

**ADDRESSING THE EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE
FROM BIRTH TO AGE 21**



A GUIDE FOR FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD
TENNESSEE COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
FIFTH EDITION



Roger A. Page
Chief Justice
Tennessee Supreme Court

Michelle J. Long
Director
Administrative Office of the Courts

Stacy Lynch, J.D., CIP Director
Carrie Mason, J.D., Ph.D., Court Improvement Attorney
Tennessee Court Improvement Program

For more information about the Court Improvement Program contact Stacy Lynch or Carrie Mason at
the Administrative Office of the Courts,
511 Union Street, Suite 600, Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Phone (615)-741-2687 or 800-448-7970, Fax (615) 253-3423

Manual Print Date: July 2023

ADDRESSING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Ensuring that the educational needs of youth in custody are being met is critical to the youth's future success upon exiting custody. Foster Care Review Boards can improve educational stability by insuring that youth are provided with the necessary resources, structure, consistency in school placements, and supports as they navigate towards independence and becoming productive citizens. A timely and thorough review of the student's educational needs is essential for them to obtain the support they need to be successful in school, as well as reaching post-secondary goals. Early identification of barriers is essential to ensuring the student reaches his/her potential.

This manual is intended to serve as a supplement to the education section of the Foster Care Review Board Forms and as a resource to community stakeholders engaged in the educational success of Tennessee children and youth in the custody of the Department of Children's Services.

Table of Contents

Children Under the Ages of Three	1
School Stability in Foster Care.....	4
Education Considerations for Students with Disabilities.....	11
School Discipline	19
Pre-School Aged Children (Ages 3-5).....	27
School Ages Children (Kindergarten – 12 th Grade).....	31
Special Consideration for High School.....	36
Foster Care Review Board Form for 17 Year Olds.....	55
Extension of Foster Care	68
Undocumented Youth	89
Education Glossary.....	93
Education Supplemental Worksheet	105
Post-Secondary Court/FCRB Attendance Letter	107
Job Corps Information Sheet	109
Military Information Sheet	111
TCAT Information Sheet	112
DCS Policies.....	114

PART 1

CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF THREE (INFANTS AND TODDLERS)

Birth to age three is a critical time in a child's development. Research shows that intervention provided to very young children pays dividends! The earlier that necessary support can be provided, the best chance that a child has for improved outcomes over his or her whole life. This is because the brain's systems are expanding rapidly during this period.¹

Research also tells us that infants and young children in foster care are at high risk for disability. Studies have shown that when children in out of home care are screened for disability, between 23% and 61% will be identified as needing services. Among children not in out of home care, that identification rate is only 10-12%. The increased risk of disability may be due to early neglect, abuse, or prenatal drug or alcohol exposure, all of which occur more frequently in the foster care population.²

Early intervention may prevent or decrease the severity of developmental delays in preschoolers, enhance school readiness, and increase later academic success in school.

Both federal law and state policy require that children under three years who have a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect from Child Protective Services (CPS) are referred for disability assessment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).³ In Tennessee, an allegation of abuse or neglect is substantiated if the allegations are found by CPS to be more likely than not.⁴

In Tennessee, children under three are referred to and screened for disability by Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS).⁵

TEIS is a voluntary education program for families with children from birth to age three with disabilities or developmental delay. Infants and toddlers determined to

¹ Harvard Center for the Developing Child (2011). The Importance of Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and Their Families.

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/whyActEarly.html#:~:text=The%20Importance%20of,MB%2C%20%20Pages%5>

² Stahmer AC, Leslie LK, Hurlburt M, Barth RP, Webb MB, Landsverk J, Zhang J. Developmental and behavioral needs and service use for young children in child welfare. *Pediatrics*. 2005 Oct;116(4):891-900. doi: 10.1542/peds.2004-2135. PMID: 16199698; PMCID: PMC1550707.

³ The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (2003); Tennessee Department of Children Administrative Policies and Procedures: 14.7 (2021).

⁴ Tennessee Department of Children Administrative Policies and Procedures: 14.7 (2021).

⁵ Tennessee Early Intervention System. <https://www.tn.gov/didd/for-consumers/tennessee-early-intervention-system-teis.html> (2022).

have a disability will be eligible for services under an **Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)**.

Questions for your review of an infant or toddler under three years old:

Question 1.1. Is the child meeting appropriate developmental milestones?

- **Please reference your Child Development Chart in your FCRB notebook.**

Additionally, a recommendation can be made for an application to *Early Head Start*,⁶ which provides early continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low income infants and toddlers, their families, and pregnant women. *Early Head Start* is designed to nurture healthy attachments between child and caregiver; emphasize a strength-based, relationship-centered approach to services; and encompass the full range of the family's needs. Head Start and Early Head Start centers can be found on the map feature on the United States Department of Health and Human Services website.⁷

Question 1.2. When was the child referred to TEIS and what was the outcome?

DCS completes the *Tennessee Early Intervention System Referral* form⁸ to make the referral. This form can be requested as part of the documentation packet to the board.

If DCS has not made a referral to TEIS, then recommend DCS make the referral within seven days. If the TEIS referral has not been completed at the time of the next review, you can consider proceeding with a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW to explain why the TEIS referral has not been made.

Question 1.3. If eligible, how are the recommendations from the IFSP helping the child be successful?

Success can be measured when the identified areas of deficit are showing measurable improvement. For example, an infant who has an identified gross motor delay (crawling, walking), that has learned to scoot may be making steady progress towards crawling.

⁶ Tennessee Department of Education (2022). Head Start and Early Head Start. <https://www.tn.gov/education/early-learning/head-start.html>.

⁷ US Department of Health and Human Services. Head Start, ECLKC. <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>.

⁸ TN DCS TEIS Referral Form (2014). <https://files.dcs.tn.gov/intranet/forms/0811.pdf>.

Examples of recommendations to address IFSP's recommendations not being implemented:

1. If the IFSP is not being implemented, determine the reason(s) and consider recommendation that the Family Services Worker (FSW) and the DCS Education Specialist consult with the provider and schedule an administrative review within one month to follow up on recommendations.
2. If TEIS recommended services be provided by another agency, were those services implemented?

If the answer to this question is no, consider an administrative review in one month to follow up on recommendations. If at the administrative review the recommendations have not been implemented, you may consider/ discuss a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW to explain why the recommendations were not implemented.

3. If the child has an IFSP, then six months prior to the child's third (3rd) birthday, a referral should be made to the local school system for special education eligibility. If a referral has not been made to the school system, consider a recommendation for action and an administrative review to follow up on meeting date with the school system. Note that TEIS recently changed their age-based criteria to allow a child identified for services before age three to remain in TIES past their third birthday, preserving continuity of services for children who might benefit. A child who has moved to school aged services cannot go back to TEIS.⁹ A child eligible for services should have access to necessary support during the transition to school aged special education services.

⁹ TN CIP Training and Interview with Amanda Sheaffer, Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Session 6: June 3, 2022, available at <https://www.tncourts.gov/node/8090600>

PART 2

SCHOOL STABILITY IN FOSTER CARE, PRESCHOOL TO GRADE 12

Across the country, students in foster care face high rates of instability at home and school. Studies have shown that high school students in foster care change schools an average of three times before graduation, and each school move is associated with a lower rate of on time high school graduation.¹⁰

In Tennessee, the latest publicly available placement data indicates that one out of every three children in foster care has moved at least three times in their first twelve months in care. About half of Tennessee children in foster care 12 to 24 months experienced three or more placement moves.¹¹ Placement instability often results in school instability, as students move into different school zones. A new school often means disconnected lessons, friendships, adults and activities. Recent research indicates that students lose an average 2.5 percentile points in reading when they move from home to home, while maintaining stable school enrollment. If the student must attend a new school with a placement change, the cumulative achievement loss is 3.7 points.¹²

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law, revising and reauthorizing the federal education law. Under ESSA, state departments of education (like the Tennessee Department of Education) and school districts are required to support school stability for students, preschool through grade 12, when that is in their best interest. Note that Fostering Connections to Success included a requirement that child welfare agencies like DCS support school stability in 2008, but until ESSA was passed, there was no corollary requirement for schools, so school placement was often an afterthought.

Here are some important terms:

- **SCHOOL OF ORIGIN** – This is the school the child was enrolled in prior to the placement change. For children leaving residential facilities with on-site schools, the school of origin is the public school the child attended prior to placement in the residential facility.

SCHOOL OF ZONE – This is the new school the child is zoned for in the new foster home.

¹⁰ Clemons, E.V. and Sheesley, A. (2016.) Every Transition Counts: Educational Stability of Colorado's Students in Foster Care: 2007-08 TO 2013-14. University of Northern Colorado, Fort Collins, CO. https://www.unco.edu/cebs/foster-care-research/pdf/reports/Every_Transition_Counts_V.1_Interactive.pdf

¹¹ US Children's Bureau (2022). 2020 Child Welfare Outcomes by State. <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/methodology>

¹² Clemmons, Klopfenstein, Lalonde and Tis, 2018.

POINT OF CONTACT – Both the school system and DCS have a point of contact staff person whose job it is to be sure that the school stability provisions are being followed and that students have the required support. On the school district side, the point of contact’s minimum responsibilities includes maintaining agreement between the LEA and DCS. Identify students in foster care. Coordinate and document BID Meetings. In conjunction with DCS, arrange transportation. Remove barriers to enrollment. Train all applicable staff on foster care provisions.¹³

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION – This is the determination regarding school placement that is made by the team of individuals close to the child at home and school. Ideally, the student is part of the team making this decision, as is the guardian ad litem.

Under ESSA, students in foster care remain in their school of origin, unless it is determined that this is not in their best interest. If it is not in the student’s best interest to remain in the school of origin, then the student must be immediately enrolled in the new, zoned school - *even if they don’t have the required documentation*.¹⁴

The determination about what is in the student’s best interest should occur in the context of a **Best Interest Determination Meeting**. This is often called the “**BID meeting**.”

- BID meetings must occur when a child enters foster care and each time the child’s placement in foster care changes.
- Meetings can occur in person, via teleconference, or in some cases even via email, although this is not ideal, since electronic communication is likely to limit a robust conversation.
- All BID meetings will include the DCS Educational Specialist (DCS POC) or their designee and the school system Foster Care POC or their designee. School counselors, teachers, coaches, parent(s), child, child advocate, guardian ad litem, foster parent(s), and mental health providers may also be involved in the meeting or be asked to provide their input in advance for team consideration.
- The Tennessee Department of Education advises that local school systems and DCS should support school attendance in the student’s school of origin while awaiting a best interest determination when this is feasible.¹⁵

¹³ TN Department of Education, Foster Care Point of Contact Training.

<https://eplan.tn.gov/documentlibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentKey=1839366&inline=true>

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016). Guidance on the Foster Care Provisions in Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/09/Non-Regulatory-Guidance_06-23-2016.pdf

¹⁵ TN Department of Education, Foster Care Point of Contact Training.

<https://eplan.tn.gov/documentlibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentKey=1839366&inline=true>

In making the determination, the team may consider the following factors:

- Appropriateness of the current educational setting;
- How the length of commute would impact the child, based on the child's developmental stage;
- Special education and English Learner services; whether these services are available in a school other than their school of origin;
- Preference of the student and their parent/ education decision maker;
- Placement of siblings;
- History of school transfers and how they impacted the student.

If the BID team cannot come to an agreement about the student's best interest, then DCS has authority to make the final decision. Transportation costs are not an allowable consideration in a BID.

If the BID Team determines that a student should remain in their school of origin, then transportation arrangements will be made in coordination with the school district, DCS, and the foster parents, if they are willing to assist.

The next page is a copy of the Best Interest Determination Form used in BID meetings:



Tennessee Department of Children's Services
Best Interest Determination

Student Information

School System: _____ School of Origin: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____ Grade: _____

IDEA 504 EL None Primary Contact: Title: _____ Name: _____ Number: _____

Emergency Contact: Title: _____ Name: _____ Number: _____

Foster Parent Name: _____ Cell #: _____ Address: _____

I. Determination: Mark either school of origin or school of zone for each.

Consideration Item	School Of Origin	School of Zone	Evidence/Comments
Preference of Youth/Child			
Preference of Education Decision Maker			
Child's or Youth's attachment to school			
Placement of Siblings			
Educational & social emotional needs			
IDEA or 504 needs & supports			
Existing services (Homeless, EL, PreK, sports, etc.)			
Special Academic Needs (EL, etc.)			
Time in route			
Other			

II. Final Determination

Student will attend: School of Zone School of Origin Undecided: Refer to dispute resolution team:

Explanation for decision: _____ Transportation Needed: Yes No

School: _____ School Address: _____

Pick up Address:: _____ Drop off Address: _____

Signatures

DCS Point of Contact: _____ Date: _____

Check the "Forms" Webpage for the current version and disregard previous versions. This form may not be altered without prior approval.

LEA Point of Contact: _____ Date: _____
Educational Decision Maker: _____ Date: _____
School Principal or Designee: _____ Date: _____
DCS Case Worker: _____ Date: _____
Other (DCS or LEA): _____ Date: _____
Other (DCS or LEA): _____ Date: _____

1. If a student exits foster care during the school year, TDOE indicates that districts should allow them to remain in the school of origin at least through the end of the academic year.
2. A district must ensure that students remain in their school of origin while any dispute is being resolved.
3. Methods of transportation and related costs are **NOT** to be considered when determining the best interest.

As a member of the Foster Care Review Board, is it important to understand the challenges students in foster care face. It is the board's responsibility to carefully consider the barriers that impact their academic progress and long-term educational needs.

Questions for your reviews of related to school stability (Preschool-grade 12)

Question 2.1. Has the child experienced a change of placement since the last review?

A student who has experienced a change in placement will need a BID meeting to discuss school placement. The team should include people that know the child, like the guardian ad litem, teachers, counselors, and DCS staff. It should also include the POCs for the school district and DCS, or their designees.

Question 2.2. If yes, ask if there has been a BID meeting to discuss educational stability. What was the outcome?

If there was a change of placement without the required BID meeting, consider making a recommending that the FSW follow up with the education specialist to discuss next steps and ensure the student has access to necessary support at school. You can schedule an administrative review in one month to follow up on the outcome and discuss activities.

When the Student Changes Schools

Sometimes, school stability is not provided to the student, either due to noncompliance with ESSA or because school stability was not in the student's best interest. In this case, DCS should formally withdraw the student from the current school on the date of the decision to enroll in the new school. To formally withdraw a student, DCS must complete and sign the withdrawal form at the current school which includes notification of the new school of enrollment. Failure to do this may result in unexcused absences. DCS should obtain all educational records, including a current copy of the IEP or 504 Plan, if applicable.

If the child has already been enrolled in a new school, and has attended for several months without a BID meeting, then a new BID meeting will not accomplish anything. Recommending that the FSW alert the education specialist to the issue and addressing the fallout may be the most practical follow up.

In this case, or in the case of a student who has moved to a new school following a compliant BID, the board can recommend that DCS consider the impact of placement change on the student's progress. For example, following up on accurate credit transfer, for mid semester moves, ensuring continuity of classes for credit, and making sure necessary educational documents such as an IEP have arrived at the new school.

If you see a systemic failure to provide BIDs, you might consider making a non-emergency direct referral when they come through your boards to address the systemic challenges to providing BID meetings as required by law.

Question 2.3. If a BID determination provides for school stability, then is transportation being provided effectively to the student?

