

EDUCATION

Policies

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PATH INC. EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

The PATH Board of Directors approved the following statement on education philosophy on January 19, 1985:

General Summary

PATH has as a primary goal the professional growth and development of its foster parents. The unit support structure is the most important component of PATH's educational program. PATH foster parents utilize PATH's social workers, and other PATH families for on-going support and objective consultation. PATH parents attend regularly scheduled unit support meetings facilitated by a PATH social worker to share foster care experiences, intervention strategies, and to offer emotional support to one another.

Objectives

PATH's overall education plan has four main objectives:

- a) To maintain and enhance healthy family functioning;
- b) To increase special skills in working with special needs youth;
- c) To build teamwork and professionalism within PATH;
- d) To become an advocate for the foster youth and to assist with permanency planning for every youth in placement.

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EDUCATION FUNDS FOR TREATMENT FOSTER PARENTS

(E#1)

Introduction

The purpose of the individual education fund is to provide PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parents with financial assistance in obtaining education that will improve their skills as treatment foster parents.

General Policy

All licensed PATH treatment foster families are allowed an annual educational expenditure for personal educational pursuits related to improving skills as a treatment foster parent for special needs youth and related to meeting the educational objectives of PATH Wisconsin, Inc.

Amount

The education allowance is an annually determined dollar amount per year for each family. These funds are credited to the family on the basis of one-twelfth (1/12) of the total amount each month. At any one time the family can draw on funds that have been earned the previous (12) twelve months. If a treatment foster parent resigns from PATH Wisconsin, Inc., these funds may be authorized if they are deemed reasonable and appropriate. Treatment foster parents must complete the necessary paperwork and submit it to their PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker.

Advances

Families can apply for advancement of education funds with approval of their social worker and the Executive Director. Up to \$200 can be advanced.

Eligible Expenses

The educational funds can be used for the following purposes:

Materials

Purchase books, journals, subscriptions, tapes or other educational materials directly related to improving one's skills as a treatment foster parent for youth with special needs.

Memberships

Paying for memberships in organizations which have as their primary purpose, education and research to improve treatment foster parenting skills and the foster care delivery

system. (examples: National Foster Parent Association, Wisconsin State Foster Parent Association, County Foster Parent Associations).

Fees

Payment of tuition or fees for workshops, seminars or classes that will lead to improving one's knowledge about working with foster youth with special needs.

Expenses

Reimbursement for expenses related to attending educational programs. This might include transportation, meals, lodging, and childcare. PATH Wisconsin, Inc. reimbursement guidelines are followed in paying these expenses.

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EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TREATMENT FOSTER PARENT

(E#2)

***Purpose of
Requirements***

PATH, Inc. has as a primary goal the educational growth and development of its treatment foster parents. The PATH, Inc. Board has established basic educational requirements to ensure that all families obtain needed education and to encourage uniformity in educational planning. These education standards are higher than required by Wisconsin's Treatment Foster Parent licensing code, HFS 38. This higher standard reflects PATH, Inc.'s belief that education is one of the most important tools enabling PATH to provide high quality treatment foster care. This higher standard also demonstrates the PATH commitment to continuous growth and development of the human potential. These standards are a minimum level; more can be achieved at the foster parents discretion.

When PATH Wisconsin, Inc. contracts with counties, the expectation is the treatment foster parents meet the educational requirements required by PATH Wisconsin, Inc. These educational and Share and Support requirements provide the necessary tools and supports to treatment foster parents to allow them to provide appropriate treatment to the youth in their care. Not meeting those educational requirements represents a lack of PATH Wisconsin, Inc. to fulfill the counties' expectations

of skill and training levels of the treatment foster parents used to provide contracted services for the county.

Pre-Placement Education

Please refer to E #4 New Treatment Foster Parent Education.

Ongoing Annual Education Requirements

All active PATH treatment foster parents must participate in a minimum of 30 hours of educational programs each PATH educational year (*July 1 to June 30*). At least ten (10) hours must be obtained through participation in unit Share and Support meetings (with a minimum of 5 hours participating in person at a Share and Support meeting and no more than 5 hours participating in a PATH Inc. sponsored teleconference or on-line chat Share and Support). No more than six (6) hours can be obtained through reading books or listening to audio or video tapes.

