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|  | INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL | |
| | Chapter 11: Independent Living | Effective Date: January 1, 2010 |
| | Section 6: Transition Planning and Services | Version: 4 |

POLICY

[REVISED] The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will assure that a transitional services plan based on the results of the most recent Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) is developed with input from the youth for all youth at age 17 who are expected to turn 18-years old while in foster care or while receiving independent living services. The plan shall be:

1. Developed at the direction of the youth, with assistance of the Family Case Manager (FCM) and any other individuals selected by the youth;
2. As detailed as the youth elects; and
3. Implemented at the time the youth becomes 18 years of age. The plan may include steps to be taken before the youth turns 18. See [Independent Living Transition Planning Toolkit \(SF 52691/CW 2112\)](#) and Related Information for more information.

DCS will assure that all youth in foster care, regardless of their placement, are referred for transition services:

1. At age 17 years and six (6) months if their case will be dismissed at age 18; or
2. Within 6 months of the youth's case dismissal after the age of 18.

DCS will assure that Child in Needs of Services (CHINS) or probation youth aged 17 and older have a determination regarding the ability to be placed in a Transitional Living Placement (TLP).

Code References

1. [42 USC 677: Chafee Foster Care Independence Program](#)
2. [IC 31-25-2-21: Transitional Services Plan](#)
3. [42 USC 675\(5\)\(H\): Transition Plan for Children Aging Out of Foster Care](#)

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Make a determination regarding a TLP for all youth at age 17 with a case plan goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), who are expected to remain in out-of-home care until age 18;
2. Arrange a transition planning case conference for a youth in foster care within 30 days of his or her 17th birthday with the youth to develop a transitional services plan. Invite all parties involved in the youth's case to the conference. A follow-up conference will be scheduled within six (6) months of the transition planning case conference;
3. **[NEW]** Review, revise, and update the youth's transitional services plan during the 90 day period prior to the youth turning 18;

Note: If the youth does not have a transitional services plan in effect 90 days prior to turning 18, the FCM will assure that a plan is developed and ready for implementation.

4. **[NEW]** Assist foster youth in high school in applying for the 21st Century Scholars program, if they have not yet enrolled;
5. **[NEW]** Provide youth with information regarding Pell grants, Chafee Education and Training Voucher grant, federal supplemental grants, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and the State Student Assistance Commission at the transition planning case conference. See separate policy, [11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program](#);

Note: This information may be provided earlier if the youth will be applying to colleges prior to age 17.

6. **[NEW]** Ensure that the youth and caregiver has signed the [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(ACRCPT070901FRM\)](#). Give the child and caregiver a copy and place the original in the child's case file;
7. Make a referral for youth placed in residential facilities, group homes, private agency foster homes, or other similar placements to a Chafee Independent Living (IL) service provider for transition services in the county where the youth has chosen to reside:
 - a. At age 17 years and 6 months if the case will be dismissed at age 18, or
 - b. Within 6 months of the youth's case dismissal after the age of 18.
8. Assure that CHINS and probation youth placed in local foster homes, relative homes, and non-licensed court approved placements and receiving Chafee IL services are receiving transition services following the youth's transition planning case conference; and
9. Assure that eligible youth in foster care as a "ward of another state" are receiving Chafee IL services as requested by the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) sending state and are being prepared with transition services within six (6) months of their case being dismissed at age 18 or older.

The Chafee IL service provider will:

1. Meet with the referred youth at the youth's placement with his or her placement case worker within 14 days of referral. The youth will then complete an ACLSA at that time or review the most recent one completed;
2. Determine the youth's plans regarding housing and employment and assist the youth with budgeting or assist in developing realistic alternate plans if necessary;
3. Meet with the youth at least once a month to share and gather information until the youth's case is dismissed;
4. Assist the youth in locating affordable and safe housing and employment that provides a living wage;
5. Ensure eligibility for any youth referred for room and board assistance;
6. Provide rental deposit, first month's rent, and utility deposits for gas, lights, water, and landline phone if needed for eligible youth;
7. Assist the youth in applying for voluntary services prior to case dismissal;
8. Request start-up items for eligible youth receiving room and board funding using the [Application for Emancipation Goods and Services \(SF 52690/CW 2113\)](#); and
9. Obtain approval for any item not listed on the [Application for Emancipation Goods and Services \(SF 52690/CW 2113\)](#) from the IL Specialist prior to expending funds.

The IL Specialist will:

1. Monitor referrals to ensure that all eligible youth are being referred;
2. Assist DCS local offices when needed in making referrals for eligible youth; and

3. Approve or disapprove requests for items not included on the [Application for Emancipation Goods and Services \(SF 52690/CW 2113\)](#) in a timely manner.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Youth Appropriate for TLP

A TLP may include scattered site apartments or other semi-independent living arrangements.

