

## **POLICY VIII-A: TRANSITIONAL YOUTH SERVICES**

01/2011

The purpose of Transitional Youth Services (TYS) is to better prepare youth in DCFS custody, who are in an out-of-home placement or whose adoption or guardianship is finalized at age 16 or after, for successful transition to adulthood and to ensure that youth have access to an array of resources. The Division of Children and Family Services shall ensure that each youth in foster care who reaches age 14, or who enters foster care at or after age 14, shall be provided the opportunity to take an active role in planning for his or her future. Youth entering foster care between the ages of 14 and 18 will be immediately referred to the Transitional Youth Services (TYS) Coordinator.

The Division shall:

- A. Provide the youth with the opportunity to be actively engaged in all case/client plans impacting his or her future, including, but not limited to a Transitional Plan and a Life Plan.
- B. Empower the youth with information regarding all available services and options and provide the youth with the opportunity to participate in services tailored to his or her individual needs and designed to enhance his or her ability to acquire the skills necessary to successfully enter adulthood.
- C. Assist the youth in developing and maintaining healthy relationships and life connections with nurturing adults who can be a resource and positive guiding influence in his or her life after leaving foster care.
- D. Provide the youth with basic information and documentation regarding his or her biological family and personal history.
- E. Provide the youth with information that relates to the health care needs of youth aging out of foster care, including options for health insurance after exiting care and the importance of designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on behalf of the youth, if he or she becomes unable to participate in such decisions and does not have, or does not want, a relative who would otherwise be authorized to make such decisions; provide the youth with the option to execute a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document recognized under State law.
- F. Inform the youth of his or her right to stay in care until age 21.

Each youth shall be given the opportunity to create a Transitional Plan which encompasses all the life skills, resources, and future-planning for the youth's successful transition into adult life. The Transitional Plan will be created with the support of the youth's Transitional Team which will consist of adults whom the youth identifies as significant. The youth's primary Family Service Worker shall be responsible for the coordination of the youth's Transitional Team and is responsible for the Transitional Plan and case plan as reflected in the court report. The TYS Coordinator is an appropriate support for some of the youth's transitional plans and may serve on the Transitional Team if appropriate. Because APPLA is the least permanent goal for a youth, the case plan and Transitional Plan shall address life connections.

The Transitional Plan shall allow for client protection. If a youth is identified as legally impaired and likely to become endangered, the Transitional Plan shall include automatic referrals to Developmental Disabilities Services and/or Adult Protective Services as appropriate. For youth with significant mental health issues, the Transitional Plan shall consider appropriate referrals and applications for post-care services (e.g. adult SSI).

The youth and his or her attorney shall have the right to attend all staffings and to fully participate in the development of the Transitional Plan, to the extent that the youth is able to participate medically and developmentally.

## **Chafee Services**

Each youth in DHS custody, age 14 or older, is eligible for Chafee services. All Chafee services are voluntary. Services provided are primarily education- and training-oriented and are intended to keep youth in school while they obtain life skills and participate in other life preparation activities and plans to promote a successful transition to adulthood.

Chafee provides support for three groups of the foster care population:

- A. Youth in foster care, beginning at age 14 and continuing until the youth completes high school or other secondary educational program, may receive services such as life skills assessment, basic life skills training, and other services such as tutoring that can be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- B. Youth may choose to remain in care until the age of 21 and are eligible for Chafee services if they meet any of the following conditions:
  - 1) Youth is enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education.
  - 2) Youth is participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment.
  - 3) Youth is employed for at least 80 hours per month.
  - 4) Youth is incapable of doing any of the above described activities due to a medical condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the case plan.
- C. If a youth was in foster care on his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and the foster care case is closed, he or she will be eligible for After Care services and support until age 21.

Chafee also provides support for youth whose adoption or guardianship is finalized at age 16 or after. Such youth are eligible for ETV (Education Training Voucher) and may attend youth development activities and life skills classes.

