



FAQ on Wraparound Services for California Children and Families Receiving Adoption Assistance Program Benefits

When children in foster care in California are adopted, they are still entitled to certain financial benefits and supportive services from the State. This resource provides information on how children who have been adopted out of foster care can access Wraparound services through the Adoption Assistance Program.

1. What is the Adoption Assistance Program?

The Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) provides financial resources to families who are willing and able to assume parental responsibility for children in the foster care system. The goal of the program is to reduce the use of long-term foster care by supporting youth and families and recognizing that many adoptive parents experience financial difficulty meeting the special needs of children who were in foster care.¹

2. What are Wraparound services?

SB 163 established Wraparound services to provide eligible children and youth in California with family-based alternatives to group home care. “Wraparound” is a planning process that is family-centered, strengths-based, and needs-driven, and provides youth with complex needs intensive, coordinated, and individualized interventions and linkage to services. The Wraparound model uses a collaborative team approach that encourages coordination across agencies, disciplines, and communities to enhance outcomes for children and families.²

3. What is the connection between AAP and Wraparound services?

In certain circumstances, AAP may cover an out of home placement, but it may also cover Wraparound services in lieu of payment for an out of home placement. If the responsible public agency approves the provision of Wraparound services in lieu of an out of home placement, the amount of the AAP benefit shall be limited to the amount that would have been paid for the out of home placement.³

¹ Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 16115.5; Cal. Code Regs. tit. 22, § 35325; ACIN I-91-08, at 9-10.

² Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 18250; ACIN I-52-15 at 1-2, Att. at 1.

³ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 22, § 35334(b); ACIN I-91-08 at 10.

4. Who is eligible for AAP benefits?

A child is eligible for AAP benefits if they are under the age of 18 and meet a three-part special needs determination, citizenship requirements, and Title IV-E funding requirements or state funding requirements specified in Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16120.⁴

5. Who is eligible for Wraparound services?

Counties have the option to develop a county plan for intensive Wraparound services. Children shall be determined as eligible for Wraparound services if they are any of the following: (1) a child or nonminor dependent who has been adjudicated as either a dependent or ward of the juvenile court; (2) a child who is the subject of a Section 602 petition, participating in an informal probation, probation without wardship, or deferred entry of judgment program, and at risk of out of home placement; (3) a child or nonminor dependent who is currently or would be placed in out of home care; or (4) a child who is eligible for AAP benefits when the responsible public agency has approved the provision of Wraparound services in lieu of out of home care. Once a child is determined eligible for Wraparound services, they are generally eligible for the time period specified in their individualized services plan.⁵

6. Who is eligible for Wraparound services with AAP benefits?

Adopted children who are eligible for AAP benefits pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16120, and who meet the definition of the target population for Wraparound services, are eligible for Wraparound services using AAP as the underlying funding source.⁶

7. What is the process for obtaining AAP benefits?

To receive AAP benefits, a prospective adoptive parent must make a request prior to the finalization of the adoption. The responsible public agency then determines the child's eligibility. If they are eligible, the benefit rate is negotiated based on the child's needs and the circumstances of the family. The prospective adoptive parents and the responsible public agency then enter into a contract called the AAP agreement. The parents also have the option to sign a deferred AAP agreement if they do not want to receive the benefits at that time but want to maintain the child's eligibility should they request benefits at a later date.⁷

⁴ Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 16120; Cal. Code Regs. tit. 22, § 35326; ACL 16-38 at 3-6.

⁵ Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 18251(c), 18252.

⁶ Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 18251(c)(4), 18252(a); ACIN I-91-08 at 10.

⁷ Cal. Code Regs. tit. 22, §§ 35333, 35339; ACL 16-38 at 3-7.

8. What is the process for obtaining Wraparound services funded by AAP benefits?

Best practices dictate that counties should establish a process for providing Wraparound as part of any post-adoptive service array for the adopted child. In consultation with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), counties will determine the target population, number of allocated slots, and the eligibility process for adopted children.⁸

Ideally, a family should be able to access Wraparound as many times as needed with no wait period. Participation is subject to consultation with the AAP worker and/or CDSS District Office staff, or subject to the local decision making or review process in place to recommend post-adoptive services.⁹

When an adoptive family agrees to participate in Wraparound, the amount of the AAP benefit is increased to the appropriate group home rate for that child. The family continues to receive their negotiated AAP benefit – including any specialized care increment – and the remaining funds are used to pay for Wraparound services. Counties can either pay the entire amount to the Wraparound provider, who then pays the family their AAP benefit, or they can pay the family their AAP benefit and separately pay the Wraparound provider.¹⁰

It is recommended that counties use formal agreements to document a family's choice to participate in Wraparound services, with terms that apply to a family, the provider, and both parties. It is also recommended that counties use authorization forms to allow a family's AAP benefit to pay for Wraparound services, and to inform families about what will happen with their payments and remaining funds.¹¹

9. Can families choose their Wraparound service providers?

Yes, the adoptive parent has flexibility to select a Wraparound provider, in or outside of their county of residence.¹²

For AAP purposes, any type of Wraparound contract is between the adoptive parent and the Wraparound provider, as the adoptive parent, not the county, bears the legal and financial responsibility of the child. This means that the adoptive parent makes the decisions regarding the child's care and supervision needs, including services, providers, out of home placements, and other management-related tasks. The responsible public agency's role is to confirm the Wraparound services are necessary and will appropriately meet the child's needs; to confirm

⁸ ACIN I-91-08 at 10.

⁹ ACIN I-91-08 at 13.

¹⁰ ACIN I-91-08 at 10.

¹¹ ACIN I-91-08 at 11.

¹² CFL 20/21-94 at 10.

the rate classification level is appropriate to the child’s needs; and to facilitate the AAP funding per the adoptive parent’s request.¹³

Nothing precludes a county from contracting with a Wraparound provider who meets the requirements articulated in the Wraparound standards. A wraparound provider should have the capacity and experience with the Wraparound planning process and be able to adhere to the principles and values.¹⁴

¹³ ACL 15-50 at 8.

¹⁴ ACIN I-91-08 at 13.