A written plan for this method needs to be completed and approved by the treatment foster care social worker. A minimum of twenty (20) hours must be obtained in PATH-approved education programs. Approved hours can include time from additional Share and Support meetings, however it is not intended that anyone should gain all of their annual education through Share and Support.

In addition, all treatment foster parents must attend the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Family Care Providers (TCIF) course **prior to** the placement of youth with a significant history or likelihood of physical aggression or self-injurious behaviors as evaluated by the treatment team, and within six months of licensing. Until TCIF training is completed the treatment team may determine some youth are unsuitable for your home. The refresher course for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Family Care Providers (TCIF) must be completed a minimum of once every two years before re-licensing may occur.

Senior Foster Parents

Long term, highly trained PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parents could have their annual requirements reduced to 24 hours (10 hours Share and Support and 14 hours PATH approved training) when all three of the following conditions are met: 1) Five years experience as a successful foster parent with PATH, 2) PATH, Inc. Foster Parent Certification Program completed, 3) They have

applied for Senior Foster Parent status and their application has been approved by the Regional Director.

Education Allowance

All licensed treatment foster families accrue education monies to be used for educational purposes. These funds must be authorized by the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker prior to utilization. Treatment foster parents must complete the necessary paperwork and submit it to their PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker.

First Aid and CPR

All PATH treatment foster parents must obtain First Aid and CPR training prior to licensing. (The specifics of this requirement are covered in "First Aid and CPR Training" policy E #3 of this manual).

Plans for Meeting Education Requirements

Each PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parent is responsible for ensuring that they meet their individual education requirements. A report is sent from the local PATH Wisconsin, Inc. office at midpoint during the education year to inform treatment foster parents of their current status. At the time of annual re-licensing or initial licensure, the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker will assist the family in evaluating their educational experiences of the previous year and identifying an educational plan for the coming year. The educational programs that the family participates in should be related to improving their treatment foster parenting skills, strengthening their family, and meeting the overall educational goals of PATH Wisconsin, Inc.

PATH, Inc. Certification

Although there is no time limit on completing the program, all PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parents are automatically enrolled in the PATH, Inc. Foster Care Certificate Program. Educational opportunities are offered through PATH Wisconsin, Inc. each year.

PATH Wisconsin, Inc. families are encouraged to attend all educational programs organized or sponsored by PATH, Inc. Each individual would easily meet the education requirements if they attend the PATH-sponsored activities. Individuals may also meet their education requirements by participating in alternative education programs. These are seminars, classes or workshops not sponsored by PATH, or

independent reading or research. Alternative education is discussed in E #5.

Documentation

An educational record listing all educational programs attended by the individual treatment foster parents is filed in the education section of the treatment foster parents' file. This list should include Share and Support hours, PATH-sponsored programs and alternative education.

Non-Compliance Guidelines:

Each treatment foster parent is required to complete 20 hours of education (presented by PATH or by another approved source) and 10 hours of Share and Supports between July 1-June 30 each year.

If the required number of hours is not completed within the fiscal year, a Make-up Education Plan must be developed by July 30th utilizing the "Make-up Education Plan or Substitution/Exception Request" form. Plans are developed by the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker and each treatment foster parent. Plans must detail how and when each treatment foster parent will be in compliance with their educational plans for the prior fiscal year. Each plan must be completed by Sept 1st of the year following the end of the fiscal year in which the hours should have been completed or further action will be taken. Action taken after Sept 1st will be written in the work plan, and will also be communicated in writing to the referring social worker.

If the requirements of the plan are not completed by September 1st, the social worker will work with the Regional Director and the Chair of the Education Committee to determine further action including remedies such as: changes in rates (e.g., reduction to a lower rate or the equivalent county rate), no new referrals/placements, or non-renewal of licensure until the work plan is completed. Other remedies may also be used to insure that the treatment foster parents are in educational compliance; these remedies will be determined by the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker, the youth's treatment team, and referring social worker.

