



# Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)

# Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) Overview

- A Title IV-E benefits program that is available to guardians (after case closure) who commit to care for a child long term
- Offers financial assistance and other services, such as Medicaid, to the children and their relatives
- Strengthens permanency for children discharged to permanent guardianship

# GAP Benefits

(Available to GAP eligible children upon case closure)



## Tuition and Fee Exemption

Authorized at Florida public universities/colleges, and workforce education programs



## Medicaid

Child remains eligible for Medicaid coverage until reaching age 18



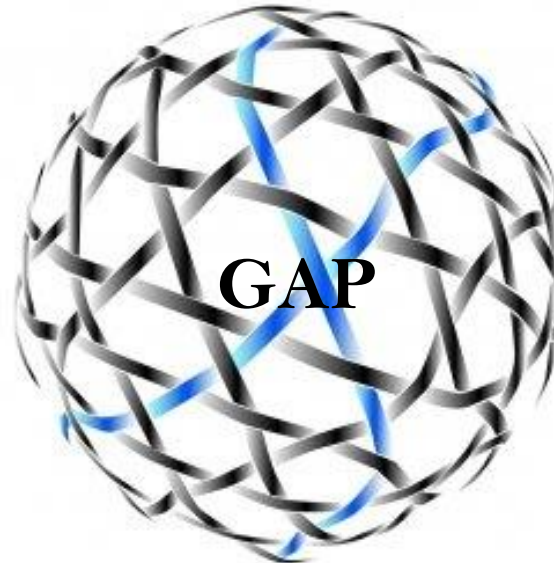
## Monthly GAP Payment

Caregiver receives a monthly payment; payment is negotiated prior to closure. Payment amounts begin at \$333/mo.



## Available when Living Out-of-state

GAP Payments and Medicaid coverage continue even if the family relocates out of state



## Non-recurring Assistance (One time, up to \$2,000)

Financial assistance is available for eligible expenses that are barriers to finalizing the permanent guardianship arrangement

# GAP Eligibility Overview



Child is placed with a relative or fictive kin.



Child is eligible for foster care board payments with relative/fictive kin for at least 6 consecutive months (must be a licensed caregiver)



Case plan includes required language.



Guardian enters into a Guardianship Assistance Agreement for the child prior to case closure.



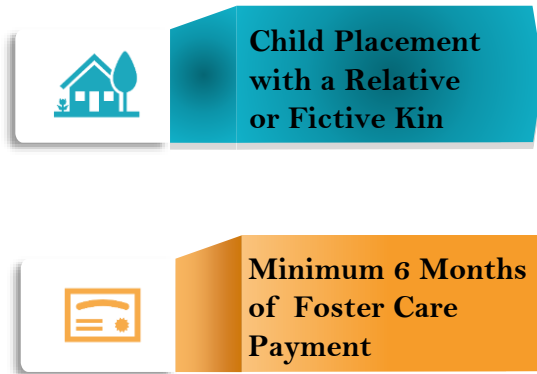
Court discharges the child with the guardian as a permanent guardianship.

# GAP Eligibility Stages Overview

## GAP Eligibility Initiation



## GAP Presumptive Eligibility



## GAP Application Process



## Discharge to Permanent Guardianship



## GAP Benefits



# GAP Eligibility Initiation



- Court accepts the primary or concurrent goal of permanent guardianship.
- **Within 2 business days, Case Management must notify Caregiver Support via email of primary or concurrent PG goal changes, at [FLCBCcaregivers@cckids.net](mailto:FLCBCcaregivers@cckids.net)**
- Within 30 days of a primary or concurrent goal change, the assigned Kinship Coordinator must initiate the GAP eligibility process in FSFN.

# Presumptive GAP Eligibility

In order to meet Presumptive Eligibility criteria:



**Child Placement with  
a Relative or Fictive  
Kin**

- Child must be placed with a relative caregiver or fictive kin.
  - Placement is facilitated by CPI and/or DCM per existing protocol



**Minimum 6 Months  
of Foster Care  
Payment**

- Child must be eligible for foster care board payments with the relative/fictive kin for at least 6 consecutive months.
  - The assigned Kinship Coordinator facilitates the Level 1 licensing process and will notify case management upon licensure.