Transportation to the school of origin can be a challenge for school systems and DCS. Ask about the plan for transportation and whether it is working to support regular school attendance. If transportation is problematic, consider recommending a CFTM to discuss challenges. If a failure to transport is causing attendance issues through no fault of the student, consider making a direct referral to the court, which may be on a non-emergency or an emergency basis, at the discretion of your court facilitator.

PART 3

EDUCATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, PRESCHOOL TO GRADUATION

Students with disabilities may be eligible for services and accommodation at school to support their academic, social and developmental success. The local school system has an obligation to find and identify students with disabilities who require special education beginning at age three and through high school graduation (or the end of the school year the young person turns 22, whichever comes first).¹

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Support for students with disabilities may be provided through an Individualized Education Program (IEP), for students who qualify under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which is our country's federal special education law, or through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which is a federal statute that prohibits disability discrimination in schools which receive federal funds.

Students who receive special education and related services under the IDEA must IEP. The IEP must be individualized, or specific to the student for whom the document is written. The IEP is usually drafted by the student's special education team at school, then reviewed and revised with the IEP team, which includes the student's family and other people that are knowledgeable about the student.

The IEP contains information about the student's strengths and needs related to their disability, and a plan to make academic and functional progress in areas of identified need. Under the IDEA, the IEP must provide a free and appropriate public education which includes access to the least restrictive school environment, specialized instruction as needed, and accommodations to allow access to the school environment or the curriculum. In order to comply with the IDEA, the plan should be "reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances."¹⁶

504 Plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

A student with a disability who does not meet the eligibility criteria for an IEP under the IDEA may still need specific support related to their disability at school. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is another federal law that supports individuals with disabilities in schools and other programs that receive federal funds. Section 504 is

¹⁶ U. S. Supreme Court Case Decision *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1*

a civil rights statute, which means that it prohibits disability discrimination in programs that receive federal dollars.¹⁷

In order to eliminate discrimination at school, a student with a disability may require a 504 plan. This plan will support a student's access to the school environment and services and eliminate or mitigate barriers related to the identified disability. Unlike the IEP, the 504 plan will not contain a plan for specialized instruction, but will provide a plan for the student's access to the same education that their peers without disability enjoy. Usually, access and support are provided through individual accommodations at school. An example of a student accommodation that supports school access might be a school entry ramp or elevator access for a student with a physical impairment. A student with diabetes might require access to water and bathroom breaks, and a student with ADHD might need preferential seating, close to the teacher, in order to maintain focus.

Students with IEPs are covered under both Section 504 and the IDEA.

In the school context, Section 504 prohibits disability discrimination against students with identified disability at school. A student with a disability may have a 504 plan or an IEP, depending on their specific needs, but in either case, they should be free from disability discrimination at school under Section 504. A student with an IEP has an identified disability as well as a plan for access and specific, individualized support at school. Students eligible for an IEP under the IDEA are automatically protected from discrimination under both IDEA and 504. A student with a 504 plan is not entitled to the specific services identified under the IDEA.

IEP and 504 Plans are valid for one (1) year from the date the document is written. If they are not current, the recommendation should be that the FSW contact the DCS Education Specialist to schedule a meeting with the local school system to update the IEP or 504 Plan. At the next review, if the FSW has not referred the case to the DCS Education Specialist, or if the meeting with the local school system has not been scheduled, then proceed with a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the recommendation has not been implemented.

Questions for your review of students with disabilities Preschool- 12th grade

3.1. If the student has an IEP, what is their eligibility category?

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Disability Discrimination. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/disability.html>

In order for a student to be eligible for an IEP in the state of Tennessee, the student must meet specific eligibility criteria under one of the following eligibility categories:

Autism	Intellectual Disability	Speech or Language Impairment
Blindness	Multiple Disabilities	Traumatic Brain Injury
Deafness	Orthopedic Impairment	Visual Impairment
Emotional Disturbance	Other Health Impaired	Intellectually Gifted¹⁸
Hearing Impairment	Specific Learning Disability	Functionally Delayed¹⁹

Question 3.2. If the student has a 504 Plan, what is the student’s qualifying condition?

In order for a student to be eligible for a 504 plan, the student must have a qualifying condition that limits one or more major life activities, like thinking, concentrating, walking, eating, sleeping breathing, and others.

While IDEA eligibility is very specific and defined, Section 504 eligibility is broad and, aside from eye glasses, mitigating treatments like medication or prosthetics should not be considered when determining eligibility. This means, for purposes of 504 eligibility, the 504 team should consider the child’s functioning without the benefit of medication, prosthetics, and other mitigating treatments or tools.¹⁹

Examples of disabilities or diagnoses that commonly lead to 504 eligibility are diabetes, asthma, significant allergies, and ADHD, among many others. Note that a student with or without a 504 plan may also benefit from **an individual health plan**²⁰ to help support access to medical services at school.

¹⁸ Children identified as intellectually gifted are exempted from the discipline procedures at 34 C.F.R. §300.530- 537.

¹⁹ US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. Protecting Students with Disabilities. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html#:~:text=The%20mitigating%20measures%20are%20as,hearing%20devices%3B%20mobility%20devices%3B%20oxygen>

²⁰ Tennessee Department of Education. Chronic Health Conditions. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/csh/Chronic_Health_Conditions_Toolkit.pdf

Also, a student with a disability under 504 may at some point require more support at school than the 504 plan can provide. If a student with a 504 plan meets eligibility for any of the IEP eligibility categories, the student should be evaluated for an IEP.

Question 3.3. How are the accommodations, modifications and support offered under the student’s plan helping the student succeed at school?

For an IEP progress reports are issued periodically. If progress is not being made, the team can consider recommending that the FSW contact the DCS Education Specialist to schedule an IEP meeting to determine the reasons why, and to develop a corrective plan of improvement. If at the next review, the FSW or the DCS Education Specialist has not provided the documentation, proceed with a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the documentation was not provided.

Children who have an IEP may also qualify for additional services if that student requires those services due to their disability, and in order to receive the benefit of their education. Information can be found on the Special Education and Related Services page(s) in the IEP document. A sample IEP is linked in the footnote. The Special Education and Related Services page sample can be found on page 9.²¹

1. Specialized services - Include, but not limited to, speech therapy, occupational or physical therapy, interpreters, medical services (such as a nurse to perform procedures the child needs during the day, for example, catheterization), orientation and mobility services, parent counseling and training to help parents support the implementation of their child's IEP, psychological or counseling services, recreation services, rehabilitation, and social work services.
2. Supplementary aids and services - Assistive technology and/or teacher's aide in classroom that provide additional support for one or more specific students.
3. Special Transportation –If the student requires transportation to and from school in order to receive the benefit of their education, and their disability prevents access to regular school transportation, then the student may qualify for special transportation, as determined by the IEP team. Students with wheelchairs related to a mobility impairment or behavioral issues related to their identified eligibility category may require specialized transportation to get to school and return home. Special transportation arrangements can be made

²¹ Tennessee Department of Education. Sample IEP.
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/forms/ed2998_iep_sample.pdf

by smaller school bus, a school bus aide, or alternative vehicle, like taxi or in the parent's vehicle with a parent transportation reimbursement through the school district.

For a 504 Plan, ask the child and foster parent if they are receiving the accommodations as outlined in the 504 Plan. Also, review the progress report for academic progress.

If progress is not being made, consider recommending that the FSW contact the DCS Education Specialist to schedule a meeting to determine the reasons why the accommodations are not effective, and to develop a plan of improvement. If at the next review, the FSW or the DCS Education Specialist has not provided the documentation, consider a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the documentation was not provided.

Question 3.4. Does the student demonstrate problem behavior at school?

Children in foster care are at increased risk for problem behavior, as early adversity and instability contribute to childhood stress and tax developing social emotional skills.²² For children in foster care with disabilities, behavior and social development are often critical areas for intervention.

Question 3.5. Is behavior addressed on the IEP or 504 Plan?

Every IEP contains the question: "Does the student's behavior impede his/her learning or that of others?" See page 4 in the sample IEP linked in footnote 18. If the answer to that question on the IEP is "Yes", then that behavioral issue must be addressed on the IEP, either through goals and objectives or through positive behavior support.

Although preschool aged children are still learning appropriate behaviors, some children may exhibit behaviors that require formal interventions. Examples may include constant daily temper tantrums; causing physical harm to self or others; destruction of school property; or repeated intentional urination/defecation.

If the IEP indicates that the child's behavior interferes with the student's progress, check to be sure that the issue is being addressed in the IEP. If it isn't addressed, consider recommending that the FSW should refer to the DCS Education

²² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice; Committee on Applying Neurobiological and Socio-Behavioral Sciences from Prenatal Through Early Childhood Development: A Health Equity Approach; Negussie Y, Geller A, DeVoe JE, editors. Washington (DC): [National Academies Press \(US\)](#); 2019 Jul 25.

Specialist to contact the school to set up an IEP meeting to discuss appropriate behavior support, to be determined by the IEP team. At the next review, if the FSW or the DCS Education Specialist has not contacted the school, consider following up with a direct referral to the court, so the court can investigate further and make orders in the child's best interest.

A 504 plan will not necessarily contain a statement regarding behavior, unless behavior is implicated in the child's identified disability. Behavior might relate to symptoms of mental health diagnoses or ADHD underlying 504 eligibility. Section 504 accommodations that support positive behavior might include positive behavior support plan, breaks from the classroom environment, or access to physical activity on a daily basis.

PLEASE SEE THE NEXT SECTION (SECTION 5) IN THIS MANUAL FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION RELATION TO PROBLEM BEHAVIOR AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.

SURROGATE PARENTS:

Under the IDEA, for purposes of special education decision making, a parent is defined as a biological or adoptive parent of a child; a foster parent; a guardian authorized to make educational decisions; an individual acting in the place of a biological parent including a grandparent, stepparent or other relative with whom the child lives; or a surrogate parent.²³

In Tennessee, a foster parent may only act as a parent if "the biological or adoptive parent's authority to make educational decisions on the child's behalf has been terminated and the foster parent has an ongoing relationship with the child for **more than one (1) year in duration** and is willing to make the educational decisions required of parents and has no interest that would conflict with the interest of the child."²⁴ In no event may the DCS FSW serve as parent/ educational decision maker for the child.

If there is no parent, relative with whom the child lives, or foster parent that is able to serve as an educational decision maker, then a surrogate parent must be appointed through the school district or the court for a child in foster care.

A surrogate parent for special education is appointed by the school district or the juvenile court supervising that child's dependency to serve as special educational decision maker. Under federal law and state policy, the person selected as surrogate may not be an employee of the SEA (State Education Agency), the LEA, or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child; the person

²³ US Code of Federal Regulations, Sec. 300.519 Surrogate parents
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/e/300.519>

²⁴ Tennessee Department of Education, Special Education. Surrogate Parent Manual.
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/reports/331994_ed_surrogate_train_man.pdf

may not have personal or professional interest that conflict with the interest of the child; and the person should possess knowledge and skills that ensures adequate representation of the child.

A surrogate parent is usually a volunteer, but may be the guardian ad litem, if appointed through the court. A surrogate parent may refer a student to special education, participate in special education meetings, and pursue conflict resolution strategies defined under the IDEA to ensure a child's access to a free and appropriate public education under the IDEA. The surrogate parent does not have any rights or responsibilities for the child outside of the special education process. Natural parents retain their rights with regard to the education of their children unless those rights are terminated.

Question 3.6. For students with or at risk for special education, who is the educational decision maker? Is the parent/ guardian able to be located?

If the parental rights have been terminated or the parent cannot be located, consider a recommendation that the DCS Educational Specialist determine if the long-term foster parent is eligible to serve as the child's surrogate parent. In the event that the foster parent is not able to serve as the surrogate parent, the Education Specialist should follow up with the school system and the GAL. The foster parent should still be encouraged to be a part of the IEP team. The foster parent can provide valuable input regarding the current educational needs of the child.

In your reviews, you may see this issue come up when a child under review appears to be at risk for disability or referred for special education evaluation, but the school has not been able to complete the evaluate. Under federal and state law, the school system requires parental consent for evaluation. If a parent cannot be located, the team has an obligation to ensure that child does not wait indefinitely for evaluation and necessary services.

At the review, in this scenario, ask: Who is the decision maker? Have they been notified of the proposed evaluation? What was their response? If the parent cannot be located, has the GAL and the school system been notified?

Parents are also able to pursue conflict resolution to address disagreements in special education programming. One important way this comes up for children with problem behavior related to their disability is in disciplinary removals from school, specifically long-term suspension and expulsion. There is a required process in which the school must consider the student's disability prior to a long-term disciplinary removal, called manifestation determination review. The parent/ educational decision maker can pursue an expedited, or fast-track, appeal of the decision made in this process, but the timelines are quick. If there is no decision maker involved, the consequences to the student can be catastrophic. Children who are expelled unfairly or unnecessarily are at risk for many outcomes, including placement changes at home.

At the review, in this scenario, ask: Who is the decision maker? Did they participate in the manifestation determination review? If not, were they invited? If the meeting was held without an education decision maker, because the parent could not be located, consider recommending that the FSW address the issue with the Education Specialist to pursue a surrogate appointment and reconsideration of the manifestation determination, or an emergency referral to the court to pursue surrogate appointment, if there is a qualified individual available who can serve in the capacity of surrogate.

PART 4

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Students in foster care are more likely to experience discipline at school than their peers not in foster care. Research shows that certain youth in care, namely males, minority youth, youth placed apart from their siblings and youth experiencing school instability have the highest risk of school discipline.²⁵ There is mounting evidence that even one out of school suspension raises the risk of future suspensions and justice involvement, especially among Black or Hispanic males.²⁶ Aside from missing academic work, the student in foster care may be cut off from positive school relationships and while facing additional challenges in the foster home. Advocating for alternatives to out of school suspension, like in school suspension, service in school (like cleaning/administrative support) or community, educational programming, contracting, behavior planning or school based mental health may support more positive outcomes for the student at school and home.²⁷

In public preschools, the Tennessee Department of Education provides that young students should have access to behavioral instruction and positive behavior support, although individual programs address discipline differently.²⁸

Tennessee Statute Regarding Suspension

According to Tennessee statute, a school principal or assistant principal of any Tennessee public school is authorized to suspend a student from school, school sponsored activities, and/or the school bus “for good and sufficient reasons.”²⁹

Good and sufficient reasons for suspension include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Willful and persistent violation of the rules of the school or truancy;
- (2) Immoral or disreputable conduct or vulgar or profane language;
- (3) Violence or threatened violence against the person of any personnel attending or assigned to any public school;

²⁵ Kothari B.H., Godlewski B., McBeath B., McGee M., Waid J., Lipscomb S., Bank L.. (2018). A longitudinal analysis of school discipline events among youth in foster care. *Child Youth Serv Rev.* 2018 Oct;93:117-125. doi: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2018.07.017.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8204670/>

²⁶ School Discipline, Safety, and Climate: A Comprehensive Study in New York City,” (2019), L. Ayoub, E. Jensen, T. Sandwick, D. Kralstein, J. Wonsun Hahn, and E. White, Center for Court Innovations.

²⁷ Positive Behavior Intervention and Support World. <https://www.pbisworld.com/tier-2/alternatives-to-suspension/>

²⁸ TN Department of Education (2022). Early Learning, Voluntary Pre-K.