If requirements are not met by June 30 each year, the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker should hold new placements; unless the education committee grants an exception.

Exceptions

A treatment foster parent desiring to request an exception to any particular educational requirement should present his or her case in writing utilizing the "Make-up Education Plan or Substitution/Exception Request" form by April 30th of the educational year to their PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker who would present the document to the Regional Director and education committee. Any disagreement must be negotiated among the treatment foster parent, staff member and Education Committee for resolution.

Carry-Over Hours

Banked hours are to be used only as an emergency resource to offset failure to meet the thirty (30) hours of required education.

They are not to be used as an alternative education program.

1. Up to ten (10) hours of education may be used as carry-over. The hours may be accumulated through attendance at PATH, Inc. workshops or alternative educational programs in the community (approved by PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker).
2. Any educational activity which receives prior approval from the treatment foster parent's PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker may be used as carry-over hours. Activities that are contingent upon a placement (i.e. treatment plan meetings and reviews, psychiatrist/therapy visits, court activities, etc.) are not considered carry-over.
3. Each PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parent's carry-over hours are identified on the listing of all education programs attended in the education section of the treatment foster parents' file.
4. Carry-over hours may be used at any time within the twelve (12)-month period after which they are earned. The need for an exception to this requirement may be approved upon mutual agreement of the family's PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker, the Regional Director, and education committee. **In all cases, however, treatment foster parents must annually meet the training hours required for state licensing and for Council On Accreditation standards, exclusive of any previous year carry-over.**

FIRST AID AND CPR CERTIFICATION

(E#3)

<i>Purpose of Policy</i>	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parent has basic skills at meeting emergency medical needs of youth in placement.
<i>CPR and First Aid Training</i>	Every PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parent shall obtain training from a certified instructor in CPR and First Aid prior to their first placement. It is required that each treatment foster parent maintain active certification in CPR and First Aid.
<i>Education Hours</i>	Participation in a CPR or First Aid course does count as hours toward meeting the annual individual education requirements or the requirement for pre-service hours (30) prior to the first placement. It is recommended that PATH Wisconsin, Inc. consider scheduling convenient opportunities for updates; however, locating a training is the responsibility of the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parent.
<i>Non-Compliance</i>	Parents not meeting these requirements will have their per diem reduced as outlined in the policy section of individual education requirements.
<i>New Families</i>	New families must meet this requirement prior to their first placement and provide proof of this training.
<i>Purpose of Training</i>	To insure that treatment foster parents and staff attend CPR and First Aid to insure the safety of youth in our care.
<i>Guidelines for Maintaining Certification:</i>	Current policy states that treatment foster parents must have had First Aid and CPR certification training within the last five years. Effective July 1, 2005, all PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parents must maintain

current certification in First Aid and CPR; unless a waiver is obtained from a medical professional. First Aid and CPR will be offered by PATH a minimum of twice a year and counts towards the annual 30 hour education requirement.

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EDUCATION FOR NEW TREATMENT FOSTER PARENTS

(E#4)

Purpose of New Foster Parent Education

The purpose of the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. New Treatment Foster Parent Education program is to provide newly licensed PATH Wisconsin, Inc. families information about the agency philosophy, personnel, and management as well as selected parenting skills. At the end of the New Treatment Foster Parent Education program, it is the goal that new families will be prepared to become fully participating members of the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. organization.

Pre-Placement Education

Before receiving a youth for placement, all treatment foster parents must participate in 30 hours of competency-based training as required by COA standards. These hours *may* include pre-placement and licensing visits, Share and Support, and PATH-approved education programs. These hours *must* include New Treatment Foster Parent Education and CPR/First Aid delivered by a certified instructor.

