

PROCEDURE

Series:	Operating Procedures	COA: CFOP: 170-10 (Replaces 175-79)
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Procedure Name:	Non-Licensed Relative and Non-Relative Caregiver Support
Procedure Number:	OP-1079
Reviewed Date:	4/16/24
Revision Date:	(2) 12/15/08 (3) 7/3/12 (4) 8/24/16, 01/30/20, 9/30/2025
Effective Date:	04/15/05

Applicable to:	All FPOCF Staff and Sub-contract Providers,
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PURPOSE: This Relative Caregiver Program policy has been updated to include information from the new CFOP Non-Licensed Caregiver Support. The CFOP includes policies and procedures for the Relative and Non-Relative Caregiver Program including completion of the home study, case planning, legal requirements, eligibility determination, re-determination and other casework activities.

The Relative / Non-Relative Caregiver Support explains how we will support children placed by the child welfare system and help children achieve stability and well-being with caregivers.

PROCEDURE:

References

Florida Statutes: Section 39.5085, F.S. (2) Section 414.095, F.S Administrative Code 65C-28

Scope and Background

This operating procedure applies to any child welfare professional responsible for placement of children with relative and non-relative caregivers, and caregiver support.

1. Legal Authority

a. Federal statutes, regulations, and policy statements:

- (1) Social Security Act, 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) 606, 607, 672-675, 2131, 2132.
- (2) 45 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) 233.110, and Parts 1355 through 1356.
- (3) Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families: Information Memoranda; policy interpretations; policy announcements; letter responses.

b. State statutes, administrative rules and plans:

- (1) Section 39.5085, F.S.

- (2) Chapter 414.095, F.S.
- (3) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan.
- (4) Title IV-E State Plan.
- (5) 65C-28.008, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C).
- (6) ACCESS Florida Program Policy Manual

2. Definition of Terms All major terms used in this operating procedure are defined in Appendix A.

3. Federal Funding Requirements The state receives funding for the Relative Caregiver Program monthly payments and benefits from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. The relative caregiver payment is not related to Title IV-E; however, the child must meet the criteria for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) child-only eligibility. Children who receive a relative caregiver payment are not eligible to simultaneously receive TCA benefits.

4. Unified Home Study Requirements.

a. A Planned Placement home study of a relative caregiver must be completed and approved per CFOP 170-10; The child welfare professional is responsible for:

- 1) Determining whether the relative caregiver can provide a physically safe environment and a stable, supportive home.
- 2) Determining the relative caregiver ' financial security, resources, and childcare arrangements.
- 3) Determining and assisting relative caregivers in accessing services and support.

b. The home study must be completed and filed with the court prior to or at the time the relative placement is being considered as a placement for the child.

c. Family Partnerships of Central Florida shall not place a child or continue the placement of a child in a home with a relative caregiver if the results of the home study are unfavorable unless the court overrides the home study recommendation and orders the placement.

5. Caregiver Support Options.

The child welfare professional making the initial contact with the relative/non-relative caregiver must discuss the caregiver support services available for the caregiver. All services must also be discussed during the completion of the relative/non-relative caregiver home study. This includes, but not limited to:

- Referral for Level I Foster Home Licensing
- Referrals to kinship navigation services
- Assisting with linkages to community resources and completion of program applications
- TANF

a. Medical Insurance (Medicaid) There is a process in place for automatic, temporary Medicaid enrollment of a child placed in out-of-home care with a relative. The child will be enrolled in a Medicaid plan. If a child is already enrolled in a Medicaid plan, he/she may remain in his/her Medicaid plan at the time of placement or may be moved to another Medicaid plan. The responsibilities of revenue maximization staff for Medicaid eligibility are described in CFOP 170-15, Chapter 2, Medicaid.

b. “Child-only” monthly grant, cash assistance under Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) may be available subject to the relative caregiver meeting the eligibility criteria. Payment amounts, benefits, eligibility criteria, and application procedures are separate from the Relative Caregiver Program.

NOTE: The relative has the option to include their needs in a regular Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) benefit. Once converted to a Relative Caregiver Program payment, only the child’s needs may be included.

c. Once a child placed with a relative has been adjudicated dependent and an approved home study has been filed with the court; the child-only payment can be transitioned to a Relative Caregiver Program payment.

d. Relative Caregiver Program (RCP). Monthly payments for the Relative Caregiver Program are established per s. 39.5085, F.S. Payments may be made to the relative caregiver for each eligible child placed with them to cover the cost of providing for the child’s basic needs.

(1) “Child-only” and monthly payments for the Relative Caregiver Program are subject to the eligibility criteria outlined in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan.