<https://www.tn.gov/education/early-learning/voluntary-pre-k/voluntary-pre-k-frequently-asked-questions.html>

²⁹ TCA 49-6-3401. Suspension of students Expulsion of students.

- (4) Willful or malicious damage to real or personal property of the school, or the property of any person attending or assigned to the school;
- (5) Inciting, advising or counseling of others to engage in any of the acts enumerated in subdivisions (a)(1)-(4);
- (6) Marking, defacing or destroying school property;
- (7) Possession of a pistol, gun or firearm on school property;
- (8) Possession of a knife and other weapons, as defined in § 39-17-1301 on school property;
- (9) Assaulting a principal or teacher with vulgar, obscene or threatening language;
- (10) Unlawful use or possession of barbitol or legend drugs, as defined in § 53-10-101;
- (11) Two (2) or more students initiating a physical attack on an individual student on school property or at a school activity, including travel to and from school;
- (12) Making a threat, including a false report, to use a bomb, dynamite, any other deadly explosive or destructive device, including chemical weapons, on school property or at a school sponsored event;
- (13) Any other conduct prejudicial to good order or discipline in any public school; and
- (14) Off-campus criminal behavior that results in the student being legally charged with a felony and the student's continued presence in school poses a danger to persons or property or disrupts the educational process.

In School Suspension

A principal or an assistant principal may assign a student to an in-school suspension, pursuant to policy adopted by the local board of education. Good and sufficient reasons for in-school suspension include, but are not limited to, behavior that “adversely affects the safety and well-being of other pupils; That disrupts a class or school sponsored activity; or [is] prejudicial to good order and discipline occurring in class, during school-sponsored activities or on the school campus.”

Procedural Due Process

Except in emergency situations, before the suspension, students should be advised of their problem behavior and given an opportunity to explain.

Parental Notice

Within 24 hours of any suspension except for one day in school suspensions, the principal shall notify the parent/guardian/ custodian and the school system’s director or the director’s designee of: (1) the suspension (2) the reason for the suspension; and (3) the conditions for readmission, which may include, at the request of either party, a meeting of the parent or guardian, student and principal.

Suspension of more than 5 days

If the suspension is for more than five (5) days, the principal shall develop and implement a plan for improving the behavior.

Suspension of more than 10 days

- In the event of long-term suspension of more than 10 days, If the principal or assistant principal will provide written or actual notice to the parent or guardian and the student of the right to appeal the decision to suspend for more than ten (10) days.
- All appeals must be filed, orally or in writing, within five (5) days after receipt of the notice and may be filed by the parent or guardian, the student or any person holding a teaching license who is employed by the school system if requested by the student.
- The appeal from this decision shall be to the board of education or to a disciplinary hearing authority appointed by the board. The disciplinary hearing authority, if appointed, shall consist of at least one (1) licensed employee of the LEA, but no more than the number of members of the local board.
- The hearing shall be held no later than ten (10) days after the beginning of the suspension. The local board of education or the disciplinary hearing authority shall give written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the parent or guardian, the student and the school official designated in subdivision (c)(4)(A) who ordered the suspension. Notice shall also be given to the LEA employee referred to in subdivision (c)(4)(B) who requests a hearing on behalf of a suspended student.
- After the hearing, the board of education or the disciplinary hearing authority may affirm the decision of the principal, order removal of the suspension unconditionally or upon such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable, assign the student to an alternative program or night school or suspend the student for a specified period of time.
- If the decision is determined by a disciplinary hearing authority, a written record of the proceedings, including a summary of the facts and the reasons supporting the decision, shall be made by the disciplinary hearing authority. The student, principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal may, within five (5) days of the decision, request review by the board of education; provided, that local school board policy may require an appeal to the director of schools prior to a request for review to the board. Absent a timely appeal, the decision shall be final. The board of education, based upon a review of the record, may grant or deny a request for a board hearing and may affirm or overturn the decision of the hearing authority with or without a hearing before the board; provided, that the board may not impose a more severe penalty than that imposed by the hearing authority without first providing an opportunity for a hearing before the board. If the board conducts a hearing as a result of a request for review by a student, principal, principal-teacher or assistant principal, then, notwithstanding any provision of the open meetings laws compiled in title 8, chapter 44, or other law to the contrary, the hearing shall be closed to the public, unless the student or student's parent or guardian requests in writing within five (5) days after receipt of written notice of the hearing that the hearing be conducted as an open meeting. If the board conducts a hearing as a

result of a request for review by a student, principal, principal-teacher, or assistant principal that is closed to the public, then the board shall not conduct any business, discuss any subject or take a vote on any matter other than the appeal to be heard. Nothing in this subdivision (c)(6) shall act to exclude the department of children's services from the disciplinary hearings when the department is exercising its obligations under § 37-1-140. The action of the board of education shall be final.

(d) In the event the suspension occurs during the last ten (10) days of any term or semester, the pupil may be permitted to take final examinations or submit required work that is necessary to complete the course of instruction for that semester, subject to the action of the principal, or the final action of the board of education upon any appeal from an order of a principal continuing a suspension.

(e) Students under in-school suspension shall be recorded as constituting a part of the public school attendance in the same manner as students who attend regular classes.

(f) Nothing in this title shall require an LEA to enroll a student who is under suspension or expelled in an LEA either in Tennessee or another state. The director of schools for the school system in which the suspended student requests enrollment shall make a recommendation to the local board of education to approve or deny the request. The recommendation shall occur only after investigation of the facts surrounding the suspension from the former school system. If the recommendation is to deny admission and if the local board approves the director of schools' recommendation, the director of schools shall, on behalf of the board of education, notify the commissioner of the decision. Nothing in this subsection (f) shall affect children in state custody or their enrollment in any LEA. Any LEA that accepts enrollment of a student from another LEA may dismiss the student if it is determined subsequent to enrollment that the student had been suspended or expelled by the other LEA.

(g) Notwithstanding this section or any other law to the contrary, a pupil determined to have brought to school or to be in unauthorized possession on school property of a firearm, as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921, shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year, except that the director may modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In addition to the other provisions of this part, a student committing battery upon any teacher, principal, administrator, any other employee of an LEA or school resource officer, or unlawfully possessing any drug including any controlled substance, as defined in §§ 39-17-403 through 39-17-415, or legend drug, as defined by § 53-10-101, shall be expelled for a period of not less than one (1) calendar year, except that the director may modify this expulsion on a case-by-case basis. For purposes of this subsection (g), "expelled" means removed from the pupil's regular school program at the location where the violation occurred or removed from school attendance altogether, as determined by the school official. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the assignment of such students to an

alternative school. Disciplinary policies and procedures for all other student offenses, including terms of suspensions and expulsions, shall be determined by local board of education policy.

Question 4.1. Is the student demonstrating problem behavior leading to disciplinary referral?

Examples of problem behavior that may prompt school discipline:

DISRESPECTING STAFF – When a student is being disobedient or disrespectful to staff (walking out of class, cursing, refusing to follow class rules, sleeping in class) it can have varying outcomes. This may affect the student’s grades due to loss of instruction time. A recommendation should be made for DCS to request a meeting with the school to develop a behavior plan. Additionally, inquiries should be made to determine if similar behaviors are occurring in the home. If the behaviors are occurring at home, a recommendation can be made for a CFTM to discuss therapeutic intervention.

FIGHTING – Fighting can lead to a juvenile court petition for assault or disorderly conduct. This can result in suspension from school, referral to an alternative school, change in adjudication, or change in where the student resides. A recommendation can be made for DCS to request a meeting with the school to discuss the development of a a behavior plan and make referrals to community resources.

REFUSAL TO DO SCHOOLWORK/HOMEWORK – When a student is refusing to do homework and participate in class activities, it is important to determine the reasons for the refusal. The reasons may be academic or non-academic. Academic reasons may include not understanding or bored with the subject matter, poor classroom management, lack of educational supplies, or being registered in the wrong class.

Non-academic reasons may include the student feeling like a social outcast (clothing, appearance, grooming, placement in foster care), social/emotional disruptions (visitation, court appearance, foster care review board, social conflict with the teacher or peers, medical/mental health, and engaging in inappropriate behavior.

SKIPPING – When a student exhibits a pattern of not attending school or an individual class despite having supports in place to get the student to school interventions are needed. A question should be posed to the student to discover the reasons for skipping, for example “What are the reasons you are skipping school/class?”, “What would it take for you to go to class every day?”, “What is going on in your math class?”.

Possible reasons for skipping classes or school may include not understanding or bored with the subject matter, conflict with the teacher, conflict with another student (bullying), poor classroom management, lack of educational supplies, or being registered in the wrong class.

OTHER PROBLEM/ INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR – Inappropriate behavior can range from smoking, drug and alcohol use, bullying, harassment (social media and in person), sexting, theft, vandalism on school property, possession of weapons on school property, and sexual activity at school. A recommendation should be made for DCS to request a meeting with the school to develop a behavior plan and make referrals to community resources. Additionally, a recommendation can be made for DCS to hold a CFTM to discuss whether additional assessments are needed to identify further services.

- If any of the issues are presented to the FCRB, follow-up questions should focus on the underlying reasons for the behavior resulting in disciplinary referrals. Recommendations should be made to remedy or improve the underlying behavior. For example, if the student is sent to the office for fighting, consider the circumstances at school and at home. Is the student new to the school, following a disruption from a previous foster home? Is the student struggling to fit in? Or is the student in the midst of a difficult transition, like termination of parental rights, suspended visitation, sibling placed in another foster home? Recommendations can include entail the FSW speaking with the school counselor, so the school can support the student emotionally. Additionally, recommendations should be made for the FSW to provide services to address these life changes.
- Next, address how the disciplinary infraction is affecting the student's academic standing. The school system may or may not allow the student to make up school work missed during a suspension. The FSW should inquire into the school's policy. If the school's policy does not allow for credit for missed assignments, the FSW should speak with the principal or school counselor to see if an exception can be made if the behavior resulting in the suspension was due to extenuating circumstances, e.g. medication issues, emotional responses to being in foster care such as placement changes, court dates, etc.
- The board can recommend that the student finish all missed assignments even if credit will not be obtained.

Question 4.2. If the student been expelled from school, where are they currently enrolled?

In the event a student is expelled from school and not receiving educational instruction from an accredited educational program, then the board should recommend DCS enroll the student in an accredited education program. Pursuant to § 49-6-3402, Tennessee school districts should have alternative schools available for students grades 7-12,

although students responsible for zero tolerance offenses might not be eligible to attend. Additionally, further problem behavior within the alternative school can lead to dismissal from the alternative school at the discretion of the director of schools for the district.

Other options that DCS may pursue include enrollment in an accredited online private school, or in a school within DCS's LEA network. Consider making a recommendation to follow up on school enrollment that will allow progress toward graduation, and an administrative review within one month for the FSW to provide proof of enrollment. If at the administrative review the FSW does not have proof of enrollment, you can consider proceeding with a direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the child is not enrolled in an educational program that meets his or her needs.

If the behavior is more than an isolated incident or has a detrimental effect on the student's educational progress, then you may consider the following supplemental questions:

Question 4.3. If the student is demonstrating problem behavior at school, how many disciplinary referrals have been made?

If there are five (5) or more referrals, best practice would provide that the FSW should request a meeting with the school/administrator to discuss the development of a Functional Behavior Assessment and a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). Note this is not a Tennessee requirement, but would be in the student's best interest. You can follow up on progress at the next review, or schedule an administrative review sooner.

Question 4.4. Is the student demonstrating problem behavior at in a DCS facility school?

If the student engages in problem behavior in a facility school, consider the following question to help the parties to gain a better understanding of why the disciplinary referrals occurred:

- **What plan of action has been put in place to improve behavior in the classroom?** Recommend that the FSW and/or DCS Education Specialist contact the facility counselor or principal to determine an action plan for success. At the next review, the FSW should provide the board a copy of any documentation of updated infractions and intervention plan.

Question 4.5. Is the student taking medication(s)?

Some medications can have side effects affecting behavior. Please see the FCRB Training Manual, available through the Court Improvement Program and

available online at:

https://www.tncourts.gov/sites/default/files/docs/fcrb_manual_april_2022_edition.pdf and refer to Common Medications for Behavioral Health Conditions starting on page 146. If a student's medication is not being monitored properly, it may cause behavioral issues. **If you think this is an issue, then consult with the health person on the FCRB.** If you are concerned that an adverse effect of medication is creating problems for the youth at school, consider a recommendation to the FSW to address with the youth's treating psychiatrist, or refer to the Regional Health Nurse, if appropriate. You can follow up at an administrative review or the next regularly scheduled review.

PART 5

PRE-SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN (AGES 3-5)

The preschool years are critical to the development of all children. The time between the child's third birthday and kindergarten entry are marked by the development of a number of developmentally appropriate skills in preparation for kindergarten and beyond.³⁰ A developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for all areas of development: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive through an integrated approach.

Infants, toddlers and preschool-aged children that are not eligible for special education may also attend daycare or preschool with the financial support Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) Child Care Certificate Program. Tennessee DCS Policy provides childcare assistance is available in several circumstances:

1. If the foster family requires childcare due to employment,
2. To support sibling placement or parenting teen resource placement,
3. When recommended by a medical or mental health provider to address issues with a child's development,
4. To support success in the trial home visit (THV).³¹

Note that childcare support may be available for older children as well, and for children who have been adopted out of foster care.

Childcare settings

Below is a list of settings where a preschool aged child can receive instruction. The most appropriate settings should be determined based on the needs of the child and the foster family.

HOME SETTING - children who are being cared for in a home where the caregiver is not licensed by the state.

LICENSED HOME DAY CARE - any place or facility operated by a person or entity that provides 3 or more hours per day for at least 5 children, but not more than 7 children who are not related to the primary caregiver and is licensed by the state.

³⁰ Healthy Children (2022). Developmental Milestones: 3 to 4 Year Olds. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/preschool/Pages/Developmental-Milestones-3-to-4-Year-Olds.aspx>

³¹ Tennessee DCS Administrative Policies and Procedures: 31.17

LICENSED CHILDCARE CENTER - a place or facility operated by any person or entity that provides childcare for 3 or more hours per day for at least 13 children who are not related to the primary caregiver.

PRESCHOOL - an educational establishment offering early childhood education to children between the ages of 3-5 prior to kindergarten.

HEAD START - a federally funded educational program promoting school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development.

If a child is not receiving in a licensed daycare or preschool and there are social/developmental concerns indicated, consider recommending that the child be evaluated by a medical or mental health provider for childcare recommendation, in compliance with DCS policy. You can schedule an administrative review in one month. If at the administrative review the child has not been assessed for the suitability of childcare services, you can consider making a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the recommendation was not implemented.

Recent research investigating the outcomes of Tennessee’s Voluntary Pre-K (TNVPK) indicates that preschool helps children get ready for kindergarten entry, especially low-income children, but that most children that don’t go to preschool eventually catch up to their peers that did. Research also indicates that play and social engagement may be the most important part of early childhood education.³² The following chart, excerpted from Tennessee’s Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) Assessment Instrument³³ shows skills commonly developed in childcare settings, preschools and at home to help children prepare for kindergarten:

Personal (with no assistance)	Social	Intellectual
Put on and take off coat	Listen & follow instructions	Hold a book upright and turn the pages, Sit & listen to story, Tell & retell stories
Tie shoes	Cooperate with other children	Count 0 -10, Say ABCs

³² <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fdev0001301>

³³ Tennessee Department of Education (2015). The Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) assessment instrument.

