

I. WHAT ARE THE MINOR PARENT RULES?

A minor parent is an individual under age 18 who has a child.

NOTE: A minor parent is under age 18. The rules in this policy do not apply to an emancipated minor. Emancipation occurs when a dependent child marries or is a member of the U. S. Armed Forces or is declared emancipated by a court

When a dependent child becomes emancipated, the child is treated as an adult caretaker and cannot receive Work First Cash Assistance (WFCA) in the status of a child. For example, if a minor child marries and later returns to their parent's home before reaching age 18, the emancipated individual cannot be included in the parent's WFCA case as a child.

A minor parent is subject to all the eligibility requirements for Work First Cash Assistance. Although a parent, the minor is still by Work First Cash Assistance definition a dependent child and is subject to additional requirements for staying in school and living with a parent or other adult. The purpose of these requirements is to encourage and promote future independence.

These requirements are reviewed when discussing personal responsibility and when the caretaker or protective payee signs the Mutual Responsibility Agreement. Refer to Section 103, Personal Responsibility, for additional information.

These additional requirements are:

A. A MINOR PARENT MUST BE ENROLLED IN AND REGULARLY ATTENDING SCHOOL.

A minor parent is expected to attend an elementary or secondary school (public or private) or approved home school (or a vocational or technical training program which is equivalent to high school).

NOTE: Home schools for children ages 7 through 17 must be registered with the Division of Non-Public Education. To verify whether the home school is operating legally, ask the caretaker to provide a copy of the Notice of Intent issued by the Division of Non-Public Education. If the caretaker does not have a Notice of Intent, call the Division of Non-Public

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Education at (984) 236-0110 to verify the registration of a home school or verify the registration of a home school at this website:

<https://www.dnpsys.nc.gov/NPEPublic/HSCountySearch.aspx> by entering the last name of the home school administrator.

In those instances, in which the minor parent has already completed high school or received a GED or is suspended or expelled from school, the case manager must assist the caretaker in finding an educational, training, or work activity. **The case manager should provide assistance to the caretaker by contacting the NC Community College System, the NC Works Career Center, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), etc.** Enrollment in and regular attendance (defined by the school or institution) at one of these alternative arrangements meets the school attendance requirement.

If a child's suspension is lifted, the child is expected to return to school.

While there is a sanction when the minor parent does not attend school, the goal is to help educate the child and make them employable.

NOTE: If needed, minor parents **should be referred to the subsidized childcare program in the county to ensure appropriate resources for school attendance are provided.**

B. A MINOR PARENT MUST LIVE WITH A PARENT, LEGAL GUARDIAN, OR IN ANOTHER ADULT SUPERVISED ARRANGEMENT (THE ADULT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A RELATIVE.) UNLESS ONE OF THE EXCEPTIONS BELOW APPLIES.

1. The minor parent has no parent or legal guardian who is living, or the whereabouts of the parent or legal guardian is unknown; or
2. The agency determines the physical health or safety of the minor parent or the dependent child would be jeopardized by living with a parent or legal guardian; or
3. The minor parent has lived apart from any parent or legal guardian for a period of at least one year prior to either the birth of the child or prior to the date of the Work First **Cash** Assistance application; or
4. The parent or legal guardian will not allow the minor parent to live in the home; or

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NOTE: In all the instances discussed in 1. through 4. the minor parent may be at risk. Make a referral to Child Protective Services if appropriate.

5. The county director or designee determines on an individual case basis that because of a reason not listed above, it would be detrimental for the minor parent to live with their parent or legal guardian; AND
6. There is no other adult supervised arrangement where the minor parent may live. The adult does not have to be related to the minor parent.

If the minor parent does not live with a parent, legal guardian, or in another adult supervised arrangement, the case manager may approve Work First Cash Assistance only after the case manager has carefully assessed there is no adult with whom the minor parent can live, or such an arrangement would be detrimental to the minor parent or child. The Work First Cash Assistance payment in such cases must be made as a protective payment.

II. WHO RECEIVES THE PAYMENT FOR THE MINOR PARENT?

In no instance can the minor parent receive a Work First Cash Benefit payment in their own name.

Whenever the minor parent lives with an adult who is a member of the family unit, that adult is the applicant and receives the payment. Otherwise, the payment is made as a protective payment. Refer to the protective payment instructions in [Section 205 Payment Rules and Benefit Issuance](#).

III. HOW DOES THE CASE MANAGER ASSURE THE MINOR PARENT MEETS THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS?

A. School Attendance

When the caretaker or protective payee signs the Mutual Responsibility Agreement ([DSS - 6963-A](#)) the caretaker agrees to be responsible for school attendance verification on an ongoing basis once the application is approved.

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Once the Work First Cash Assistance application has been approved, families with a minor parent are subject to the **Work First Family Assistance Report (DSS-8127)**. This report is generated **quarterly** to allow the case head to report changes within the household as the method for ongoing monitoring any changes such as school attendance, employment, household composition, etc.

The case manager worker will also need to discuss this requirement at the eligibility review.

If at any time the information is questionable, the case manager may ask the caretaker or protective payee to provide a statement from the school (or other source if the child is meeting the school requirement in a setting other than the traditional public school) that the minor parent is enrolled and attending school. Accept the school's definition of regularly attending.

NOTE: For counties that have on-line access to local school records, **the case manager should explore every alternative to obtain verification in this manner to better assist the family.**

B. Living With Parent, Legal Guardian, Or Other Adult

When the caretaker or protective payee signs the Mutual Responsibility Agreement (**DSS - 6963 - A**), the caretaker or protective payee agrees to notify the case worker if the minor parent leaves the home. The caretaker or protective payee will be responsible for reporting on the Work First Family Assistance Report (**DSS-8127**) Assistance Report if the minor parent leaves the home. **Failure to report the absence would result in potential overpayments.**

To verify initially that the minor parent is living with a parent, legal guardian, or other adult, use the verifications listed in Section 112, Kinship and Living With Rule Requirements.