



## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

### CHILD WELFARE POLICY

#### Chapter 11: Older Youth Services

##### Section 01: Older Youth Services (OYS)

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2025

**Version:** 9

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#### POLICY OVERVIEW

Older Youth Services (OYS) are available to eligible Child in Need of Services (CHINS) and Juvenile Delinquent/Juvenile Status (JD/JS) youth to assist the youth in preparing to successfully transition to adulthood.

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#### PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make OYS available to eligible CHINS and JD/JS youth in eligible foster care placements beginning at age 16. Referrals may be completed for former foster youth at age 18, up to the day before the youth's 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday (see policy 11.07 Voluntary Older Youth Services and review the Older Youth Services [OYS] Timeline).

Upon case closure, a former CHINS or JD/JS youth, who is between the ages of 18 up to the day before the youth's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and has transitioned out of an eligible foster care placement, may agree to enter into Indiana's extended foster care program, Older Youth Case Management. See policy 11.18 Eligibility to Participate in Collaborative Care for additional information.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) or Older Youth Case Manager (OYCM) will:

1. Complete and submit a referral for OYS for CHINS youth and ensure a referral has been completed and submitted for JD/JS youth, who are placed in DCS licensed foster care homes (non-Licensed Child Placing Agencies [LCPA]), relative homes, non-licensed court approved placements, or in a Older Youth Case Management placement. Referrals for OYS may be made beginning at age 16;

**Note:** For CHINS youth, the Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood should be developed starting at 14 years of age, and the Transition Plan should be developed for JD/JS youth beginning at age 14. The youth and the youth's child representatives should participate in the development of this plan (see policy 11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood).

2. Complete and submit a referral for OYS for youth placed in group homes or LCRA foster homes or for youth who are receiving treatment at residential facilities at 17.5 years of age;

**Note:** OYS will be provided for the youth by the placement agency beginning at age 16.

3. Confirm that all youth 14 years of age and over who are in out-of-home placement receive yearly credit reports from all three (3) major Credit Reporting Agencies (CRAs) until the youth is discharged, and collaborate with the Older Youth Case Management Administrative Assistant to assist in resolving any inaccuracies (see Practice Guidance on Credit Reports);

**Note:** DCS will utilize the electronic batch report process. Reports will be processed monthly. This will capture all youth during their birthday month and the month of the youths' initial removal.

4. Provide information about opening an Individual Development Account (IDA) to youth who have obtained over \$400 in earned income (see Practice Guidance for additional information); and
5. Ensure an annual copy of the life skills assessment and progress reports are obtained from the OYS provider or placement provider, placed in the youth's case file, and entered in the case management system on all eligible CHINS and JD/JS youth 16 to 21 years of age who are receiving OYS through residential facilities, group homes, LCPA foster homes, and OYS providers.

**Note:** Review the Older Youth Services (OYS) Timeline for additional information. For youth entering Older Youth Case Management, refer to policy 11.19 Entry into Collaborative Care (CC) for Previously Discharged Older Youth.

For youth entering Voluntary OYS, the OYCM or Independent Living Specialist will:

1. Ensure eligibility is determined for all former CHINS Older Youth Case Management, or JD/JS youth requesting Voluntary OYS; and
2. Create a Voluntary OYS referral for the appropriate OYS provider in a timely manner.

**Note:** See Practice Guidance for additional information regarding Voluntary OYS. For specific responsibilities for Voluntary OYS, see policy 11.07 Voluntary Older Youth Services.

Refer to the Older Youth Initiatives webpage for information about the differences between OYS, Older Youth Case Management, and Voluntary OYS.

The FCM Supervisor or OYCM Supervisor will:

1. Ensure all applicable Older Youth Case Management and service requirements have been followed based on the Older Youth Services Timeline;
2. Ensure all appropriate referrals for OYS are submitted and assist the FCM or OYCM in completing the referrals, as needed;
3. Assist the FCM or OYCM in reviewing credit reports from the three (3) CRAs, as needed; and
4. Guide and assist the FCM or OYCM through regular case staffing.

#### Checking or Savings Account

If a qualified foster youth requests to open a checking or savings account, DCS will complete the Foster Youth Acknowledgement Statement (SF 57827). See Practice Guidance for more information.

## Disputes or Inaccuracies on Credit Reports

To dispute inaccurate information in the credit report, the Older Youth Case Management Administrative Assistant will:

1. Send the following to the CRAs:
  - a. A form letter. Upload the form letter in the case management system and send the letter to the FCM and FCM Supervisor by email,
  - b. A copy of the court order showing wardship and documentation for the agency to act in the capacity of the court order, and
  - c. Proof that the youth is a minor (i.e., copy of birth certificate), if applicable. Include the youth's identification information, such as full name, current address, social security number, date of birth, and addresses where the youth has lived within the past two (2) years;

**Note:** Put unknown if unable to determine the youth's addresses for the past two (2) years.

2. Indicate what accounts do not belong to the youth or contain inaccurate information, and indicate the youth is a minor child; and
3. Follow-up with the DCS legal if the CRA is unwilling to address issues or inaccuracies.

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## **RELEVANT INFORMATION**

### **Definitions**

#### Case Staffing

Case staffing is a systematic and frequent review of all case information with safety and risk, stability, permanency, and well-being as driving forces for case activities.

#### Credit Reports

A credit report is a record of a person's credit activities. It lists any credit card accounts or loans the person has, the balances, and how regularly payments are made, as well as, identifying information.

