

## DSS Policy and Procedure Guide

Division 03: Child Welfare

Chapter 05: Placement

Item 030: Specialized Care Increment

Suggested changes send to: [DSS PSOA](#) Mailbox

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References: PPG [45-02-002](#), ACIN [I-05-10](#),  
ACL [15-20](#); ACL [17-11](#)

**Complete Revision**

Replaces: August 17, 2018

### Preamble

Child Welfare Policy and Procedure Guides are meant to be used as tools to relay best practice and staff expectations. It is understood that specific case scenarios may not always align themselves with the stated practices and that at all times what is of paramount importance is the Safety and Well-being of the children we are charged to protect.

### Policy

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) allows counties to supplement the Levels of Care (LOC) rate for current and some former dependents that have extra medical, physical, emotional, and/or developmental needs. Fresno County has elected to supply care providers with this supplement, if needed, referred to as a Specialized Care Increment (SCI).

### Purpose

To provide Child Welfare staff with information regarding the different levels of SCI and how to apply for a SCI.

### Overview

Upon a child entering an initial foster care placement and/or subsequent qualifying events (All County Letter [ACL] [17-11](#)), a LOC assessment is completed to determine the level of care that is required to meet the child's needs and support the placement. The LOC Protocol is a strength-based method designed to identify the individual care and supervision needs of children/youth that can be translated to an appropriate LOC rate to support their placement in a family setting. Care and supervision needs will be identified based on five core domains. The Core Domains in the protocol tool are: Physical, Behavioral/Emotional, Educational, Health and Permanency/Family Services. The LOC Protocol is comprised of a matrix, a form to be completed by the caregiver, a scoring sheet which is to be completed by a Social Worker (SW) or Probation Officer (PO), and an instructional guide. The LOC, once determined, will be documented by the SW or PO and forward to [CWS LOCP](#) mailbox for processing of the SOC 158 and inputting the payment in CWS/CMS. Resource Family Services (RFS) Office Assistant (OA) will then forward the LOC packet to the ETA mailbox.

A SCI may be paid in addition to the LOC rate when a child needs special care not available through the LOC rate and an additional amount is requested and appropriate. The child's behavioral, emotional and/or physical (including health) challenges will be assessed to determine the level of SCI. A SCI assessment will only follow upon completion of the LOC Protocol. The SCI assessment involves the evaluation and review of a child's identified needs to determine the appropriately assigned Tier and the recommended rate to be issued. Assessment guidelines are as follows:

Following the completion of the LOC Protocol, the Child Welfare SW in conjunction with the Child and Family Team (CFT) will review the needs of the child.

There are two SCI levels:

- LOC Supplemental 1: LOC 4 + SCI = to the Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) rate
- LOC Supplemental 2: LOC 4 + SCI = to the Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Placement (STRTP) rate

The LOC Supplemental 1 SCI applies only to children/youth in Non-Related Legal Guardianship (NRLG) and Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (Kin-GAP) established in Juvenile Dependency Court. NRLG cases established in probate court are not eligible for a SCI. In order to qualify for the LOC Supplemental 1 SCI, a child/youth must qualify for ISFC when assessing the LOC. This would be used when the child/youth is not in an ISFC placement but their needs qualify them for the ISFC rate. The LOC Supplemental 1 must be approved and signed by a Program Manager (PM). Refer to the [LOC Supplemental 1 SCI Matrix](#).

The LOC Supplemental 2 SCI may apply to any child/youth in Home Based Care (HBC), including NRLG and KIN-Gap established in Juvenile Dependency Court. In order to qualify for the LOC Supplemental 2 SCI, a child/youth must be approved for or is at-risk of placement in a STRTP or they are eligible for ISFC and they have been impacted by COVID-19 and there are increased care and supervision needs as a result. The LOC Supplemental 2 must be approved by the Child Welfare Deputy Director (DD) and signed by the Placement Division PM. Refer to the [LOC Supplemental 2 SCI Matrix](#).

In addition to completing the LOC Supplemental form (1 or 2) when requesting an SCI, the SW must also complete the [Specialized Care, Infant Supplement, and Clothing Supplement Request and Authorization form](#) (6247), the [LOC Digital Scoring Form \(SOC 500\)](#) and submit to Specialized Care Assessment Team (SCAT).

The SW will document the identified needs and ensure supportive documentation (as appropriate) is obtained to support the recommended SCI level.

At the time of a SCI approval, a re-assessment (review) date is identified to determine if the rate will remain the same, change, or is no longer needed. The following includes standard re-assessment dates and situational examples appropriate for the indicated re-assessment frequency:

- 30 days – Precipitating events, such as short-term medical needs, which includes the need to isolate or recover from a non-chronic medical need
- 12 months – Annual review for chronic conditions

A re-assessment date will not exceed more than twelve months from the initial effective date of the SCI. A new SCI approval will not be needed if the SCI is to continue at the same level.

