

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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Issue 21-08

Date: 04/16/21

IMPLEMENTATION OF LEVEL OF CARE (LOC) AND SPECIALIZED CARE INCREMENT (SCI) RATE DETERMINATION PROTOCOL

This FYI is to announce the full implementation of the LOC Protocol (LOCP) for all approved resource families in home-based family care (HBFC) settings ([All County Letter \(ACL\) 21-17](#)). Partial implementation of the LOCP began on March 1, 2018 (see [FYI 18-09](#)) for new entries into Foster Family Agencies (FFAs). Beginning April 1, 2021, all HBFC placements are now eligible for the LOCP determination process, regardless of the date of their entry into foster care.

The LOC rate structure **applies** to the following placements:

- Approved Resource Family Homes (RFH)
- Approved Relative Caregiver homes
- Non-Relative Extended Family Members
- Licensed Foster Family Homes
- Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs) residing in a HBFC setting.
- KinGAP and Non-Related Legal Guardianships established through Juvenile Court on or after January 1, 2017

The LOC rate structure **does not apply** to the following placements:

- Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs)
- Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Treatment Programs (STRTPs)
- Non-Related Legal Guardians (NRLG) established in probate court

Specialized Care Increment (SCI)

Full LOCP implementation includes determination of the need for a Specialized Care Increment (SCI) to compensate resource parents who care for youth with extraordinary needs in the medical, emotional/behavioral and/or developmental domains. Every youth who receives an LOC rate determination will also be assessed for an SCI. If applicable, the SCI rate will be paid retroactively to the date of placement in an approved home.

A new three-tiered SCI rate structure has been developed to replace the existing D- and F-Rate protocols. This new rate structure aligns with the criteria and payments currently provided under the D- and F-rate guidelines ([DCFS 1696](#))

Existing D- and F-Rate caregivers will be informed that these payments will be evaluated within the LOC matrix and three-tiered rate structure at the time of their annual reassessments, if the reassessment occurs on or after July 1, 2021.

Caregiver Training

Specialized Foster and Kinship Care Education training offered through the [countywide community college system](#) will be mandated for caregivers of children/youth/NMDs who qualify for an SCI.

Centralized LOC Unit

In order to support regional offices with these State mandates, a [centralized LOC unit](#) was created and is managed by the Bureau of Clinical Resources and Services (BCRS). LOC CSWs will be responsible for completion of **all** LOC and SCI rate determinations and will gather information from various sources in order to establish final rates.



If you have any questions regarding this release please e-mail your question to:

Policy@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Input from the child's team (including, but not limited to, case-carrying CSWs, caregivers, mental health clinicians and Public Health Nurses) is critical to this process. CSWs should familiarize themselves with the parameters used to determine LOC and SCI rates and maintain adequate documentation in CWS/CMS to support rate determinations made by the LOC unit.

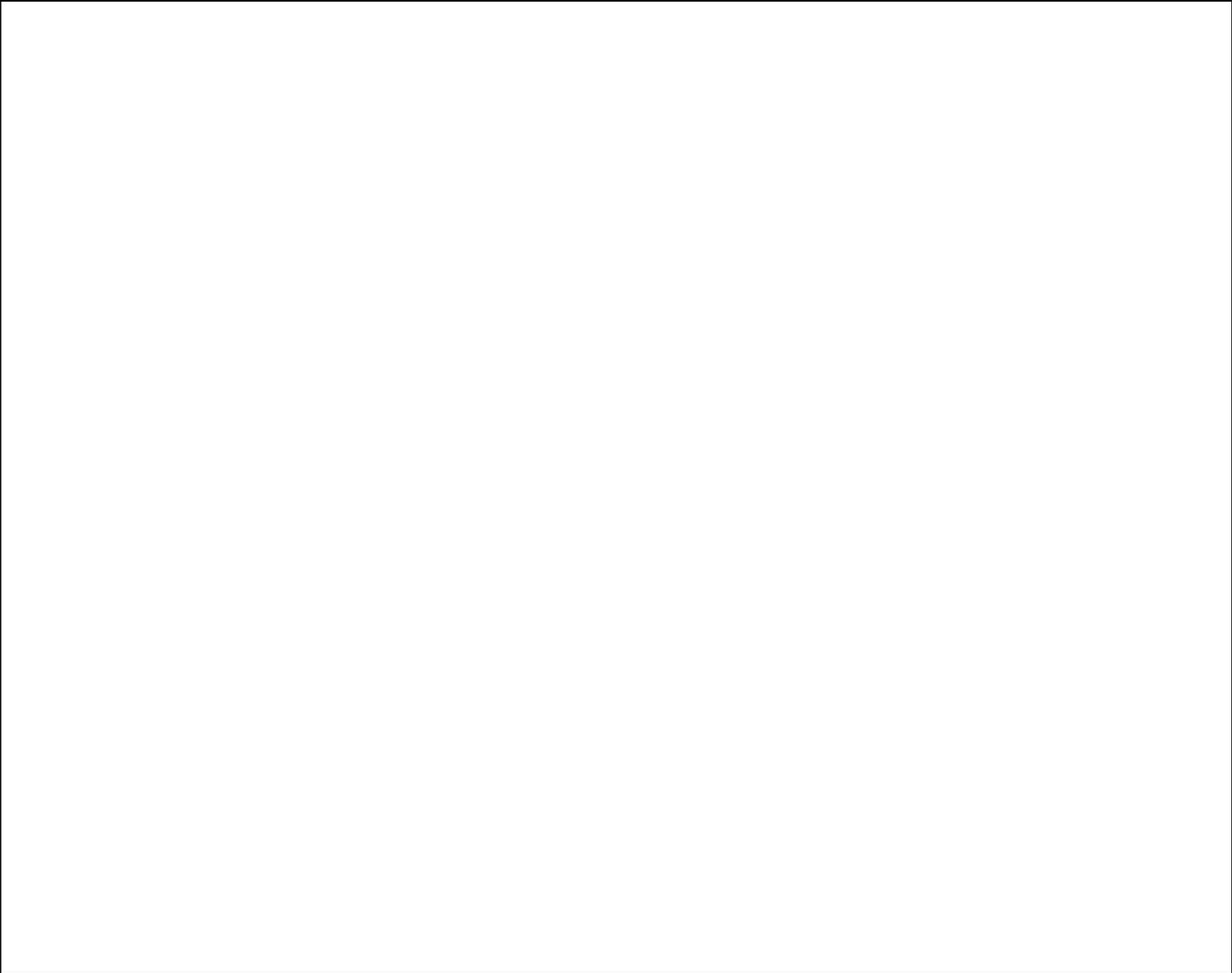
Note: The LOC Determination Unit will be automatically notified of all placements and replacements. A referral by the CSW is not required. However, if a caregiver requests a rate redetermination outside of the automatic notification protocol, please forward the attached form to the LOC unit.

Policy is under development and will provide staff with additional guidance and instructions on the implementation of the LOC and SCI rate determination protocol.



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