

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 11: Independent Living	Effective Date: July 1, 2008
	Section 16: Older Youth Foster Care	Version: 1

POLICY [NEW]

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make Older Youth Foster Care (OYFC) available to eligible former foster youth age between the ages of 18 and 21.

DCS has determined that an older youth is eligible for the OYFC program if the youth:

1. Is between 18 and 21 years of age and has not yet reached his or her 21st birthday:
 - a. Is employed and working at least 35 hours per week,
 - b. Is a full time student in a high school or a post high school vocational, educational certification, or degree program,
 - c. Is enrolled for the upcoming semester as a full time student in a high school or a post high school vocational, educational certification, or degree program, or
 - d. Intends to enroll within six (6) months of their 18th birthday, in a high school or a post high school vocational, education certification, or degree program.
2. Was in foster care through an Indiana court order the month prior to their 18th birthday;
3. Lives or resides in Indiana;
4. Is not married;
5. Is not a member of any of the armed forces of the United States;
6. Does not have any criminal charges pending;
7. Has never pled guilty or been convicted of any crimes related to the health and safety of children;
8. Has successfully completed a DCS background check;
9. Has successfully completed a DCS substance abuse assessment, the results of which indicate no need for services or treatment;
10. Has successfully completed a DCS mental health assessment, the results of which indicate no need for mental health or developmentally delayed services or treatment;
11. Has not previously participated in the OYFC program; and
12. If enrolled as a full time student, is making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of a vocational or educational certification or degree program as determined by their Independent Living (IL) provider.

Exclusions:

Youth participating in any of the following programs are not eligible for the OYFC program:

1. Chafee Room and Board Services (See separate policy, [11.8 Chafee Room and Board Services](#));
2. Voluntary IL Services (See separate policy, [11.7 Voluntary Chafee Independent Living Services](#)); or

Note: Youth who withdrawal from Voluntary IL Services may apply for the OYFC program.

3. Receiving housing funds through the Education and Training Voucher Program (See separate policy, [11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program](#)).

The youth's participation in OYFC program may be terminated by DCS without further court involvement if the youth does not follow all guidelines and rules of the OYFC program.

Code References

[IC 31-28-5.7: Older Youth Foster Care](#)

PROCEDURE

All youth interested in participating in the OYFC program will:

1. Contact the DCS local office to request [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#);

Note: Applications may be submitted any time after the youth turns 17 years and six (6) months of age.

2. Complete and return [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#) to DCS local office in the county where they currently reside; and
3. Participate in all eligibility assessment activities.

DCS local office designee will:

1. Date stamp [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#) immediately upon receipt; and
2. Refer application to Family Case Manager (FCM) Supervisor or designee for review.

FCM Supervisor will:

1. Review the [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#) and the youth's DCS file to determine potential eligibility. If youth appears eligible for OYFC program, continue with the following steps;

Note: If youth appears ineligible for program, notify the youth by phone and send a formal denial letter by mail.

2. Make an appointment for the youth to be fingerprinted. Provide youth with directions on how and where to go to be fingerprinted for a DCS background check;
3. Make referral or appointment for the youth to complete a substance abuse, mental health, and developmental delay assessment. These assessments must be completed not later than **30 days** after receiving the initial OYFC application;
4. Schedule a meeting with the youth for an eligibility assessment;
5. Notify DCS Local Office Attorney of youth's application so Verified Joint Petition for Entry into Older Youth Foster Care Program can be drafted;
6. Complete Eligibility Assessment within **15 days** of receipt of the application;
7. Submit the [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#) results of the background check, substance abuse, mental health, and developmental delay assessments; and results of the eligibility assessment to the DCS Local Office Director for approval or denial;
8. Send [Letter of Approval of OYFC Application](#) or [Letter of Denial of OYFC Application](#) , based on decision of DCS Local Office Director and DCS Permanency Manager, within

30 days of completing the eligibility assessment or **15 days** of receiving all background and assessment results, whichever is later;

9. If application is approved, send completed application to DCS Local Office Attorney;
10. Obtain and have the applicant sign a Verified Joint Petition for Entry into Older Youth Foster Care Program form from the DCS Local Office Attorney;

Note: This form and the proposed Order for Entry into Older Youth Foster Care Program shall be filled within **45 days** of the date the eligibility assessment was completed.

11. Attend any hearings scheduled by the court regarding the petition;
12. Attempt to locate an appropriate resource family for the youth, while petition is pending;
13. Arrange youth's transition into the resource home after court approval; and
14. Assign youth to IL provider for implementation and monitoring of older youth's participation in OYFC program.

DCS Local Office Director will:

1. Review all [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#) background checks; substance abuse, mental health, and developmental delay assessments, and results of eligibility assessments and determine program acceptance or denial; and
2. Submit [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#) to Permanency Manager, in DCS Central Office, for final authorization.

