



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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EDUCATIONAL COSTS FOR STUDENTS PLACED TEMPORARILY BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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You asked whether the state compensates or reimburses towns, such as Ashford, for the cost of educating children temporarily placed in the towns by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and attending local public schools.

SUMMARY

The state reimburses school districts for a portion of any special education costs for children in temporary DCF placements, but not for regular education costs. The state provides support for regular education costs for DCF-placed children, as well as for other children attending school in a district, through Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants to towns and other categorical grants for which a district may be eligible.

If a DCF-placed child needs special education, the state reimburses the school district that is financially responsible for the child's special education, which may or may not be the town where the child is placed, for any costs that exceed the district's basic contribution. The basic contribution for a DCF-placed child is the reasonable cost of the special education or the district's average per-pupil cost of education for the prior year, whichever is less. For example, Ashford's basic contribution for special education costs for a state-placed child is \$14,640 for FY 12.

FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A district's financial responsibility for a DCF-placed child requiring special education is determined as follows.

When the child's home school district can be identified, that district must pay the basic contribution. A child's home district is the one where his or her parent or guardian lives and where he or she would otherwise be attending school. If DCF places such a child outside his or her home district, the school district where the child is placed provides the services and bills the home district for their cost. The State Board of Education then reimburses the home district for any of these costs exceeding its basic contribution (CGS § [10-76d\(e\)\(2\)\(A\)](#)).

If DCF places a child who has no identifiable home school district, the local board of education under whose jurisdiction the child last attended school or in whose district the child lived when he was removed from his home is temporarily responsible for the basic contribution. The responsibility lasts for one calendar year or until the child is either committed to the state's custody or returned to his parent or guardian, whichever is earlier. If the child remains in the placement for longer than one year, DCF is responsible for 100% of the cost (CGS § [10-76d\(e\)\(2\)\(B\)](#)). The state is also responsible for 100% of the cost of special education for children who live on state-owned or -leased property or in permanent family residences and attend public school (CGS § [10-76d\(e\)\(3\)](#)).

BASIC CONTRIBUTION FOR A STATE-PLACED CHILD

The basic contribution for a school district that is financially responsible for special education costs for a DCF-placed child is the lesser of (1) reasonable costs of the special education and related services for the child or (2) an amount equal to its average per-pupil educational costs for the previous year.

Although the law requires the state to pay all special education costs above the basic contribution, the state's responsibility is currently limited by the total state appropriation for the year. If the amount appropriated in the budget is not sufficient to fund the excess cost grants for all towns, each town's grant is proportionately reduced. This limit currently applies through FY 13 (CGS § [10-76d\(e\)\(2\)\(B\)](#)).

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