#### Foster Care

Foster care is 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parent, guardian, or custodian and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility.

#### Older Youth Services

The purpose of OYS is to:

1. Assist identified youth who are expected to remain in foster care until their 18th birthday or after in making the transition to self-sufficiency;
2. Help identified youth receive the necessary education, training, and services to overcome potential barriers to employment;
3. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary education and/or training programs;
4. Provide personal and emotional support for youth aging out of foster care;
5. Assist youth in locating and identifying community resources that will be available to the youth after DCS involvement has ended; and
6. Encourage positive personal growth in older youth through "teachable moments".

## Forms and Tools

- [Annual Credit Report website](#)
- [Annual Credit Report Request Form](#)
- [Equifax Member Center](#)
- [Experian Disputes](#)
- [Foster Youth Acknowledgment Statement \(SF 57827\)](#)
- [Individual Development Accounts \(IDA\)](#)
- [Older Youth Initiatives](#)
- [Older Youth Services \(OYS\) Timeline](#)
- [Transition Plan \(TP072117JDJS\)](#)
- [Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood \(SF 55166\)](#)
- [TransUnion Disputes](#)
- [Voluntary Older Youth Services Summary](#)

## Related Policies

- [11.02 Eligibility for Older Youth Services \(OYS\)](#)
- [11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood](#)
- [11.07 Voluntary Older Youth Services](#)
- [11.08 John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood \(the Chafee Program\) Room and Board Services](#)
- [11.10 Education and Training Voucher \(ETV\) Program](#)
- [11.18 Eligibility to Participate in Collaborative Care \(CC\)](#)
- [11.19 Entry into Collaborative Care \(CC\) for Previously Discharged Older Youth](#)

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## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [42 USC 677: John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood](#)
- [465 IAC 2-15.1: Collaborative Care](#)
- [IC 31-28-5.8: Chapter 5.8. Collaborative Care](#)

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## PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 11.01

*Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.*

### **Checking or Savings Account**

A foster youth at least 16 years of age may open a checking or savings account with a depository financial institution (i.e., commercial bank, credit union, or savings and loan association) in the foster youth's name with the consent of a juvenile court. A foster youth who opens a checking or savings account is:

1. Solely responsible for paying all bank-related costs associated with the account; and
2. Solely liable for any and all penalties assessed to the foster youth as the account holder due to any violations of the terms of the account.

### **Child Representatives**

Beginning at 14 years of age, youth may select up to two (2) child representatives. The child representatives must be at least 18 years of age, members of the Child and Family Team (CFT) and may not be a foster parent or Family Case Manager (FCM). The youth may select one (1) of the child representatives to also be the child's adviser, and if necessary, advocate for age-appropriate activities. Child representatives are subject to the approval of the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS), and they may be rejected if there is cause to believe they would not act in the best interest of the child.

### **Credit Reports**

Most children and youth do not have credit reports. If a credit report does exist for a person younger than 18 years of age, it may be due to error, fraud, or identity theft. To protect the identity and future credit worthiness of the youth, there is a need to take action and correct the information.

The three (3) main CRAs are: Experian, Equifax, and TransUnion. Each year, the OYS service provider caseworker must assist older youth 18 to 21 years of age in obtaining their credit report through the Annual Credit Report website. The youth will receive assistance in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the credit report from Indiana's OYS service providers.

Voluntary youth 18 to 23 years of age who are discharged from care will be advised to apply for their credit report from each of the three (3) CRAs each year until the youth is no longer actively participating in voluntary services. The youth will receive assistance in obtaining, interpreting, and resolving any inaccuracies in the report.

### **Contact Information for CRAs**

1. Experian:  
By Mail: Experian National Consumer Assistance Center  
P.O. Box 4500  
Allen, Texas 75013  
Online: Experian Disputes  
By Phone: Phone number provided on credit report or (888) 397-3742
2. Equifax:  
By Mail: Equifax Credit Information Services, Inc.

P.O. Box 740256  
Atlanta, GA 30348  
Online: Equifax Member Center  
By Phone: Phone number provided on credit report or (866) 349-5191

3. TransUnion:  
By Mail: TransUnion LLC, Consumer Dispute Center  
P.O. Box 2000  
Chester, PA 19016  
Online: TransUnion Disputes  
By Phone: Phone number provided on credit report or (800) 916-8800

#### **Individual Development Accounts (IDA)**

There are a limited number of IDAs available in Indiana. To open an IDA, individuals must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Be an Indiana resident;
2. Have an income below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
3. Have at least \$400 per year in earned income;
4. Be able to save a minimum of \$35 per month; and
5. Meet minimum screening requirements.

Youth interested in opening an IDA should visit the Individual Development Accounts webpage, or call 1-317-232-7777 for county specific information.

#### **Life Skills Assessment**

All youth referred for services between the ages of 16 and 23 years of age must complete the life skills assessment. The life skills assessment will be completed with by the Older Youth Services (OYS) provider or placement provider with the youth beginning at age 16. The life skills assessment tool has been approved for use by the Older Youth Initiatives (OYI) team.

#### **Voluntary OYS**

All youth aging out of foster care and former youth who are 18 years of age up to 23 years of age are eligible for Voluntary OYS, including Room and Board (R & B) assistance and the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program (see the Voluntary Older Youth Services Summary and policies 11.02 Eligibility for Older Youth Services, 11.07 Voluntary Older Youth Services, 11.08 John H. Chafee Foster Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood [the Chafee Program] Room and Board Services, and 11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program).

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