Wash hands	Sit for short periods of time	Know colors, shapes & sizes, Hold scissors & pencils
Snap, button, zip, & buckle	Follow simple two-step directions	Recognize & write first name (uses capital letter for first letter in a name), Recognizes letters within name

Preschool Special Education

Beginning at the age of three, the child’s local school district (also known as the Local Education Agency) is required to provide services to children with disabilities who require special education. Preschool aged children who qualify for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Tennessee criteria are entitled to an Individualized Education Plan.³⁴ A preschool aged child with a disability may receive special education services in a full day district preschool, or may just come into the school district setting to receive the required services, and then return home or to daycare. How special education services are delivered depends on the child’s individualized needs as determined by the IEP Team.

Questions for your reviews of preschool aged children (ages 3-5).

Question 5.1. Will the child be entering kindergarten soon?

The transition to kindergarten is a major milestone for a child. Currently, the cut-off date to enroll in kindergarten is August 15th. This means any child who has turned five on or before August 15th of the current school year is eligible to attend a free, public kindergarten. However, school attendance is not mandatory until the beginning of the school year after the child’s 6th birthday.³⁵ Therefore, a parent or legal custodian may decide to delay kindergarten for their eligible five-year-old child, until that child is ready to start kindergarten or until the beginning of the next school year following that child’s 6th birthday, whichever comes first.³⁶ Note that the school system may not decide to delay kindergarten to improve readiness, only the legal parents.

Question 5.2. If the child will be entering kindergarten in August ahead of your next review, inquire about the child’s preparation for kindergarten. What developmental skills does the child possess and what is that child working on?

³⁴ Tennessee Department of Education (2022). Early Childhood Special Education. <https://www.tn.gov/education/student-support/special-education/special-education-section-619.html>

³⁵ TN Code § 49-6-3001 (2021)

³⁶ Tennessee State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-03.

<https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0520/0520-01/0520-01-03.20180123.pdf>

A child who is not progressing towards skills necessary for kindergarten success may need intervention to overcome identified deficits. For children that qualify, school-based special education services can help bridge the gap to kindergarten. Some children require academic, developmental or social support, but do not have deficits that qualify them for special education. In these circumstances, consider inquiring about the child's eligibility for clinic-based services through a developmental provider, that can be provided in the community, rather than through the school district. Providers in the community often use different standards for service eligibility than school-based providers.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY - therapy based on engagement in meaningful activities of daily life such as play skills, feeding skills, sensory processing problems (hypersensitive to sounds, textures, taste, and etc.), pre-writing, self-help skills (using bathroom alone). Occupational therapy should be provided by a licensed occupational therapist.

SPEECH THERAPY – helps children with language related learning issues such as speaking, listening, and writing. Speech therapy should be provided by a licensed speech therapist.

Sometimes young children just need opportunities to develop self-awareness and social skills in normal, age-appropriate settings.

DEVELOPMENT OF INTEREST/HOBBY – Hobbies are healthy and benefit children in many ways. Hobbies give children opportunities to discover themselves and build self-esteem. Hobbies can teach children to solve problems and make decisions.

DEVELOP SOCIAL SKILLS – helps children develop good relationships with others, e.g. communication skills, being part of a group, being a friend, and dealing with emotions.

If a preschool aged child you are reviewing has a school readiness deficit that has not been addressed, consider recommending that the FSW and/or DCS Education Specialist obtain evaluation (for clinical services like speech or OT) or pursue other resources to address the child's deficits.

If needed, you can schedule an administrative review in three months to follow up on progress. If the issue is still a challenge and it has not been addressed by DCS or the foster family, consider making a non-emergency judicial referral so that the court can review the situation, hear from DCS, and make relevant orders in the child's best interest.

PART 6

SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN (KINDERGARTEN – 12TH GRADE)

EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

Stable, safe, and connected school settings promote the best possible outcomes for students in foster care. Being enrolled in a stable school, having opportunities to participate in academic and extracurricular activities, and having good home to school communication can help level the playing field for students in foster care. Unfortunately, many students in foster care do not experience these advantages. As a result, on average, students in care underperform on standardized measures of academic functioning, experience more school failure,³⁷ including grade retention (being left back) and absenteeism.³⁸ Youth in foster care are also less likely to go to college.³⁹

An FCRB volunteer can be an extra set of eyes and an extra support on a school-aged student's journey to high school graduation. The following important records will allow the board to check on school progress and help sort out challenges that can be addressed with court, school or DCS action.

The court facilitators will review the packet. If any of the following information is missing, the court facilitators should notify the DCS liaison to the board and / or may reschedule the case on the docket.

- Attendance records for current school year (or most recent semester if summer break)
- Discipline records for current school year (or most recent semester if summer break)
- Official report card
- Current progress report (mid-term)
- Up to date transcripts from each school setting (since enrolling in high school)
- IEP or 504 Plan with signatures (if applicable)
- IEP Progress Report (if applicable)
- S-Team Plan (if applicable)
- Eligibility Form with signatures (if applicable)
- HiSET – Proof of enrollment (if applicable)

³⁷ Trout et al., 2008

³⁸ Stone, 2007

³⁹ Pecora et al., 2006

Placement

Students may be enrolled in a variety of school settings: typical public schools, separate special education public schools in their school district, non-public schools such as self-contained schools located within treatment facilities, residential facilities, juvenile detention facilities, or Youth Development Centers (such as Wilder).

Non-public schools in DCS regulated residential facilities are required to provide special education and related services to students with disabilities (See Part 2- Special Education Considerations for Students in Foster Care).

School Absences

Absences from school adversely affect a student's educational progress. In the state of Tennessee, a student is truant after 5 unexcused days from school. An unexcused absence is determined by the local school system and will be coded in the student's attendance record.

The Tennessee State Compulsory Attendance Law (T.C.A. §49-6-3001) requires that pupils of legal age attend school (ages of six through seventeen years, both inclusive) unless special circumstances arise which temporarily or permanently excuse the student from attendance.⁴⁰

If the review happens during the summer, review attendance records of the most recent school year.

COURT/DCS MEETING – If a student is unable to attend regular classes because of having to attend court or FCRB, then, according to Tennessee statute, “the student's absence may be an excused absence and the student shall be afforded the opportunity to complete all assignments missed for this purpose.”⁴¹ The court facilitator should provide the student a note for school on court letterhead.

If a student has missed school due to attending a DCS meeting, the board can consider recommending that DCS hold child and family team meetings in which the student has a right or desire to attend, after school hours.

HEALTH - It is common for students to miss school for health-related issues. School district policies vary on what is accepted as an excused absence for missing school due to sickness (i.e.: doctor's note or parent's note). On the FCRB, you may review cases in which students demonstrate problematic attendance. Note specific reasons

⁴⁰ If a child has enrolled in the public school system at the age of 5, the compulsory attendance law applies. By state law, the student's school year shall consist of a minimum of 180 teaching days exclusive of all vacations, as approved by the Board of Education. §§ 49-6-3004 & 3050(b)(3).

⁴¹ T.C.A. §49-6-3002(c).

why the student is missing school due to health-related issues and make appropriate recommendations to reduce the number of absences. When making recommendations, consider the following example:

- Schedule doctor appointments, so the student misses a minimum amount of school (early morning or late afternoon appointments). Provide doctor's excuse and submit to the school **within the allotted time**.
- If the student has a chronic illness, such as diabetes or asthma that are causing absences, work with the school nurse to develop an **Individualized Health Plan**. This may provide a knowledgeable person at school to help support attendance and school-home communication in the event of health-related absences.

Students who are absent due to short-term hospitalization (under 10 days) may need additional instructional support when they return to school. Consider recommending that the FSW obtain missing assignments through the current school system. The FSW can arrange for tutoring services to provide instruction for the missed curriculum on the day the student returns to school, if needed.

Students who are absent due to long-term hospitalization (over 10 days) may need additional instructional support through Homebound Services. Consider recommending that the FSW apply for Homebound Services through the current school system on the tenth day or following the board review if the tenth day has passed.⁴²

SCHOOL REFUSAL TO ENROLL – In the event the absences are due to a school's refusal to enroll the student, consider a direct referral should be made to the court for the FSW to explain why the student was not enrolled in school.

SKIPPING – When a student exhibits a pattern of not attending school or an individual class despite having supports in place to get the student to school, interventions are likely needed. The board can ask the student before the board the reason for his or her school refusal.

Possible reasons for skipping classes or school may include not understanding or boredom with the subject matter; conflict with the teacher or another student; or school community/ sense of belonging issues.

Consider a recommending that the FSW follow up with the school counselor, education specialist and foster care point of contact (see Part 3- School Stability

⁴² TN State Board of Education (2020). Homebound Instruction. [/https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducationschools/documents/policies/4000/4206_Homebound%20Instruction_Current_Accessible.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducationschools/documents/policies/4000/4206_Homebound%20Instruction_Current_Accessible.pdf)

Preschool- Grade 12) to set up a meeting to discuss intervention. You can set this action item for administrative review in one to two months to follow up with the FSW.

SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS – Infractions occurring at school could cause a student to be absent from class. Please see Part 6- School Discipline for more information and strategies to support students in foster care with problem behavior.

TARDY – A tardy can result when a student is late to a class. In some districts, multiple unexcused tardies can add up to an unexcused absence. Consider asking the student about his or habitual tardies.

Consider a recommending that the FSW follow up with the school counselor, education specialist and foster care point of contact (see Part 3- School Stability Preschool- Grade 12) to set up a meeting to discuss intervention. You can set this action item for administrative review in one to two months to follow up with the FSW.

TRANSPORTATION – If transportation issues result in absences of a student, the FSW should make efforts to resolve all underlying issues. In some instances, the school system can provide transportation for students when a determination has been made by the school that is in the student’s best interest to remain in the school of origin instead of the school of zone. If this is the case, the recommendation should be that the DCS Education Specialist address this with the school system. See Part 3- School Stability for Students Preschool-Grade 12.

OTHER – There may be extenuating circumstances that cause the student to have absences from school, e.g. funeral/death of family, terminal illness of family members, or religious reasons. The board can recommend the FSW monitor personal reasons for absences and keep the absences to a minimum.

Residential Schools

Students in the custody of DCS are sometimes enrolled schools connected to the facilities where they are placed. These facilities are called Residential Treatment Facilities or RTFs.

These are the graduation requirements for students attending RTF on-site school programs. The DCS education division can issue diplomas for students who meet graduation requirements while in these programs.

Opportunities:

TRIO is a set of federally-funded college opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. TRIO programs provide direct support services for students, and relevant training for directors and staff. The target populations of the TRIO programs are low income, first generation, and students with disabilities from 6th grade through college

graduation. The 3 sections of TRIO are Talent Search (beginning in grade 6), Upward Bound (beginning in grade 9), and Student Support Services (post-secondary). The Talent Search program provides academic, career, and financial counseling to its participants and encourages students to graduate from high school and continue on to complete their post-secondary education.⁴³

The board may recommend that FSW or DCS Education Specialist inquire about the availability of the Talent Search program at the student's school with their school counselor.

Education Savings Account

The Individualized Education Account (IEA) Program is a school choice program for eligible students with certain disabilities (i.e. Autism, Deaf-blindness, Developmental delay, Hearing impairments, Intellectual disability, Multiple disabilities, Orthopedic impairments, Traumatic brain injury, or Visual impairments). The IEA Program gives parents and students access to public education funds to use on certain types of approved educational expenses that best meet their own unique needs. These funds come from the student's own cost of enrollment in the public school, and they cannot use the funds and continue to attend public school.

At this time, DCS Policy 21.14 states that students in foster care must be enrolled in public school, so an Education Savings Account to fund alternative education programs while the student is homeschooled or to attend private school is not an option⁴⁴. For more detailed information about the program, or updates made regarding eligibility, please review the IEA Account Holder Handbook and IEA Participating Non-Public School Handbook. If you have questions related to the IEA Program, need accommodations to access IEA materials, please contact the IEA team at IEA.Questions@tn.gov.

⁴³ US Department of Education, TRIO. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>

⁴⁴ Tennessee Department of Children's Services Protocol for Educational Programs and Resources. Supplemental to DCS Policy: 21.14 <https://files.dcs.tn.gov/policies/chap21/ProtocolEduProgRes.pdf>

PART 7

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL

High School and Post-Secondary Preparation

Beginning with grades issued in the 2022-2023 school year and thereafter, LEAs shall use the following uniform grading system for students enrolled in grades nine through twelve (9-12) for purposes of application for postsecondary financial assistance administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation.⁴⁵

For students enrolled in PreK-8, please verify if the student's school system uses a different grading scale.

Grade	Percentage Range	
A	90	100
B	80	89
C	70	79
D	60	69
F	0	59

Determine what subjects and reasons the student does not have a C or better in the class.

Question 7.1. What assistance is needed to help the student be more successful in class?

Examples of additional support are tutoring, and providing the student with the proper materials, e.g., scientific calculator, internet access, computer, ability to purchase materials for projects, proper attire, etc. Appropriate interventions can be services available within the school, school system, or private resources that are paid for by DCS.

⁴⁵ Tennessee State Board of Education, Uniform Grading Policy 3.301. Available at www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducation/documents/2022-sbe-meetings/july-22%2C-2022-sbe-meeting/7-22-22%20III%20O%20Uniform%20Grading%20Policy%203.301%20Clean.pdf

It is important to understand the distinction between RTI and tutoring. Response to Intervention (RTI) is provided by Tennessee school systems during the school day to address a student's identified skill set deficit in reading, writing, and math.

Tutoring is typically provided after school, through the school, DCS, or a private provider, and is meant to provide extra support in a specific area.

If the student needs after school tutoring, the board should consider recommending that DCS make arrangements for tutoring.

Question 7.2. What other barriers are contributing to the student's difficulties in school?

Consider non-academic barriers that contribute to a student's performance in school and be aware that recommendations can be made to address those barriers. For example, if a student's grades are low and the teacher says the student is sleeping in class, ask questions about the issue, and consider recommending medical follow up if the student has a medical reason for daytime drowsiness, like medication side effects. If the issue is related to the child's behavior, like access to technology at night, consider a recommendation that technology be addressed through a Child and Family Team Meeting.

Question 7.3. How are the modifications/services or accommodations helping the student be successful?

If a student with a disability receives accommodations and modifications, those accommodations/ modifications should also be reflected where appropriate in the permanency and / or transition plan. For example, a delinquent youth with a learning disability, who has assignments read aloud, should have those accommodations when there are similar requirements in the permanency plan, e.g.: A&D, anger management classes, or Life Skills Assessment read aloud.

Question 7.4. In what extracurricular activities does the student participate?

It is important for the student to participate in extracurricular activities, which can include activities outside of the school. Extracurricular activities promote social skills, positive self-esteem, and good physical health. It can be also be a really great way to connect to a different group of peers and adults with a strength-based focus! Additionally, they help older youth prepare for post-secondary education. For students enrolled in extracurricular activities, the board should ask if the student has

the necessary supplies for the activity and/or if there are any additional fees associated with participation in the activity. If it is indicated that there are additional fees, equipment, supplies, or services necessary, the board should consider recommending that the FSW follow up with the independent living specialist for that region to ensure all equipment, supplies, fees, and/or services are provided.

