

Foster Care Association of Victoria Position:

The Foster Care Association of Victoria believes Respite Care can add strength and relief to any home based care placement.

DHS Respite Care Policy

Dual reimbursements should only be made for placements of children and young people who have been placed in a 'home based care placement':

- Adolescent Community Placement;
- General Foster Care;
- Kinship Care;
- Shared Family Care;
- Home Based Care Intensive including Specialised Home Based Care and Innovative Home Based Care;
- Complex Home Based Care (High Risk Adolescents - 1:1).

Where the child or young person is on a Children's Court order:

- Interim Accommodation Order;
- Custody to Secretary Order;
- Guardianship to Secretary Order.

Or where a child or young person has been placed in a voluntary capacity but at the instigation of Child Protection and the placement is part of a protective case plan.

In such instances where a client in an ongoing placement is placed in a respite placement, both the primary and the respite carers will receive reimbursements for the period of the respite care, at the same rate, subject to the following business rules:

- **Respite placements up to 7 days:**
reimbursements to both the primary and respite caregiver will be made.
- **Respite placements for 8-28 days:**
case-by-case discretion, however it is anticipated payments to both caregivers will occur other than in situations where the reason for the respite placement is that the primary caregiver is travelling for a holiday.
- **Respite placements for 29 days or more:**
payments to the primary caregiver will cease for the period of respite other than in exceptional circumstances.

It is important to note that a decision to place a child or young person in respite care on a regular basis is one that requires case planning endorsement.

The process for options b) and c) above requires the Community Service Organisation and the Child Protection Unit Manager to discuss the appropriateness of dual payments being made. This is on a case-by-case basis. The Placement and Support Manager will be required to endorse the decision to make a dual payment in these circumstances.

Dual payments will not be made for voluntary placements where a child care agreement under Section 13A of the Community Services Act 1970 is in place, or under such an agreement as specified in Part 3.5 of the Children Youth and Families Act 2005, which will come into force in October 2006, except where a child or young person has been placed in a voluntary capacity but at the instigation of Child Protection and the placement is part of a protective case plan.