

# **Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities**

## **Administrative Policy Manual**

### **Policy: Family Support Services**

**Board Approved: 10/03**

**Revised: 2/04, 10/04, 3/05, 12/11, 8/16, 12/20,  
8/21, 9/22, 11/22, 12/23, 9/24, 9/25, 12/25**

**Reviewed: 3/14, 9/14, 12/15**

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**Section: 4.11**

### **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Licking County Board of Developmental Disabilities, hereinafter referred to as “the Board,” to make available to Board-eligible children, adults and their family’s resources to acquire goods, services, and supports that address needs a family experiences when it includes someone with a developmental disability. These resources are available without regard to family income. MEORC is the administering entity for the Family Support Services Program.

People with developmental disabilities have a right to live in a safe home, enjoy membership in a family, and have access to supports they need to participate, to the degree they choose, in the life of their community. They also have a right to experience enduring relationships with brothers, sisters, and other family members and friends committed to their well-being. Board resources used to support families should help to:

- a) Nurture partnerships between family members and other supportive people including professionals who serve these individuals and their families.
- b) Build on the unique strengths of each family.
- c) Utilize the resources in each family’s social network and home community.
- d) Respect the beliefs, values and structures of each family.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for Family Support Services, a family member of any age who is eligible for Board services must reside in the family home or his/her own home. This includes kinship care (not foster care). For the purpose of this policy family means Parent, Brother, Sister, Spouse, Son, Daughter, Grandparent, Aunt, Uncle, Cousin or Guardian of the individual with developmental disabilities. “Family” also means person(s) who are acting in a role similar to those specified in this paragraph, even though no legal or blood relationship exists. The application for FSS funding is due before December 1<sup>st</sup> of the FSS calendar year.

If a non-family member is providing supports, that if withdrawn, would result in the need for alternative living arrangements, then the non-family member would be eligible to receive Family Support Services with exception of foster care.

- Through ongoing engagement with families, service coordinators help them identify needs and possible options for addressing these needs.
- Any available resources the family could use to pay for the needed services, such as Medicaid and other state and local programs, are explored first. FSS funds will not be used to pay for services, supports, supplies, and equipment that can be purchased with a Medicaid card. Additionally, FSS will not be used if the person is enrolled on a home and community-based Medicaid waiver.

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### **APPROVED USE OF FSS FUNDING**

A family's request for Family Support Services funding will be honored if the funds to pay for them are available, and the expenditure of funds is in accordance with the Board's Payor of Last Resort and Use of Public Funds Policies as well as the stipulations detailed in this policy. At times, the family may be asked to submit a picture, a web link to the item or share specific information about the item requested. **The individual or family will ensure that all requests are allowable before requesting an item and after the initial date of application (date SC sends application email to FSS Coordinator) for FSS funding each year.**

The request will then be processed or purchased. The FSS Coordinator (MEORC) will work directly with the family about purchase options. If a situation arises where reimbursement must occur, a W-9 will be requested as necessary and must be returned prior to payment being made with the exception of co-pays for medical testing and doctor's visits directly related to the diagnosis or suspected delay. Sick and well visits are not included. If at any time the person is found to be dishonest, they will no longer be eligible for the program and restitution may be required. All receipts, mileage and respite forms are due no later than January 31 following the end of the FSS calendar year.

#### **A. Respite**

Families are responsible for choosing a provider(s) that meets the needs of the family member receiving care. In the majority of instances, respite providers are family members and others known to the family who know the person with a disability and are willing and able to provide the care or service. These providers are known as "family approved" providers. The provider shall not reside in the home and must be at least 16 years of age. The family will negotiate the rate with the respite provider(s). Once respite services have been satisfactorily provided to the individual, respite forms will be turned into the FSS coordinator (MEORC), and then a check will be processed and mailed to the provider or vendor.

The Board will link the family to obtain specialized training for any family-approved provider if needed/warranted.

#### **B. Training, Counseling and Education**

Services provided to all family members to obtain the education and skills to assist the family with learning how to address special behavioral, medical, emotional, therapeutic, or personal needs of the individual. Services that may be approved are listed below:

1. Counseling
2. Conferences or training (registration only; no travel or hotel costs)
3. Resource and training materials (i.e. sign language videos)
4. Tutoring outside of regular school hours and in addition to school

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**Professional Recommendation:** It is at the discretion of the FSS Coordinator (MEORC) to ask for a professional recommendation in this area if the request is out of the ordinary, such as an educational conference, specific to a disability. Recommendations may be accepted from a physician, psychologist, teacher or other licensed professional.

### C. Special Diet

Assistance with purchasing food or equipment items needed for a special diet due to a medical, behavioral, or disabling condition. Food or equipment that may be approved:

1. Baby food for children or adults who cannot eat regular food
2. Special formulas or milk
3. Dietary Supplements such as Ensure or vitamins
4. Equipment to process food for needed texture
5. Special plates, spoons, etc.

**Professional Recommendation:** Special diets must be prescribed by a physician or dietician. Equipment can be ordered or recommended by physician, dietician or speech therapist or occupational therapist.

### D. Purchase of Adaptive Equipment/Items

Special Equipment/Items that are needed to improve the living environment or to facilitate the care of the individual at home. Special Equipment that may be purchased is listed below:

1. Adaptive seating for wheelchairs
2. Booster chairs
3. Wheelchairs/ambulating devices
4. Bathing chairs, rails for bathtub or commode, elevated commode seats, etc.
5. Lifts for home use including tracks and installation of lifts/tracks or wheelchair lifts for vans
6. Specialty shoes, braces, AFO's, etc.
7. Developmental/adaptive feeding supplies – easy grip fork & spoons, scooper bowls & training plates, etc.
8. Adaptive add-ons for computers (switches) or joy sticks, v-smile adaptor for communication devices
9. Helmet needed for safety reason such as seizures
10. Diapers for individuals older than 3 years old. \*

**Professional Recommendation:** The need for special equipment must be through a recommendation by a Physician, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist or Speech Therapist and/or linked to the person's Individual Support Plan or Individualized Family Service Plan

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Outcomes. \*For incontinence items a Medicaid denial may be requested. At times, a recommendation may be made for items that appear to be used by a typically developing person. These items are not always intended for the purpose in which they are created. Professional recommendations should be submitted for these requests.

