

WAC 388-454-0015 Temporary absence from the home. The temporary absence policy described in this WAC applies to the temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) and state family assistance (SFA) programs. In some situations, a child receiving TANF/SFA can continue to be eligible for TANF/SFA cash assistance when there is a temporary separation of the child and the child's caregiver. There must be a clear expectation the absence is temporary and the child is expected to be reunited with the family. Temporary absences can't exceed one hundred eighty days except as described in (1)(a).

(1) For recipients, temporary absences include, but are not limited to:

(a) A caregiver receiving care in a hospital, substance abuse treatment facility, or other medical institution. If the temporary care exceeds one hundred eighty days, the assistance payment for the person is reduced to the CPI amount specified under chapter 388-478 WAC.

(b) Out-of-home visits less than one hundred eighty days, when the caregiver is still responsible for the support and care of the child.

(c) A caregiver or child attending school or training as described in WAC 388-454-0020.

(d) Placement of a child in foster care or in the care of a relative or other adult, including when the child's primary caregiver is in a residential treatment facility. The division of children and family services (DCFS) must place the child and determine the child is expected to return to the primary caregiver within one hundred eighty days of the placement.

(2) For applicants, temporary absences include:

(a) When the child is placed in unlicensed foster care or in the care of a relative or other adult and DCFS expects the child will return to the home within one hundred eighty days of removal. Benefits can also be approved for an applicant if DCFS determines that the child will be in the care of the applying adult within thirty days of authorizing assistance even if the child has been out of the home for over one hundred eighty days.

(b) When the child is out of the home because of illness or hospitalization and the absence isn't expected to exceed one hundred eighty days.

(3) For situations described in (1)(d) and (2)(a) of this WAC, concurrent TANF or SFA cash assistance can be made for the child, only when DCFS places the child in the temporary care of an unlicensed-relative, other caregiver, or in foster care. DCFS must expect the child return to the home of the primary caregiver in one hundred eighty days.

(a) When the child goes into licensed foster care, the TANF/SFA grant to the parent continues.

(b) When the child goes into unlicensed care, whether with a relative or other caregiver, the TANF grant to the parent continues and the caregiver can also get a TANF grant.

(4) Situations that do not meet the criteria of a temporary absence include, but aren't limited to:

(a) The caregiver or child is incarcerated for any length of time.

(b) The child ran away and there is no clear expectation of when the child will be returning home.

(c) A caregiver or child is away attending school and doesn't meet the criteria outlined in WAC 388-454-0020.

(5) A caregiver must report within five days of learning that a child's absence is going to be greater than one hundred eighty days as required under WAC 388-418-0005 and 388-418-0007.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, and 74.08.090. WSR 08-14-105, § 388-454-0015, filed 6/30/08, effective 8/1/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057 and 74.08.090. WSR 98-16-044, § 388-454-0015, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98.]