For the student not enrolled in extracurricular activities, the discussion should center around the student's interest, e.g. "What interests do you have?"; "What do you like to do outside of school?"; "What clubs at school would you like to participate?" The board should determine if there are any barriers to participating in any extracurricular activities. The board can recommend that the FSW develop a plan to remove any barriers to allow the student to participate.

Placement changes should not affect a student adjudicated **dependent and neglected** from participating in sports sanctioned by the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Associations.⁴⁶

FOR YOUTH ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL

Credits required for High School Graduation

The State of Tennessee graduation requirements are 22 credits. According to Tennessee State Board of Education Policy, each school district in Tennessee shall have "procedures to eliminate barriers to enrollment and retention for students identified as homeless, migrant, foster, or military..."⁴⁷ According to the policy, school systems must have a process in place that allows for an exemption from local education requirements that exceed the State Board of Education requirements. The Tennessee Code includes a similar provision for students enrolling in a new high school in grade 11 or later: "No LEA shall require any enrolling or transferring student, who is in grade eleven (11) or higher and in the custody of the department of children's services or exiting its custody, to meet more than the minimum requirements for graduation set forth by the state board of education. The LEA shall issue a full diploma to any such student who meets the minimum requirements."⁴⁸

While it is important you are aware of the graduation and credit requirements for the school the child is attending, if a student in high school is not on track for an on-time graduation because their school system requires more credits than the state required 22,

⁴⁶ Tennessee School Sports Athletic Association Handbook 2021-2022 (Section 12). <https://cms-files.tssaa.org/documents/tssaa/2021-22/handbook/2021-22TSSAABylaws.pdf>

⁴⁷ Tennessee State Board of Education High School Policy, 2.301(VIII).

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducation/documents/2022-sbe-meetings/may-20%2C-2022-sbe-meeting/5-20-22%20IV%20M%20High%20School%20Policy%202.103%20Clean.pdf>

⁴⁸ T.C.A. § 49-6-6001(h)

consider following up with a recommendation to DCS to check in with the school system foster care point of contact to request an adjustment to the credits required of the student.

State of Tennessee minimum credit requirements:

High school provides students with opportunities to pursue focused educational programs which may be referred to as tracks or academies. When they are offered, these focused educational programs allow students to pursue paths that allow students to focus on post-secondary goals ranging from four-year universities, community college, vocational programs or direct entry into the workforce.

During the eighth-grade year all students will develop an initial four-year-plan of focused, purposeful high school study. By the end of the 10th grade year, the student will focus the plan to ensure the completion of the program of study and a smooth transition to post-secondary (college) study or work.

High school planning is an opportunity for the board to discuss with the child transition planning (even before the age of 17) and help the child identify areas of interest, and aspiration which may inform education and career choices. Students interested in four-year universities and demonstrate a commitment to their studies, should consider taking higher level courses such as honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, Dual Enrollment (DE), and Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) where available. Students who indicate a reluctance to attend college or have a desire to work after high school should be encouraged to research the career and technical education path. Review the transcripts, grades, and plan of study in conjunction with the child's expressed interests to assist with selecting the best suited educational program.

The specific classes listed behind each subject area are the most common course selections, but may be substituted for other courses.

The following sections discuss the **Tennessee State Board of Education Policies**. **You can find the most current version of any Board of Education policy by visiting: <https://www.tn.gov/sbe>**. To locate the policies, select 'Rules and Policies' near the top of the page, and then select 'Policies'. On the next page, locate the 'Select Topic' menu and choose 'Instructional Program'. Scroll through the selection to locate the policy.

Tennessee State Board of Education High School Policy 2.103 addresses Tennessee graduation requirements, which are as follows:

- English: 4 credits
- Science: 3 credits, including Biology, Chemistry or Physics, and a third lab course

- Math: 4 credits, including Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and a fourth higher level math course (Students must be enrolled in a Mathematics course each school year.)
- Social Studies: 3 credits (World History and Geography, U.S. History and Geography, Economics, US Government and Civics)
- Personal Finance: 0.5 credits (May be waived for students not going to a University to expand and enhance the elective focus)
- Physical Education: 0.5 credit. Participation in school sponsored athletics, band, JROTC, cheerleading, and intramural athletics may be substituted for the 0.5 credit in Physical Education but the school must approve it.
- Wellness: 1.0 credits
- Foreign Language: 2 credits. Credits must be in the same foreign language. May be waived by the local school district for students not planning on enrolling in a university to expand and enhance the elective focus. A waiver from the school must be obtained in order for the foreign language credits to be waived.
- Fine Arts: 1 credit (May be waived for students not planning on enrolling in a university to expand and enhance the elective focus)
- Elective Focus: 3 credits consisting of Math and Science, Career and Technical Education, Fine Arts, Humanities, Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) or International Baccalaureate (IB). A recommendation should be made that DCS pay any fees associated with a student sitting for AP, CIE or IB exams. This request should be made no later than October 31st in the fall semester.
- For the Special Education student, please refer to the IEP for the graduation requirements.

Question 7.5. What year did the student first enroll as a freshman in high school?

Students who are not able to graduate within four years from when they start 9th grade are generally not considered to be on track for graduation. Regular education students and special education students working toward a regular diploma should complete their courses within four years. If they are not on track, every effort should be made to enroll them in summer school, explore credit recovery, enroll in alternative educational programs, or by any other means to assist them in graduation. Special education students are able to remain enrolled in school through the end of the school year in which they turn age twenty-two according the federal special education law, but most students do not wish to remain in school after their peers have moved on. Note how many credits the child has earned in each class.

Diploma Types

There are several types of diplomas conferred by the State of Tennessee Department of Education:

- **Regular High School Diploma** (may be with Honors, State Honors and State Distinction)
- To earn a regular high school diploma, students must:
 - earn the proscribed twenty-two (22) credit minimum;
 - complete the ACT or SAT prior to graduation, if the student was enrolled in a Tennessee public school during their eleventh (11th) grade year
 - have a satisfactory record of attendance and discipline.

- **Special Education Diploma**

A special education diploma may be awarded at the end of the fourth (4th) year of high school to students with disabilities who have:

- not met the requirements for a regular high school diploma
- received special education services or supports and made satisfactory progress on an individualized education program (IEP)
- have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.

Students who obtain the special education diploma may continue to work toward a regular high school diploma through the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22) years old. For students receiving special education services, the graduation requirements may differ based on their disability and the type of diploma towards which they are working.

- **Occupational Diploma**

An occupational diploma may be awarded to students with disabilities at the end of their fourth (4th) year of high school who have:

- (1) not met the requirements for a regular high school diploma;
- (2) received special education services or supports and made satisfactory progress on an IEP;
- (3) have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct;
- (4) have completed the occupational diploma Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA) created by the Tennessee Department of Education⁴⁹; and

⁴⁹ TN Department of Education, Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment (SKEMA)
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/transition/sped_transition_skema.pdf

(5) have completed two (2) years of paid or non-paid work experience. The determination that an occupational diploma is the goal for a student with a disability will be made at the conclusion of the student's tenth (10th) grade year or two (2) academic years prior to the expected graduation date.

Students who obtain the occupational diploma may continue to work toward a regular high school diploma through the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22) years old.

FCRB Considerations: If a student receiving special education in high school is unlikely to successfully complete the coursework required for a standard high school diploma, consider making a recommendation that the DCS Education Specialist meet with the lead special education teacher to set up an IEP meeting to discuss an occupational diploma. The board cannot determine that the occupational diploma is appropriate for the student, only the IEP team can decide that.

You can schedule an administrative review in one (1) month to ensure the IEP meeting has occurred and review determinations of the team/ documentation.

Note that Tennessee policy allows a student who receives an occupational diploma to continue working on a regular diploma through the school year that they turn 22.

- **Alternate Academic Diploma**

Beginning with students entering 9th grade in 2018, alternate academic diploma may be awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities at the end of their fourth (4th) year of high school who have:

- participated in the high school alternate assessments,
- earned the prescribed 22 credit minimum,
- received special education services or supports and made satisfactory progress on the IEP,
- have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct, and
- have completed a transition assessment(s) that measures a minimum, post-secondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community involvement.

The required credits may be earned either through the state-approved standards or through alternate academic diploma course requirements defined by the Department of Education. A student who earns an alternate academic diploma remains eligible for special education services under IDEA until the student receives

a regular high school diploma or through the school year in which the student turns twenty-two (22).⁵⁰

Recommend the FSW consult with the DCS Education Specialist to make sure the student is enrolled in the correct classes and is on track to graduate within the designated timeframe based on the contents of the IEP.

If there is a concern regarding the student's credits and whether they are on track to graduate within the designated timeframe, you may recommend that the FSW and the DCS Education Specialist contact the student's school for a letter of verification. Schedule an administrative review in one (1) month. If at the administrative review the FSW has not referred the case to the DCS Education Specialist, you may proceed with a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the recommendation has not been implemented.

Additional Graduation Requirements

STATE ISSUED ID - A student must have a state issued ID to take the ACT or SAT. It is important to for the board to verify proof of the ID.

CIVICS TEST - Students must take a Civics test prepared by the LEA consisting of 25 to 50 questions derived from the Civics Test administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to persons seeking to become naturalized citizens. Passing the test is not a requirement to graduate.

ACT/SAT - Prior to graduating the student must complete the ACT, if the student was enrolled in a TN public school during the eleventh-grade year. If the student is a senior and has not taken the ACT, you can consider a recommendation that the issue be resolved quickly, and set the matter for administrative review. If the situation meets the judicial referral criteria, your board can instead consider a direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the student has not taken the test unless DCS can provide proof at the review that the student is registered for the next scheduled test. Note that some colleges require the SAT for admission, so this will need to be considered when discussing the student's post-secondary choices.

⁵⁰TN State Board of Education High School policy 2.103 <https://www.tn.gov/sbe/rules--policies-and-guidance/policies.html>

AP/IB/DUAL ENROLLMENT/CAMBRIDGE – Some students may be eligible for advanced academic courses which are college level courses that qualify the student for both high school and college credit upon passing a standardized exam. A recommendation should be made that DCS pay any instructional materials and fees associated with the class, associated tests and diploma. Placement moves may affect the student’s ability to complete the course since these type courses are not offered at all high schools. These exams and diplomas have fees which are usually due to the school during the fall semester. The board can recommend that DCS make the requisition to have the fees covered if applicable.

Question 7.6. If the student has an IEP or 504 Plan, have accommodations been requested?

Requests for accommodations for the ACT or SAT should be requested at the beginning of the Fall semester of the junior year. The board should recommend for DCS to submit a formal request for accommodations to the student’s school counselor. When a student is enrolled in AP, IB, or Dual Enrollment courses the request for accommodations during the exit exams for post-secondary credit should be made to the school counselor. Be mindful that changes in educational placement may require the request to be done again.

Question 7.7. Preparation for Post-Secondary

Preparation for post-secondary education is critical to a student’s success and builds a foundation that will assist the student throughout life. The key is to be proactive and comprehensive in developing a plan that encompasses the student’s goals. The earlier the planning begins - better are the student’s chances for success. A student’s planning for post-secondary education must encompass the following:

CAREER INTEREST INVENTORY (CII) – Assists a student with identifying career interests and ideal work environments. This assessment helps a student identify a post-secondary pathway geared to the identified career interest. The Career Interest Inventory may be accessed through the school counselor or the DCS Independent Living Specialist. A recommendation should be made no later than the junior year to have the CII completed.

COLLEGE APPLICATION – This refers to the process by which a student applies to a post-secondary institution. A student needs to be aware of the application deadlines for each institution which are normally later than the scholarship application deadlines.

COLLEGE RESUME – Some colleges require a resume as part of the application process. A recommendation should be made for the DCS Independent Living Specialist to assist the student with developing a resume for the college application process. The school counselor is also a resource for developing a resume.

COLLEGE TOURS – College tours are an important component of a student selecting an institution best suiting the needs and interests of the student. Most colleges have planned days for students to visit, but a scheduled visit can always be arranged for any post-secondary program. Recommendations should be made that college visits be planned for the student beginning as early as the junior year but no later than the Fall semester of the senior year. College fairs can also assist a student with narrowing the list of colleges to visit.

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is financial aid for college, career school, or graduate school. It is a form required by the government for application to any federal education aid program, used to provide funding for post-secondary education. **The FAFSA process should start on October 1 of the senior year of high school** and each year thereafter for post-secondary education.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION – Application to post-secondary institutions may require letters of recommendation especially four-year institutions. Recommendations are usually required from school counselors and teachers. Additionally, recommendations may be needed from other persons such as community advocates, employers, clergy, mentors, and etc.

SCHOLARSHIPS – Scholarships are an award of financial aid to assist a student with covering the costs of post-secondary education. They are awarded on various criteria such as academics, athletics and other factors. Some scholarships are offered by academic institutions, private entities, and government (Tennessee Promise and HOPE Scholarship). Most scholarships have deadlines, so planning and timing are important. Academic scholarships normally have a deadline in November. The school counselor is a resource for identifying scholarships, and there are numerous websites that specialize in identifying scholarships. See Question 7.11 for more information on scholarships available to Tennessee students pursuing post-secondary education, including technical preparation.

- As indicated above under **Additional Graduation Requirements**, a student who is enrolled in a Tennessee public school during their 11th grade year must complete the ACT or SAT prior to graduation. If the ACT/SAT has not been taken as of March 31 of the student's junior year, consider recommending that the FSW register the student for the next testing date, with an administrative review in one month to evaluate DCS progress. If at the administrative review, the FSW has not registered student for the ACT/SAT, consider a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the student has not been registered for the ACT/SAT.

Students planning to enter a four-year university following high school will need to keep track of their score. Most universities use the ACT/SAT as a part of their admissions decision. A 19 or above is generally accepted, but each institution will set a minimum ACT/SAT score required for admission. If the score

is under 19, or is less than the required score for the college or university the student hopes to attend, the student may retake the test. Community Colleges have an open-door admission policy, but they use the ACT/SAT score for placement in college level courses. Students scoring less than the required ACT/SAT score in reading, writing or math will be required to take learning support courses.

If a student needs academic support in order to be successful in college admissions, consider recommending that the FSW coordinate with their regional Independent Living Specialist and enroll the student in an ACT/SAT Prep Course (examples - DVD, hard copy of book, online course, community classes, after school program) and register the student for the next testing date. You can schedule an administrative review in two (2) or three (3) months to follow up.

- If a student has a 504 Plan or an IEP, he or she may request accommodations or modifications for the ACT/SAT. If the LEA is responsible for giving the test, have the FSW consult with the LEA to determine who is responsible for submitting the request for accommodations from ACT/SAT before the deadline date. To qualify for accommodations, the student must have a professionally diagnosed condition with appropriate documentation on file showing that the student requires specific accommodations due to his/her disability. The accommodations may include extended time on tests, time-and-a-half on tests (or uses extended time only on writing tests), can take breaks as needed, can test over multiple days due to the nature of the disability, use alternate test formats such as Braille, DVDs, or a reader; or a scribe or computer for essays (this is available only for students whose disabilities prevent them from writing independently) and use extended time with alternate formats. ACT/SAT makes the final determination on what accommodations are approved. If the LEA is not responsible for giving the ACT test, the FSW must make sure that they submit the request for accommodations before the deadline date for the given test. There are currently no additional accommodations for ESL students without a disability (i.e, test form in another language).
- Academic accommodations provided by post-secondary schools will be based on the student's most current 504 Plan or IEP. The FSW and DCS Education Specialist should assist the student in meeting with the high school Special Education Coordinator or 504 Coordinator to revise the plan to assist with transitioning them to post-secondary education. Once enrolled in classes, the student must register with the institution's Office of Disability Services and submit their 504 or IEP plan. The institution will then develop a new accommodation plan.