### E. Home Modifications

The requested home or property modifications must make the individual's home accessible. Home modifications that may be approved are listed below:

1. Ramps/walkways both inside and out of the home
2. Widening doorways to accommodate wheelchair
3. Chairlift to access second floor
4. Special fire alarm equipment
5. Bathroom modifications

**Professional Recommendation** Request for professional recommendation or supporting documentation such as a bill or estimate will be at the discretion of the FSS Coordinator (MEORC).

### F. Technology

Technology is defined as any product, device, equipment, or service used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of a person with developmental disabilities and that is deployed in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local rules and regulations and not used for entertainment purposes.

Consider how each technology solution might:

- (a) Enhance the individual's personal freedom;
- (b) Increase the individual's ability to communicate effectively with others;
- (c) Expand opportunities for the individual to access and pursue available activities and establish meaningful relationships with people who are important to the individual;
- (d) Enable the individual to perform tasks that support the individual's efforts to obtain or maintain employment; or
- (e) Help the individual increase and/or maintain independence with daily tasks and activities.

**Professional Recommendation:** A professional recommendation is required for the purchase of an iPad or Tablet and should include an explanation of how the iPad or tablet will increase, or improve the functional capabilities of the person that the item is requested for. For ages 0-2, System of Payment must be explored prior to the utilization of FSS for the purchase of an iPad Or Tablet. iPads and Tablets have a 3-year replacement period. Damaged iPads and Tablets

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must have a written estimate for repairs. Families will be notified of requests that require supporting documentation.

### G. Other

Other is a broad-based category that the family may request services not covered under any of the previous categories. Approval of these requests will be at the discretion of the FSS Coordinator (MEORC). These requests will not be approved if it is determined they present a potential health and safety risk to the eligible individual.

**Professional Recommendation:** Items that vibrate and are indicated to be used for oral motor stimulation such as z-vibes as well as any item that is weighted (ex: weighted blanket or vest) need approval from a therapist prior to ordering. This does not include electric toothbrushes.

- A. Developmental Toys or Materials - The type of item requested which will assist the child/adult in learning or maintaining skills such as:
  - 1. Sensory stimulation development
  - 2. Increase fine & gross motor skills
  - 3. Improve/maintain reading skills
  - 4. Facilitate language development
  - 5. Develop cognitive skills
- B. Camp/Recreation/Leisure Activities that provide opportunities for individuals to learn or maintain skills such as:
  - 1. Specialized Summer Camp
  - 2. Toddler Enrichment Program
  - 3. Safety Town
  - 4. Membership fee to exercise facility Youth Sports Enrollment, dance and music lessons (Uniform and equipment costs are not an allowable expense)
- C. Safety Devices/Equipment
  - 1. Plugs for electrical outlets
  - 2. Devices/locks to keep individuals from getting into cabinets, door knob covers, window and door alarms, etc. for individuals under 18.

*These types of boundaries must be used alongside positive strategies to promote overall growth and development and avoid an environment based solely on punishment.*

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### **USE OF FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM NOT APPROVED**

When a request is not approved, the SC will review the denial and explain why the service is being denied. The SC will also provide the individual and family with a copy of Policy 1.04 Complaint Resolution and Appeals of Adverse Action due process and explain the appeal process. Services/Items that will not be approved or reimbursed are listed below:

- A. Anything purchased prior to FSS application date (date SC sends application email to FSS Coordinator).
- B. Anything that is available through a third-party source/payer
- C. Any item/service the FSS Coordinator (MEORC) determines that would be a possible health and safety risk for the individual
- D. Family vacations
- E. Utility bills
- F. Mortgages
- G. Luxury items such as electronics (TV's, VCR's, DVD's, streaming services, video games, computers, laptops, etc.), swing sets, trampolines, lawn furniture, swimming pools, cable, internet, etc.
- H. General applications/registration/activity fees
- I. Typical expenses incurred for a child/adult of the same age (regular clothes/shoes, crib for infant, strollers, car seats, school fees/supplies, infant immunizations, typical medical costs, Christmas/Birthday gifts, regular furniture/appliances, vehicles, vehicle repair/maintenance, fuel and insurance).
- J. Damage to property/item
- K. Educational services other than summer camp and tutoring in addition to school day.
- L. Home repairs that is not related to the disability or if the home is not owned by the person receiving services or their immediate family.
- M. Vehicles or vehicle repairs
- N. Project LifeSaver will not be approved through Family Support Services Funding, but can be requested through Local Funding.

  

- The total allocation for Family Support Services expenditures is approved by the Board on an annual basis. The Board reserves the right to establish a cap on the total amount of reimbursement to each family. The amount allocated to each family is determined by the total amount available for allocation, the number of families that request assistance.

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- When the annual allocation of Family Support Services funds is exhausted, no additional services will be approved until funds are available again.
- Family Support Services are included in the Individual Support Plan or Individual Family Support Plan. For a child under 18 years of age and is not enrolled on a waiver, Family Support Services are included on the child's "annual plan."
- To be assured reimbursement for non-respite services, the family will obtain the estimated cost and prior approval for the expenditure from the Board before agreeing to services or signing a contract with a provider or vendor. An example of this would be a home modification.