

## Subsidized Guardianship Program

By: Katherine Dwyer, Associate Attorney  
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### Issue

Describe the (1) circumstances in which child caregivers may receive subsidies through the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) subsidized guardianship program and (2) amount of such subsidies.

### Summary

By law, a caregiver may request subsidies from DCF's subsidized guardianship program for care they provide to a child (1) who is in DCF care or custody and living with the caregiver, (2) who has been in foster care for at least six months, and (3) for whom neither adoption nor parental reunification is appropriate.

An eligible caregiver includes a licensed or approved foster care provider who is a:

1. fictive kin caregiver (see box);
2. relative caregiver (i.e., age 21 or older and related to the child by birth, adoption, or marriage); or
3. person caring for a child because the child's parents have died or are otherwise unable to care for the child for reasons that make parental reunification or adoption not viable options in the foreseeable future ([CGS § 17a-126](#), as amended by [PA 17-81](#)).

#### *Fictive Kin Caregiver*

*By law, a fictive kin caregiver is a person who is age 21 or older and unrelated to a child by birth, adoption, or marriage but who has an emotionally significant relationship with the child amounting to a familial relationship ([CGS § 17a-114](#)).*

*Legislation passed in 2015 made these caregivers eligible for subsidies through the subsidized guardianship program ([PA 15-199](#)).*

According to DCF, a caretaker is not eligible for the program if he or she assumed guardianship for the child through probate court without DCF involvement.

Caretakers deemed eligible to participate in the program receive a monthly subsidy and may be eligible for an additional medical or special-need subsidy. The prevailing monthly subsidy rates appear in Table 1:

Table 1: Guardianship Subsidy Rates

<i>Age Group/Service Group</i>	<i>Per Diem Rate</i>	<i>Rate for 31 days</i>	<i>Rate for 30 days</i>
Age 0-5	\$25.99	\$805.69	\$779.70
Age 6-11	\$26.29	\$814.99	\$788.70
Age 12 and over	\$28.52	\$884.12	\$855.60
Medically complex*	\$51.89	\$1,608.59	\$1,556.70
Minor Parent and child	\$54.51	\$1,689.81	\$1,635.30

\*average rate

Source: [DCF Policy 36-55-25.2](#)

Eligible caregivers may also receive (1) a medical subsidy if the child does not have private insurance and (2) a one-time special need subsidy of up to \$2,000 for costs related to assuming care for the child.

Generally, the caregiver may continue to receive subsidies while he or she cares for the child until the child (1) turns 18 or (2) turns 21 if he or she is attending school or a job training program full-time. At least 30 days before terminating or reducing a subsidy, the commissioner must provide written notice and an opportunity for a hearing before the department. If the caregiver appeals the decision, the subsidy must continue without modification until the department issues its final decision ([CGS § 17a-126](#), as amended by [PA 17-81](#), Conn. Agencies Reg. § 17a-126-8).

By law, if the caregiver receiving the subsidy dies or becomes seriously ill or severely disabled, DCF may transfer the subsidy to a successor guardian who meets the department’s foster care safety requirements (e.g., passes a criminal background check) and is the child’s court-appointed legal guardian ([CGS § 17a-126](#), as amended by [PA 17-81](#)).

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