Question 7.8. If the student is not on track to graduate, what steps can be taken to achieve the needed credits?

When determining if the student is on track to graduate within four (4) years, the type of class scheduling that is used at each high school will inform how many credits the student can accrue for the current semester. A schedule change may result in potential loss of credits. For example, a student attends School A on a block schedule, and then moves to School B on a traditional schedule. A loss of credits can occur without intervention from the DCS Education Specialist and the school counselor.

If there are concerns that the student may be moved from his/her current education setting prior to the completion of the current school year, the following recommendation should be made. Prior to enrollment, there should be a placement meeting in the new school system to ensure the most appropriate school placement that will assist the student with graduating on time.

The student may be on one of the four types of scheduling:

TRADITIONAL – a 6 - 7-hour school day consisting of 7 - 9 courses of about 50 minutes each. The class meets every day and credit is earned at the end of the school year.

BLOCK – a schedule in which students take four (4) 90 minute classes every day, and credit is earned at the end of the semester. Under a block schedule, the student can earn a maximum of four credits per semester and a maximum of eight for the school year.

MODIFIED BLOCK – sometimes referred as A/B schedule in which students take eight (8) 90 minute classes that meet every other day. Some courses earn half credit at the end of the semester. Some courses earn a full credit at the end of a year. Under a modified block the student can earn a maximum of eight (8) credits for the school year.

TRIMESTER - a schedule in which students take two (2) or three (3) core courses, with each class meeting daily over three (3) terms in a whole school year and credit is earned at the end of each trimester.

Some in-house schools offer the opportunity to accrue credits during the summer. An inquiry will have to be made for each in-house school.

Options available for a student in need of credits to graduate timely consist of the following:

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SETTING – A setting outside of a traditional school structure that provides the freedom and ability to experience learning in a new way and increases student success. An example could include a school that allows a student to learn at his/her own pace or one that has non-traditional hours. This option is appropriate

for a student who has reached 18 years old or is a senior in high school and does not have adequate credits to graduate, and still desires to obtain a diploma.

CREDIT RECOVERY – An opportunity for students to re-take a course in which they previously were not academically successful in earning a credit or to improve grades in a course. These could be available on-line.

EXTENDED CLASS TIME (SEAT TIME) – The lengthening of regular class time to focus on core academic learning and enrichment activities to obtain required credits and enhance student success.

FAST TRACK OPTIONS – Compressed time in classes that meet for the same total number of required hours as a full-term class to receive credit.

ONLINE COURSES – Classes taken over the internet through an accredited institution to achieve high school course credits that may not be available to the student during the school term.

SUMMER SCHOOL – A session conducted in the summer enabling students to accelerate progress toward a diploma or to make up credits lost through absence or failure, or to improve grades in a course.

TUTORING – An opportunity for a student to receive additional instruction to receive support in academic classes.

If a student is not on track for graduation, and requires extra support to get on track, consider recommending that the FSW follow up with the student's high school counselor to develop a graduation plan. You can administrative review in one (1) month for the FSW to provide documentation of the graduation plan. If at the administrative review the FSW does not have a graduation plan, you can consider a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to address this obstacle to

Ask these follow up questions to gain a better understanding of the student's readiness to graduate from high school and enroll in college/university.

Question 7.9. Has student applied for FAFSA? (Student cannot submit until October 1 of senior year)

If No, you can consider scheduling an administrative review in one (1) month to ensure that the recommendation to apply for FAFSA was implemented and provide the application confirmation number (FSA ID). It is important to include in the recommendation that an able adult assist the youth with completing the application. The FAFSA process should start in October of the senior year of high school and each year thereafter for post-secondary education. In order to be considered for lottery scholarship funds, applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the deadline dates for Fall, Spring and Summer. If at the administrative review the recommendations have not been implemented, and the

student has not completed the FAFSA, consider a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW to explain why the recommendations were not implemented. An emergency referral may be needed if the review occurs in late May or June.

Question 7.10. Has student submitted college applications?

If yes, verify the receipt of an acceptance letter at a subsequent review. If no, you may recommend DCS develop a plan for the student to apply for post-secondary education. The plan should include the payment of application fees. Your FCRB may consider an administrative review in one (1) month for the FSW to provide documentation of the acceptance letter. If the FSW has not made the request for a plan for post-secondary education, you can consider proceeding with a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW to explain why the recommendations were not implemented.

Question 7.11. Has student applied for scholarships? (if after October 1)

In order to be considered for the federal Education and Training Voucher and the Tennessee lottery scholarship funds described below, applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by the deadline dates for Fall, Spring and Summer. Ask which scholarships have been awarded for the youth you are reviewing and if there are any additional requirements for the scholarship. If the youth has not been awarded any scholarships, consider recommending that DCS assist the youth with conducting a scholarship search.

SCHOLARSHIP AND COLLEGE FUNDING

Federal Chafee Program Education Grants

Educational and Training Vouchers (ETVs): ETVs⁵¹ are grants to students of up to \$5,000 per academic year based on cost of attendance, available funds, and the student's unmet financial need. ETVs are funded by the federal government and administered by the states, awarded to eligible youth and young adults currently and formerly in foster care to help pay for college, career school, or training. States may have a different name for the ETV program.

Application: Students apply online with the help of the DCS office of Independent Living or its designee.

Eligibility: The ETV Program is intended to serve

- youth and young adults who experienced foster care after age 14, and

⁵¹ US Department of Health and Human Services. John E Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/grant-funding/john-h-chafee-foster-care-independence-program>

- youth who, after turning age 16 years or older, exit foster care to adoption or guardianship.
- In 2018, the Family First Prevention and Services Act amended the ETV program to extend eligibility to youth up until their 26th birthday while placing a five-year limit on the total length of time a youth can receive an ETV voucher (whether or not the years are consecutive).

ETV Forms: There are two ETV forms that must be submitted each quarter, term or semester, depending on the institution. This is because ETV funds are assigned one term at a time. The ETV Program needs to update students' financial information, school enrollment, attendance and educational progress before any funds are assigned, and therefore the forms must be submitted on a semester, quarterly or term basis.

- **The ETV Financial Aid Release Form.** Students must complete and sign the top part of this form and bring it to their school's financial aid office. The financial aid officer fills in cost of attendance and all of the student's other loans, grants and scholarships and faxes it to ETV. This form shows ETV the student's ESTIMATED NEED.
- **The ETV Student Participation Agreement.** This form explains the student's responsibilities as a program participant. It must be must signed and faxed or mailed to ETV before funding is disbursed.

Tennessee Post-Secondary Education Grants

Tennessee Promise⁵²: Tennessee resident/U.S. citizen/eligible non-citizen/students who graduate from an eligible high school, homeschool, or earn a GED/HISET (prior to 19th birthday) can receive an award at an eligible postsecondary community college/ two-year institution toward tuition and mandatory fees after all other gift aid has been first applied.

Application: Students will be required to complete the Tennessee Promise Scholarship application in the TSAC Student Portal by November 1 and the FAFSA by March 1 at www.fafsa.gov.

Eligibility: Students must attend mandatory meetings and participate in a mentoring program. College students must attend full-time, continue to participate in the mentoring program, and perform 8 hours of community service prior to each term the award is received.

Renewal: Students must complete the FAFSA every year and complete program requirements.

⁵² Tennessee Promise. <https://www.tn.gov/tnpromise>

The Tennessee Hope Scholarship⁵³: The Hope Scholarship provides financial support for Tennessee students to attend Tennessee institutions with on-campus housing. For qualifying students who enroll in a four-year college the scholarship provides up to \$2,250 per full-time enrollment semester as a freshmen and sophomore; then up to \$2,850 per full-time enrollment semester as a junior and senior. Students enrolling in two-year Institutions can receive up to \$1,600 per full-time enrollment semester as a freshman and sophomore. Award amounts are also available for summer enrollment

Application: The student must apply by completing the FAFSA and attending sessions that will be held at their high schools. To maintain renew application each year, the student must complete the FAFSA each year and be continuously enrolled at an eligible postsecondary institution in the fall and spring semesters and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Eligibility: In order to be eligible for the HOPE scholarship, a student must have a weighted 3.0 GPA and a minimum score of 21 on ACT or 1060 SAT. GED ® recipients must have a minimum 21 ACT exclusive of the essay and optional subject area battery tests and qualifying GED ® score of 170. HiSet recipients must have a minimum 21 ACT exclusive of the essay and optional subject area battery tests and minimum average HiSet score is 15. If the student has not applied for the scholarship and meets the requirements, consider scheduling an administrative review in one (1) month to ensure application has been completed for applicable scholarship(s). If at the administrative review the recommendations have not been implemented, proceed with a non-emergency direct referral to the court for the FSW to explain why the recommendations were not implemented.

Renewal: In order to maintain eligibility under the Hope Scholarship once the student is enrolled in a Tennessee institution, the student must:

- have a minimum 2.75 cumulative GPA at the end of the semester in which the student attempted 24 and 48 semester hours.
- have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the semester in which the student attempted 72 semester hours and any multiple of 24 semester hours thereafter.

If the student does not have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of the semester in which the student attempted 72 semester hours and any multiple of 24 semester hours thereafter, then the student must:

- Have a minimum 2.75 – 2.99 cumulative GPA and have a semester GPA of at least 3.0 at the end of the semester in which the student attempted 72 semester hours and any multiple of 24 semester hours thereafter. The

⁵³ Tennessee Higher Education Commission. The Hope Scholarship. <https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/money-for-college/tn-education-lottery-programs/tennessee-hope-scholarship.html>

student's continued eligibility will be determined on a semester-by-semester basis and must maintain full-time enrollment.

If a student ceases to be academically eligible for the HOPE Scholarship, the student may regain the award one-time only. The award may be re-established once the student meets any of the above criteria and maintains continuous enrollment and satisfactory academic progress at an eligible postsecondary institution without the HOPE Scholarship. The student must re-apply each year by completing the FAFSA and be continuously enrolled at an eligible postsecondary institution in the fall and spring semesters and maintain satisfactory academic progress.

The Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant⁵⁴: The Foster Child Tuition Grant is established and funded from the net proceeds of the state lottery. A Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant for a student attending an eligible public postsecondary institution shall be the full cost of attendance less any gift aid with the total award *not exceeding the cost of tuition and mandatory fees at an eligible postsecondary institution*.

The Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program (described above) provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care. This award along with all other available financial aid sources shall be applied towards the student cost of attendance *before* utilizing awards offered through the HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant; in this way the Foster Child Tuition Grant is a last dollar grant, **applied only after all other aid is applied**.

Gift aid means scholarships and grants from any source that do not require repayment, including funds provided through the federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and other similar programs. Student loans and work-study programs shall not be considered gift aid.

Eligibility: The grant is awarded to students who meet the minimum eligibility requirements. In addition to meeting the minimum HOPE Scholarship high school eligibility requirements, a student shall present the Corporation with official certification from the Department of Children's Services that the student meets the eligibility requirement for the HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant. A youth is eligible for the Foster Child Tuition Grant as long as the youth was:

- in state custody at any time when the individual was thirteen (13) years of age or older;
- in state custody at any time when the individual was thirteen (13) years of age or older and was placed for adoption by the Department of Children

⁵⁴ Tennessee Higher Education Commission: Hope Foster Child Tuition Grant.

<https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/money-for-college/grant-programs/tn-hope-foster-child-tuition-grant.html>

Services (DCS) or one of its adoption contract agencies, and the adoption was finalized; or

- in state custody at any time and was placed in permanent guardianship by DCS after reaching thirteen (13) years of age.

The receipt of a Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant is contingent upon the following:

- Student must meet the high school requirements for the Tennessee HOPE scholarship; and
- Be admitted to an eligible postsecondary institution. Academically qualifying for any of these award programs does not guarantee admission to an eligible postsecondary institution.

Renewal: The student shall maintain eligibility for the Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant:

- For a period of no more than four (4) years after the date of graduation from high school or equivalent; and
- For a period of six (6) years after admittance to an eligible public postsecondary institution, if, except as provided by TSAC Rule 1640-1-19-.20 or 1640-1-19-.21, the student maintains satisfactory progress in a course of study in accordance with the standards and practices used for Title IV programs by the postsecondary institution in which the student is currently enrolled.

General Assembly Merit Scholarship: High achieving students may be eligible for up to \$500 per semester as a supplement to the HOPE Scholarship; including summer.

Eligibility: Students graduating from a Tennessee public school or category 1, 2, 3 private school must have a minimum 3.75 GPA* AND 29 ACT or a minimum 1330 SAT, exclusive of the essay and optional subject area battery tests. ACT/SAT exams must be taken on a national test date or state test date and prior to the first day of college enrollment after high school graduation. The ACT Residual test and the ACT Superscores are not accepted.

*Grade point average means a grade point average on a 4.0 scale calculated with additional internal quality points awarded for advanced placement, honors or other similar courses according to the Uniform Grading Policy adopted by the State Board of Education.

For status updates on any and all Tennessee tuition grants: To check the status of any state of Tennessee tuition support grant, you may visit the Lottery Scholarship website: <https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/financial-aid.html> or access your TSAC Student Portal account: <https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/tsac-student->

portal.html. By logging into the portal, the student can get a summary of all state financial aid programs available to the student along with award amounts by semester. Also, the student may transfer his financial aid package from one Tennessee postsecondary institution to another.

Question 7.12. If review occurs in last semester of student's senior year, is there a plan to pay for orientation fees and dormitory application fees?

If Yes, set a review in the month the fees are to be paid to ensure compliance. If No, consider setting an administrative review in one (1) month for DCS to develop a plan for the fees to be paid.

PART 8

FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD FORM FOR 17 YEAR OLDS

The age of 17 is a critical time for a student in foster care. Youth aging out of custodial, or traditional foster care at 18 must decide whether they want to voluntarily opt into Extension of Foster Care. This can be a difficult decision for young people who have been system involved for much of their youth. Unfortunately, experience shows that students without a transition plan that includes supportive programs like Extension of Foster Care are likely to dropout from school, become homeless, struggle with depression, become involved with the criminal justice system, and other tragic outcomes. **Note that in 2023, Extension of Foster Care eligibility in Tennessee expanded to include employment of 80 hours or more a month, so young adults leaving foster care at 18 can opt into Extension of Foster Care even if they do not wish to continue their high school education or enroll in post-secondary education.**

While the 17-year-old approaches adulthood, the board's role is to assist the youth in thinking critically about his/her decisions to develop the best possible plan for future success.

It is crucial that the board ensures that DCS has properly informed the student about EFC, and that he/she understands all the benefits that could enhance his/her future. Most questions can be directed to the youth, and he/she should be given the opportunity to process the question and formulate an answer. The FSW should supplement the youth's answers. Additionally, it is important for the board to communicate with the youth in a manner that respects autonomy in decision making. The questions below assume the youth is enrolled in school, as they are under 18.

Question 8.1. What school are you attending?

Question 8.2. What grade are you in?

Question 8.3. What year did you start high school?