New Foster Parent Edu- cation Requirements

All newly licensed PATH Wisconsin, Inc. families must attend the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. New Treatment Foster Parent Education program and complete a CPR/First Aid class delivered by a certified instructor. If currently certified, the treatment foster parent will provide documentation to the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker, and the treatment foster parent will not have to repeat the initial First Aid/CPR training. The New Treatment Foster Parent Education program involves three (3) hours of agency orientation with the licensing social worker plus nine (9) hours of classroom time in a structured New Treatment Foster Parent Education Program

All newly licensed PATH Wisconsin, Inc. families must also complete the Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training within six months of being licensed and/or prior to the placement of a youth with a known history of physical aggression or restraint.

Families who join PATH Wisconsin, Inc. without previous foster parent experience must also meet additional requirements as outlined in HFS 56 and HFS 38.

When a new family comes into PATH Wisconsin, Inc., the mandatory annual thirty (30) hours of education for that educational year will be reduced by 2.5 hours per month for every month previous to their being licensed. Calculation for pro-rated hours begins on July 1. Attendance at the Share and Support meetings remaining to be held in their unit is also recommended. The Share and Support minimum requirement is also pro-rated, although new families are encouraged to attend as many as possible. New families will be subject to all other PATH Wisconsin, Inc. educational requirements upon licensure.

***New Treatment Foster Parent
Education Leaders***

New Treatment Foster Parent Education is conducted by PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parents, social workers, and administrative staff. New Treatment Foster Parent educators have been trained in facilitating the program.

Information Presented

The PATH, Inc. Board of Directors has determined that certain items should be covered in the agency orientation. These items include:

- PATH, Inc. history and background
- Legal basis for organization
- Treatment foster care philosophy
- People involved with PATH
- Types of children served
- Agency organization
- Licensing and re-licensing
- Placement process
- Treatment planning process
- Treatment plan reviews
- Foster parent reports
- Data privacy
- Foster parent per diem
- Initial clothing allowance
- Education allowance

- Respite
- Medical payment
- Insurance coverage
- Risks involved in treatment foster care
- Education requirements
- Role of birth parents
- Abuse/neglect in foster care

Parenting Skills Topics:

In addition, selected parenting skills topics include, but are not limited to:

- Allegation of Abuse in Foster Care
- Separation, Attachment, Grief and Loss
- Child Development
- Working with Birth Families
- Behavior Management
- Cultural Awareness

Completion Agreement

At the end of the program, the new PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster parents must sign a statement that they have completed the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. New Treatment Foster Parent Education program. This must be filed in the treatment foster parent's file.

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NON-PATH EDUCATION

(E#5)

Definition

Alternative education is educational programs which are not sponsored by PATH, Inc. This might include attendance at seminars, workshops, and classes or independent readings, or viewing of materials.

Completing Alternative Hours

Alternative education hours can be earned through the following methods:

1. Attending an alternative education program of an equal number of hours through classes, seminars and workshops offered in the community.

2. Accomplishing an alternative education program through reading or listening to tapes and submitting written summary reports.
3. Participating in a maximum of 6 hours of on-line training.

Approval

To meet educational requirements, the alternative education program must be approved by either the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. social worker or the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. Education Committee. All alternative education must be planned with the treatment foster family's social worker. Documentation on the alternative education form is required and filed in the treatment foster parents' file.

PATH WISCONSIN, INC. LIBRARY

Area Libraries

PATH Wisconsin, Inc. regional offices maintain a library available to all PATH treatment foster parents. The library includes books, films, DVD's, and tapes, which may be checked out for a 30-day block of time.

Eligibility

All PATH Wisconsin, Inc. treatment foster families are eligible to check out library materials. If items are desired which are not in the regional library, a request should be made to the regional director to obtain the material.

Responsibility

The regional office secretary is responsible for maintaining the library and checking out materials.

Lost Materials

When a book or tape from the PATH Wisconsin, Inc. library has not been returned and due notice has been given and sixty (60) days has elapsed, the item not returned will be charged as follows:

- a) Books - the cost of replacement;
- b) Films/Videotapes/DVD's - if the tape can be replaced, the cost is \$5.00/tape; if the tape is irreplaceable, the cost is \$40 per hour of tape.

