

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



November 27, 2000

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 00-79

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL COUNTY ADOPTION ADMINISTRATORS
 ALL COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES ADMINISTRATORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS PROGRAM

REFERENCE: ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 2198 (CHAPTER 1014, STATUTES OF 1998)

The purpose of this letter is to notify all counties that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is accepting county plans for the use of funds authorized by Specialized Training for Adoptive Parents (STAP) program that has been established pursuant to AB 2198 (Chapter 1014, Statutes of 1998). The purpose of STAP program is to provide special training and services to facilitate the adoption of children who are substance-exposed and/or HIV positive.

Children with prenatal drug exposure are disproportionately represented in the foster care system and may present unique challenges for purposes of adoption planning. Many of these children are born prematurely, remaining in hospitals almost five times as long as normal newborns. Many suffer long-term effects of drug exposure, requiring special education. Many may have developmental and behavioral problems and learning disabilities for which appropriate interventions must be provided. Children who are HIV positive present similar unique challenges for purposes of adoption planning.

County Plans

Funding for this program is available for Fiscal Year 2000/01 to any county or consortium of counties that submits a county plan that has been subsequently reviewed and approved by staff in CDSS Recruitment and Training Unit. **Counties that submitted plans last year are not required to submit complete plans this year**, they only need to submit documents reflecting the name and telephone number for the county contact, number of clients to be served, any changes for the methods of recruitment, training from last year's plan and/or budget changes only.

For counties submitting plans for the first time, the Department will continue to accept abbreviated county plans that at a minimum provide: 1) a description of the population to be served, 2) a list and brief description of the training and services to be provided to the preadoptive/adoptive parents, 3) an estimated budget and 4) contact name and telephone number for someone who may be contacted for further information.

The county plan/plan revisions must be postmarked no later than December 15, 2000. Address the county plan as follows:

California Department of Social Services
Foster Care Services Bureau
744 P Street, M.S. 19-70
Sacramento, California 95814
ATTENTION: Cheryl King

County Allocations

Department staff anticipates the review/approval of the plans or plan amendments to be completed by late December. Subsequently, the Department will provide the participating counties with individual approval letters that will include the county's allocation. The county allocation and/or regional allocations will be developed on the basis of: 1) the county estimated budget for STAP program; 2) the number of projected cases of court dependent, substance-exposed and/or HIV positive children that will enter the system on a monthly basis and 3) the number of participating counties.

Funding

This program is funded by federal, State and county shares consistent with the normal sharing ratio for child welfare services. Both the recruitment and training components are funded with 50 percent/75 percent federal funds, respectively. The federally funded components (recruitment and training) will be subject to the non-federal discount rate that is obtained from the County Expense Claim. There is not a federal share for the respite component as it is solely funded by State and county funds (see the chart below, for clarification of the funding percentages for each of STAP local assistance services components).

The estimated county sharing ratio for each component is as follows:

	Federal	State	County
Recruitment	50%	35%	15%
Training	75%	17.5%	7.5%
Respite	0	70%	30%

Eligibility

Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 16135.1 states (a) "Eligible child" means any child who meets the requirements of paragraph (1) or (2), and paragraph (3).

1. Any child who has a condition or symptoms resulting from, or are suspected as resulting from, alcohol or substance abuse by the mother.
2. Any child who is HIV positive.
3. Any child who meets the requirements of either paragraph (1) or (2) and who meets all of the following requirements.
 - (A) The child is a dependent child of the court.
 - (B) The child has an adoption case plan and resides with a preadoptive or adoptive caregiver, or the plan is to transition and move the child to a preadoptive or adoptive caregiver.

Training

A participating county shall provide special training to recruited adoptive parents to care for eligible children. The training curriculum **shall** include, **but is not limited to**, all of the following:

1. Orientation.
2. Effect of alcohol and controlled substances on the fetus and children.
3. Normal and abnormal infant and early childhood development.
4. Special medical needs and disabilities.
5. Recovery from addiction to alcohol and controlled substances.
6. Self-care for the caregiver.
7. HIV/AIDS in children.
8. Issues in parenting and providing lifelong permanency and substance abuse prevention to children with prenatal alcohol and other controlled substances exposure.
9. Issues specific to caring for a child who tests HIV positive.

Participating counties may provide the same special training to relative caretakers in the process of adopting program-eligible children.

Case Plan

Participating counties shall include in a child's services case plan how STAP program services are to be provided to support the goal of adoption. The services case plan shall be prepared in accordance with Manual of Policies and Procedures Division 31-200. The case plan **shall** include arrangements for **nonmedical support services including respite care for specially trained prospective adoptive parents, including relative caretakers**. Nonmedical support services **may also include, but are not limited to:** temperament and behavior management training, consultation regarding medical and psychological issues and services, and educational advocacy.

Respite Care

As referenced in the preceding paragraph, respite care shall be part of the services case plan and funded in accordance with WIC Section 16135.10 (b) which requires a 30 percent nonfederal county share of costs consistent with the normal sharing ratio for child welfare services. The county share may be provided with county general funds, in-kind contributions, or other funds not appropriated by the Budget Act.

If you have any questions regarding STAP and/or this letter, please contact Cheryl King at (916) 323-7793.

Sincerely,

SYLVIA PIZZINI
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

c: CWDA