

THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN:

A comparison of supports available to children in foster care and supports available to children placed with a relative under the Juvenile Proceedings Act (JPA) or through Probate Court



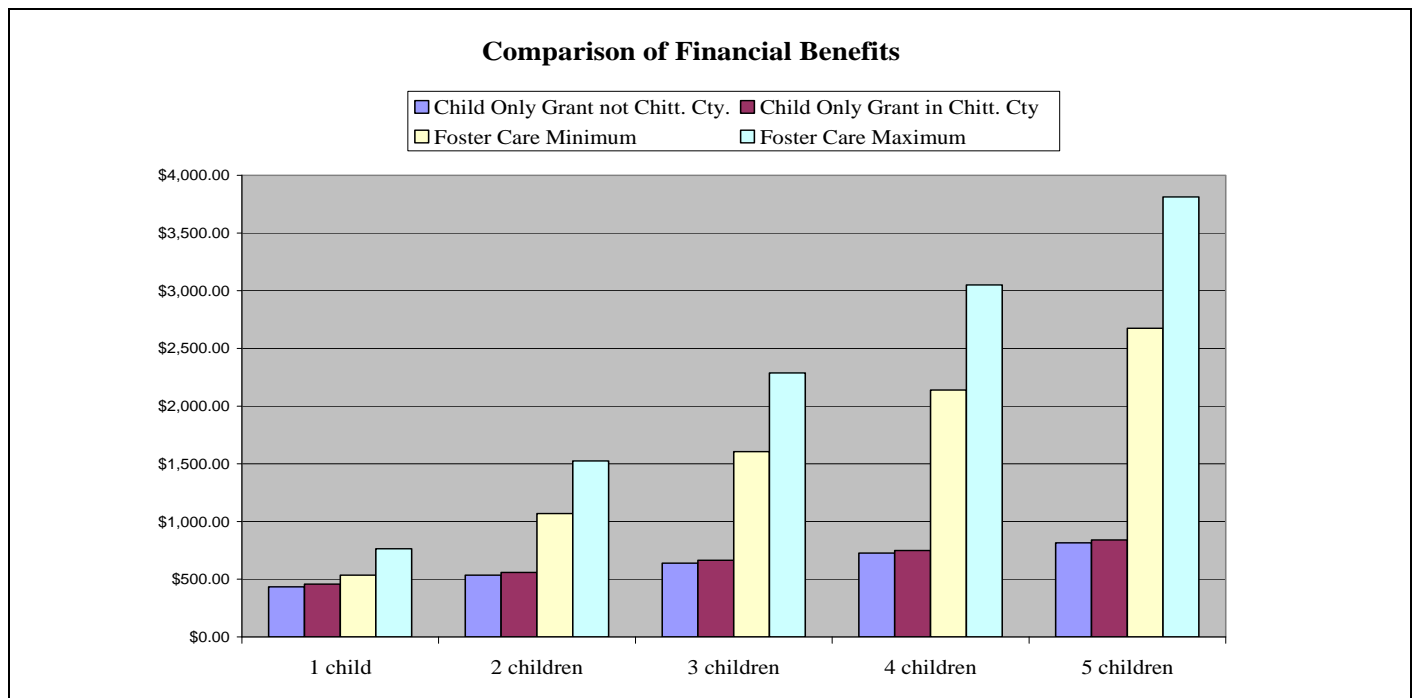
Research shows that children whose parents are unable to care for them are more successful when placed with a relative. In Vermont two courts are involved in establishing a legal relationship between a child and a relative. In Family Court, a child who is determined to be in need of care and supervision (CHINS) in the past has been most often placed in foster care. However under JPA (Vermont Statutes, Title 33, Chapters 52 & 53), an appropriate relative now is considered as a preferential placement early in the case. In Probate Court a child can be placed with a relative through Legal Guardianship proceedings. However, there are major differences in the support that the child and family receive when a child is in foster care as compared to a child placed in the custody of a relative.

FINANCIAL DIFFERENCES

A child in foster care is eligible for more financial support than one not in foster care. As illustrated below, the difference is even more dramatic when more than one child is placed with a family.

	<u>Foster Care Reimbursement Rates</u>	<u>(Maximum) Child Only RUFA* grant</u>
	Infant, Level One/Adolescent, Level Three	Outside Chittenden County/Chittenden County.
1 child	\$ 534.90 / \$762.60	\$434.00 / \$458.00
2 children	\$1,069.80 / \$1,525.20	\$535.00 / \$560.00
3 children	\$1,604.70 / 2,287.80	\$640.00 / \$ 665.00
4 children	\$2,139.60 / \$3,050.40	\$726.00 / \$750.00
5 children	\$2,674.60 / \$3,813.00	\$816.00 / \$841.00

*Child Only Reach Up grant is obtained through Economic Services. Child support and any income for the child such as Social Security offsets the benefit; caregiver income is not taken into consideration.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS FOR THE CHILD

FOSTER CARE

CUSTODY through JPA; GUARDIANSHIP

Educational Supports

Remain in home school if appropriate

Remain in home school only if relative lives in the same town or school agrees temporarily

Eligible for educational surrogate parent to help navigate educational issues

Not eligible

Reimbursement for transportation to school

None



Other benefits for the child:

Eligible for Medicaid

Eligible for Medicaid or Dr. Dynasaur if eligible for RUFA grant

Free hot lunch

Free hot lunch if eligible for RUFA grant

Childcare in licensed facility (100% covered)

Childcare if a proven need; covered up to maximum allowed, not always 100%

Other supports for the child, parent, and family:

Social worker or contracted agency assistance for support, negotiating family issues, parent visitation, etc.

None unless ordered by court

Help for parents to reunite with the child and/or to experience safe contact

None unless ordered by court

Access to Family Services (FS) contracted services



Only at Commissioner's discretion and dependent on available funding

Legal support for court proceedings, including TPR

None once FS is no longer involved (except OCS)

Permanency planning for the child: reunification, TPR/adoption, permanent guardianship

Permanency planning when reunification is the goal: legal custody or guardianship unless the child's attorney or relative petitions for TPR; cost of legal representation is usually the relative's

Other:

Reimbursement of mileage to doctor's, counseling, other appointments of child

None (some exceptions)

Reimbursement for phone calls to siblings, Family Services

None

Respite services so the family has a break and can come back together renewed

None

Trainings available for foster parents to be better parents and to better understand child's trauma and needs

None



ADOPTION:

Potentially all of above

NO BENEFITS OR SUPPORT unless the child is eligible for SSI