

# WIC WORDS



## Certification Update

October 30, 2008

### Topics Today:

- What is Foster Care
- Who may be in foster care
- Who are foster parents
- Family Size
- Adopted Children
- Determining Income
- Acceptable Proof of Placement & Identity
- Statement of Status
- Responsible Parties
- Assigning Family ID Numbers
- High Risk Designation
- Check Issuance
- Alternative Living Situations – Not Foster Care

### STATEMENT OF STATUS FOR FOSTER TEENS:

A Statement of Status form should be completed for each teen who is currently placed in foster care. The first option on the form would apply to these teens.

### WHAT IS FOSTER CARE:

**Foster care** is a system by which certified, stand-in "parent(s)" care for minor children or teens who have been removed from their birth parents or other custodial adults *by state authority*. The foster care parents receive money from the state to care for the child.

### WHO MAY BE IN FOSTER CARE:

Any infant, child or teen who has been maltreated or neglected, or has been found to be delinquent.

### WHO ARE FOSTER PARENTS:

Any individual or family licensed or approved by the State to provide care to state wards. They may or may not be relatives of the foster child. Foster placement with a relative may take time and be of "pending" status. Foster care placement with the foster parent may be coordinated through the state and other agencies such as Visanet, Heritage Home, or Cedars Home for Children.

### FAMILY SIZE :

All foster children are considered a family of one. They may be part of a larger "foster family" **BUT** for WIC eligibility purposes they are counted as a family of 1.

### Adopted Children:

If the foster child leaves foster care and is adopted into a permanent home subsidized by DHHS, the child is no longer in foster care and therefore is no longer a family size of 1. All household family members are counted for adopted children.

### DETERMINING INCOME:

Foster children are always on Medicaid and therefore adjunctively income eligible for the program.

Each foster child's income consists only of payments made to the foster family by DHSS for the care of that child. This may also include money received for respite care, clothing, mileage etc. given to the foster parents for care of the child. That income figure should be entered into the computer system. Any additional income earned/received by the foster parent(s) is excluded from the income calculations for foster children.

### ACCEPTABLE PROOF OF FOSTER PLACEMENT & IDENTITY:

Many foster placements occur as a result of a crisis situation. Therefore, the foster parents may have little or no documentation regarding a child's identity or placement. Other methods of identification you can use when this occurs are:

- Foster placement letter from the case manager
- Verbal statement from HHS caseworker or CPS to WIC staff confirming that the child has been placed with the foster family.

## WHO IS THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY?

The responsible party(ies) for clients in foster care is/are the person(s) designated by DHHS as the caregiver for that client. This is usually the foster parent(s).

The exception is when the case manager has determined that a teen needs to take responsibility for accessing services. In these situations the teen is listed as the 1<sup>st</sup> responsible party and the foster parent is listed as the 2<sup>nd</sup> responsible party.

## HOW TO ASSIGN FAMILY ID NUMBERS:

A family ID number is used to identify a group of individuals with a common link. In Nebraska this link is the same responsible party.

The same family ID number is used for every client with the same responsible parties.

**Children & infants** in foster care - would be assigned the foster parent's family ID number.

**Foster teens** - are assigned their own family ID number. If the teen was on WIC before and she is the only person in that family you can use the existing ID number.

**Infants whose mom is in foster care, but they are not, would be issued a new familv ID#**

## FOSTER PLACEMENT & HIGH RISK DESIGNATION:

Children who have been placed or moved from one foster care home to another during the previous six months are determined to be high risk according to Nebraska WIC Risk Criteria.

As high risk clients, education must be provided by a CPA.

## Alternative Living Situations That Are Not Considered Foster Care

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between foster care and other living situations. Not all alternative living situations are considered foster care.

The following situations are NOT considered foster care living arrangements.

- Mom went to jail & left children with others
- Grandma has note from mom giving her guardianship or allowing her to take care of child for medical treatment
- Mom left the state and asked aunt to care for the children while she is gone
- Children of military personnel living with friends or relatives

Children in the examples above were not taken away from their parents by the State. These children are not wards of the State and the caregivers are not being paid by the State for their care. Therefore, they are not foster children.

## CHECK ISSUANCE.....

### Issue checks monthly when placement is with a:

- Foster family and it is unknown how long the child or teen will remain with this family
- Relative and it is thought to be short-term (less than 4-6 months).

### Issue checks Bi-monthly when the:

- Child or teen has been living with the same foster family for more than three consecutive months.
- Child is with a family member or relative and the placement is thought to be long term (more than 4-6 months).

Note: Bimonthly checks may be issued when there has been contact between WIC staff and the case manager, or foster parent to verify long term placement of the foster child. When this contact has been made, it should be documented in the record.

For additional questions or hard copies, please contact the Nebraska State WIC Program at 402-471-2781.