

As the Child Safety and Permanency Division (division) moves forward with rearranging and reorganizing work related to COVID-19, inquiries were received regarding how to provide support to Minnesota's foster, adoptive and kinship families caring for children.

Below are several immediate options that may potentially increase benefit levels for children and provide additional family supports.

Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth reassessment – available for foster, adoption and kinship

When case managers learn from foster parents that their children's needs and subsequent parenting responsibilities increased due to COVID-19, an immediate step is to complete a Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth (MAPCY) reassessment to capture changing needs of children and parenting. This process also applies to foster youth ages 18 – 21 living in supervised independent living settings. When youth share additional needs or financial concerns due to COVID-19, an immediate step is to reassess the MAPCY to support them.

Per Northstar Adoption Assistance or Kinship Assistance benefit agreements, adoptive parent(s) or relative custodian(s) can request a MAPCY reassessment when they believe a change in circumstances has occurred where a child's needs and/or their parenting role has increased. Adoptive parent(s) or relative custodian(s) need to make requests to their adoption assistance operations worker.

Within agency's role of completing MAPCY assessments and reassessments, Minnesota Statute 256N.24, subs. 9 and 10, allows for agencies to conduct a reassessment related to changing child needs and parenting, or for providers to request a reassessment. These reassessments may be warranted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within the MAPCY process, a built-in functionality allows assessors to complete a COPY MAPCY. Using this function allows assessors to copy all a child's needs and parenting indicators into a new MAPCY, allowing for changes to both. The COPY function requires that the effective date must be different from the MAPCY on which it was based.

Division staff reviewed the MAPCY for potential changes of child needs and parenting indicators that may fit for this particular time. Assessments are designed to reflect current individual needs of a child and parenting. A reassessment may not guarantee an increase to the benefit level for a child, however, it may better reflect current situations in a home.

When completing a reassessment related to the COVID-19 situation, note the below needs and parenting indicators that may warrant a selection:

Domain B – indicators 4 and/or 5 (Child tool) or 5 and/or 6 (Youth tool):

- 4. Identify interactions in the home that include physical conflicts among children living in the home and makes adjustments to parental attention in order to safely maintain and teach healthy family interactions. (Extensive)
- 5. Identify dangerous interactions among children in the home that are a safety risk. A mental health or social service professional has identified the safety risk and developed a written safety plan caregivers follow to provide daily routine with intense parental attention to ensure safe sibling interactions among children in the home and when they are in the community. (Exceptional)

Within Domain B, if a family lost services due to the COVID-19 pandemic that provided a caregiver with relief from parenting duties, changes within Domain B related to indicators 11 – 14 may be warranted:

Child receives services that provide the caregiver with relief from parenting duties while family/friends or other professional services care for a child's needs. These parental relief services include respite, personal care attendant (PCA) services, in-home nursing, waived service provider or other designated service provider.

Caregiver:

- Arranges and engages with additional adults or service providers for a child to receive these services, or
- Provides services as a designated waiver service provider or other professional for a period of time in the home.

Child receives services that provide relief from parental care duties for:

- 11. Seven hours or less a week, and up to one respite weekend a month, or no relief is available due to any reason including the following: child is not be eligible for services; child is eligible for services but a caregiver cannot access service providers; or family/friends do not provide substitute care. (Basic)
- 12. Eight or more hours a week, up to and including 14 hours a week, in addition to one respite weekend a month. (Significant)
- 13. Fifteen or more hours a week, up to and including 28 hours a week, in addition to one respite weekend a month. (Extensive)
- 14. Twenty-nine hours or more a week, in addition to one respite weekend a month. (Exceptional)

Domain C – needs of “c” or “d”:

- c. Child's daily behaviors or conditions restrict (prevents) them from participating in age-appropriate activities in the home or community.
- d. Child's daily behaviors or conditions severely limits their functioning and affects their safety and other's safety.