Assessments begin at age 14 and transitional services may begin at age 14 for youth already in foster care. In cases where a youth younger than 14 needs life skills training, the DCFS Director or designee may grant a waiver for services.

DCFS shall provide, either directly or through contract, those services identified in the life skills assessment that are indicated to help the youth achieve independence. The case plan and/or Transitional Plan must identify and address the specific skill needs of each youth. Each youth age 14-17 receiving Transitional Services shall be assessed annually using an appropriate life skills assessment tool; however, an individualized assessment shall be conducted every six months to determine the youth's progress in acquiring basic life skills and the skills necessary for a successful transition to adulthood. Basic life skills will be assessed at each staffing held for a youth age 14 and older. When the youth turns 18, assessments will be highly individualized.

If a youth was in foster care on or after his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and was adopted before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, he will be eligible for services until his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

While incarcerated youth (prison, jail, DYS custody) are ineligible for Chafee funding, the youth shall still be given the opportunity to plan for his or her future.

Opportunities shall be available for each foster parent caring for, or interested in caring for, a youth age 14 or older, and each Family Service Worker responsible for any youth, age 14 or older, in helping youth acquire basic life skills.

Within 30 days after the youth leaves foster care, the Division shall provide the youth the following:

- A. A full accounting of all funds held by the department to which he or she is entitled;
- B. Information on how to access the funds;
- C. When the funds will be available.

## PROCEDURE VIII-A1: Referral for Transitional Services

01/2011

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Complete the CFS-001: Referral for Transitional Services & Support on all youth entering foster care between the ages of 14 and 18. The CFS-001 will be completed also on youth who turn 14 while in foster care. All youth must be assessed for life skills within 30 days of entering care or within 30 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- B. Forward the completed and signed CFS-001 to the TYS Coordinator. The youth must sign the CFS-001 to be eligible for Chafee-specific services and support.
- C. If the youth chooses to participate, notify the TYS Supervisor and he or she will assign the TYS Coordinator, as appropriate.
- D. Assist the youth in completing a life skills assessment within 30 days of entering care or within 30 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- E. After case plan is completed, initiate a Transitional Team Meeting and document on the Contact Screen and in the Transitional Plan as appropriate.
- F. Ensure that each youth age 14-17 is individually assessed every six months to:
  - 1) Review their Life Plan.
  - 2) Determine what life skills they have attained.
  - 3) Determine what life skills they still need.
- G. Ensure that each youth age 14-17 is assessed annually using the appropriate life skills assessment tool.
- H. Share the reassessment results with the TYS Coordinator and document the reasons for non-completion.
- I. Coordinate logistics for life skills training or other youth development activities with the foster parent or caretaker.
- J. Prepare the youth for Transitional Team meetings.
- K. Enter date into CHRIS in a timely manner.

If the youth makes a planned move (e.g. college) to another county, the supervisor in the primary county should communicate with the supervisor in the placement county before the youth moves.

If the youth makes an unplanned move to another county, the supervisor in the primary county should notify within 10 days, by email, the supervisor in the placement county. The receiving supervisor should then make secondary caseload assignments to the FSW and TYS Coordinator and directly notify them of the assignment. All workload assignments will go through the Coordinator's immediate supervisor and not the individual county supervisors.

If a youth is transferred to another Area/County not designated as primary, the FSW in the residence Area/County should:

- A. Assist in obtaining an assessment/reassessment if the date occurs while the client is in the other county.
- B. Transfer case files and all records of life-skills training sessions attended, skills acquired or mastered, and copies of assessment results to the FSW and TYS Coordinator in the secondary county to ensure that training needs and goals will continue to be addressed.
- C. Assist youth in completing the NYTD survey, if applicable.

The TYS Coordinator will:

- A. Update the Contact Screen in CHRIS each time contact is made with a youth. Contacts include group training sessions, face-to-face contact, phone contact, the youth's attendance in life-skills training, transitional team meetings, or ETV consultation. Indicate the title or content and information concerning the youth's participation.
- B. Complete Education and Employment Screens when appropriate.
- C. Develop life skills training resources.