(2) In order for a child who is placed with a relative caregiver to receive a monthly Relative Caregiver Program payment, the child must:

i. Live in the home of a specified relative based on an approved home study. A “specified relative” must meet the degree of relationship described in ss 39.5085(2)(a)1 and 2, F.S

ii. Be adjudicated dependent and be in:

(1) Court-ordered temporary legal custody of the relative under protective supervision of the department pursuant to s. 39.521(1)(c)3, F.S.; OR,

(2) Court-ordered placement in the home of a relative as a permanency option listed in ss. 39.6221 or 39.6231, F.S.; or former s. 39.622, F.S., if the placement was made before July 1, 2006.

(3) If a child is placed in the custody of a relative pursuant to an order of the court against the recommendation of the department or contracted service provider, the relative shall be allowed to participate in the RCP.

- (4) Contingent upon availability of funds and continuing eligibility, RCP benefits shall continue until the child reaches age 18, is no longer living in the home of the relative caregiver, or the child is adopted. NOTE: Half-siblings deriving their eligibility from a related sibling will also lose eligibility when the related child becomes ineligible for one of the reasons listed above.
- (5) If the relative caregiver is receiving an RCP payment, the payment must be terminated no later than the first day of the following month after a parent or stepparent moves into the home, allowing for a 10-day notice of adverse action.
- (6.) A relative caregiver may receive the RCP payment for a minor parent who is in his/her care, as well as for the minor parent's child, if both children have been adjudicated dependent and meet all other eligibility requirements.

e. Support for Non-Florida Residents. A child placed with a relative in Florida by another state or a Florida child placed out of state is not eligible for "child-only" TCA or Relative Caregiver Program payments from the State of Florida. Based on the state where the Florida child is placed, financial assistance may be available. The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) will facilitate access to resources for relatives in other states when a child has been placed based on an approved home study conducted through the ICPC.

f. Nonrelative Caregiver Financial Assistance Payments.

g. Nonrelative Caregiver Financial Assistance payments must be made to the nonrelative caregiver, on behalf of the child, to assist with the added expense of housing, food, clothing, incidentals, supplies, and any other costs or services that aid in the care, safety and well-being of the dependent child.

h. Nonrelative Caregiver Financial Assistance payments must be made to the nonrelative caregiver on behalf of the child in an amount based on the child's age as listed in Rule 65C-28.008, F.A.C. September 1, 2020 CFOP 170-10 9-3 (3) Contingent upon continued availability of funding and continued eligibility, nonrelative caregiver financial assistance payments must continue until the child reaches age 18, is adopted, is no longer placed in the home of the nonrelative caregiver, moves from the state of Florida, or the nonrelative caregiver becomes licensed as a foster placement, whichever is sooner. 9-2. Eligibility, Application and Approval by the Child Welfare Professional. a. Eligibility Criteria.

(1) Nonrelative Caregiver Financial Assistance is available to those nonrelative caregivers who would be unable to serve as a caregiver without financial assistance and thus would expose the child to the risk of placement in foster care without the assistance.

(2) Nonrelative caregivers who receive Supplement Security Income (SSI) on behalf of the child will be denied nonrelative caregiver financial assistance payments for the child.

(3) Nonrelative caregivers who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Social Security Survivor Benefits on the behalf of the child in an amount less than the

monthly payments for NCFA, as set forth in subsection (3)(d) of Rule 65C-28.008, F.A.C., shall be eligible to receive NCFA. The amount of the monthly NCFA payment shall be the difference between the monthly NCFA payment set forth in subsection (3)(d) of Rule 65C-28.008, F.A.C., and the amount of the child's SSDI or Social Security Survivor Benefit.

(4) The following criteria apply to Nonrelative Caregiver Financial Assistance payments: (a) A completed Unified Home Study; (b) A court order adjudicating the child dependent; (c) A court order placing the child in the care and custody of the Nonrelative Caregiver and finding that the placement is in the best interest of the child; and, (d) A signed statement by the Nonrelative Caregiver expressing financial need to continue to care for the child long term. (5) A nonrelative may receive the NCFA payment for a minor parent who is in his or her care, and for that minor parent's child, if both children have been adjudicated dependent and meet all other eligibility requirements. The minor parent may not receive a TCA payment for him- or herself and his or her child while the nonrelative receives the NCFA payment for either or both of them. If the minor parent applies for TCA for him- or herself and his or her minor child, the NCFA payment must be terminated. (6) Nonrelative caregivers may not receive the NCFA payment for an unrelated child who is eligible for the Relative Caregiver payment based on their half-sibling's placement with a relative caregiver. If the unrelated child becomes ineligible for the Relative Caregiver payment due to a change in the eligibility of the related half-sibling (for example, the related child is adopted, leaves the home, or turns age 18), the nonrelative caregiver may apply

i. Licensed Foster Care. Relative and non-relative caregivers who provide care for children placed with them are not required to meet foster care licensing requirements. If a relative decides to become licensed in order to receive higher monthly board and care payments, all requirements in s. [409.175](#), F.S., and Chapter [65C-13](#), F.A.C., for licensure must be met.