Youth who may be deemed appropriate for a TLP are those who:

1. Demonstrate progress in IL skills as indicated on their ACLSA;
2. Demonstrate progress in educational and vocational pursuits;
3. Exhibit mental health stability;
4. Demonstrate an ability to maintain stable employment; and
5. Have the approval of all parties (e.g., FCM/Probation Officer, youth's caregiver, therapist, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/ Guardian ad Litem (GAL), Chafee IL service provider, etc.) involved in the youth's case.

A TLP may be arranged through a licensed agency or may be managed by the DCS local office in areas where there is no licensed agency providing TLP services. In the event DCS arranges and manages the TLP placement, appropriate case management must be provided either by DCS or a contracted agency providing Chafee IL services. Payment for the TLP is made through a per-diem for out-of-home care to the licensed agency supervising and monitoring the youth's placement. If the DCS local office arranges the TLP, rent is paid for the youth by the DCS local office as placement.

Transition Planning Toolkit

The [Independent Living Transition Planning Toolkit \(SF 52691/CW 2112\)](#) is to be used at the transition case conference to guide the planning process with the youth. The youth inventory is to be completed and a transitional services plan developed with the youth's participation. The transitional services plan must address the youth's education, employment, housing, health care, development of problem solving skills, and available local, state, and federal financial assistance. Transition team members and the youth are to sign the completed youth inventory and transitional services plan at the completion of the initial plan and the follow-up plan.

Lifebooks

At the transition case conference, each youth should be presented with an Independent Living Lifebook. The Lifebook is a spiral bound book that provides information to assist youth as they become independent. The Lifebook includes pockets to store important documents as well as other personal items the youth may want to keep. The youth's FCM, therapist, resource parent(s), or IL Specialist may assist the youth, if necessary, in locating items for and completing the Lifebook.

The Lifebook may contain, but is not limited to:

1. Photographs of the youth;
2. Photographs of persons and places that were significant in the youth's life prior to placement in foster care;
3. Items related to school and extracurricular activities, (e.g., report cards, certificates, art work, awards, etc.);
4. Important documents the youth may need as he or she exits the foster care system (e.g., birth certificate, Social Security card, medical record, etc.); and

5. Short summaries of significant events that have occurred in the child's life.

Note: Lifebooks are property of the child and should remain with the child through any placement changes.

Transition Services

Transition services are provided to prepare foster youth for living outside the confines of foster care and are provided to youth who are close to aging out of care. This is a period of time for youth to build relationships with new people who will assist them in developing budgets and locating housing that is affordable. Employment assistance is provided during this period to ensure the youth will be capable of maintaining housing that is established. During the six (6) month period when transition services are being provided, IL services as needed by the youth based on the youth's ACLSA are to continue. Once the youth's case is dismissed and the youth accepts voluntary services, IL services will be provided by the Chafee IL service provider as determined by the ACLSA.

Beginning Transition Services

When a referral is received for a youth placed in an institution, group home, or private agency foster home, the Chafee IL service provider should contact the youth's placement contact person and make arrangements to meet the youth and the youth's case manager in the facility. This meeting should be held to gain information from the youth about the type of employment the youth intends to pursue and housing options of interest to the youth. Once this information is gathered, the service provider should obtain employment application forms from the type of employment the youth is interested in and explore housing options in the community.

If possible, it is important to allow the youth to participate in the process by taking the youth to the community to check out housing options. This may also give the youth an incentive to work toward the goal of independence. Permission must be obtained prior to the excursion from the placement facility and the youth's FCM.

Host Home

Youth in foster care, relative care, or non-licensed court approved placements may wish to pursue a Host Home Agreement with their caregiver in order to remain in the home through mutual agreement between the youth and the caregiver. See separate policy, [11.9 Host Home](#).

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Service Referral form – Available in ICWIS](#)
2. [Independent Living Transition Planning Toolkit \(SF 52691/CW 2112\)](#)
3. [Chafee IL Voluntary Services Application and Service Agreement \(SF 52692/ CW 2114\)](#)
4. [Tool 11.B: Host Home Agreement](#)
5. [Tool 11.A: Budget Worksheet](#)
6. [Application for Emancipation Goods and Services \(SF 52690/CW 2113\)](#)
7. [Referral to Medicaid Foster Care Independence Program \(SF 53241/CW 3341\)](#)
8. [Tool: Lifebook – Available in Hard Copy](#)
9. [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(ACRCPT070901FRM\) – Available in ICWIS](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

[NEW] Transitional Services Plan

The transitional services plan is a comprehensive, written plan that is personalized for each youth and includes information relating to the following:

1. Education and training;
2. Employment services and work force supports;
3. Housing, which may include a transitional living placement when appropriate;
4. Health care, including prevention and treatment services and referral information;
5. Health insurance;
6. Local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, including development of lifelong adult relationships and informal continuing supports;
7. Identification and development of daily living and problem-solving skills;
8. Any additional independent living services that are approved by the department and are appropriately tailored to the needs of the youth; and
9. Availability of local, state, and federal resources, including financial assistance, relating to any parts of the plan described above.

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