

CHILD WELFARE UPDATE

Title:	Subsidized Guardianship Program
Publish Date:	8/2/21
Effective Date:	8/1/21
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Background Information:	<p>Background Information: The Subsidized Guardianship Program provides financial assistance to caregivers who agree to be the legal guardian for a youth who is in foster care. Guardianship is a safe alternative to adoption, providing permanency for the youth without requiring formal termination of parental rights. The program became effective on July 1, 2019. New rules regarding some changes in benefits and the age of eligibility will go into effect on August 1, 2021</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement: Various internal stakeholders were engaged in the clarification of process including representatives from DHS policy and field operations.</p> <p>Reason for the Change: It was determined there was a need to allow a greater number of children and families to have access to the Subsidized Guardianship Program as several exceptions to policy were being granted for younger than age 14 children to participate. Additional allowances for children to remain in the program until high school graduation was determined appropriate. Clarification as to when subsidized guardianship subsidy payments can be suspended was also needed.</p>

<p>What Is Changing:</p>	<p>What Is Changing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The age of eligibility for participation in the Subsidized Guardianship Program will be age 10 in instead of age 14. If a child’s sibling(s) are residing in the same home as an eligible child, all children are eligible for the program regardless of age. • Eligible children in the Subsidized Guardianship Program reaching the age of 18 may continue to receive the subsidy payments until the child completes courses leading to a high school diploma or equivalency or reaches the age of 21. • Determination of ongoing Subsidized Guardianship Program subsidy eligibility and suspension of subsidy payments. Eligibility for continuation of guardianship subsidy shall be evaluated when the department has good cause to suspect the guardian is not providing financial support, or is no longer legally responsible for the child. Suspension of Subsidized Guardianship Program subsidy payments was not a possible option in previous rules. <p>Who Is Impacted: DHS Staff will be impacted by the clarification in practice. This will also impact DHS external court partners who may or may not agree with the permanency decisions made through this process.</p>
<p>What Is Not Changing:</p>	<p>The Subsidized Guardianship Program will be available as a permanency option for children in the Iowa child welfare system.</p>
<p>Expected Benefits:</p>	<p>Statewide consistency in practice and outcomes.</p>