

The foster care grant is R740 a month (April 2011). You can be paid a foster care grant if a child who is found in need of care by the Commissioner of the Child Welfare Court is placed in your care (and you are not the biological parent). A Children's Court can order a child to be placed with foster parents for one of the following reasons: the child has no parent or guardian; the child has a parent or guardian who cannot be traced; or the child is in the custody of a parent, guardian or any person who is unable or unfit to have custody.

The grant is usually issued for a period of two years, as the court generally appoints foster parents for two years only. After this children are formally adopted, returned to their parents, or placed with new foster parents for another two-year period. A social worker can, however, extend the grant depending on the circumstances. The grant is paid until the child reaches 18 years, or the end of the year in which the child turns 21 if the child is still attending secondary school. This will only be approved to enable the child to complete secondary school (not any form of tertiary education).

How do I know if I am able to claim this grant?

You are eligible if:

- The child has been placed in your care by an order of the Children's Court
- You and the fostered child live in South Africa
- You are a South African citizen or permanent resident
- You are not receiving any other kind of grant for the child (unless the child is disabled, and he or she is receiving a Care Dependency Grant)
- The child meets the requirements of the Means Test
- The child remains in your care and attends school (if under the compulsory school age)
- You can provide adequate accommodation and care for the child

The Child's Means Test

To meet the requirements of the Means Test, the income of the child (from a trust account or the child's biological parents) must be less than R15 000 a year. The income of the foster parents is not taken into account and they do not need to pass a Means Test to qualify for the foster care grant.

Documents required

When applying for a Foster Care Grant both foster parents must make the application and a full set of fingerprints will be taken. Before you go to the SASSA office make sure that you have the following documents with you:

- Your Identity Document (ID) books (with the 13-number bar code)
- The birth certificate or an ID book of the child (with the 13-number bar code)
- A copy of the Children's Court order placing the child in your custody
- Papers showing the child's income

- Proof of the child's school attendance

If you do not have these papers, contact your social worker, local advice office or one of the NPOs in our AIDSbuzz Directory that help with Social Grants. You can also phone the Department's free hotline number **0800 601 011**.