j. Permanency Achievement. When a relative caregiver provides permanency for a child who has been placed in their care, the following subsidies are available:

(1) In the case of adoption by the relative caregiver, an adoption subsidy may be paid. When the child has specific physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral needs which require care, supervision, and structure beyond what is ordinarily provided in a family setting, a maintenance subsidy may be negotiated up to 100% of the statewide foster care board rate. The subsidy must be approved prior to adoption finalization. Refer to Rule [65C-16.012](#), F.A.C., for types of adoption assistance and Rule [65C-16.013](#), F.A.C., for determination of maintenance subsidy payments.

(2) In the case of other permanency options, the relative caregiver may continue to be eligible for the Relative Caregiver Program benefits. Other permanency options include the following:

- (a) Permanent guardianship under s. [39.6221](#), F.S.
- (b) Permanent placement with a fit and willing relative under s. [39.6231](#), F.S.

(3) DCF Tuition and Fee Exemption. Children placed by the department per s. [39.5085](#), F.S., in out-of-home care may be eligible for a tuition and fee exemption at any public Florida University or Florida College System institution or Florida workforce education programs. Each university or college shall waive eligible youth and young adults from payment of tuition and fees until they reach 28 years of age. The young adult must meet the eligibility criteria listed in s. [1009.25](#), F.S.

6. Relative Caregiver Program Payments/Nonrelative Caregiver Financial Assistance Program

Monthly payments for relative, nonrelative/fictive kin caregivers pursuant to section 39.5085, F.S., and 65C-28.008, F.A.C., are made to the caregiver for each eligible child placed with them to assist with the added expense of housing, food, clothing, incidentals, supplies, and any other costs that aid in the care, safety, and well-being of the dependent child. Benefits may not be received under more than one program for the same child.

RCP and NCFA payments are made to the caregiver on behalf of the child in the standard amount based on the child's age as listed in 65C-28.008, F.A.C., and as listed below. However, pursuant to section 39.5085(2)(d)1., F.S., relatives and nonrelative caregivers will receive a higher payment amount for up to six months while in the program if the child is in an open dependency case. The higher amount will be pursuant to section 409.145(3)(a), F.S. If the dependency case closes during the six-month period, the payment amount will be reduced to the standard amount based on the child's age.

Age of Child Monthly Payment Standard

0 through 5 \$242
6 through 12 \$249
13 o 18 \$298

7. Eligibility Process for Relative Caregiver Financial Assistance.

a. Family Partnerships of Central Florida and the Department of Children and Families' Economic Self-Sufficiency Program Office are jointly responsible for determining eligibility. The eligibility determination process is described in section 39.5085 and Rule [65C-28.008](#), F.A.C.

(1) The Family Partnerships of Central Florida Kinship Caregiver Support Specialist is responsible for assisting relative caregivers with the eligibility application process. The Dependency Care Manager responsible for the child placed with a relative caregiver will ultimately be responsible for ensuring that the local procedures are followed.

(2) Family Partnerships of Central Florida and the Economic Self-Sufficiency Program Office will utilize form CF-FSP [5233](#), Relative Caregiver Communication (available in DCF Forms), or communicate by electronic means to notify one another of a relative caregiver's desire to apply for financial assistance and to communicate changes in circumstances that may affect the amount of the payment or eligibility for the payment. The communication form is a requirement of communication for both programs per Rules [65C-28.008\(2\)\(j\)5](#) and [65C-28.008\(2\)\(k\)6](#), F.A.C.

b. In addition to on-going case management services and required judicial reviews, Family Partnerships of Central Florida or subcontracted staff are responsible for:

(1) Completing face-to-face contacts with the child and relative caregiver per requirements in Rule [65C-30.007](#), F.A.C. During each contact with a relative caregiver, the child welfare professional will determine whether the relative caregiver has any needs for support including services or training that might be critical to placement stability.

(2) Assisting the relative caregiver with obtaining the monthly financial assistance benefits, as necessary.

(3) Notifying ESS within five business days when a child in the home of a relative caregiver becomes potentially eligible for the Relative Caregiver Program benefits and the relative caregiver has indicated a desire to be considered for these benefits.