- D. Complete the CFS-035: TYS Coordinator Monthly Summary.
- E. Submit the CFS-035 to the TYS Supervisor and the TYS Program Manager by the sixth day of the month.
- F. Coordinate and support transitional activities with the FSW when appropriate.
- G. Document the completion of the initial life skills assessment and any reassessments on the IL Checklist Screen and that the results were routed to the youth, FSW, and foster parents/provider in the Document Tracking screen.
- H. Document all transitional activities and services on the Client Contact Information Screen.

## **PROCEDURE VIII-A2: Youth Transitional Plan & Life Plan**

01/2011

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Develop a Transitional Plan with all youth in foster care between the ages of 14 and 21, and for all youth who turn 14 while in foster care, within 90 days of entering care or within 90 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- B. Assist the youth in developing a Transitional Team to include individuals identified by the youth as significant (e.g. foster parents, bio family, AAL, CASA, mentors, therapists, TYS Coordinator, teachers, coaches).
- C. Review the Transitional Plan every six months to ensure consistency with education plan, case plan, and life plan and coordinate with the youth's school at least annually, until the youth exits foster care or secondary school.
- D. Determine, based on the youth's age, maturity, disabilities, and other factors, what shall be appropriate to include in the Transitional Plan.
- E. Determine at which point in the youth's development to include the following components: (All components must be present by the time the youth is 17 years old.)
  - 1) Education component
  - 2) Employment component
  - 3) Health component to include information on:
    - a. options for health insurance
    - b. documentation of a health care power of attorney or health care proxy if the youth chooses to designate one
  - 4) Housing component
  - 5) Lifelong Connections component
  - 6) Written confirmation that the youth has been informed of his right to stay in foster care after reaching 18 years of age for education, treatment, work, or other specific programs and services, including but not be limited to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and other transitional services
  - 7) The youth's court case record, including information on:
    - a. his or her biological family
    - b. foster care placement history
    - c. tribal information, if applicable
    - d. whereabouts of siblings, if any, unless a court determines that release of information pertaining to siblings would jeopardize the safety or welfare of the sibling
  - 8) List of significant individuals in the youth's life
  - 9) Assistance in obtaining a free credit report and if the youth has a bad credit report because of identity theft, assistance in correcting the credit report
- F. Assist the youth or arrange for assistance in:
  - 1) Procuring life skills training.
  - 2) Completing applications for:
    - a. ARKids First, Medicaid, or assistance in obtaining other health insurance.
    - b. Referrals to transitional housing, if available, or assistance in securing other housing.

