

California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

Foster Care Rates Bureau (FCRB)

Overview of the Group Home Rate Classification Levels (RCLs)

(Does not include Community Treatment Facilities)



PROGRAM COMPONENTS



INTRODUCTION

All group home providers will be classified into one of fourteen (14) RCLs according to the level of care and services they provide.

The RCL process uses a point system to measure the level or intensity of care and supervision provided. Points are based on the number of hours per child per month of services provided in the following three components:

- Child Care and Supervision
- Social Work Activities
- Mental Health Treatment Services

The hours “per child” are computed by dividing the number of weighted hours of services provided per month in each of these three program components by the greater of:

- a. 90% of program’s licensed capacity, or
- b. 5.4 minimum occupancy

The 5.4 minimum occupancy standard represents 90% occupancy in a group home licensed for six.

Child Care and Supervision

The number of hours per child per month of child care and supervision (CCS) provided are weighted by a factor of 1.0 for the minimum level.

Additional points are computed for hours of CCS provided by staff whose experience, education, and/or ongoing training exceeds specified minimum levels.

Experience in Residential Care

Additional points will be computed for each hour of residential child care experience earned by each CCS staff with 24 months or more of residential child care experience and will be weighted as follows:

- 24-47 months 0.15
- 48 months or more 0.25

Residential child care experience is defined as prior experience in providing direct child care worker duties to children residing in out-of-home care, including first-line supervision of child care workers. Residential employment examples include: group homes, county receiving homes/shelters, youth authority camps/facilities, county juvenile halls/camps, juvenile detention facilities, public and/or private mental health day treatment programs, or as a licensed/certified foster parent.

Formal Education

Additional points will be computed for each hour of educational level earned by each CCS by staff with at least two years of education from an accredited college and will be weighted as follows:

- 60 semester units 0.05
- Bachelor’s Degree-other 0.10
- Bachelor’s Degree - Behavioral Science 0.25
- Master’s Degree - Behavioral Science 0.40

Training

Additional points will be given for each hour of CCS if the program provides its CCS staff with 40 or more hours of formal on-going training per full time equivalent per year, provided in accordance with a training plan approved by CDSS. If a program meets this criterion, an additional weighting of 0.10 is allowed.

The maximum additional weighting for hours (per child per month) of the most experienced, educated, and trained CCS staff is 0.75.



Social Work Activities

The number of hours per child per month of social work activities provided are weighted according to the professional level of the person providing the social work activity.

Professional level:

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) 2.5
- Licensed Marriage, Family and Child Counselor (LMFCC) 2.5
- Master's of Social Work (MSW) 2.0
- Master's of Science in Counseling (MSC) 2.0
- Master's (30 units) in a discipline which would enable the individual to sit for the LMFCC or LCSW exam 1.75
- Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) with at least two years of full time equivalent experience 1.5

In order to be considered as social work activities, the employee performing social work activities shall have at least a master's degree from an accredited institution in social work or social welfare; marriage, family and child counseling; child psychology; child development; counseling psychology; social psychology; or equivalent education and experience as determined by CDSS. Education and experience in psychiatric and/or medical fields shall not be considered for this requirement.

Social work activities shall include the following:

Development of needs and services plans; development of discharge plans; assessments to identify changing needs. **(Psychological and psychometric testing is not considered a social work activity.)**

Interaction (counseling) with the child and/or others aimed at preparing the child to analyze and better understand his/her situation is included in social work activities. This includes helping the child understand the reason for placement and to handle associated emotional problems, resolving the difficulties between child and family that led to the need for placement, and planning for the return of the child into a family setting.



Mental Health Treatment Services

The number of hours per child per month of mental health treatment services provided by mental health professionals are weighted according to the professional level of the person providing the mental health treatment services.

- Psychiatrist/Psychologist 5.0
- LCSW/MFT (LMFCC) 2.5

Each eligible hour of mental health treatment services provided by anyone other than a licensed Psychiatrist, Psychologist, LCSW, or MFT, will not receive an additional weighting, but will receive a 1.0 base factor for each unweighted hour of qualified mental health services provided.

These hours include only direct contact time between the child and the mental health professional.

No program is allowed more than an average of 30 points for Mental Health Treatment Services. The 30-point cap counts up to 6 hours per child per month of mental health treatment services by a psychiatrist or psychologist, or 12 hours per child per month by an LCSW or MFT (LMFCC), or any combination that does not exceed 30 points.

Paid-Awake Hours

Hours counted for points in any of the three program components above shall be limited to paid-awake hours. CDSS may make adjustments as determined appropriate.