A foster child/youth may be eligible to receive a SCI if they are placed under the authority of:

- a court order, from Juvenile Court for dependency or delinquency
- out-of-home placement due to a protective hold and the child/youth was returned home prior to Juvenile Court action
- relinquishment
- voluntary placement agreement
- guardianship

Care providers that may be eligible to receive a SCI are:

- Resource Family
- Foster Family Agency (FFA) Certified Homes (FFA)  
(Please note that the entire SCI payment must go to the certified home, not the FFA)
- Relative
- Non Related Extended Family Member (NREFM)
- NRLG
- Kin-GAP
- Adoptive parent receiving assistance through the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)

There are two levels of SCI, which, is described on the LOC Supplemental 1 and 2 forms. The assigned SW is to assess the special needs of the child/youth using the LOC Supplemental 1 or 2 form.

## **Procedure**

### LOC Supplemental 1: LOC 4 + SCI = to the ISFC rate

The LOC Supplemental 1 criteria is specific to children/youth who are placed with a NRLG or Kinship Guardian and qualify for ISFC when assessing the LOC. The LOC Supplemental 1 must be approved and signed by a Program Manager (PM). Refer to the [LOC Supplemental 1 SCI Matrix](#).

If the SW believes the child/youth meets the criteria for a LOC Supplemental 1 rate as described on the [LOC Supplemental 1 SCI Matrix](#), the SW will:

- Complete the [LOC Digital Scoring Form \(SOC 500\)](#)

- Complete the [LOC Supplemental 1 SCI Matrix](#) and [6247](#), marking the [6247](#) as an initial request.
- Identify on the [6247](#) in the area “Special Supplement is being requested because:” the specific special need(s) of the child/youth.
- The SW then attaches to the [6247](#) the “Needs Assessment” packet, which can include, but is not limited to:
  - The Health and Education Passport (HEP)
  - Letter(s) from the doctor and/or medical report(s) which show a diagnosis
  - Letter(s) from the therapist
  - Letter(s) from the school, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and/or the 504 plan
  - Any incident report(s) from community agencies
  - Police report(s)
  - A letter from the caregiver outlining daily care needs
- The contents of the packet will depend on the child/youth’s needs.
- The SW signs the [LOC Supplemental 1 SCI Matrix](#) and the [6247](#), and submits the forms with the supporting documentation to their SWS and PM.

If the Social Work Supervisor (SWS) and PM supports the request, the PM will forward the forms to RFS.

#### LOC Supplemental 2: LOC 4 + SCI = to the STRTP rate

The LOC Supplemental 2 criteria is specific to children/youth who have been approved for or are at-risk for placement in a STRTP or they are eligible for (ISFC but are placed in a Foster Family Agency (FFA) home, as no STRTP or ISFC placement home is available. In addition, the child/youth must be impacted by the COVID-19 virus and require increased care and supervision needs and is at-risk of shelter placement.

If the SW believes the child/youth meets the criteria for a LOC Supplemental 2 rate as described on the [LOC Supplemental 2 SCI Matrix](#), the SW will:

- Complete the [LOC Digital Scoring Form \(SOC 500\)](#)

- Complete the [LOC Supplemental 2 SCI Matrix](#) and [6247](#), marking the [6247](#) as an Initial request.
- Identify on the [6247](#) in the area “Special Supplement is being requested because:” the specific special need(s) of the child/youth.
- The SW then attaches to the [6247](#) the “Needs Assessment” packet, which can include, but is not limited to:
  - The Health and Education Passport (HEP)
  - Letter(s) from the doctor and/or medical report(s) which show a diagnosis
  - Letter(s) from the therapist
  - Letter(s) from the school, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and/or the 504 plan
  - Any incident report(s) from community agencies
  - Police report(s)
  - A letter from the caregiver outlining daily care needs
- The contents of the packet will depend on the child/youth’s needs.
- The SW signs the [LOC Supplemental 2 SCI Matrix](#) and the [6247](#), and submits the forms with the supporting documentation to their SWS and Placement Division PM.

If the SWS and Placement Division PM support the request, the Placement Division PM will request approval from the Child Welfare Deputy Director (DD). If approved by the Child Welfare DD, the SWS and PM sign the [6247](#) and LOC Supplemental 2 form. Once signed, the forms are forwarded to Resource Family Support (RFS).

### Renewal SCI

One month prior to the review date, Eligibility will send an email to the assigned SWS and SW, with a cc to the RFS SWS and OA, informing them of the date the review is needed.

The assigned SW then reassesses the functioning of the child/youth to determine if the child/youth continues to meet the criteria for SCI.

If the SW believes the child continues to meet the criteria for the SCI the SW will follow the process outlined above and mark the [6247](#) as a Renewal.

For LOC Supplemental 1, the SW must also provide current documentation regarding the child/youth's functioning.

### OA Responsibilities

Once signed by the RFS SWS or SCAT, the [6247](#) and LOC Supplemental 1 or 2 form is then given to the RFS OA who will:

- Enter the SCI into the “Placement Management” (red) section of Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) under “Ongoing Requests”.
  - Under “Rate Type” select “Additional Rate”.
  - Under “Request Details”, the “Start Date” is the date the 6247 was approved by the RFS SWS; the “Projected End Date” is the date by which a renewal is needed; and in “Additional Rate”, the SCI amount is entered.
  - Under “Additional Payment Reason”, for the “Payment Type”, choose the reason closest to why the SCI was approved; under “Reason Description” add reason specifics and include which SCI Level was approved.
- Create and log a new SOC158.
- Forward the SOC158 to Eligibility in order for the resource family to receive the new rate.