- c. Assistance in obtaining employment or other financial support.
- 3) Applying for admission to a college or university, or to a vocational training program, or another educational institution and in obtaining financial aid, when appropriate.
- 4) Developing and maintaining relationships with individuals who are important to the youth and who may serve as a resource to the youth based on his or her best interests.
- G. Discuss with the youth the importance of designating someone to make health care decisions on their behalf when they exit from foster care, if they become unable, or if they do not have or do not want, an otherwise authorized relative to do so.
- H. Assist the youth in contacting the individual(s) who they would like to serve as their health care power of attorney or health care proxy and completing documentation authorizing a health care power of attorney or health care proxy. (DHS serves as the youth's health care power of attorney or health care proxy until the youth exits foster care.)
- I. With court permission and if the youth desires, facilitate visits between the youth and his relatives.
- J. Assist all youth in or entering foster care at age 14 or above or in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, whichever comes first, within 90 days after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday or 90 days after entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, in developing a Life Plan (CFS-002: Life Plan and Agreement for Youth in Transition).
  - 1) The Life Plan shall be youth-driven.
  - 2) The Life Plan shall contain a concrete to-do list for youth, staff, and stakeholders.
  - 3) The Life Plan should be adopted by the Transitional Team within six months of the youth's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday or entry into foster care, whichever comes first.
- K. Hold a final Transitional Team meeting within 90 days of youth's planned exit from foster care.
- L. Invite the youth's TYS Coordinator to the Transitional Team Meeting to discuss Chafee After Care support and ETV.
- M. At the final Transitional Team meeting, complete CFS-003: Checklist for Youth Exiting Care and provide the youth with the following and obtain his signature and that of his attorney ad litem confirming receipt:
  - 1) Social security card.
  - 2) Certified birth certificate or verification of birth record, if available or should have been available.
  - 3) Family photos in the possession of the Division.
  - 4) All the youth's health records for the time the youth was in foster care and any other medical records that were available or should have been available to the Division. A youth who chooses to remain in foster care after reaching age 18 may request that his or her health records remain private.
  - 5) All of the youth's educational records for the time the youth was in foster care and any other educational records that were available or should have been available to the Division.
  - 6) Driver's license and other picture identification.
  - 7) Transitional Resources Book and Life Book, if applicable.
  - 8) Life Plan.
  - 9) If the youth elected not to designate a health care power of attorney or health care proxy before aging out of care (whether at 18 or 21), contact information for legal services if at a later point the youth decides to designate someone to make health care decisions on his or her behalf, if he or she becomes unable to participate in such decisions and does not have, or does not want, a relative who would otherwise be authorized to make such decisions.
  - 10) All information contained within the youth's case plan (current or former, as requested).
  - 11) A list of all the youth's former placements.
- N. Document a current address and contact information for youth who reside outside the foster home in order to study, work, or for any other reason. This information must be kept current.
- O. Within 72 hours of case closure, notify the Eligibility Unit of the case closing and provide the Trust Coordinator with any information requested.

The Eligibility Unit Trust Coordinator will, within 30 days after the youth leaves foster care, provide the youth with the following information:

- A. A full accounting of all funds held by the department to which he or she is entitled;
- B. How to access the funds;
- C. When the funds will be available.

## **PROCEDURE VIII-A3: Interagency Support for Youth with Disabilities**

01/2011

In order to promote continuity of care for youth with disabilities, Adult Protective Services (APS), DCFS, Division of Youth Services (DYS), Division of Developmental Disability Services (DDS), and Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that describes each Division's roles and responsibilities.

DCFS will:

- A. Arrange an interagency case staffing and initiation of transition plan following youth's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- B. Arrange an interagency case staffing within 30 days to include PACE determination and DD diagnosis identified for individuals taken into custody after age 14.
- C. Arrange an interagency review every six months for youth likely to require state custody status as an adult.

APS will:

- A. Review plan and identify issues requiring clarification or issues that might have been omitted and request this information from DCFS.
- B. Participate in case staffing and transition plan review following client's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

APS, DCFS, DYS, and OCC will apprise court of transition plan.

APS and DDS will review transition plan and arrange appropriate placement prior to client's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## **POLICY VIII-B: EXTENDED FOSTER CARE**

01/2011

Youth may choose to remain in foster care past the age of 18 for education, treatment, work, or other programs and services as determined appropriate by their Transitional Team. Board payments for IV-E eligible youth will be made through title IV-E funds. Board payments for youth who are not IV-E eligible will be paid using State General Revenue funds.

In order to be eligible for extended foster care, youth must meet one of the following criteria:

- A. Youth must have been in foster care at or before age 17, OR
- B. Youth must have entered care at age 17 or after due to dependency-neglect, OR
- C. Youth must have entered foster care at age 17 or after with a prior dependency-neglect status.

A copy of the youth's entire record will be made available to him or her at no cost at the final Transitional Team meeting which will occur within 90 days of youth's planned exit from care.

