



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Placement Program Report

September 2020

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Introduction

Pursuant to Texas Family Code 264.762 added by House Bill 4 (85th Texas Legislative Regular Session), the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) shall, not later than September 1 of each year, publish a report on the Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program.

The report must include data on permanency outcomes for children placed with relative or other designated caregivers, including:

- The number of disruptions in a relative or other designated caregiver placement;
- The reasons for any disruptions in a relative or other designated caregiver placement; and
- The length of time before a relative or other designated caregiver who receives monetary assistance from the department under this subchapter obtains permanent managing conservatorship of a child.

Background

Kinship care is the term used to describe care provided to a child in DFPS conservatorship by relatives or fictive kin who live outside of the child's home.

The Relative and Other Designated Caregiver (RODC) Program supports continuity and stability for children in the conservatorship of DFPS, by providing financial assistance to eligible kinship caregivers. Prior to September 1, 2017, the RODC Program provided an initial, one-time cash payment, or Integration Payment, of \$1,000 for the first child and \$495 for each additional child in a sibling group, to defray the costs incurred for essential child care items at the time of placement. Eligible caregivers were also able to receive an Annual Reimbursement of \$500 per year, per child, to be paid on the anniversary date of placement.

As a result of the passage of House Bill 4 (HB4) in 2017 (85th Texas Regular Legislative Session), there were changes to the RODC Program. The changes included replacing the Integration Payment and Annual Reimbursement with a monthly reimbursement payment. Currently, the rate is \$11.55 per day, per eligible child, and is paid to the kinship family monthly. Monthly reimbursement payments are time-limited and may be paid for up to twelve (12) months. However, if DFPS determines there is good cause for an exception, payments may be made for up to an additional six (6) months.

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Good cause exceptions listed in the Texas Administrative Code Rule §700.1007 include:

- the identification, release, or location of a previously absent parent of the child;
- awaiting the expiration of the timeline for an appeal of an order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship;
- allowing additional time for the caregiver to complete the approval process for adoption of the child;
- waiting for approval of a child's placement from another state;
- a delayed determination of the child's Indian Child status, or awaiting the approval of the Indian Child's Tribe; and
- any other circumstance surrounding the child or the caregiver that DFPS deems to necessitate the extension.

An annual reimbursement of up to \$500 per year, per child for child-related expenses for up to 3 years or until the child turns 18, whichever occurs first may be provided if DFPS transfers conservatorship of the child to the kinship caregiver, and the caregiver does not receive Permanency Care Assistance.

Analysis of Data

The data in this report represents state fiscal year 2020 year to date (FYTD 20) from September 2019 through March 2020 except where otherwise noted. As of FYTD 2020, 42.6 percentⁱ of children in substitute care were placed with relatives or kinⁱⁱ. 11,746ⁱⁱⁱ children were in a kinship placement as of March 2020. In FYTD 19, 44.9 percent of children were placed with relatives or kin. The most recently available national data (FY 2018) indicates that the national average for relative placement is 32 percent.^{iv}

Benefits to Kinship Caregivers

In Spring 2020, qualitative feedback about kinship caregivers' experiences with financial support was solicited from families receiving payments and the caseworkers with whom they work. Caseworkers and caregivers felt strongly that financial support enabled caregivers to provide better care for youth, thereby improving youths' quality of life:

"Kinship reimbursement has helped us tremendously in caring for [child]. We are able to provide her with not only her needs but wants, as well. For example we have used the reimbursement to fill her bookshelf with books!" -- Caregiver

"[Caregiver] has received 10 months of kinship monthly reimbursement and has reported this monthly assistance has helped her throughout the kinship placement of her two grandchildren. [Caregiver] shared that she relies on her single income to pay her monthly bills (electricity, water, gas, cell phone) and the additional assistance she

has received through kinship has been utilized for her to buy the children clothing, food and items they may need or just want. Caregiver shared the kinship monthly reimbursement has allowed her to not worry about how she will meet her grandchildren's needs as well as pay her bills. The monthly reimbursement has helped make the kinship placement of her grandchildren stable." – Caseworker

It was a scary feeling when I was asked to keep my niece. I thought, "We already are a family of 7." First thought that came to my mind was God, help us because I'm not really sure if we can do this financially... the help from kinship was an answered prayer because the help they gave me was truly a blessing! Just knowing that we had extra income coming in during the middle of the month was great! We knew we had help during the time of the month where hard times would hit." – Caregiver

"[Caregiver] is caring for her grandson who is medically needy. Caregivers were having a very hard economic time. The assistance helped them purchase new appliances, which were really badly needed, such as a new washer since caregiver washes a lot of blankets and clothing for her grandson. She also purchased a stove which gives her the ability to cook more conveniently instead of using a mini-cook top. Since receiving the assistance, she hasn't felt as stressed and has been able to focus more on our child's care" – Caseworker

The Number of Disruptions in Kinship Homes

There were 21,818 non-foster kinship placements which ended in FYTD 20; of these, 2,125 (9.74%) kinship placements disrupted, meaning the placement ended and the child's next placement was in some type of non-kinship foster care.^v This compares to 24,316 non-foster kinship placements that ended in FYTD 19, with 1,980 (8.14%) of subsequent placements in a non-kinship foster care setting.^{vi}

The Reasons for Disruptions

Disruptions reasons data was obtained for all children placed in a kinship home who had a subsequent move into a non-kinship paid foster care living arrangement. The most common reason caseworkers identified for a disruption in a kinship home was the child's behavior.^{vii}

The Length of Time to Obtain Permanent Managing Conservatorship

The average time it took for a relative to be awarded Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC)^{viii} of a child in FYTD 20 for caregivers who received a payment under HB 4 was 13 months^{ix}, a slight increase from 12 months in FYTD 19. This as a one month improvement in the average time to permanency which was 14 months when the HB 4 payments began in FY 18.

Conclusion

The new payment program started September 1, 2017. Analysis of the permanency outcomes highlights consistency of findings between FYTD 19 and FYTD 20.

ⁱ DFPS data warehouse report Executive Dashboard. Due to anomalous data, this rate can be reported only for March 2020, rather than for FYTD20 through March.

ⁱⁱ This includes both those in kinship foster care and non-foster care kinship placements.

ⁱⁱⁱ DFPS data warehouse report SA_09. Based on children in substitute care on March 31, 2020.

^{iv} <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport26.pdf>

^v A move from one relative placement to another relative placement does not count as a disruption.

^{vi} DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics report d95918

^{vii} DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics report d95918

^{viii} Unless otherwise noted, relative PMC means a relative or kin obtained PMC but did not exit under the Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) program.

^{ix} DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics report d95921