# GAP Application Process



## GAP Application

- Once the child is deemed presumptively eligible, the caregiver must complete and submit the GAP application form. Assigned Kinship Coordinator will assist.
- All applicants living in the home must sign the application.
- The applicant can withdraw their application at any time.
- The right to appeal begins once the application is signed.
- Once signed, the Kinship Coordinator will scan and upload the document to the FSFN GAP Page.

The GAP application process is facilitated by the assigned Kinship Coordinator.

The image shows a draft of a form titled "APPLICATION FOR GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM". At the top left is the logo for the Florida Department of Children and Families, with the website MYFLFAMILIES.COM. The form includes fields for the applicant's name (First, Middle, Last), date, address, county, phone, and email. It also has signature lines for two applicants and fields for the last 4 digits of their Social Security Numbers (SSN). A large "DRAFT" watermark is overlaid on the form. At the bottom, there are two lines of text: "(All applicants living in the home must sign the application.)" and "This application may be withdrawn at any by time the applicant(s)."



# GAP Payment Negotiation Rules



## Payment Negotiation

The payment negotiation process is facilitated by the assigned Kinship Coordinator.

### Important Message

GAP payments are not intended to cover services which can be obtained through family insurance, Medicaid, Children's Medical Services, or through special education plans provided by the public-school district.

01

Initial GAP payments start at \$333 monthly.

A payment may be negotiated beyond the family's level of licensure with approval of DCF Region.

02

03

GAP payments should never exceed the foster care board level payment the family would receive based on the level of licensure.

# GAP Negotiations: What to Consider



## Payment Negotiation

- Initial determination of monthly GAP payments should be based on the child's need and at the time of negotiation and projected future needs.
- In conjunction with the prospective relative(s), factors to identify are:
  - The immediate and long-term needs of the child
  - The services required to meet the child's needs
  - Service costs
  - Family's ability to provide the services
  - Other community resources and supports

# Guardianship Assistance Agreement

- The Guardianship Assistance Agreement (GAA) must be fully signed/executed **prior to the Court discharging the child to Permanent Guardianship**. If not, the child is **ineligible** for all GAP benefits.
- The GAA serves as legal documentation for the payment agreement between the Department and child's guardian
- The GAA is completed in FSFN by the Kinship Coordinator, with input from the caregiver and case management.



## Guardianship Assistance Agreement

Includes the agreed upon benefit amount for the child

Completion of the GAA is facilitated by the assigned Kinship Coordinator.

**GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND GUARDIANS REGARDING PAYMENTS AND SERVICES**

Certification: <input type="checkbox"/> Initial <input type="checkbox"/> Update		Region: _____	Effective Date: _____	
Name of Guardian 1: _____		Name of Guardian 2: _____		
Address of Guardian(s): _____				
Type of Payment	Amount of Payment	Medicaid	Non-Recurring Expenses	Projected Cost
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship: IV-E	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	LEGAL COST	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship: TANF	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> No	TRAVEL COST	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship: State Funded/General Revenue	\$ _____		OTHER	\$ _____
	\$ _____		<b>Total Projected Cost:</b>	\$ _____
Description of Other: _____				
Does the guardian(s) elect to name a Successor Guardian? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Name: _____				
Do the guardian(s) and child elect to opt into the Extension of Guardianship Assistance Program? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A				
*Only applicable to a child who is age 16 or 17 when the initial agreement is signed.				

We (I), the guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_, a child who is presumptively eligible for guardianship assistance in the State of Florida, agree and understand that:

1. The department will be responsible for the guardianship assistance payment as agreed to in this document, regardless of our family's

Identifies Successor Guardian

# Discharge to Permanent Guardianship

**Guardian starts receiving GAP benefits upon discharge to Permanent Guardianship.**

- FSFN updates:
  - Link the final court order and finalize GAP Eligibility (Case management to provide order to Kinship Coordinator; Kinship Coordinator will upload and complete eligibility)
  - Finalize the GAA (Kinship Coordinator)
  - Discharge the Out of Home Placement with the reason of Permanent Guardianship (DCM to complete uRefer; Data Management will discharge the placement in FSFN)
  - Eligibility Department will:
    - Start a service for ALL children in GAP
      - Even if a child will not receive a GAP payment because of SSI, the service will open as a \$0 service.
    - Submit a Medicaid change row to update payee to the Guardian in order for child to continue receiving Medicaid coverage.
  - Case Management will end primary case assignment; after discharge to PG, primary case assignment will remain with Kinship Coordinator for ongoing GAP redetermination.