### **PROCEDURE VIII-B1: Extended Foster Care**

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Consider the following issues with the youth:
  - 1) The school the youth will attend
  - 2) Living arrangements
  - 3) Choosing a sponsor
  - 4) Budgeted income/expenses
  - 5) Amount of board payment
  - 6) Start-up items
  - 7) Transportation needs
  - 8) Continued life-skills training
  - 9) Support needed to help youth remain in school
  - 10) Designating a health care power of attorney or health care proxy (if not already determined before entering extended foster care).
- B. Assist the youth in locating and choosing a sponsor who may be the youth's out-of-home provider, attorney ad litem, apartment manager/owner, or a volunteer from the community.
- C. Approve the sponsor chosen by the youth.
- D. Notify the TYS Coordinator of the youth's sponsor.
- E. Assist the youth and his or her Transitional Team in determining appropriate housing and needed support for the first school year. (If youth intends to reside with sponsor, he or she must be an approved placement.)
- F. Complete CFS-370: Residence Checklist for Youth.
- G. Notify Resource Worker to initiate the youth's monthly board payments when residence is selected.
- H. Develop a budget with the youth and share it with the Transitional Team.
- I. Visit the youth face-to-face at least once a month.
- J. Obtain approval for less than twice-monthly visits from the County Supervisor, if appropriate.
- K. Maintain monthly contacts with the youth's sponsor. Contacts may be by telephone.

The youth's sponsor will, as appropriate:

- A. Attend and participate in Team Meetings.
- B. Assist the youth in selecting the independent living residence.
- C. Assist the youth with managing their budget if selected as board payment payee.
- D. Maintain regular contact with the youth.

## **POLICY VIII-C: AFTER CARE SERVICES & SUPPORT**

01/2011

Chafee funds can be used to provide assistance and services to youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age and who have not attained 21 years of age. These services are called After Care. The youth must have been in foster care on his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and not currently in DHS custody to be eligible for after care services and support.

In order to be eligible for after care, youth must meet one of the following criteria:

1. Youth must have been in foster care at or before age 17, OR
2. Youth must have entered care at age 17 or after due to dependency-neglect, OR
3. Youth must have entered foster care at age 17 or after with a prior dependency-neglect status.

Additionally, a youth must have a budget and a plan that includes participation in education, employment, training, or treatment in order to be eligible for after care.

After care support is generally limited to \$500 in any one month and may be requested for a total of \$2000. After care support may include expenditures for education or training programs, housing, insurance, housing set-up, transportation, utility bills, or utility deposits. After care support is paid to the provider, not the youth. Reimbursement may be made to the youth if documentation of the expense is provided. After care support does not include amounts available through ETV. Youth eligible for after care may also participate in life skills classes.

### **PROCEDURE VIII-C1: After Care & Follow Up**

The TYS Coordinator will:

- A. Work with the youth requesting after care support. Request will be made via CFS-004: Request for After Care Support.
- B. Reopen the youth's closed child protective service case and assign the TYS Coordinator as the primary worker.
- C. Select Independent Living Program as the case type on the Case Summary Screen.
- D. Complete the Contact Screen for all contacts with youth, and update as appropriate.
- E. Complete Education and Employment screens and update as appropriate.
- F. Update Client Contact Information as appropriate.
- G. Document in the Client Contact Information Screen, the type and extent of financial assistance to be provided.
- H. Assist the youth in selecting a residence that is appropriate for his or her immediate needs, if needed.
- I. Complete a CFS-370: Residence Checklist for Youth to assure the residence and location are acceptable and document in the Document Tracking screen in CHRIS.
- J. Provide the youth with available alternatives for meeting their immediate housing needs, if appropriate.
- K. Recommend and assist in arranging for personal or community support as requested.
- L. Assist the youth in applying for assistance if he or she wishes to start or continue a post-secondary educational program.
- M. Document purchase requests in the Document Tracking screen, and if approved, document in Client Contact Information Screen. Payment is not made directly to the youth, except for approved travel reimbursement.
- N. Forward after care support requests to Financial Support Unit at least two weeks before payment is due.
- O. Maintain monthly contact with the youth.