This question is asking for the year the student first started freshman year of high school, and it should be verified on the transcript. This date is important to know to the determination if a student will graduate on time.

According to state guidelines, a student is considered an on-time graduate if they complete graduation requirements within four years, which may include the summer after the fourth year. If the student does not graduate on-time, for data purposes the school considers the student to have not completed his/her graduation requirements. If this determination is made, some LEAs may not allow the student to return the following school year, or obtain the course credit to meet the graduation requirements.

Questions 8.4 and 8.5 are directed to the FCRB Education Board Member.

Question 8.4. What credits has the student earned?

The first step should be for the board member to ask the student if they can evaluate the student's credits together. To do this, the board member will need the transcripts, the Education Supplemental Worksheet (see appendix), and the information listed below to assist the student with a clear understanding of his/her progress towards graduation. For the special education student, please refer to the IEP for the graduation requirements.

- English: 4 credits. English I, II, III and IV.
- Science: 3 credits. Biology, Chemistry or Physics, and a third science course
- Math: 4 credits. Must have a credit in Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and a fourth higher level math course. Integrated Math I, II and III can substitute for the above courses. Must take a math class each year of high school.
- Social Studies: 3 credits. World History and Geography, U.S. History and Geography, Economics, US Government and Civics
- Personal Finance: 0.5 credit.
- Physical Education: 0.5 credit. Participation in school sponsored athletics, band, JROTC, cheerleading, and intramural athletics may be substituted for the 0.5 credit in Physical Education but the school must approve it.
- Wellness: 1 credit. Participation in 2 years of JROTC or Nutrition Across the Lifespan may be substituted.
- Foreign Language: 2 credits. Credits must be in the same foreign language. A student who is **not** going to a four-year university can substitute the foreign language credits with additional courses in his/her elective focus equaling 2 credits if their school agrees. A waiver from the school must be obtained in order for the foreign language credits to be waived.
- Fine Arts: 1 credit. A student who is not going to a four-year university can take can substitute the fine arts credit with an additional course in his/her elective focus equaling 1 credit.
- Elective Focus: 3 credits. Elective Focus consists of Math and Science, Career and Technical Education, Fine Arts, Humanities, Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) or International Baccalaureate (IB). A recommendation should be made that DCS pay any fees associated with a child sitting for the AP, CIE or IB exam. This request should be made no later than October 31st in the fall semester.
- Take a Civics test prepared by the LEA consisting of 25 to 50 questions that is derived from the Civics Test administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to persons seeking to become naturalized citizens. Passing the test is not a requirement to graduate.

For youth in foster care it is essential that the school focuses on enrolling the student in courses that count toward Tennessee graduation requirements. T.C.A. § 49-6-6001 - No LEA shall require any enrolling or transferring student, who is in grade eleven (11) or higher and in the custody of the Department of Children's Services or exiting its custody, to meet more than the minimum requirements "for graduation set forth by the state board of education. The LEA shall issue a full diploma to any such student who meets the minimum requirements."

The Transcript Evaluation form represents the 22 minimum credit hour graduation requirements for the State of Tennessee. Once you complete the Transcript Evaluation form, you can determine if the student is on track to graduate and identify the remaining required credits using the Education Supplemental Worksheet (see appendix).

Question 8.5. What remaining classes are required for the student to graduate?

The hope is that the student is on track to graduate with his/her class; however, there may be instances where this is not the case. The discussion that may ensue from this question can bring up a variety of emotions, and the board needs to be understanding, supportive, and assistive to the student's needs.

Question 8.5.1. Will those classes be available to the student in their current educational setting?

- All public schools offer the 22 credits required by the state of Tennessee, but not all elective focus courses are offered at all schools. See the credit requirements above to review the Tennessee Elective Focus graduation requirement of 3 credits consisting of Math and Science, Career and Technical Education, Fine Arts, Humanities, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB). If the courses in the student's elective focus are not available in the current setting, then a recommendation should be made for the DCS Education Specialist to meet with the school and develop a plan to ensure graduation with an elective focus. You can schedule an administrative review to ensure compliance with the recommendation. If DCS has not complied with the recommendation at the administrative review and you are not satisfied that this will be accomplished, you can consider a direct referral should be made to the court.
- In-house schools in DCS contracted residential facilities offer most of the 22 credits required by the state of Tennessee. In the event that a student needs a required class not offered at the in-house school, then the in-house school must provide that class or classes. For example, if the student needs a foreign language credit, then the in-house school shall provide an online foreign language course. You may recommend that the DCS Education Specialist work with the in-house school to ensure that the class is provided,

and there is an opportunity to earn the credit before the student is released from the residential facility, and follow up can be addressed in a 30-day administrative review.

- **If there are concerns that the student may be moved from the current education setting prior to the completion of the current school year, please consider recommending at placement meeting to address the transition. At the placement meeting, DCS and the new school system can ensure the most appropriate school placement that will assist the student with on-time graduation.**

Question 8.5.2. Will the 17-year-old student be able to earn the remaining required credits in the current school year?

In order to answer the question, the following must be considered:

- A student in the first semester of his/her fourth year should have at least 16 of the required graduation credits.
- A student in the second semester of his/her fourth year should have at least 18 of the required graduation credits.

This question can be answered “YES,” if one of the aforementioned factors is present and the student can take the required remaining credits during current school year. Skip to Question 8.5.6.

The length of time that students have to complete high school graduation requirements is up to each school system. Normally students are given four years and a summer in which to complete the requirements. However, the law allows for this time to be shortened or extended based on certain factors. It is best for the 17-year-old student to complete the graduation requirements in the current school year, if possible.

If the answer is “NO,” then a recommendation may be made for DCS Education Specialist to meet with the school counselor to develop a path to graduation. An administrative review should be set within 30 days to ensure compliance with the recommendation.

Question 8.5.3. Is the student aware of alternative paths to high school diploma?

When the student cannot earn the remaining required credits during the current school year, the task is to determine the educational path that best meets the needs of the student. Listed below are options for the student who desires to obtain his/her high school diploma through an alternative path. Also listed below are resources for students who choose to dropout.

For students who choose to conclude their secondary education

HiSET Path

Both the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) and the General Educational Development (GED) exams are used to award a high school equivalency diploma, but there are differences between the two. Once either exam is complete, the diploma equivalent is nationally recognized no matter which test was taken.

The option for receiving the High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) in Tennessee is the HiSET. The HiSET test will measure the same competencies as were identified on the GED test, but the advantages of the HiSET program include being able to take the test in paper format.

The process for completing the HiSET is as follows:

1. Be 18 years of age, or 17 years of and obtain a waiver from LEA
2. Enroll in an HiSET program
3. Take the official HiSET practice test to indicate readiness
4. Take preparatory courses if needed
5. Take final test

If the student on the HiSET track is considering post-secondary education, then the fine arts and foreign language requirements will need to be addressed. It is imperative that while the student is going through the HiSET process, they are also completing preparatory steps for post-secondary education including; completing FAFSA, campus visits, entrance exams, and admission applications.

For additional information, visit the Tennessee HiSET online information page at <https://hiset.ets.org/requirements/state/TN>.

Job Corps Path

Job Corps provides skills in more than 100 different career paths, including accounting, office administration, computers, painting and landscaping. It is a campus setting that varies in length depending upon the certification program. The program is entirely voluntarily, so applicants can leave at any time. The primary goal is to obtain certification in a skill by completing the course of study and then obtaining a job. Requirements include:

- Must be at least 16 and not yet 25 years of age at time of enrollment

- Be a legal U.S. resident; lawfully admitted permanent resident alien, refugee, asylee, or parolee, or other immigrant who has been authorized by the U.S. Attorney General to work in the United States; or resident of a U.S. territory
- Meet low-income criteria
- Face one or more barriers to employment such as: needing additional career technical training, education, counseling, and related assistance to complete regular schoolwork or to secure and maintain employment

Refer to: <https://www.rescare.com/job-corps-eligibility/>

The process to apply for Job Corps is as follows:

1. Apply in-person to an Admissions Specialist with the following documentation: (Specialists will travel to an applicant who resides more than 45 miles from an admission center.)
 - Birth Certificate (minors only)
 - Social Security Card
 - School Transcript or HiSET
 - Immunization record
 - State ID/Driver's License
 - Previous school withdrawal form
2. Attend orientation
3. Start program

The student should be handed the accompanying Job Corps Information Sheet. (Page 93 in the appendix section)

Military Path

Members of the U.S. military service maintain the U.S. national defense. Members serve in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard. They may serve in the Reserve components of these branches, and in the Air National Guard and Army National Guard. Some service members work in occupations specific to the military, such as fighter pilots or infantrymen. Many work in occupations that also exist in the civilian workplace.

Requirements for the U.S. Armed Services include:

- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) which is a multiple-choice test and one of the requirements for enlistment (minimum requirement scores vary by branch).
- High School diploma or GED
- Age 18 or 17 with parental consent

Males age 18 through 25 are required to register with the Selective Services.

The student should be handed the accompanying Military Information Sheet. (Page 95 in the appendix section)

For students who choose to leave secondary school

If the student chooses not to complete high school, these are some resources.

Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the job market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need. Visit the career center (unemployment office) and register with www.JOBS4TN.org for career opportunities. The youth should ask about the Career Readiness Certificate exam. This allows the employer to determine the level of employability within their career field.

For additional information about the Tennessee WIOA youth program, please visit www.tn.gov/workforce/jobs-and-education/services-by-group/services-by-group-redirect/youth-services.html

Question 8.5.4. Which path do you see yourself taking?

This is an opportunity to allow the youth to ponder the paths that have just been explained and to ask any questions. If the youth expresses an interest in a particular area, a recommendation should be made for the FSW to assist the student with meeting with the appropriate agency for either additional education/discussion or initiation of the process.

Question 8.5.5. What assistance or services, if any, do you need to be successful with your high school plans?

The purpose of this question is for the youth to think critically about his/her future, so allow time for the student to process the question and formulate an answer.

The following are services which can assist a student to be successful with completion of high school courses.

If the student needs assistance with improving his/her grades, consider the following:

TUTORING – An opportunity for a student to receive additional subject based instruction to receive additional support in academic classes.

SUMMER SCHOOL – A session conducted in the summer enabling students to accelerate progress toward a diploma or to make up credits lost through absence or failure, or to improve grades in a course.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES – Obtaining supplies and equipment necessary for course completion. Examples are scientific calculator, access to internet, class art supplies, and course fees.

SUPPLEMENTAL STUDY AIDS – Obtaining additional materials that assist the student with better understanding of the subject matter. Examples are study guides, outlines, and online study tools.

If the student needs assistance with graduating on time, consider the following:

CREDIT RECOVERY – An opportunity for students to re-take a course in which they previously were not academically successful in earning a credit, or to improve grades in a course. These may be available on-line.

FAST TRACK OPTIONS – Compressed time in classes that meet for the same total number of required hours as a full-term class to receive credit.

EXTENDED CLASS TIME (SEAT TIME) – The lengthening of regular class time to focus on core academic learning and enrichment activities to obtain required credits and enhance student success.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SETTING – A setting outside of a traditional school structure that provides the freedom and ability to experience learning in a new way and increases student success. An example could include a school that allows a student to learn at their own pace or one that has non-traditional hours. This option is appropriate for a student who has reached 17 or is a senior and doesn't have adequate credits to graduate, and still desires to obtain a diploma.

ONLINE COURSES – Classes taken over the internet through an accredited institution to achieve high school course credits that may not be available to the student during a school term.

HiSET – Students who are 17 years of age may take the test if they present an age waiver signed by the superintendent of the local school district. The student

must take an official practice test before taking the official HiSET exam. DCS should pay the fees associated with these tests.

If the student needs assistance with post-secondary education options, consider the following:

COLLEGE CREDIT TEST FEES – Tests for early post-secondary opportunities that have fees associated with them that must be paid by December 1 of the current school year. Children in foster care may qualify for a reduced rate, and DCS should pay the fees for the tests, which include: Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International Examination (CIE), College Level Exam Program (CLEP), Dual Enrollment (DE), International Baccalaureate (IB), Local Dual Credit (LDC), State Dual Credit (SDC), and Industry Certification (IC),

FAFSA (FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID) - A form required by the government for application to any federal education aid program, used to provide funding for post-secondary education. The FAFSA process should start on October 1 of the senior year of high school and each year thereafter for post-secondary education. The FSA ID number should be requested in October with the final submission of the FAFSA application during the month of October. For help, visit StudentAid.gov/fsaid.

ACT/SAT PREP – Students who will take a standardized test for high school achievement and college admissions need to prepare for the test. There are several options available, including classes, study booklets and CDs, and online courses. DCS is to pay for the student to access these options.

CAMPUS VISITS – Students who are anticipating continuing their education beyond high school will benefit from touring campuses to expose them to a full range of experiences. A campus visit provides many advantages for the growth and development of each student and helps them to find the right fit.

SENIOR EXPENSES – Students in their senior year will have expenses associated with graduating. DCS will pay for the Graduation package, which includes cap and gown, senior dues, graduation announcements/invitations, yearbooks, senior pictures, senior event clothing (such as prom attire), school spirit packets, senior class trip, and class rings.

Question 8.5.6. What are your educational goals after high school?

The purpose of this question is for the student to think critically about their future, so allow time for the student to process the question and formulate an answer. If the student does not plan to continue his/her education after high school, then proceed to Section 6 - Housing.

Students should be made aware of the additional financial obligations and consequences associated with attending for-profit institutions. These include additional loans, high interest rate credit cards, credits that won't transfer, and limited support services. Students are at risk for entering for profit institutions when there has been no planning or inadequate planning for post-secondary education. This is commonly seen with students enrolled in alternative educational settings or Hi-Set programs where there is no traditional school calendar for graduation. Due to time constraints with EFC eligibility for profit schools can be an attractive option because enrollment times are flexible. The board should inform the student about Community Colleges and the TCAT (Tennessee College of Applied Technology) as an option. These institutions offer more flexible enrollment options and traditional start times. More information on colleges of applied technology can be found here: <https://www.tbr.edu/tcat/institutions>.

The following are post-secondary options available to students who have completed high school:

Career and Technical Schools

Career and technical schools are designed to provide vocational or technical skills required to perform the task of a particular and specific job. They offer different forms of enrollment which can allow students to begin classes immediately and aren't limited to traditional semesters. Some programs can be completed in as little as 6 weeks and up to 2 years. Some certificates can include HVAC repair, auto mechanics, collision repair technology, welding, culinary, truck driving, dental lab technology, Computer Aided Design (CAD), graphic design, plumbing, industrial maintenance programs, medical assistant, certified nursing assistant, phlebotomy, landscaping, administrative office technology, and cosmetology. Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) is the state's premiere provider of technical training for workers to obtain technical skills and professional training.

The student should also be handed the accompanying TCAT Information Sheet. (Page 9 in the appendix section)

Community College

Community colleges are two-year schools that provide affordable post-secondary education. These colleges offer a wide variety of options, such as preparation for transfer to four-year universities, workforce development & skills training and Associate degrees, which are granted after a two-year course of study to any post-secondary student who wishes to apply.

Community Colleges offer Associate of Applied Science Degrees (AAS) that enable the student to enter the workforce with a two-year technical or career degree. Examples of the degrees are civil and construction engineering, electrical engineering, health care management, law enforcement, early childhood education,

accounting, paralegal studies, business, administrative professional technology, culinary arts, and nursing.