Domain C- indicators 8, 9 and/or 10 (Child tool):

- 8. Provides individual care and attention for a child who has either:
 - Frequent episodes of intense distress not typical for their age, or
 - A serious medical condition, illness, disability or complex medical needs. (Extensive)
- 9. Provides constant adult supervision to a child age 8 or older. This supervision ensures a child's safety in the home, with peers and in the community. This child is never left alone, with peers or in the community without a responsible adult present. (Extensive)
- 10. Provides one-to-one supervision of child or is responsible to ensure another adult provides one-to-one supervision in the home and community. Child cannot be left alone in any room in caregiver's home without a responsible adult present due to: emotional functioning that is assessed to be a danger to self or others, or due to a medical condition requiring continuous supervision of a specific life threatening condition or behavior. (Exceptional)

Or

Domain C –indicators 8, 9, and/or 10 (Youth tool):

- 8. Provides individual care and attention for a youth who has either:
 - Frequent episodes of intense distress not typical for their age, or
 - A serious medical condition, illness, disability or complex medical needs. (Extensive)
- 9. A youth has constant adult supervision to assure their safety, and the safety of others in the home and community. (Extensive)
- 10. Provides one-to-one supervision of youth or is responsible to ensure another adult provides one-to-one supervision in the home and community. Youth cannot be left alone in any room of in caregiver's home without a responsible adult present due to: emotional functioning that is assessed to be a danger to self or others, or due to a medical condition requiring continuous supervision for a specific life-threatening condition or behavior. (Exceptional)

Domain D – indicator 17:

- 17. Transforms parenting to safety manage child's complex behavior or conditions that are a safety risk to self or others. This requires caregivers to have knowledge about child's medical or mental health needs, adjusts their parenting to meet individual health needs, and utilize community medical and mental health services to safety care for child in the home. (Exceptional)

Domain E – indicators 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12:

- 8. Is responsible to supervise regular face-to-face visits with youth's parents or other adult relatives per court order, case plan or contact agreement. (Extensive)
- 9. Actively assists youth with unusually intense reactions related to regular visitation. (Extensive)

- 10. Drives or goes with youth to visit parent(s), siblings, relatives or kin more than 16 times a month. (Extensive)
- 11. Drives one hundred miles or more every month for youth to visit with parents, siblings, relatives or kin. (Extensive)
- 12. Contact with the youth's parents or other relatives is complex and difficult, but caregiver(s) safely maintains a relationship and contact with youth's family by exercising sound judgment. (Exceptional)

Domain G – indicator 10 (Child) or 12 (Youth)

Supports youth in a home-based educational program who may have been expelled from school, involved in an alternative education program, or cannot attend a daily school program. (This does not include a homeschool program that a caregiver decided to provide or day treatment where education is a component of the daily program.) (Extensive & Exceptional)

Domain H – As Minnesota children are not currently attending in-school instruction ([Minnesota Executive Order 20-19](#)), families may need child care due to a provider's need to work. A MAPCY reassessment may be completed to ensure the temporary need for support in Child Domain H: Child Care. The supports offered through Domain H may increase a child's benefit level from 0-4 levels.

- a. Is not needed or is minimal. A caregiver needing child care does not work or attend an education program outside the home year around, the need is nine hours a week or less. Select this item if Minnesota Child Care Assistance program or other resources pay for child care cost. (Basic)
- b. Is needed for 10 to 19 hours a week, or needed for work or education during the summer only. (Significant)
- c. Is needed for 20 to 29 hours a week. (Extensive)
- d. Is needed for 30 to 39 hours a week. (Exceptional)
- e. Is needed for 40 or more hours a week (Maximum)

Special Cost Code 96 – Available for foster care

A per diem, monthly payment, or other service fee may be paid to a family foster home for accepting an emergency placement from law enforcement, or an agency related to a child testing positive for COVID-19. This is not a foster care maintenance payment. This payment may be paid to foster families to be available for placement, or paid as an additional supplement for placement in a home.

Special Cost Code 96 allows an agency to pay above the determined MAPCY supplemental rate. These payments are not included in the Child Foster Care (CFC) report, not eligible for Title IV-E claims, not included in the Northstar Care Fiscal Reconciliation, nor eligible for the Northstar Care state share.

Division staff is exploring potential reimbursement avenues to agencies using the Special Cost Code 96 related to payments to providers faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. Information will be shared with agencies as it becomes available.

County agency staff's work and commitment to adoptive and foster families and children in care is greatly appreciated. Division staff appreciates all of the concerns and questions from county agencies, providers and others. Contact Jody McElroy at 651-431-4730 or jody.mcelroy@state.mn.us) for questions.