



## Emergency Relief Support (ERS) Program "Talking Points."

**The purpose of ERS:** To support families in a crisis, and support relatives who take emergency placement and care for children in OCS custody.

**Target population:** To support the needs of children in OCS custody when they are placed with relatives in an emergency situation.

**Implementation plan:** A pilot was implemented on March 1, 2016 in the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and extended August 1, 2016 to the Western Regional Office (WRO), December 1, 2016 to the Northern Regional Office (NRO), July 1, 2018 to the Anchorage Regional Office (ARO), and December 1, 2018 the Southcentral Regional Office (SCRO) serving families located in these areas.

1. **What is ERS?** Emergency support payments of \$500.00 per 30 days, per child, not to exceed two months.
2. **Who is eligible for ERS?** Relatives related by blood, marriage, adoption or Tribal custom caring for children in custody of OCS. Relatives identified through Tribal custom need to be verified through written documentation from the appropriate Tribe.
3. **Why establish ERS?** To provide financial and emotional support to relative families while they complete the process to become fully licensed or seek Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits. To provide motivation for families to become fully licensed and reduce the number of provisional licenses issued under emergency conditions.
4. **How will this support be provided?** The Emergency Relief Specialist at state office will facilitate timely payments. Licensing staff will provide additional support and information to the relative resource family.
5. **When will payments end?** Payments will end when either the relative family 1) becomes licensed, 2) begins receiving TANF benefits, or 3) the child is moved from the home. Payments are time limited to a two month (60 day) time period.
6. **What policy and practice changes are most notable?**
  - a. Families identified as relative caregivers will not be issued emergency licenses but will instead utilize ERS.
  - b. No request for funds will be approved for relatives during ERS payment period for food, diapers, and diaper wipes. Under emergency conditions RFFs may be issued for food, diapers, and diaper wipes. The amount of the RFF will be deducted from the ERS payment.
  - c. The creation of unlicensed relative provider files maintained by the licensing unit, to maintain background check and relative home study.
7. **Who is eligible for emergency licenses?** Emergency licenses may be issued to unlicensed, non-relative providers who are identified as safe and appropriate foster care providers.