**Permanent  
Guardianship**

# What is Important for Case Managers?

The case manager must document all of the following areas in the case plan (Ch. 39.6225 F.S.). If all areas are not addressed, the child will be ineligible for GAP benefits.



## Appropriate Permanency

The manner in which the department determined that reunification or adoption is not appropriate.



## Appropriate Placement

The reasons why a permanent placement with the prospective guardian is in the best interest of the child.



## Siblings

The reasons why the child is separated from his or her siblings during placement, if applicable.



## Adoption Discussion with Guardian

Efforts to discuss adoption with the child's permanent guardian.

(These are existing requirements.)



## Effort to Consult Child

The efforts to consult the child, if the child is 14 years of age or older, regarding the permanent guardianship arrangement.



## Program Eligibility

The manner in which the child meets program eligibility requirements.



## GAP Discussion with Parents

The efforts to discuss guardianship assistance with the child's parent or the reasons why efforts were not made.

(These are new requirements and are explained further on the next slide.)

# What is New for Case Managers?

This information must be documented in the Permanent Guardianship case plan:



## Program Eligibility

- The child is placed with a relative or fictive kin.
- The caregiver is a licensed foster home and eligible for at least 6 consecutive months of foster board payments for the child.



## GAP Discussion with Parents

- Describe permanent guardianship to the parents.
- Discuss GAP and the possibility of the parents reopening the case.
- Explain the Guardianship Assistance Program benefits to the parents.



## Effort to Consult Child

- Describe permanent guardianship to the child.
- Explain the Guardianship Assistance Program benefits to the child.

# Required Language Placement

## Case Plans

### Reunification Case Plan

- Includes tasks for parents to complete
- Ends with Reunification or TPR

### Progress Update

- Every 90 days or at critical junctures
- Assess progress along the reunification case plan
- Upon goal change to add Permanent Guardianship:
  - Continue assessing progress
  - Create a new Permanent Guardianship case plan

### Permanent Guardianship Case Plan

- Includes details about the guardian
- Include the required statutory language

## FSFN

### Case Plan Worksheet

- Created from FFA – Ongoing
- Generates the Court Involved Case Plan (Word doc)

### Progress Update

### New Case Plan Worksheet

- Remove parents and add the Guardian
- Include the required statutory language
  - Use “What are the Strengths of This Placement?”
- Generates a new Court Involved Case Plan (Word doc)





# Siblings

**When siblings are simultaneously discharged to Permanent Guardianship, all 5 requirements must be met:**



Child is placed with a relative or fictive kin.



Child is eligible for foster care board payments with relative/fictive kin for at least 6 consecutive months.



Case plan includes required items.



Guardian enters into a Guardianship Assistance Agreement for the child.



Court discharges the child with the guardian as a permanent guardianship.

**When a second sibling is discharged to Permanent Guardianship after the first child started receiving GAP benefits, 2 requirements are waived:**



Child is placed with a relative or fictive kin.



Child does not have to be eligible for foster care board payments with relative/fictive kin for at least 6 consecutive months.



Case plan language does not impact GAP eligibility; however, best practice is to still include the appropriate language.



Guardian enters into a Guardianship Assistance Agreement for the child.



Court discharges the child with the guardian as a permanent guardianship.

# GAP – Identifying Successor Guardian

The Successor Guardian is an approved alternative caregiver, should the Guardian become unable to continue serving as the Guardian anytime after discharge to Permanent Guardianship. The Successor Guardian is documented on the Guardianship Assistance Agreement (GAA) by the Kinship Coordinator.

Successor Guardian is not required to be a relative, fictive kin, or licensed caregiver.

Guardian can change the Successor Guardian at any time.

Guardian will be asked if they would like to change/update the Successor Guardian during the annual redetermination.
















Guardian can identify only one person/household as the Successor Guardian.

Successor Guardian must meet all licensure background screening requirements prior to being added to the GAA.

When Guardian changes the Successor Guardian, a new GAA is required.

