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August 20, 2019

OF INTEREST TO

County Directors

Social Services Supervisors and
StaffTribal Social Services
Supervisors and StaffCounty Fiscal Coordinators and
Staff

County Attorneys

Tribal Attorneys

Private Child Placing Agencies
Supervisors and Staff**ACTION/DUE DATE**Please read and implement as
directed**EXPIRATION DATE**

August 20, 2021

Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth

TOPIC

Northstar Care for Children assessment tool.

PURPOSEProvide guidance on the Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for
Children and Youth (MAPCY) tool.**CONTACT**

For questions regarding the MAPCY and its implementation, contact:

Jody McElroy, agency policy specialist: jody.mcelroy@state.mn.us,
651-431-4730For questions regarding the Social Service Information System in
implementing the MAPCY, contact:DHS SSIS Help Desk: dhs.ssishelp@state.mn.us, 651-431-4801**SIGNED**

NIKKI FARAGO

Assistant Commissioner, Children and Family Services Administration

TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

I. Background

The Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth (MAPCY) is the supplemental assessment tool established by the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (department). It replaced the supplemental Difficulty of Care (DOC) for foster care and the Supplemental Needs Assessment for adoption assistance when Northstar Care for Children went into effect on Jan. 1, 2015.

Northstar Care for Children has three components:

- Northstar foster care, for children in family foster homes and extended foster care – supervised independent living
- Northstar Adoption Assistance, for eligible children who are adopted
- Northstar Kinship Assistance, for eligible children whose legal and physical custody is permanently transferred to a relative.

Most eligible children receive three benefits:

- Medical Assistance (Medicaid)
- Monthly basic payment, based on age of child
- Monthly supplemental payment

The MAPCY determines whether a child will receive a monthly supplemental payment, and if so, the amount of payment. Exception: Children eligible for Northstar Adoption Assistance who are designated as at risk receive no monthly payment, regardless of MAPCY level determined in foster care.

Unlike the DOC, the MAPCY focuses on a child's needs and what a caregiver is doing to meet those needs. Specifically, it:

- Considers the individual needs of a child and the extra care, attention and impact on a caregiver's family to safely parent a child in the home and community
- Measures the needed parenting, whether foster parents, adoptive parents or relative custodians
- Focuses on a child's well-being and development
- Supports a child's safety while in placement.

II. Subtools

Because the MAPCY focuses on developmental tasks, based on children's ages, there are three MAPCY subtools:

- Children ages birth-12
- Youth ages 13-21, including youth in extended foster care living in a foster home
- Youth ages 18-21 who are in extended foster care – supervised independent living.

Each subtool is organized into domains. Each domain focuses on the needs of a child and what a caregiver is doing to meet those needs (or in the case of independent living settings, a youth's support needs).

In the Child/Youth Needs section of each domain, assessors select one of the following:

- a, which describes a strength
- b, which describes basic needs
- c, which describes several needs
- d, which describes high needs.

In the Parental Care and Attention section of each domain, assessors select indicators that best describe the level of parenting, including:

- Basic, which is parental care common for most parents
- Significant, which is parental care that offers a child extra care and attention without the assistance or direction of qualified professionals
- Extensive, which is parental care that is directed or guided by a qualified professional and/or represents considerable impact on a family
- Exceptional, which is parental care that involves attention to an identified safety risk, and caregiver's attention and actions ensure the safety of a child and family members at home and in the community
- Extraordinary, which is parental care that maintains a child with the highest needs in the community, preventing a more restrictive setting, such as a residential placement or hospitalization.

Note: For comprehensive information on the three MAPCY subtools, domains, child needs and parent indicators, see the [Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth Practice Guide](#).

[Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.24]

A. Child Assessment Subtool

The child assessment subtool has the following domains:

- Placement experience
- Dynamics in the caregiver's home
- Supervision, guidance and structure
- Mental health, physical health and development
- Preserving connections
- Developing identity
- Education
- Child care.

1. Child Care Allowance

Under the child care domain, an assessment determines the amount available for a child care allowance, in part based on the age of a child. A child care allowance may be available, if needed, for caregiver(s) for work or education. The child care allowance:

- Consists of an increase beyond the starting supplemental level

- Partially defrays child care costs, but is unlikely to cover the full cost
- Has a higher allowance for children ages birth-6 and then ages 7-12.

[Minnesota Statutes, sections 256N.24, subdivision 3, and 256N.28, subdivision 2]

Note: The child care allowance must not be included in a MAPCY if it is available through the Child Care Assistance Program, or other non-foster care sources.

