

Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

POLICY

The Board maintains a family support services program (FSS) so that individuals or family members of individuals who are county board eligible can be assisted to remain in and be supported in the family home. The purpose of the program is to make payments for all or part of the costs incurred to promote self-sufficiency and further the unity of the family by enabling the family to meet the special needs of an individual with a disability.

The Board shall set annually the budget allocation for this program and the financial assistance available per individual.

In order to be eligible for financial assistance under this program, the individual or the individual's family must reside in Stark County, and the individual must be in need of habilitation. Each eligible participant will receive financial assistance up to \$750 dollars for the program year. The program year runs from July-June.

Before incurring expenses for a service for which payment will be sought, the individual or family shall apply to the Board for a determination of eligibility for the FSS program.

Request for purchase of items, supports, services or reimbursement of such will be managed by the North East Ohio Network Council of Governments (NEON).

Payment shall not be made under this program to an individual or individual's family if the individual is living in a residential facility that is providing residential services under contract with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities.

Individuals placed through foster care, adopted individuals (receiving an adoption subsidy) and those enrolled on a HCBS waiver or other similar funding source are not eligible to receive FSS funds.

Payments may be made for the following service categories:

- Respite
- Counseling/Training
- Adaptive/Specialized Equipment
- Home Modification
- Incontinence Supplies for persons 3 or older
- Special Diets
- Authorized Medical Expenses
- Community Access: Programs/Camps/Activities

In the event that any requested support is denied by Stark DD or NEON on behalf of Stark DD, an appeal may be made in accordance with Board Policy 2.16 Administrative Resolution of Complaints.

The superintendent will develop procedures to implement this policy.

Sources: Ohio Revised Code 5126.11

Historical Resolution Information	Reviewer(s):
Date	Director of SSA/Investigative Services
3/23/21	
4/23/24	
4/28/26	
Resolution Number	
03-14-21	
04-23-24	
04-20-26	

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PROCEDURE

- I. Everyone applying for assistance through the Family Support Services program will have his or her eligibility determined, if it has not been determined previously.
- II. A family shall be eligible for reimbursement of family resources if it includes a family member who resides at home and has been determined eligible for Board services according to section 5126.01 of the Ohio Revised Code. "Family" as in this policy, means parent(s), brother(s), sister(s), spouse, son(s), daughter(s), grandparent(s), aunt(s), uncle(s), cousin(s), or guardian(s) of the individual with a developmental disability and includes the individual with developmental disabilities. "Family" also means a person or persons acting in a role similar to those specified in this paragraph even though no legal or blood relationship exists if the individual with developmental disabilities lives with the person(s) and is dependent upon the person to the extent that if the supports were withdrawn, another living arrangement would have to be found. The person(s) shall verify the relationship by signature.
- III. A family's request for service must be made electronically via Family Support Service Application. The FSS program is required to respond with an email communication to that request within seven working days. If service/reimbursement is denied, the reason for denial must be in a written response to the family, and shall include information relating to the family's right to appeal the denial in accordance to 5123:4-04 of the Administrative Code. This information shall be presented in the native language of the family or other mode of communication used by the family unless it is clearly not feasible. If the reason for denial is lack of funding, and/or the family is placed on a waiting list, the family is to be notified in writing also.
- IV. North East Ohio Network Council of Government (NEON) shall work with the family to obtain supports and services on behalf of the Board. At the family's request, the Board shall assist families in developing individual plans and strategies for family supports. Family Support Services shall be considered a component of the individual planning process in accordance with the rules adopted by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD).
- V. Family Support Services may be provided in a county other than the one in which the reimbursing County Board is located. Reimbursement must always come from the county of the family with whom the individual resides. The reimbursing County Board is responsible for determining that providers meet the requirements of this rule.
- VI. FSS Payments may be made for the following services:
 - A. Respite
 - B. Counseling/Training
 - C. Adaptive/Specialized Equipment
 - D. Home Modification
 - E. Incontinence Supplies for persons 3 or older
 - F. Special Diets
 - G. Authorized Medical Expenses
 - H. Community Access: Programs/Camps/Activities

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** Please see addendum for itemized list of items, supports, and services that will and will not be covered with the FSS Program.

- VII. To be assured of reimbursement, the family shall obtain the estimated cost and prior approval of the expenditure from NEON before agreeing to services or signing a contract with a provider. To request a purchase of approved items, supports or services, the individual or family would contact NEON to make the request. To be reimbursed for expenses incurred for approved services, the individual or family shall submit to NEON a statement of the expenses incurred, accompanied by any evidence required by the Board. NEON, on behalf of the Board, shall make reimbursements no later than forty-five days after it receives the statements and evidence required.
- VIII. To ensure good fiscal practices that meet the County Auditor requirements or procedures, it is necessary to get estimates and bids for some services prior to reimbursement being approved, e.g. home modifications. In general, however, the Board will not enact policies/procedures that restrict families' choices of providers. While reimbursement may be granted to a family following receipt of and/or payment for services without prior approval, normal practice is that the family should obtain approval for reimbursement before the cost is incurred. Services provided/received without prior approval may not be eligible for reimbursement.
- IX. Upon approval of the request for Family Support Services, the Board shall identify the amount approved to NEON through a shared electronic database. NEON will track all purchases against the original amount approved. NEON shall purchase items, supports, services or render reimbursement of such within forty-five (45) days after the submission of all identified requirements.
- X. The Board is required to have a financial payment system acceptable to the County Auditor, which shall be the means by which a provider of service is guaranteed payments for the Board's (FSS) portion of the cost of an approved service, in the amount authorized by the FSS program. The Board has chosen to use NEON, a Council of Governments (COG), to process payment requests and expedite the payment process.
- XI. For those requesting or needing respite services, a family may request a list of agencies providing certified respite care from the Board before deciding on a provider, or the family may recommend a provider to the Board. It is the intention of this policy to permit, especially in the case of respite care, neighbors, or family members living outside of the family home to provide services to the individual with the developmental disabilities as long as the neighbor or family member has signed the necessary assurances for family selected provider. When using a family selected provider, the family shall sign an assurance assuming responsibility for the health and safety needs of the individual with a disability, and that no liability shall be incurred by the Board. Family selected providers may serve as many families as select them. This applies to out-of-home respite also. Families are encouraged to select people with whom they are familiar. Family members living inside the home of the individual with developmental disabilities will not be approved as respite providers for that individual. Also, a parent who is not living in the same home as the individual is not eligible for reimbursement of respite services. The family may select a County Board employee to provide respite care for their family member with a disability. Notwithstanding, if this occurs, the procedures outlined in Board Policy 2.15 (Ethics

