

Title:	Use of the Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility Tool		
DCS Number:	8.3	Supersedes:	Protection and Safety Procedure Update #2-2020
Version	1.0	Effective Date:	July 1, 2021
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1.0 Scope

CFS Specialists (CFSS) will complete the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) and the Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility Tool (NCR) when a child is removed from their home and placement occurs out of home in foster care.

2.0 Purpose

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Children and Family Services will utilize a standardized level of care assessment to determine foster care payment reimbursements for foster parents and the licensed placing agency who supports the foster parents.

3.0 Policy

The CFS Specialist will complete two documents when a child is initially removed from his or her home and placed in an out of home placement in foster care, and will complete the Child's Sections for:

1. The Structured Decision Making Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA)
 - Identifies the known needs of the child.
2. The Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility Tool (NCR)
 - Documents the care and efforts the foster parents are making to meet the child's individual needs.

If the child moves from one foster home to another foster home within thirty days of the initial removal, the NCR is not required for the initial foster home.

The NCR describes eight areas of care:

- (1) Medical/Physical Health and Well-Being;
- (2) Family Relationships/Cultural Identity;
- (3) Supervision/Structure/Behavioral and Emotional;
- (4) Education/Cognitive Development;
- (5) Socialization/Age Appropriate Expectations;
- (6) Support/Nurturance/Well-Being;

- (7) Placement Stability; and
- (8) Transition to Permanency and/or Independent Living.

Within each of the eight areas of care are three levels of responsibility.

Whenever a Level 2 or Level 3 ranking is selected under one of the areas of care, the CFSS must describe and document in narrative on the NCR under the section “Outline the Caregiver Responsibilities,” the additional care the foster parent has committed to provide that supports a Level 2 or Level 3 ranking in each level of responsibility. The documentation must describe the specific activities that the foster parent(s) will engage in that meet the definition of a Level 2 or Level 3 ranking, including intensity and frequency of those activities. Whenever a Level 1 ranking is selected under one of the areas of care, additional documentation is not necessary.

The CFSS will complete the NCR during a face to face meeting with the foster parents, and will invite the foster care agency representative if the foster parent is supported by a contracted agency. The NCR should be reviewed by the biological parents when reunification is the current permanency goal. The NCR should be reviewed by the child if the child is currently participating in an independent living plan.

The level of parenting responsibility the foster parent agrees to provide, along with the age of the child, will determine the daily reimbursement rate calculated through N-FOCUS.

Upon a child’s 6th and 12th birthdate, N-FOCUS will automatically calculate a change in the daily foster care rate and generate an alert for the CFS Specialist and the Income Maintenance Worker assigned. The CFSS will not need to complete a new tool with the foster parent(s) on those dates.

The NCR will be completed at the following times when the child is placed in an out of home placement;

- (1) Initial placement into the foster home;
- (2) Every six months following the date of placement, unless one has been completed within the prior six months;
- (3) Planned placement changes while in an out of home placement in foster care;
- (4) At the request of the foster parent;
- (5) At the request of the Agency Supporting the foster parent;
- (6) At the request of the Division of Children and Family Services;
- (7) Child’s needs change, which requires the foster parents to provide additional level of responsibility;
- (8) Permanency plan changes to adoption or guardianship; and/or,
- (9) Permanency plan changes to APPLA living in an Independent Living setting, 30 days prior to the child turning age 19, if the child remains in a foster home placement.

1.) Initial Placement into the foster home:

- A. The foster parents will be reimbursed at the essential rate for the child's age.
- B. The CFSS will complete the FSNA no later than thirty calendar days after the child's initial placement. The CFSS with the foster parents and supporting foster care agency will complete the NCR no later than thirty calendar days after the child's initial placement.
- C. Foster Care reimbursement rate will be authorized when the NCR is received in NFOCUS.