Procedure for Termination from OYFC Program

1. FCM Supervisor will notify DCS Local Office Attorney of termination and send [Notice of Termination from Older Youth Foster Care Program](#) to youth;
2. DCS Local Office Attorney will file Notice of Termination from OYFC; and
3. FCM Supervisor will meet with youth to review and revise their Transitional Services Plan and assure that the youth is aware of other services available to them (e.g. Voluntary IL Services).

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#)
2. [Letter of Approval of OYFC Application \(OYFC110801LTRA\)](#)
3. [Letter of Denial of OYFC Application \(OYFC110801LTR\)](#)
4. [Notice of Termination from Older Youth Foster Care Program \(OYFC110801LTRN\)](#)
5. [OYFC Monthly Report](#) – Not Yet Available

RELATED INFORMATION

Eligibility Assessment

The purpose of an eligibility assessment is to ensure that all participants in the OYFC Program achieve the greatest success possible. The eligibility assessment must be completed not later

than 15 days after the date the initial [Older Youth Foster Care Program Application](#) was received by the DCS local office and involves a face-to-face meeting between the applicant and the FCM Supervisor.

The eligibility assessment must include discussion on the following topics:

1. The applicant's DCS file;
2. Completion of or revisions to the applicant's Transitional Services Plan;
3. The applicant's current living situation and proposed living situation during the application process;
4. The applicant's awareness of and eligibility for Voluntary IL Services;
5. The applicant's need to complete a DCS background check;
6. The applicant's need to complete a substance abuse assessment, mental health assessment, and developmental delay assessment;
7. Request for the applicant's signature on the Verified Joint Petition for Entry into OYFC Program;
8. Review of the OYFC program rules and OYFC program termination provisions; and
9. Discussion and assurance that the applicant has appropriate services during the application and approval process (e.g. food, shelter, etc.).

Denial of an Application

If an older youth's OYFC application is denied, the FCM Supervisor shall meet with the youth to review and revise the Transitional Services Plan. The FCM Supervisor should also assure that the older youth is aware of other services available to them.

Youth denied admission to OYFC program as a result of a substance abuse evaluation, mental health assessment or developmental delay assessment determining that they require in-patient treatment or extensive outpatient services; shall be encouraged to apply for services through the appropriate Family and Social Services Agency (FSSA) division (Division of Mental Health and Addiction, Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services, etc.). Youth may reapply for admission to the OYFC program upon completion of recommended treatment or services. Youth reapplying for entrance into OYFC must submit verification that recommended treatment and services have been completed.

Youth denied because of unemployment or a previous criminal offense, shall be referred to Indiana Work One, through Indiana Workforce Development for additional services.

OYFC Program Rules

All OYFC participants must follow all rules of their resource parent. All participants must abide by the following program rules or their participation in OYFC may be terminated by DCS:

1. The youth must continue to meet all OYFC Program eligibility requirements;
2. If employed, the youth must:
 - a. Remain employed on a full time basis (at least 35 hours per week), and
 - b. Provide a signed [OYFC Monthly Report](#) to their IL provider acknowledging their continued full time employment including copies of pay check stubs, on or before the last day of each month.
3. If the youth's eligibility was based upon their enrollment in school or their intent to enroll in school, they must:
 - a. Enroll within the timeframe agreed upon, and
 - b. Remain in good standing in a full time academic program as outlined in the OYFC Program Eligibility Requirements.

4. If the youth is attending school full time, they must:
 - a. Remain in good standing in a full time academic program as outlined in the OYFC Program Eligibility Requirements and maintain a grade point average of “C” or its equivalent as determined by the institution,
 - b. Provide a signed OYFC Monthly Report to their IL provider acknowledging their continued participation in a full time academic program on or before the last day of each month,
 - c. Provide their IL provider with copies of any documentation regarding their participation and progress in an academic program. This includes but is not limited to: acceptance letters, registration confirmation, grades, progress reports, and any disciplinary actions. This information must be submitted by the youth no later than two (2) weeks after its receipt, and
 - d. Maintain the standards of conduct and eligibility criteria of the post-high school vocational, educational certification, or degree program, without any suspension or expulsion.

Termination from OYFC Program

A youth’s participation in OYFC may be terminated by DCS without further court order if:

1. The youth does not follow all of the rules outlined in the Terms of the OYFC Program;
2. The IL provider recommends the youth’s removal from the program for reasonable cause;
3. The youth does not submit his or her [OYFC Monthly Report](#) to the IL provider on or before the seventh day of the following month;

Note: Termination will occur at the end of the month following the due date of the [OYFC Monthly Report](#).

4. The youth no longer meets the OYFC Program Eligibility Requirements;
5. The youth becomes involved in any illegal use of drugs, alcohol, or participates in criminal activity;
6. The youth has graduated from a high school or post-high school vocational, educational certification, or degree program and is not working full time;
7. The youth is not accepted into an accredited post high school vocational, educational certification, or degree program;
8. The youth intended to enroll in school, but has not enrolled within nine (9) months of their 18th birthday;
9. The youth is terminated or withdraws from a high school or post high school’s vocational, educational certification, or degree program; or
10. The youth reaches his or her 21st birthday.