B. Youth Assessment Subtool

The youth assessment subtool has the same domains as the child assessment tool, with the exception of child care. There is an additional domain for young parents. This is to help support youth in care who are parenting their own child, but the youth's child is not under custody or control of a county or tribal agency.

The youth assessment subtool is used for those ages 13-17 and 18-21 living in a licensed setting who need day-to-day supervision by a caregiver.

C. Extended Foster Care – Supervised Independent Living Assessment Subtool

The extended foster care – supervised independent living (EFC-SIL) assessment subtool is used for youth ages 18-21 who are living in a supervised independent living setting, which may include apartments, dorms, host homes and other settings. This subtool is also used when a youth's independent living setting is also licensed as an adult foster home, and a youth is considered a boarder. For example, a youth may rent a room in a home that is also licensed as an adult foster home.

The EFC-SIL assessment subtool has the following domains:

- Transportation to preserve connections
- Transportation to work or school
- Communication
- Young parents
- Child care for young parents.

III. Timelines

A. Initial MAPCY

A MAPCY is required within 30 days of placement, similar to the out-of-home placement plan. County and tribal agencies are not required to complete a MAPCY unless a child is in placement for more than 30 days.

[Minnesota Statutes, sections 256N.24, subdivisions 1, 5-8; and 256N.28, subdivision 2]

Once a child is in a foster care placement, the following needs to happen:

- Enter placement in the Social Service Information System (SSIS)
- Collaborate with caregivers, tribal agencies, guardian ad litem, etc. to complete the MAPCY
- Enter the MAPCY into SSIS
- Approve the MAPCY in order for payments to occur.

1. Emergency Rate

A default emergency rate (Level D) is available without an approved MAPCY, but only for the initial 30 days of a continuous placement. See [Northstar Care General Practice Guide, Section IV.B, Initial Assessment](#). Agency staff may decide to conduct a MAPCY at any time during the initial 30 days, replacing the emergency rate. Once the initial MAPCY is completed, if the benefit goes up, the higher rate is retroactive to the placement date; if the benefit goes down, the lower rate is effective the date the MAPCY was approved, or the 31st day of placement, whichever is earlier. If a MAPCY is not completed within the initial 30 days, the supplemental rate automatically decreases to Level B (no supplement payment).

A county or tribal agency may pay more than the emergency rate, but the additional amount is non-reimbursable through Northstar Care.

[Minnesota Statutes, sections 256N.24, subdivisions 1 and 5-6; and 256N.26, subdivision 6]

B. Reassessments

1. Northstar Foster Care

A reassessment is due six months after an initial assessment, then annually thereafter. However, a reassessment may be done any time the legally or financially responsible agency decides it is warranted.

Foster parents may also request a reassessment if at least six months have elapsed since the most recent assessment or reassessment, unless documentation is provided that shows significant changes in a child's needs that necessitate a reassessment.

To request a reassessment, a foster parent sends a written request for a reassessment to the financially responsible agency. The written request must include:

- Name of the child
- The name, address and contact information of caregivers
- Reasons for the request, and
- Written supporting documentation showing why a reassessment is needed now, if requesting less than six months after the previous assessment.

If a reassessment is determined appropriate, the financially responsible agency is responsible for ensuring that a reassessment is completed within 30 days of a request. If a reassessment cannot be completed within 30 days of a foster parent's request, the agency responsible for

reassessment must notify the foster parent of the reason for delay, and a reasonable estimate of when a reassessment can be completed.

2. Adoption or Transfer of Permanent Legal and Physical Custody (TPLPC)

If a child is moving from foster care to adoption or TPLPC, a new MAPCY is not required if the following four conditions are true:

- Child is in Northstar foster care
- The most recent MAPCY is with the prospective permanent caregiver
- The MAPCY is current
- No significant changes have occurred that would warrant a new MAPCY.

A reassessment cannot be requested or completed between the times a Northstar Adoption or Kinship Assistance benefit agreement has been negotiated and signed by all parties, and when the court has finalized an adoption or TPLPC. There are two exceptions to this: 1) When a benefit agreement expires, and 2) When a child is eligible for at-risk Northstar Adoption Assistance and a disability develops.

Once an adoption or TPLPC is finalized, there are no required reassessments; however, permanency caregivers may request reassessments if at least six months have passed since the previous MAPCY was completed, or if an adoptive parent is requesting a reassessment based on a disability developing for a child with an at-risk agreement.

To request a reassessment, a permanent caregiver submits a written request to the department. The written request must include the same content as a foster care reassessment request. If an adoptive parent requests a reassessment for an at-risk child because a disability has developed, supporting documentation from a medical or mental health professional must be included (documentation must be current, within one year).