Paid-awake is defined as *the hours in which staff is awake and reimbursed in a manner consistent with the Department of Industrial Relations*. For more information regarding minimum wage and

overtime rules, visit the following Website:

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/IWC>

54-Hour Per Week Cap

In computing a group home program's point score for classification purposes, no more than 54 hours per week will be counted for any person, regardless of the number of hours that person actually works. Adjustments may be made for documented emergencies.

Allocation of Hours

Some group home staff perform more than one function. For program classification purposes, the group home provider will be required to allocate the hours worked by such staff among the various functions they perform.

For example, the administrator of a 6-bed group home also spends part of the workday performing social work activities and supervising child care staff. The administrator's timesheet indicates the administrator typically works a 60-hour week, spending 30 hours performing administrative tasks, 15 hours performing social work activities, and 15 hours supervising child care workers. The allocation of the administrator's time is 50% for administration, 25% for social work, and 25% for child care and supervision. The time spent on administration does not fall into one of the three program components and cannot be counted for program classification purposes. Given the 54-hour cap, 13.5 (25% of 54 hours) can be counted as social work activities and 13.5 hours can be counted as child care and supervision. These hours can also be weighted to reflect the administrator's experience, education, ongoing training and professional qualifications.

GROUP HOME ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATE

Providers are required to submit a Group Home Administrator Certificate as part of a complete rate application packet in order to have a

program rate established. For more information regarding certification, contact your local Community Care Licensing District Office.



GROUP HOME RATE APPLICATIONS AND EXCEPTION LETTERS

There is a permanent moratorium on the acceptance and processing of group home rate applications for a new program, a new provider, a program change, such as a Rate Classification Level (RCL) increase, a program capacity increase, a licensed capacity increase and a program reinstatement. This means that the FCRB will not accept any rate application for an RCL 10 or above without a letter of Exception written by a county placement agency on behalf of the provider. The letter of Exception must be sent to the FCRB and the request will be granted or denied.

Group homes vendorized by Regional Centers who accept county welfare or probation foster care placements are subject to the moratorium. In addition, for fiscal year 2012-13, SB 1041 restricts the letter of Exception to the moratorium to group home providers at a RCL 1 through 9. Exceptions to the moratorium for RCL 1 through 9 providers will be permitted on a case-by-case basis only for an application to the FCRB for an RCL increase only.

The Exception request letter must be on county letterhead, signed by a county director or designee. The Exception request must include: 1.) the type of rate action requested; 2.) the county's explanation for the Exception request with supporting documentation; 3) and the impact on the county if the request is denied.

Please review All County Letter #12-40 for all the details at <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/letters/notices/entres/getinfo/acl/2012/12-40.pdf>

RATE CLASSIFICATION LEVELS (RCLs)

Based on the points derived from the three program components, programs are placed into one of the fourteen RCLs. Each RCL covers a 30-point range.

POINT RANGES

<u>RCL</u>	<u>POINTS</u>
1	under 60
2	60-89
3	90-119
4	120-149
5	150-179
6	180-209
7	210-239
8	240-269
9	270-299
10	300-329
11	330-359
12	360-389
13	390-419
14	420-up



STANDARD RATES

A current schedule of rates can be obtained at <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/pdf/StandardizedRatesSchedule.pdf>

PROVISIONAL RATE

Pursuant to Senate Bill 933 (Chapter 311, Statutes of 1998), Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 11462(e)(1)(A), (1998), the FCRB is required to establish the initial rate as a "provisional rate" for new providers requesting an RCL or for existing providers requesting a new program or an RCL increase. A provisional rate

is a temporary rate established for no longer than 13 months, based on the RCL that a group home provider projects it will provide. CDSS sets the rate which continues until CDSS conducts a provisional rate audit and issues an audit report which establishes the actual RCL.

Self-Dealing Transactions for Group Home Leases (Leaseback)

The Manual of Policies and Procedures Section 11-400 I (1) defines "leaseback" as limited to the following business arrangements: affiliated leasebacks, less-than-arms' length leases, and long-term leases that create material or financial interest in land or real property. Self-dealing transactions relate to any Board Member (or their family) who own property and lease it back to the corporation for occupancy by group home clients.

Senate Bill X1 24 changed the way the Department of Social Services, Foster Care Rates and Audits Branch handles self-dealing lease transactions for group home providers and added Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 11462.06(d)(1) and (2) which became effective July 1, 2003. Under the provisions of the new Sections, commencing July 1, 2003, any group home provider with an affiliated lease (shelter costs that result from self-dealing transactions) will not be eligible for an AFDC-FC rate.