile justice or criminal justice system. c. There are to be no violations of household curfews. d. There is to be no unauthorized absence from the placement (<i>as defined in the policy on Missing, Abducted, or Absent Children</i>). e. There is to be no inappropriate use of the allowance, as described in Section C.6. 2. The resource provider is to determine whether the youth’s level of household engagement warrant’s receipt of the personal allowance. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Resource providers are to make ongoing efforts to integrate the youth into the provider household, and the youth is to be encouraged by all members of the case management team to participate. b. The youth, assigned social worker, and resource provider shall determine the trauma-informed, child-centered criteria for household engagement. These criteria are to be documented in the youth’s case plan and are to be revisited at team meetings. 3. The resource provider and social worker shall be responsible for explaining the personal allowance eligibility criteria and the youth’s requirements for ongoing receipt of the allowance in language and terms that are clear and understandable to the youth. 4. If the youth does not satisfy the eligibility criteria, the resource provider may withhold the allowance payment according to the criteria outlined in Section D.
	<p>Section B: Budgeting and Financial Literacy for Allowance Recipients</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource parents are encouraged to have youth participate in financial literacy and budgeting training, coaching and support through CFSA’s Office of Youth Empowerment or alternatively they may provide evidence of having attended training elsewhere.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Agency staff and resource providers are to encourage allowance recipients to open Making Money Grow (MMG) individual matched savings account through the Agency-selected vendor. 3. The youth shall be encouraged to develop a budget, revised as needed, with input from the social worker and resource provider, addressing the following information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Amount of money to be saved b. Amount of money to be spent c. Financial goals 4. Throughout the youth's placement, the resource provider shall provide guidance and coaching to the youth regarding how to manage their allowance to help reinforce financial management and budgeting skills with respect to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. distribution and receipt of the personal allowance b. development and maintenance of a personal budget c. spending and accounting 5. If a youth does not have the developmental or intellectual capacity (as supported by a formal diagnosis) or the emotional maturity (as determined by the team) to manage his or her allowance, the case management team (including the youth) will develop an appropriate disbursement and management plan. 6. The social worker shall document the youth's inability to receive an allowance on a monthly basis and the alternative disbursement plan in FACES.NET.
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	<p>Section C: Distribution, Monitoring and Tracking of Allowances</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family-based resource providers are to distribute the allowance weekly (typically on Fridays), totaling at least \$100.00 per month, unless an alternative distribution plan is arranged with the youth and the social worker. 2. Congregate care providers may distribute the allowance on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis, in accordance with the facility's standards, as long as the youth receives at least \$100.00 on a monthly basis. 3. The resource provider shall inform the social worker and the youth of the distribution schedule, which is to be documented in FACES.net. 4. If the youth is newly placed in the resource provider home, the resource provider may consult with the team for guidance on an appropriate distribution schedule. 5. The resource provider shall maintain accurate records of all allowance distributions for purposes of monitoring and/or auditing. At a minimum, the following information shall be documented at the time the allowance is distributed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name of the youth b. Date that the allowance was distributed or withheld
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	<p>c. The amount distributed and/or withheld</p> <p>d. Manner in which the allowance was distributed</p> <p>e. Youth's signature (if developmentally appropriate)</p> <p>6. The allowance distribution record for the youth is to be stored in the youth's placement passport and emailed to the social worker monthly.</p> <p>7. If the youth requests that the resource provider use allowance to purchase items on behalf of the youth, the resource provider shall keep receipts of the items purchased in the placement passport and furnish the receipts upon request.</p> <p>8. A resource provider is required to report any knowledge of a youth's inappropriate use of allowances or mismanagement of funds to the social worker or appropriate CFSA or contracted agency staff.</p> <p>a. Inappropriate use may include but is not limited to the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Purchasing illegal substances (e.g., drugs and alcohol) ii. Engaging in, aiding and/or abetting any illegal activity <p><i>Note: for more detailed information on reporting illegal activities of youth, see Administrative Issuance CFSA-12-01 Unusual Incidents Related to Children and Youth.</i></p> <p>b. In instances where a resource provider (or social worker) suspects inappropriate use of the allowance or the mismanagement of funds, the youth may be required to submit monthly receipts to verify allowance purchases.</p>
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	<p>Section D: Withholding of Allowances</p> <p>1. A resource provider may withhold all or part of the youth's personal allowance for a given distribution cycle (per Section C.1 or C.2 above) for failure to abide the criteria outlined in Section A.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The resource provider shall not withhold the youth's personal allowance as a method of punishment or discipline, other than failure to abide the criteria outlined in Section A. <p>2. Resource providers are to provide the youth with a reasonable opportunity to rectify the issue that led to the withholding and to "earn back" the allowance.</p> <p>3. If the youth is unwilling or unable to earn back the allowance, the resource provider may utilize alternatives to typical cash distribution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Deposit the withheld amount into the youth's MMG account. b. Deposit the withheld amount into a savings or other escrow account designated for the youth. c. Spend the withheld amount on the youth's behalf such that the youth derives a benefit (e.g., a holiday or birthday gift, or a family outing.) Such benefit must not include purchasing basic necessities for the youth.
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. When an allowance is withheld the resource provider shall complete the following tasks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inform the youth that he or she will not receive an allowance for the specified period and specify the reason(s). b. Document the date of the withholding, the amount of funds withheld, and the reason(s) for the withholding. c. Notify the social worker of the withholding and specify the reason(s). d. Notify the social worker of what alternative cash distribution method as indicated in Section D.3 (a-c) was used. 5. The social worker shall document in FACES.NET all notices indicating that the youth's allowance has been withheld.
	<p>Section E: Complaints and Grievances</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers shall inform youth and resource providers on their case load of the procedures for complaints and grievances. 2. If a youth has a grievance regarding the receipt or withholding of a personal allowance, he or she may contact his or her social worker and guardian ad litem (GAL) for review and resolution. 3. The social worker shall review the concern and make a determination to be documented in the youth's case record within 5 business days of receipt of the complaint. 4. If any allegations surface regarding a resource provider's failure to distribute allowances, or a youth's continuous inappropriate use of allowance funds, the ongoing social worker shall immediately document the allegations in FACES.NET and follow up with the youth and resource provider (and contract monitor, if applicable) to address all concerns. 5. Youth may further elevate grievances to the Agency ombudsman no later than 30 calendar days after informing the social worker of any concern and the social worker will document this grievance in FACES. 6. If an allegation of inappropriate withholding (or other failure to pay) of an allowance is substantiated, the resource provider shall provide the youth with the full amount owed. If the resource parent appeals the decision, the appeal will be reviewed by the Supervisory social worker and the Program Manager.