

**Foster Care****Policy No. CT- 840.05**

Effective date: June 26, 2018

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**Policy**

Foster children shall be certified eligible for WIC Program benefits according to age, residency, income, nutritional risk requirements and physical presence. Children left in the care of a family member or friend are not considered foster children unless the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) is involved (See CT-800.15 Guardianship).

A foster child shall be considered a household of one and will be their own Head of Household (HOH). The foster parent will be documented as the caretaker, receiving an eWIC card with benefits for each foster child in their care.

The LA must process all foster care referrals provided to them by the Clearinghouse staff from Gateway foster care referrals. Infants and children placed by DFCS with a relative, close family friend or others who have a long-standing relationship with the infant/child may be screened utilizing thirty-day procedures if the DFCS placement letter is not available.

Money received from any outside source for the care of the child, such as Social Security payments shall be considered as income. (See **CT 800.03 -Income Eligibility Requirement Policy**) If a relative does not receive any money for the care of the child, the child's income will be zero. Placement Verification is not required at subsequent certifications if the child remains in the same foster home.

**Purpose**

To ensure there are no barriers to benefit issuance for infant and children participants who are placed in foster care. To ensure individuals at nutritional risk receive program benefits.

**Procedures**

- I. Process all foster care referrals provided to the Local Agency by the Georgia Gateway Clearinghouse staff.
- II. Verify placement of infant or child in foster care at initial certification by obtaining:
  - A. Gateway foster care referrals Verification of placement from Georgia Gateway Clearinghouse staff at initial certification.
  - B. Accept written or verbal verification from foster parent/DFACS staff.
- III. Document the DFACS contact name and phone number in the General Note section of the "GA-WIC" system.
- IV. Scan the signed custody documentation into the participant's WIC record into the GA-WIC system or Georgia Gateway system.
- V. Assign the foster child as Head of Household in the "GA-WIC" system.
- VI. List foster parent as caretaker for foster child in the "GA-WIC" system.
- VII. Issue eWIC card with benefits to caretaker of the foster child.

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**Change in Foster Homes**

## VIII. Changes in custody:

- A. Document the name of the new care giver in the caretaker field in the “GA-WIC” system.
- B. Document “Change in Custody” in the General Note section of the “GA-WIC” system when issuing benefits to the new caregiver.
- C. Deactivate the previous card and load remaining benefit onto a new eWIC card when an eWIC card with previously issued, benefits were not given to the new caretaker/caregiver.

## IX. Issue benefits in one month increments for the foster child if placement is changed and the new foster parent does not have the placement letter.

## X. Follow the below procedures when a participant is removed from a foster home and is reunited with his/her parent(s):

- A. Request the parent present the infant/child at the WIC appointment or provide written documentation from DFACS or former guardian.
- B. Obtain and document the contact information of the staff providing the verbal verification, when applicable.
- C. Complete the Caregivers Statement of Change form.
- D. Add the infant/child to his/her parent(s) Head of Household (HOH) record and issue benefits if the family is currently participating in the WIC program.
- E. Create a household and issue an eWIC card and benefits to the parent(s) if the family is not participating in the WIC Program.
- F. Recertify child if certification has expired. Determine income eligibility according to the [Income Policy](#).

## XI. Follow the below procedures if the foster child is later adopted:

- A. Accept current Medicaid verification as income even if it continues to list the foster child's name rather than the adoptive name.
- B. Use Medicaid eligibility as income for the other household members per the Adjunctive Eligibility policy if the adopted individual is an infant or pregnant woman.
- C. Do not reassess income if the infant/child has an active certification period.
- D. Add the infant/child to the adoptive family's Head of Household (HOH) record and issue benefits if the family is currently participating in the WIC program.
- E. Create a household and issue an eWIC card and benefits to the adoptive family if the family is not participating in the WIC Program.

**Authority**

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7 CFR §246.12 (r)(1)—Food Delivery Systems  
O.C.G.A. § 29-2-22 (a)(2)

**Definitions/Supporting Information**

**Caregiver:** The parent or legal guardian of an infant or child. A caregiver may also be an individual who is neither a biological or stepparent, nor a legal guardian, who provides financial support and care of an infant or child that resides in his/her/their home.

**Foster Child:** Any child placed through the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS). A child returning to his/her parent shall not be considered a foster child.

**Foster Parent:** Volunteers who provide temporary care to children who have been placed in the temporary, legal custody of the local Department of Family and Children Services. Foster parents work as a part of a team to assure that a child's physical, emotional, medical and psychological needs are met while they are in foster care.

**Parent:** The biological, adoptive, or stepparent of an infant or child.

**Head of Household-** An adult participant, or a non-participating parent/guardian/caretaker of an infant or child. Head of Household to receive food benefits for all household members.

**DFACS placements include:**

- a. Foster family home or group home that has been either trained and verified by DFCS.
- b. Residential group care facility that has been licensed by DFCS, or a facility under the authority of another state agency.
- c. Infant or child placed with a relative, close family friend or others who have a long-standing relationship with the infant/child.