



Foster Care Allowances

Foster carers receive a regular allowance. This is a contribution towards the reimbursement of direct costs associated with looking after children and young people placed in care.

The foster care allowance is not a 'payment' for being a carer and is therefore not considered to be a source of income for the purposes of annual tax returns, testing eligibility for Australian Government allowances, or when applying for loans from a financial institution.

Foster care allowances are generally paid on a fortnightly basis, but payment regularity can be negotiated with the child's caseworker. Payments are generally made via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) direct to the carer's bank account.

2009/10 Foster Care Allowance Rates

As shown in the table on the following page, weekly allowances are calculated according to the age of the child. Where applicable, consideration is also given to the child's special needs.

Expenses Covered by the Foster Care Allowance

The foster care allowance has been calculated to cover a range of everyday care expenses that arise when caring for children and young people. Expenses to be covered by the foster care allowance are:

- food and accommodation
- household provisions
- general clothing and footwear
- school books, stationery and excursions up to \$20
- toys/presents
- pocket money (pocket money rates are set according to the age of the child)
- leisure, hobby activities
- outings and entertainment
- daily travel expenses
- haircuts
- incidental child minding costs
- general expenses relating to personal hygiene items including nappies
 - basic medical, dental and pharmaceutical expenses where these expenses are not related to an ongoing or chronic condition.

The needs of some children may necessitate that some expenses, especially recurrent or high cost expenses or items associated with a child's special needs can be paid by NT Families and Children (NTFC) through additional discretionary payments.

These payments are generally agreed in advance and documented in the child's case plan.

Crisis rate and Special needs care allowances have been purposefully calculated at higher rates in recognition that there are usually added expenses caring for children in these circumstances. These rates should therefore cover the costs of more items than would be expected in the standard Foster Care Allowance.

2009/2010 foster care allowance rates

As shown in the table below, weekly allowances are calculated according to the age of the child. Where applicable, consideration is also given to the child's special needs.

Age group(years)	0-4	5-7	8-11	12-14	15-17
Standard Allowance	131.75	142.80	170.85	193.00	232.15

Note: Standard Allowance rate will apply to all placements, unless otherwise specified and documented by the child's Caseworker.

Crisis Allowance	162.70	178.50	215.25	241.10	290.50
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Note: Crisis Allowance rate applies for emergency placements where the child has been placed with little notice. This rate can apply for up to two weeks, after which time the standard foster care allowance will apply.

Special Needs Allowance					
Low	195.65	215.00	255.60	287.85	349.10
Moderate	263.50	285.60	341.60	385.85	464.25
High	329.35	356.90	426.95	482.30	580.31
Very high	395.20	428.30	512.60	578.85	696.40

Note: Special Needs Allowance rate applies where the child has been assessed as requiring emotional, physical, personal and/or auxiliary care in excess of what is usually required by a child in care. As such, there are demonstrated extra expenses, duties, tasks or stresses associated with the care of the child.

Continued eligibility for this rate is regularly re-assessed as part of the case planning process.