(4) Notifying ESS within ten business days when there are changes that may impact the Relative Caregiver Program benefits, such as the child has been adopted, turned age 18, or left the home. The Relative Caregiver Communication (form CF-FSP [5233](#), available in DCF Forms) is used for this purpose.

c. Initial Application.

(1) The Dependency Care Manager/Child Welfare Professional will follow local CBC Lead Agency procedures to complete form CF-FSP [5233](#) (available in DCF Forms), Relative Caregiver Communication, for each child placed with the relative caregiver.

(2) The Dependency Care Manager/Child Welfare Professional will submit the completed form(s) to the local ESS office. The Dependency Care Manager will retain a copy in the relative caregiver's provider record in the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN).

(3) The ESS worker will review the family composition and determine if the family will be subject to the work requirements and time limits under the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program, or, alternately, if the child is eligible for a "child-only" payment. Assistance under the TCA "child-only" category is not time-limited, nor is the relative caregiver subject to work requirements.

(4) The FLORIDA system will process the child's eligibility for the Relative Caregiver Program payment.

(5) If all eligibility factors are met, the case will be approved by ESS for payment.

d. Conversion to Relative Caregiver Program Payment.

(1) Once the child placed with a relative caregiver is adjudicated dependent and a home study has been completed, the Dependency Care Manager will update form CF-FSP [5233](#), Relative Caregiver Communication, with the date of adjudication and completed home study. The Dependency Care Manager will submit the form to the local ESS office within five business days following the placement determination.

NOTE: The Relative Caregiver Program eligibility driver creates a separate assistance group for each Relative Caregiver Program eligible child and determines their eligibility separately based on their age and any countable income.

(a) Remove the Relative Caregiver Program eligible child from the existing TCA assistance group or terminate an existing TCA assistance group (AG) if all children are eligible for the Relative Caregiver Program payment.

- (b) Convert the TCA payment to the Relative Caregiver Program payment for the next recurring month.

NOTE: Payments cannot be received for a child from both TCA and Relative Caregiver Program in the same month. Notify the relative caregiver and the Dependency Care Manager of the payment conversion to the Relative Caregiver Program.

(2) Eligibility will be reviewed by ESS every 12 months and adjusted periodically, if appropriate, to reflect changed circumstances. If the review determines that the payment should be lowered, the relative caregiver shall be notified of his or her right to a fair hearing. For purposes of this paragraph, examples of “changed circumstances” shall include the following:

- (a) The child begins receiving Supplemental Security Income.
- (b) The child begins receiving unearned income. Examples are Social Security benefits, child support, etc.

(3) ESS also evaluates eligibility for other public assistance programs if the child’s circumstances change, and he or she is no longer eligible for the Relative Caregiver Program payment.

- 8. Child Support Collections (42 U.S.C. 654 and 671(a)(17)).
States are required to take all appropriate steps to secure an assignment of support rights on behalf of a child receiving maintenance payments assistance under TANF, Title IV-E, or medical assistance. Also, sections 454 and 458 of the Social Security Act require states to collect and distribute child support for foster care cases. Relative caregivers are required to cooperate with the Child Support Enforcement Program in establishing, modifying, or enforcing support orders with respect to children in their care who are receiving TANF, Title IV-E, or medical assistance benefits.
- 9. Case Planning.
 - a. The Dependency Care Manager will work with the relative caregiver and child as appropriate to develop and implement outcomes in the case plan that is co-constructed with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s).
 - (1) When the case plan goal is reunification, the relative caregiver will be an excellent resource for contributing suggestions for the family change strategies. The Dependency Care Manager should refer to CFOP 170-9, [Chapter 4](#), Family Engagement Standards for Exploration.
 - (2) The relative caregiver’s relationship with the child will be a benefit in identifying educational, medical, and other needs that must be addressed in the case plan.
 - (3) Unless it is clear the relative placement will result in permanency for the child, a concurrent permanency goal and concurrent plan should be established.
 - (4) To ensure the relative caregiver is actively involved in reunification efforts, the relative caregiver must be assigned tasks in the case plan to facilitate visitation and communication between the parent(s) and child. When siblings are separated, the

relative caregiver must be assigned case plan tasks to facilitate visitation and communication between the child(ren) and the siblings.

b. When the case plan goal is permanent guardianship of a dependent child per s. [39.6221](#), F.S., or permanent placement with a fit and willing relative per s. [39.6231](#), F.S., the relative caregiver, child, if age appropriate, and other involved parties will assist with identification of the measurable objectives, tasks, and services needed to maintain the placement. The case planning discussions must address the need for a permanency goal and a realistic timetable for achieving one of these permanency options.

c. The Children's Legal Services (CLS) attorney shall notify the relative caregiver of all hearings either in writing orally. The court may release CLS from this obligation if the relative's involvement is impeding the dependency process or is determined to be detrimental to the child's well-being.

d. The Dependency Care Manager shall inform each relative caregiver that he/she has the right to:

- (1) Attend all hearings.
- (2) Submit written reports to the court.
- (3) Speak to the court regarding the child.