# Background Screenings for Successor Guardian

## Successor Guardian

		
	When Added as Successor Guardian	Prior to Placement with Successor Guardian
<b>Federal and State Criminal Record Check (FBI &amp; FDLE) – 5 years</b>		
<b>Juvenile Records Check (FDJJ) – 12 months</b>		
<b>Local Criminal Record Check – 12 months</b>		
<b>Abuse Registry– 12 months</b>		
<b>Sexual Offenders and Predator – 12 months</b>		
<b>Civil Records Check – 12 months</b>		
<b>911 Call Outs – 12 months</b>		

# GAP Annual Redetermination

- GAP eligibility is redetermined **annually** by the Kinship Coordinator until the child is 18 years old.
- Guardian must fill out the redetermination form and send it back to CBC lead agency **within 30 days of written notification**.

**Guardianship Assistance Program**  
**Eligibility Redetermination**  
Redetermination Type

1. Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 of SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Child's Monthly Income \_\_\_\_\_ Source of Income \_\_\_\_\_  
(FOR KINSHIP REDETERMINATION ONLY)

3. Is the child currently residing in your home? Yes  No   
a. If child is not currently residing in your home, please explain briefly reason child is not in the home:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you providing support for the child listed above? Yes  No

5. Does the successor guardian need to be modified? Yes  No

6. What is the Young Adults Qualifying Activity for participation in the Extension of Guardianship Assistance Program? (Select one and include supporting documentation when returning form)

- Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
- Enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education;
- Participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to employment;
- Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
- Documentation that they are incapable of doing any of the above due to a medical condition

7. Are there any additional supports or services that the child would benefit from? Yes  No

Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian's Physical Address \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Guardian Email \_\_\_\_\_

Can make changes  
to Successor  
Guardian.



Must attest that they  
continue to provide support  
to the eligible child.



Request any additional  
supports or services the  
child may need.



# GAP Termination

## GAP eligibility can be terminated when:

- Child is absent from guardian's home for at least 60 consecutive calendar days unless child is absent due to medical care, school attendance, runaway status, or detention in a DJJ facility.
- Court modifies the placement of the child, and the guardian is no longer eligible to receive GAP benefits.
- Child turns 18.
- Child or guardian passes away.

# Florida Statute and Policies

## **Guardianship Assistance Program**

- Ch. 39.6225 – 10(a-g) F.S.
- CFOP 170-10 Chapter 13-Guardianship Assistance Program
- CFOP 170-10 Chapter 14-Guardianship Assistance Program Eligibility

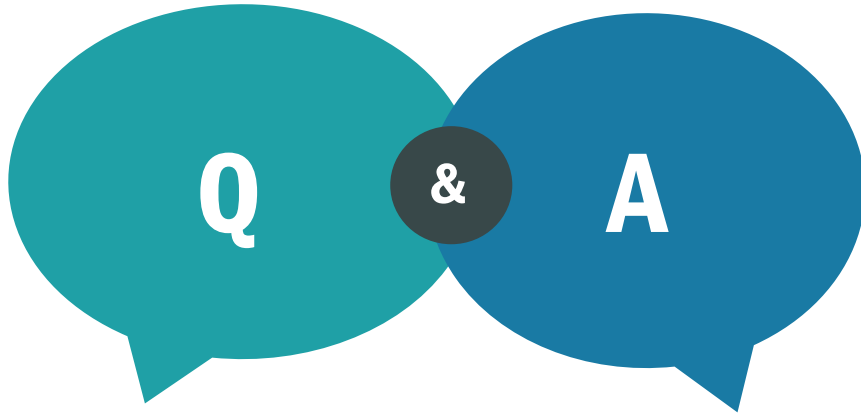
## **Foster Care Licensure**

- Ch. 409.175 F.S.

## **Federal and State Funding Eligibility**

- CFOP 170-15 Chapter 8-Guardianship Assistance Program
- CFOP 170-15 Chapter 9-Extension of Guardianship Assistance Program

# Questions?



Click [HERE](#) for additional information about GAP from the Center for Child Welfare.

Contact the CCKids Caregiver Support Program:  
[FLCBCcaregivers@cckids.net](mailto:FLCBCcaregivers@cckids.net)