2.) All other times NCR's are completed:

- A. The child has already been in an out of home placement and the unique strengths and needs are already known and documented on the FSNA completed by the CFSS.
- B. The CFSS with the foster parents and the supporting foster care agency will complete the NCR
- C. The foster parent will be reimbursed at the level of parenting responsibility determined by the updated NCR.
- D. Foster Care reimbursement rate will be authorized when the NCR is received in N-FOCUS.
- E. If the foster parents change their foster care support agency, and the NCR has already been completed with the foster parent and their prior agency, the CFSS shall print a copy of the current NCR and have the new foster care agency staff sign the NCR. A new NCR is not required unless one party requests.

3.) Foster care reimbursement rates are based off the age of the child and the level of parenting responsibility the foster parent agrees to provide in order to meet the unique needs of each child in their care. The NCR is used to determine the level of parenting responsibility. The rates for each parenting responsibility effective July 1, 2021 are as follows:

Service Level of Care		7/1/21 - 6/30/22
Essential	Age 0 - 5 years	\$21.23
	Age 6 - 11 years	\$24.41
	Age 12 - 18 years	\$26.53
Enhanced	Age 0 - 5 years	\$29.18
	Age 6 - 11 years	\$32.36
	Age 12 - 18 years	\$34.49
Intensive	Age 0 - 5 years	\$37.14
	Age 6 - 11 years	\$40.33
	Age 12 - 18 years	\$42.45
Agency Supported Foster Care		
Essential Level		\$23.09
Enhanced Level		\$29.89
Intensive Level		\$41.14

4.)When a family is considering adoption or guardianship of a child the CFSS will determine eligibility for an adoption or guardianship assistance agreement. When the assistance agreement is going to include a maintenance payment, the daily rate provided must be less than the rate determined through the NCR when the child was in foster care.

- F. Trained staff will use the Nebraska Permanency Responsibility Resource Tool (NPRRT) to determine the level of parenting responsibility. The NPRRT was developed by several stakeholders and reviewed and approved by DHHS to be utilized when preparing the adoption and guardianship assistance agreements. The NPRRT will use the rates below for daily maintenance negotiations on assistance agreements for adoption and guardianships effective July 1, 2021.
- G. The NPRRT will be completed the by the adoptive parents or relative guardians with GAP Assistance Agreements. The increase requests for Adoption Assistance agreements post adoption and increase requests for IV-E GAP Assistance Agreements will calculate the daily stipend approved with the below rates effective July 1,2021.

IMFC Increase Requests & Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Rates for NPRRT July 1st 2021	Service Level of Care				Daily rate increase amounts for the At Risk and Essential levels of care when the child does not have Medicaid coverage
	At Risk	Essential	Enhanced	Intensive	Insurance/Health Care
Age of Child					
Age 0 to 5 years	\$14.34	\$14.51	\$29.08	\$37.04	\$2.84
Age 6 to 11 years	\$15.91	\$17.02	\$32.26	\$40.23	\$3.13
Age 12 to 18 years	\$17.34	\$17.64	\$34.39	\$42.35	\$3.17
When the child does not qualify or receive Medicaid assistance, the daily rate can be increased to assist the family with health insurance or medical costs					

Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

4.0 References

4.1 Attachments

- Attachment 1 – List of Abbreviations and Definitions
- Attachment 2 - description

4.2 Applicable Statutes and Regulations

- Nebraska Revised Statutes: 43-4217; 43-117; 43-4505
- 479 NAC 7
- 479 NAC 8

HISTORY OF CHANGES

Document	Version	Description	Author(s)	Date
	2	Updated the NCR and NPRRT rates for 2021	Ivy Bloom	7/1/2021

Attachment 1: List of Abbreviations and Definition of Terms

DHHS-Use of the Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility Tool.01

Abbreviations	Description
DHHS	Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
DCS	Document Control System
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
FSNA	Family Strengths and Needs Assessment
NCR	Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility Tool
NPRRT	Nebraska Permanency Responsibility Resource Tool
Terms	Definition
Approval Date	The date the Approvers agreed to and signed off on the SOP. If the SOP is signed on different dates, the Approval Date is the date of the last signature.
Divisions	The Divisions potentially affected by a SOP include: Operations, Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, Public Health, Children and Family Services, and Medicaid and Long-Term Care.
Version Number	Identifies the number of times the document has been updated.