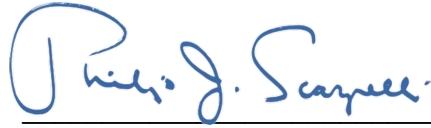
10. FSFN Documentation.

a. In FSFN Case Notes, the child welfare professional must document:

- (1) His/her discussion with the relative caregiver about support options available.
- (2) His/her actions to assist the relative caregiver with obtaining any support needed, including documentation of referrals completed.
- (3) The case plan tasks that the relative caregiver has agreed to assist with until formally incorporated into the child's court-approved case plan.

b. The relative caregiver home study must be completed and approved using the functionality available in FSFN.

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:



PHILIP J. SCARPELLI
President and Chief Executive Officer
Family Partnerships of Central Florida

APPROVAL DATE: 10/31/2025

APPENDIX A

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

TERM

DEFINITION

**Temporary Assistance
for Needy Families
(TANF) Temporary Cash
Assistance (TCA)**

Temporary cash assistance is the state's program which provides cash assistance to needy families with dependent children. The TANF Act passed in 1996 enacting the time-limited cash assistance program. Certain groups of temporary cash assistance participants are exempt from the time limit, including child-only cases.

Date of Eligibility

For eligibility to begin, a home study must be completed, a child must be adjudicated dependent, and a court order must be in effect that orders temporary custody of the child to the relative or relative placement under protective supervision of Family Partnerships of Central Florida. Once these activities are completed and the relative caregiver payment is requested, the TCA technical and financial policy must be met by the child. For children unknown to TCA at the time of the request for the relative caregiver payment, the relative caregiver payment will begin the earlier 30 days from the date of application or the date of approval.

NOTE: In most situations, the relative caregiver case will be initially approved as a TCA child-only case. When the relative caregiver payment is approved, benefits will begin in the first month that the child may be removed from the TCA case. These situations are treated as changes. Payment cannot be received from TCA and Relative Caregiver in the same month.

Designee

Refers to a community-based care contractual provider or other agency or entity named by Family Partnerships of Central Florida to perform duties and responsibilities assigned to Family Partnerships of Central Florida.

**Ongoing Determination
of Eligibility**

Determination of the continuing eligibility of a child for Relative Caregiver Program payment must be done according to the regular review cycle established in the TCA program. Generally, this requires the relative to participate in 6–12-month re-determinations of eligibility.

Need

Refers to the financial need of the child. Neither income nor assets of the child can exceed the Relative Caregiver Program payment standards, or the asset limit prescribed by the TANF State Plan.

**Relative Caregiver
Program Payments**

Payments to cover the cost of caring for the child, (and cost of providing) food, clothing, shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, and personal incidentals, i.e., for example, transportation, non-prescription medication.

Removal Home

The family setting from which the child was first legally removed, including a relative's or non-relative's home if such person had assumed and continued to exercise day to day responsibility for care and control of the child, prior to court involvement.

Medicaid

Medical assistance funded under Title XIX of the Social Security Act, which provides basic health care to various coverage groups. Children who are eligible for relative caregiver payment are eligible for Medicaid coverage.

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)

A legal proceeding which terminates the parents' rights to their child and frees the child for adoption.

Also formerly referred to as permanent commitment.

Specified degree of relationship

Refers to the non-parent relative with whom the child resides. A child must be living in a home maintained by a specified relative as a condition of eligibility. The relative must be a non-parental relative within the fifth degree of specified relationship shown below:

- Brothers, sisters (including those of half-blood)
- Aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews
- Grandparents, great-grandparents
- First cousins (and 1st cousins once removed)
- Relatives of a father whose relationship must be determined by a non-judicial determination of paternal relationship
- Stepbrother or stepsister
- **(Note:** The parent of a stepparent is not a specified relative).
- The natural and other legally adopted children and other relatives of the adopted parents, if they are within the specified degree
- Legal spouses of any persons named in the above groups even though the marriage terminated by death or divorce.
- Individuals of preceding generations as denoted by prefixes such as grand, great-grand, great-great-grand.
- The half-sibling of the child was also placed with a relative.