

Unmet Needs Determination & Request

Unmet Needs

DCYF defines an unmet need as anything a child or youth needs that is not paid for by other programs. This definition applies when the child or youth receives public benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Retirement, Survivors, Disability Insurance (RSDI). These unmet needs matter because they help support a young person's emotional, mental, social, and physical health.

The following information is meant to help explain what items or services may count as an unmet needs.

Examples of Unmet Needs

Emotional and Psychological Needs:

- Feeling safe, included, cared for, and valued. When these needs are not met, a child or youth may feel sad, anxious, or unsettled.

Medical Needs:

- Access to medical care, prescribed medicine, specialty foods or treatment for specific circumstances.

Social and Financial Needs:

- Gaps in access to mental health services, financial support, education, or family planning services.

Examples of Items Using Unmet Needs Categories

Gaming Systems (e.g., PlayStation, Xbox):

- Support social interaction, stress relief, and mental health.

Family Items:

- School supplies, toys, and books help create a sense of routine activities.



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Shared Experiences:

- Zoo visits, movie nights, or family outings foster connection and belonging.

Creative Outlets:

- Journals, coloring books, pens, and art supplies offer calming, expressive tools.

Technology Access:

- Computers and Wi-Fi help youth stay virtually connected and follow their interests.

Comfort Items:

- Weighted blankets, comforting or familiar scented items, warm clothing to reduce anxiety and promote well-being.

Educational Tools:

- Books or vouchers for classes to support learning and build self-worth.

Resources You Can Request

The following list shows examples of items that have been approved for payment in the past when they were not covered by DCYF or other public programs.

Education Costs

- School fees
- Education materials
- Tutoring from licensed business

Computer, iPad, iPod and Notebook

Medical and dental expenses (If not already covered by Medicaid)

- Eyeglasses
- Contacts
- Orthodontia

Personal care (Up to 90-day supply)

- Hygiene items
- Diapers
- Haircuts (not including tips)

Recreation and entertainment

- Summer camps
- Toys & presents

- Birthday party supplies (up to \$100.00)
- Membership fees to the Zoo, YMCA, and Children’s Museum

Clothing

Fines, restitution and legal fees for the child or youth

Travel Costs

- Paid on a case-by-case basis for the child and sometimes for an accompanying adult.
- Travel expenses for the accompanying adult will only be paid if the adult is traveling with the child solely to accompany the child, and the travel is wholly to benefit the child.
- Note: All travel expenses must be pre-approved by the Trust Fund Unit before being reimbursed.

Furniture

- Requires a detailed reason when requested.
- Must be tracked and moved with the child or youth.

How to Request Unmet Needs Funding

After reviewing this document and making sure the item or service you want **is not already provided by DCYF or another public agency**, and the child or youth receives a public benefit such as SSI, SSDI or RSDI you can:

1. Fill out the Trust Funds Unmet Need and Disbursement Request form.
2. Email the completed form to the SSI Unit: dcyf.ssiunit@dcyf.wa.gov.

Questions

If you have questions, please contact the SSI Unit at dcyf.ssiunit@dcyf.wa.gov.