The department initiates a MAPCY reassessment request to the financially responsible agency via the Post-Permanency Reassessment Log in SSIS. The financially responsible agency is responsible for monitoring the Post-Permanency Reassessment Log. Timelines for completing a post-permanency reassessment are the same as for completing a reassessment for foster care.

[Minnesota Statutes, sections 256N.24, subdivisions 1, 5-6, 9-12 and 14; and 256N.26, subdivision 15]

IV. Procedures

To ensure a comprehensive, individual MAPCY, assessors must gather input from and collaborate with caregivers, tribes, licensing workers, placing workers, parents, guardians ad litem, youth and others on a child's team. When involving caregivers, parental care is the focus, not services accessed at the time of a MAPCY.

When developmentally appropriate, youth should be engaged in the MAPCY process. Youth in EFC-SIL must be provided with a MAPCY notification and Rating Report.

[Minnesota Statutes, sections 256N.24, subdivision 2, and 256N.28, subdivision 2]

A. Assess

County and tribal agencies must ensure a MAPCY is completed by capable and trained assessors. Assessors should have significant knowledge about a child, their needs, and the parenting provided to meet those needs. They should gather input from a child's team to complete the most comprehensive, accurate MAPCY.

Once a MAPCY is completed, assessors enter it in SSIS and send for agency approval.

B. Approve

After assessors enter a MAPCY in SSIS, an agency-designated approver must review and approve before any supplemental payment can occur. Approvers are responsible for:

- Reviewing a child's needs and parenting indicators to ensure their needs are being met
- Ensuring description of high child needs and high levels of parenting
- Ensuring assessments are completed by day 30 of a child's out-of-home placement and subsequent due dates.

When reviewing a MAPCY, approvers should start with scoring. The Scoring tab provides the MAPCY at a glance. Comparing a child's needs and parenting indicators identify areas that are not consistent.

Approvers should be sure to read descriptions within the MAPCY. Assessors must describe a child's high needs and parenting indicators rated as extensive and/or exceptional. If descriptions do not adequately describe a rating, an approver should review with the assessor.

At a minimum, all agencies should have at least one approver and one backup approver. Assessments should be approved within five days of submission for approval.

Within 15 days of approval of a MAPCY assessment, an agency must provide a child's caregivers with a written report of the assessment that includes a summary of the assessment, a statement of the supplemental benefit level, and procedures to seek a reassessment or an appeal.

[Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.24, subdivision 13]

C. Score

SSIS will automatically calculate the monthly supplemental benefit level and provides a consistent scoring process throughout the state. Each domain is scored independently and is given regular points. Special points may be assigned when multiple complex issues cross more than one domain.

The MAPCY has 16 different benefit levels. The standard MAPCY benefit levels are approved at the local agency.

1. Extraordinary Level Increases

Extraordinary Level benefits are for children and youth whose caregivers are providing intensive supervision that fills a gap not covered by other services. The Extraordinary Level process can provide an increase of up to five levels to the supplemental difficulty of care determined by the MAPCY. An additional level of approval by a state approver at the department is required for Extraordinary Level increases.

For more information on Extraordinary Levels, see the [Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth Practice Guide](#).

[Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.24, subdivisions 2 and 4]

V. Agency Roles

Under Northstar Care for Children, there are different roles for legally and financially responsible agencies. Generally, the same agency will be both legally and financially responsible for a child in placement. However, sometimes two agencies may be involved, such as two counties or a tribal social services agency with legal responsibility and a county social services agency with financial responsibility. If the legally and financially responsible agencies are different, the financially responsible agency:

- Ensures that a MAPCY is completed
- Ensures that a MAPCY is entered in the financially responsible agency's SSIS system
- Approves a MAPCY, with the assistance of the legally responsible agency to complete
- Provides written notice of results of a MAPCY to caregivers (or youth in EFC-SIL) within 15 days of MAPCY approval.

The county or tribal agency that has financial responsibility at the point of permanency continues to play that role after an adoption or TPLPC is finalized.

[Minnesota Statutes, sections 256N.02, subdivisions 10 and 14; and 256N.24, subdivisions 5-14]

VI. Resources

The department has issued a number of Northstar Care related publications, including:

- [Northstar Care for Children General Practice Guide](#)
- [Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth Practice Guide](#)
- [Northstar Care for Children Basic and Supplemental Payment Rates and Initial Clothing Allowance, bulletin](#)
- [Paths to Permanency](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-4671 (voice) or toll free at (800) 627-3529 or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.