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Council) will be followed. Based upon no conflict of interest being found, the Board employee is permitted to be a family selected private respite care provider.

- XII. All individuals determined eligible for FSS funding will receive an amount of \$750 for the program year.

- XIII. Family Support Services does not apply to family support services that are funded under the state Medicaid Plan as either Home or Community-Based Services or Habilitation Center Services.

- XIV. Agreements are permitted to allow variations of this provision to meet the needs of the families. For example, the county in which the service was provided would reimburse the family instead of the county in which the family resides. Services may be received outside of Ohio, and providers do not have to be Ohio residents

- XV. The Board may contract with another agency to administer all or a portion of the Family Support Services program. The Board shall ensure that any contract agency administering the Family Support Services program adheres to the administrative rules governing the program.

- XVI. The Board may elect to contract out for all FSS services it provides. The North East Ohio Network (NEON), a Council of Governments established and permitted by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 5126.13 and Chapter 167 of the ORC has provided support to the Board's FSS program. The Board shall supervise the Family Support Service program if it contracts some or all of the program out and shall be responsible for the following:
 - A. The approval of services and costs prior to the provision of services;
 - B. The request process for respite care

- XVII. The Board annually assesses the FSS program and reviews the number of individuals and families served given the state allocation received. The Board may also allocate local funds to supplement the state dollars received to operate the program.

Stark County Family Support Services- Items Typically Covered/Not Covered

Items Typically Covered by Family Support Services:

Respite:	Home Modification (Physician's order or therapist recommendation as appropriate to DD diagnosis):
In the family home	Ramps (permanent)
Out of the family home	Fence
Latch key program	Shower/bathroom modifications
Daycare	Stairlift
Camp	
Counseling/Training	Incontinence Supplies after age 3 (Physician's order/prescription required annually)

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Assessments	Diapers Bed pads/mattress liners/covers
Speech Therapy	Wipes
Occupational Therapy	Briefs
Physical Therapy	Liners for undergarments
Family/Individual Counseling	Hygiene gloves
Therapeutic Horseback Riding	Swim diapers
Academic Tutoring not covered by school	Diaper rash ointment/cream
Tuition/Special Education School	
Computer software with recommendations	
Music Therapy	
Special Diets: Physician's orders as appropriate to DD diagnosis)	Medical (Physician's order or therapist recommendation as appropriate to DD diagnosis):
PediaSure/Ensure	Orthotic braces/walkers/standers
Regular formula after age 1	Shoe inserts
Specialized formula	Medical co-pays
Thickening agents	Medications
	Ambulance fees
	Air conditioners/dehumidifiers/humidifiers
	Generators
	Special eyeglasses
	Dental services beyond routine cleanings

Adaptive Equipment (Physician's order or therapist recommendation as appropriate to DD diagnosis):	Community Access and Programs/Activities for Persons Served
Wheelchair Lifts (stairs/van)	Music Activities
Wheelchairs	Aquatics Activities
Ramps (portable)	Museum Memberships
Adaptive bed	Art Activities
Adaptive car seat - ages 5 and older	Dance Activities
Stroller - ages 5 and older	Sports activities/participation
Bib/clothing protector/adaptive clothing - ages 3 and older	YMCA Passes
Adaptive utensils/plates	Payment toward Advocacy
Weighted blanket/vests	Transportation
Therapy ball	
Adaptive swing	
Communication device (Speech -generating devices, Text-to-Speech software, tablet apps)	
Monitoring Cameras for safety	
Alarms	

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Electronic equipment for disability-specific habilitation goals (computer, tablets, iPad, cellphone)	
Personal Emergency Response System- may include fire and/or CO2 detection	
Other OT/PT item with recommendation	

Items FSS Does Not Cover

This is not a complete list.

Adaptive school supplies
Baby food
Books
Clothing
College tuition
Down payments for mortgages
Driving lessons
Home alarm systems
Hot tub
Household maintenance and expenses
Legal fees
Medications not approved by FDA and/or experimental drug therapy
Music instruments/repairs
Parking fees
Regular furniture (highchair, bed, etc.)
Regular mattresses
Rent payments
Routine dental services
Seminars
Swing sets
Swimming pools
Tooth extractions
Toys (even if specialized)
Trampolines
Utility payments
Vehicles/Vans
Vitamins/supplements