

## Board Rates FAQ

### *What are board rates?*

Board rates are the monthly payments resource, kinship and adoptive parents receive from the NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF) to assist them in providing food, shelter, transportation and entertainment for children in care.

### *Do board rates differ from one child to another?*

Yes. Board rates vary based on a child's age and emotional and physical needs. Resource and kinship parents of older children will receive a larger monthly board payment than resource parents of younger children. Resource parents of children with special needs will receive larger monthly payments than resource parents of children with fewer medical and behavioral needs.

### *How are board rates determined?*

To determine board rates, a child's caseworker will visit the resource home and conduct a Resource Family Rate Assessment. During the assessment, the caseworker will ask the resource parent a number of prescribed questions to determine how much time the parent spends caring for the child. The caseworker then shares the information with fellow CP&P staff members to determine what level board rate the resource parent in question will receive. CP&P staff will then enter their findings into NJ Spirit, the state's case management and financial system. The NJ Spirit software will solidify the rate and enter it into CP&P records. Board rates are issued based on a system of four different levels — A, B, C and D

with A reflecting children with few or no special needs and D reflecting children with severe health conditions. There is also a fifth level for children with extreme conditions that warrant nearly constant medical attention. Children in care who have children of their own also receive a separate board rate.

### *When are assessments conducted?*

Assessments are conducted:

- At least every three months
- Whenever a child moves from one home to another
- When the child's needs or circumstances change
- When a child's acuity is reassessed by a nurse

### *What do I need to know before an assessment is conducted?*

Prior to the assessment it is important to gather any documentation relating to the child's mental, physical and behavioral health. Resource parents should be able to report roughly how many hours per week they spend transporting the child, providing educational support to the child, dealing with chronic health issues and destructive behavior, catering to the child's physical and behavioral issues, participating in therapy with the child and working with the child's birth parents. Resource parents should make a habit of documenting each visit a caseworker makes, as well as documenting the frequency and accuracy of board rate assessments.

### *Can I ask for a new assessment if I feel that my child's needs have changed?*

Yes. If you feel that your child's needs have changed you should contact your caseworker immediately. They will work with you to conduct an assessment at the nearest possible date. If CP&P deems that your child's level has increased based on the information the caseworker provides, your board rate will increase.

### *What is the difference between a board rate and a subsidy?*

Board rates refer to the monthly payments received by foster parents and subsidies refer to the monthly payments received by adoptive parents.

### *I adopted a child from foster care. Can I ask for my subsidy to be increased? ?*

Yes. After you've adopted a child, you can request an increased subsidy just like a foster parent can ask for an increased board rate by contacting your Adoption Subsidy Worker at Adoption Operations. You must submit all documentation for review. KLG parents are the only parents who cannot receive an increased subsidy.

### *How will I receive my board rate?*

Your board rate can be received via debit card/direct deposit. Payment is provided a month following care and holidays may delay compensation.

### *Who should I contact if there is an issue with my board check?*

If you have a concern, you can contact your resource worker (RFSW) to verify that there is an issue. You can also visit the payment center website at [www.njdcfpaymentcenter.com](http://www.njdcfpaymentcenter.com).