

**HANDOUT ONE:
The What and Why of the Whole Foster Family Home and Shared
Responsibility Plan**

What:

SB 500 amended the Welfare and Institutions Code to change the rates paid and placement requirements of infants placed in foster care with their minor dependent parents.

- It establishes the ***Whole Family Foster Home*** as a category of placement,
- It amends the rate structure for infant supplement payments and provides a rate structure for this new category of placement homes (see Attachment A of the ACL);
- It establishes a requirement for a ***shared responsibility plan*** in order to make homes eligible for the supplemental rate;
- It aligns state statute with federal policy regarding eligibility for dependent infants placed with dependent minor parents.

Definition: Whole Foster Family Home

“SB 500 creates and defines a new placement option called ‘Whole Family Foster Home’. The purpose is to provide foster care to teen parents and their infants, and assist teen parents in developing the skills necessary to provide a safe, stable, and permanent home for their child. This is not a new licensing category; however, a Whole Family Foster Home can be a family home, approved relative caregiver or nonrelative extended family member’s home, or a certified home of a foster family agency. ***A Whole Family Foster Home must be specifically recruited and trained for this placement option (amendment to Section 11400(t) of the W&IC).***”

Whole Family Foster Home: A family home, approved relative caregiver or nonrelative extended family member’s home, or certified family home that provides foster care for a minor parent and his or her child, and is specifically recruited and trained to assist the minor parent in developing the skills necessary to provide a safe, stable, and permanent home for his or her child.

Definition: Shared Responsibility Plan:

SB 500 describes the participants who must participate in the plan, but other participants may also participate. “The shared responsibility plan shall be developed between the teen parent, caregiver, and a representative of the county child welfare agency or probation department, and in the case of a certified home, a representative of the agency providing direct and immediate supervision to the caregiver.” Other participants may include relatives, the other birth parent, counselors, etc.

“The shared responsibility plan shall be designed to preserve and strengthen the teen parent family unit and to enable the teen parent to independently provide a safe, stable, and permanent home for the child” within a supportive out-of-home care setting. The plan shall be written for the express purpose of aiding the teen parent and the caregiver

to reach agreements aimed at reducing conflict and misunderstandings. Specific areas are designated that must be a part of the shared responsibility plan, but are not limited in scope to these areas.

Additionally...

ALL-COUNTY LETTER NO. 06-04 describes other procedural changes in the foster care payment structure, an incentive infant supplement payment when participants participate in developing and implementing the shared responsibility plan, CWS/CMS data entry processes, and Foster Family Agency responsibilities.

Attachment A of the ACL describes payment options when the teen parents' infant is also a dependent or a non-dependent.

Attachment B describes in statutory language what the shared responsibility plan is to cover and who is to participate in the process of developing, implementing, and monitoring the plan.

Why:

The language changes are designed to empower teen parents, and promote strength-based practices in child welfare.

- For example, new W&IC amendments “[clarify] that a child whose parent has been adjudged a dependent child of the court shall not be considered to be at risk of abuse or neglect solely because of the age, dependent status, or foster care status of the parent”.
- New language regarding visitation has been added for the “purposes of maintaining family ties and facilitating reunification.” This language authorizes the court to order visitation among appropriate family members unless visitation” would be detrimental to the teen parent.”