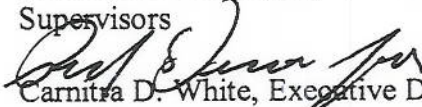


**Department of Human Resources  
Social Services Administration  
311 West Saratoga Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201**

**DATE:** December 22, 2009

**POLICY #:** SSA # 10-22

**TO:** Local Department of Social Services, Directors,  
Assistant Directors, and Out of Home Placement  
Supervisors

**FROM:**   
Carnitra D. White, Executive Director  
Social Services Administration

**RE:** Minor Parent Policy

**PROGRAM AFFECTED:** Out of Home Placement Services

**ORIGINATION OFFICE:** Child Welfare Practice and Policy

**BACKGROUND:** Replaces SSA Policy Directive #92-26 and Supplements  
SSA Policy Directives #08-18 and #10-2

**ACTION REQUIRED OF:** All Child Welfare Services Staff

**REQUIRED ACTION:** Documentation on Caseplan

**ACTION DUE DATE:** Immediately

**CONTACT PERSON:** Deborah Ramelmeier, Director  
Office of Child Welfare Practice and Policy  
Social Services Administration  
(410) 767-7506

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this Policy Directive is to amend current policy regarding the placement of the infant of a committed minor child. Current policies name only the committed minor mother. This Policy includes a discussion of both the mother and father of the infant.

**Background**

When an infant is born to a child in OHP, it is the responsibility of the local department to determine whether that committed child is capable of properly caring for his or her infant or if the infant must be committed to care. Whether the infant is committed or not, the committed mother or father can be placed with the infant (2 years old or less) in a foster placement. They may be placed in a foster home, treatment foster home, or mother-child program.

**I. Assessment of Need for Commitment of the Infant of a Committed Minor Parent**

Prior to placing a minor mother or father in a foster care placement with the infant, the local department shall first determine if the infant should be committed to the care of the local department. An assessment shall be made of each parent on his or her ability and willingness to care for the child. If the birth certificate does not indicate both parents, a search for the absent parent shall be completed. (See SSA Policy Directive #09-05 *Guidelines for Early Identification and Location of Custodial and Non-Custodial Parents*)

The department shall make every effort to include both parents in the planning for placement of the infant, unless it is contrary to the safety, well-being and best interest of the child. If only one parent is a minor under the commitment of the local department, an assessment of the non-committed parent's ability and willingness to care for the child shall be made. If the local department determines that it is in the child's best interest not to be committed, then the infant shall be placed with either parent willing and able to provide adequate safety and care for the infant. The record must include verification that the local department assessed the mother and father's ability to care for the child and found that commitment was not necessary.

If it is determined that the minor parent that is committed to the local department is not capable of providing for the care and safety of the infant, the other parent shall be assessed for placement. If the other parent is not committed to the local department and is both able and willing to provide for the care and safety of the minor infant, placement of the infant shall be pursued with that parent as a reasonable effort to prevent commitment to the local department. If said parent is either unwilling or unable to care for the infant, the local department shall seek commitment of the infant and place the infant in the same placement as the committed minor parent.

**II. Placement of the Committed Minor Parent and Non-Committed Infant**

If the minor mother or father with whom the infant is being placed is committed to the local department and the infant is not, the foster parent and/or program shall provide support to the minor parent in the care of the child, but it is the responsibility of the minor parent to care for the infant who is not committed to the local department. The record shall include verification that the local department assessed the minor parent's ability to care for the child and found that commitment was not necessary. The foster parent shall be compensated at the regular board rate for the infant in addition to the appropriate board rate for the mother or father. Private treatment provider programs may also be compensated up to 15% of the regular board rate for administrative costs.

**III. Committed Minor Parent and Committed Infant**

If a minor committed mother or father and the committed infant are placed in a foster home, the foster parent shall be responsible for the infant's care and have the same responsibilities to the infant as to any other committed child. The foster parent is to be compensated for the placement of an OHP child, as appropriate. The treatment foster parent will receive the regular or intermediate board rate *without* a difficulty of care stipend as appropriate for the child.

**IV. Private Treatment Foster Home Placement**

If a minor parent and uncommitted infant are placed with a private treatment foster care provider family, the *treatment foster family* shall receive the regular board rate only for the infant. If the infant is committed, the treatment foster parent may receive either the regular board rate or the intermediate board rate for the infant child (depending on the infant's care needs) under the Minor Parent Policy, but may not receive a difficulty of care stipend for the infant. The program shall verify that the treatment foster parents are receiving their full payment. Whether the infant is committed or uncommitted, the private treatment foster care placement agency may receive up to 15% of the regular board rate only for administrative costs. An Exception is needed for the placement in a treatment foster home to ensure the infant is not utilizing one of the two treatment beds.

**V. Payment in MD CHESSIE**

SSA Policy Directives #8-18 and #10-2 discuss the payment policy for an uncommitted infant placed with a committed minor mother. This Policy Directive amends such payments for the placement of the infant with either the committed minor mother or minor father. The instructions for MD CHESSIE entry of payments remain the same; however they can be applied to either the committed minor mother or minor father.