Students at community colleges can also earn technical certificates that enable them to receive a one-year certificate to obtain a better job. These include 3-D design and graphics, civil and construction engineering, computer aided drafting, information security technical certificate, mechatronics technical certificate, medical coding, retail management, web page authoring, music technology, logistics technical certificate, and healthcare compliance. There are also many transfer degrees called Associate of Art (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) that set the groundwork for a Bachelor's degree.

Tennessee community colleges offer free tuition to current high school graduates who are residents of Tennessee. There is a program called Tennessee Promise for students in their senior year. Tennessee Promise is a last dollar scholarship for eligible students. There are specific requirements that must be met during the senior year for the student to receive funding. **Please see Question 7.11 for more information on the Tennessee Promise Scholarship Program.**

The FSW should ensure that students are completing the stated requirements. Tennessee Promise funding applies to Community Colleges, TCAT's and Universities that offer an Associate's Degree program. It is recommended that the student complete the requirements even if the plan is to attend a four-year university, because then the young person can be financially prepared if the plan changes.

Four-Year Institution

Four-year institutions offer programs of study leading to a bachelor's degree. Certain career paths require a bachelor's degree, such as teachers, engineers, social workers, accountant, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, architects, pharmacists, optometrist, and dentists. The minimum score on the ACT or SAT that is required for admission into four-year institution varies from school to school. These institutions grant Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees.

The BA is a liberal arts degree and the BS is a more specialized degree for technical and science related fields. A degree from a four-year institution is required to attend graduate school. Additionally, these institutions offer aspects that are often not found at community colleges, including on-campus living, fraternities and sororities, athletics, and social events.

The costs of attending a four-year institution (especially private institutions) can be prohibitive for a student in foster care, but there is a good deal of support in Tennessee for students that remain in Tennessee (**please see Question 7.11 for information on the Education and Training Voucher, Tennessee Hope Scholarship, and the Tennessee Foster Child Tuition Grant**). It is important to recommend that DCS and a person from the student's support system assist the

student with searching and applying for state and privately funded scholarships. The following are websites to assist with additional scholarship searches:

- www.fastweb.com
- www.freecollegescholarships.net
- www.scholarships.com
- www.collegefortn.org

Question 8.6. For students with disabilities, how will having accommodations in college based on your disability help you be successful in your classes?

This is an opportunity to guide the youth with open-ended questions regarding the benefits of having accommodations in post-secondary education. Many youth who have an IEP are reluctant to ask for accommodations in higher education because of the stigma they believe is associated with having an IEP. The first step is to assist with their understanding of the differences between the process in high school and the process in college.

Individualized Education Plans do not exist after high school. Accommodations in higher education are pursuant to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Help the youth to understand this is the same Act that employers comply with to assist employees with disabilities. This may help reduce the stigma associated with the youth asking for assistance. The Office of Disability Support at their college or university will help support the student's equal access to learning by accommodating the disability, but the student must self-identify (they must ask for disability related support and demonstrate basis for accommodation.) The office will guide them through the necessary steps.

This process can be complicated and overwhelming for any 18-year-old especially young adults in foster care who are experiencing major life transitions. The board can recommend for the DCS Education Specialist assist the youth/young adult with seeking accommodations. This process of self-identifying as a student with a disability should start as soon as the youth/young adult receives a letter of acceptance.

An Individualized Education Plan contains its own transition plan beginning at the age of 14. The transition plan within the IEP is designed to link the student to community resources and transitional information after graduation. When the student reaches the age of 17, the IEP transition plan will also contain resources that are available to the student. These resources help with housing,

employment, vocational rehabilitation, adult education, independent living skills, and healthcare.

Question 8.7. How will you accomplish your transition goals?

This is an opportunity to determine if the student has a plan to accomplish his/her desired post-secondary educational path. The board should offer to make recommendations to fill-in the gaps of the student's plan. It is also an opportunity to educate the youth about the availability of various options.

SECTION 9

EXTENSION OF FOSTER CARE

Approximately 26,000 young people age out of foster care each year. Many youth who age out of care without assistance often have poor outcomes. They have lower prospects for employment, higher rates of incarceration, lack access to medical health, and struggle with mental health issues that go untreated. Services and support provide many resources that can become a lifeline for this vulnerable population.

Extension of Foster Care (EFC) is a voluntary program available to some youth who turn 18 while in foster care. Because it is voluntary, a lot of youth do not accept these valuable services. Some do not accept because of their prior history with foster care. Some do not accept because they have unrealistic expectations of what it means to turn 18. Some do not accept because of wrong information or lack of information about EFC. Some do not accept because they do not want to meet the eligibility requirements, which are explained below. **Note that Tennessee's EFC requirements expanded in 2023 to allow more young people to participate!**

The eligibility requirements include:

- Completing secondary education or program leading to an equivalent credential
 - Eligibility Verification: School letter confirming enrollment with expected completion date.
- Enrolled in an institution which provides postsecondary or vocational education
 - Eligibility Verification: Letter of acceptance to post-secondary or vocational education program.
 - Verification of secondary education completion.
- Employed for at least eighty (80) hours per month
 - Eligibility Verification: Employment letter on company letterhead.
 - Weekly or monthly check stubs or statements.
- Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment (Limited to one (1) year of eligibility).
 - Eligibility Verification: Letter of acceptance on agency letterhead including program description and attendance dates.
 - Ongoing monthly verification of attendance.
- Incapable of doing any of the above activities due to a medical condition, including a developmental or intellectual condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the Transition Plan.

- Eligibility Verification: Clinical documentation verifying medical, developmental or intellectual condition.
- Review and approval by DCS regional psychologist or nurse, Regional Administrator or JJ Director, and Director of Independent Living.

It is important for board members to advocate for the success of the young adult. They should focus on identifying barriers to success and ensure that the young adult understands all available wraparound services. The board members should guarantee questions are directed to the young adult, and he/she is given the opportunity to process the question and formulate an answer. The FSW should not answer the questions for the young adult, but it is okay for the FSW to supplement his/her answer. Additionally, it is important for the board to communicate with the young adult in a manner that respects autonomy in decision making.

The board's role is to assist the young adult to think critically about his/her decisions to develop the best possible plan for future success.

EXTENSION OF FOSTER CARE FOR YOUNG ADULTS COMPLETING HIGH

SCHOOL

If this is the first foster care review board after a young adult enters EFC, then review the last FCRB summary for the High School credits to complete the EFC Education Supplemental Worksheet. Listed below are challenges some young people in EFC face in the path to academic success, and recommendations you might consider making as a board member:

FAILING CLASSES OR SKILL SET DEFICITS

If the young adult has indicated the need for additional academic or organizational support, the board members can recommend the FSW request funds for tutoring and follow up as needed in an administrative review in one (1) month.

TRANSPORTATION

If the young adult has identified transportation concerns, review the Independent Living Plan to see if the concerns have been addressed. If the transportation concerns have not been addressed, then consider recommending DCS and the Independent Living Specialist develop a plan to resolve transportation issues. You can schedule an administrative review in one month to ensure this has occurred.

HOUSING

If the young adult has identified housing concerns, then review the Housing section (Question 5) of the 18-21 Foster Care Review Board Summary Form. If the housing concern has not been addressed, consider the recommendation that DCS and the housing specialist on the board (if available) discuss housing options and develop a plan. As always, you can schedule an administrative review in 30 days to ensure this has occurred. If at the administrative review, the housing issues have not been resolved by DCS, and the issue meets the criteria for a direct referral to the court, you can consider proceeding with a direct referral to report to the court as to why the recommendation was not followed.

EMPLOYMENT

If the young adult has identified the need for additional income, the recommendation should be made to explore WIOA) or other workforce development programs.

CHILD CARE

If the young adult has identified child care as a concern, encourage the him/her to contact the Office of Student Services or the Department of Human Services for childcare eligibility.

Questions to consider if the young adults enrolled in high school and EFC:

Question 9.1. Have you met with a school official and/ or the DCS Education Specialist to determine if you are on track to graduate within 4 years from the date you entered 9th grade?

Each young adult should have the opportunity to meet with a school official (usually a school counselor, but a school administrator or teacher may be able to fill this role as well), and/or a DCS Education Specialist to review his/her current transcript(s) to ensure they are on track to graduate within 4 years.

If Yes, proceed to Question 9.3.

If No, the board should ask the young adult if he/she wants assistance from the DCS Education Specialist. If the young adult wants the assistance of DCS, consider a recommendation for the FSW and DCS Education Specialist schedule a meeting with a school official to address the following:

- the number of credits the student currently has and the number of credits that may need to be recovered (*see Glossary for Credit Recovery*)
- the number of credits still required to meet graduation requirements
- a plan of action for the student to make up or take the missing classes.

A plan to address problems or issues inside the school (i.e.: failing grades, suspensions, attendance) or outside of the classroom (transportation, child care, housing insecurity, bullying, etc.) that may be an obstacle to high school graduation.

The following are additional areas that might need to be addressed by the board for follow up at DCS and / or the in the student’s high school to support graduation:

ATTENDANCE

Board members should inquire with the young adult as to the barriers to attending school. Board members should recommend to DCS that all court hearings, health appointments, or any meeting/appointments related to foster care placement should be submitted as an excused absence to the school. Additionally, the board should recommend DCS to schedule any meetings/appointments at times that minimize the young adult’s educational absence. The board should remind the young adult that attendance in school is necessary for the continued enrollment in Extension of Foster Care.

DISCIPLINE

Board members should inquire with the young adult regarding any discipline issues in school. Disciplinary concerns may be the result of the young adult’s behavior, but may also be the result of other issues such as medication management, disabilities, personal issues, and bullying/harassment. The board can recommend DCS schedule a CFTM to address the external factors, if any, that may be contributing to the behavior. Additionally, DCS should request an S-Team/IEP meeting to develop a behavioral intervention plan, if applicable. The board should encourage the young adult to take any and all supporting documentation to the meetings.

IEP/504 PLAN ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

Board members should review the IEP/504 Plan and ask the young adult if they are receiving the accommodations in the IEP/504 Plan.

Possible accommodations:	Possible modifications:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read-aloud • extended time • flexible setting/scheduling • additional breaks during the school day • school materials - i.e. calculator or a computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abbreviated assignments • shortened tests • alternate projects or assignments • extra grade opportunities

If accommodations are not being implemented or new accommodations need to be considered, then the board members should recommend the FSW contact the DCS Education Specialist to set up an IEP/504 Plan meeting with the school. Schedule an administrative review in one month to review the revised IEP/504 Plan. If the meeting has not occurred, make a direct referral to the court for the FSW or DCS Education Specialist to explain why the recommendation has not been implemented.

If the young adult elects not to receive assistance from DCS, then consider recommending that the young adult contact the school counselor or designated person with student services to plan a meeting to address the above.

You can schedule an administrative review in one month to ensure this has occurred, and provide documentation regarding the outcome(s) and recommendations of that meeting.

Question 9.2. What if the student has had a meeting and is not on track to graduate?

If the student cannot graduate on time, you can recommend that the young adult work with the FSW and DCS Education Specialist to verify this conclusion and/or discuss the HiSET, or any other educational alternative such as home school program, adult high school, etc.

Consider the possible barriers enumerated in Question 9.1 and consider making specific recommendations for follow up, as appropriate.

- If the young adult before the board reports they have no issues, but the board identifies barriers during the review, the board should provide a list of resources to the young adult should he or she determine after the review that assistance is needed in graduating.
- The board can provide the information from the paragraph above or let the young adult know that they can contact the court facilitator to have the case brought back before the board.

Question 9.3. What are your plans after high school to further your education or career?

Below is a list of possible paths for young adults upon completion of high school.

TRANSITIONING TO VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PATH

If the young adult's plan is to obtain a certificate or diploma, the young adult must be aware of the entry requirements and deadlines for that career path. The young adult should contact student services/admission office for admission requirements and fees by the fall/spring during senior year. It is important that preparations be made early for any necessary fees, including application and registration fees. Failure to meet these required deadlines could result in the delay of enrollment and loss of financial assistance. It is recommended that in the junior year, the young adult signs up, prepares for, and takes the ACT. Although the ACT is not required for the vocational/technical path, it may help the youth meet a graduation requirement and some additional scholarship opportunities require the ACT.

The FAFSA application should be started the fall of senior year and completed during the month of October. The young adult should create their FSA ID at the beginning of their senior year by visiting StudentAid.gov/fsaid. The young adult should also visit each institution's website for additional scholarship opportunities.

Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) offer different forms of enrollment which can allow students to begin classes immediately and aren't limited to traditional semesters. **Upon completion of HiSET a student can often immediately enroll in a TCAT program.** The FSW should accompany the student to the TCAT to explore immediate enrollment.

TRANSITIONING TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE/FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION

If the young adult's plan is to obtain an associate or bachelor degree, the young adult must be aware of the entry requirements and deadlines. Failure to meet the required deadlines can result in the delay of enrollment and loss of financial assistance. Prior to the junior year, the young adult must research post-secondary opportunities based on career interests, including understanding the requirements and deadlines for the ACT or SAT. These entrance exams should be taken no later than the spring of the junior year in order to apply for scholarships and need-based money. Application to a community college or a four-year institution can be submitted in the fall of the senior year, and the earlier the better for scholarships. It is important that preparations be made early for any necessary fees including application, registration, or housing fees. **The FAFSA application should be completed during the month of October of the senior year.**

If the young adult before your board is not on track with the timelines identified above, you can recommend the young adult work with the FSW, DCS Education Specialist, and/or the Independent Living Specialist to conduct a CFTM within 10 days to ensure all fees are paid and applications submitted. You can follow up schedule an administrative review if needed.

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

There are many opportunities for a young adult to engage in post-secondary education while in high school. Dual Enrollment is a program that allows a young adult to take college level courses and earn both college credit and credit toward their high school requirements. Dual Credit is a program for young adults in high school to earn college credit in a high school course after passing a standardized exam. Advanced Placement courses are offered at many high schools for the young adult to earn college credits for qualifying test scores. The DCS Education Specialist should assist the young adult with exploring options to earn college credit prior to entering the junior year in high school. If the young adult will be required to take remedial courses upon enrolling at a post-secondary institution, the DCS Education Specialist should assist the young adult in exploring options for remediation while in high school, such as the Tennessee Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Supports (SAILS).

The choice of careers is important for the young adult in determining the correct institution and major. The State provides free resources (College4TN.org) for the young adult to explore careers and to determine career interests. The DCS independent living specialist should assist the young adult in exploring options for career interests and the post-secondary opportunities to earn a degree in the chosen field.

NOTE:

TRIO is a set of federally-funded college opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. TRIO programs provide direct support services for students, and relevant training for directors and staff. The target populations of the TRIO programs are low income, first generation, and students with disabilities from 6th grade through college graduation. The 3 sections of TRIO are Talent Search (beginning in grade 6), Upward Bound (beginning in grade 9), and Student Support Services (post-secondary). The Upward Bound program provides academic instruction in mathematics, laboratory sciences, composition, literature, and foreign languages. Tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, work-study programs, education or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students; and programs and activities previously mentioned that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths, students who are in foster care or are aging out of foster care system or other disconnected students.

The board should recommend that the FSW or DCS Education Specialist inquire about the availability of the Upward Bound program at the student's school, and make all necessary steps to apply to the program.

TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

If the young adult desires to transition to employment upon graduating high school, the following steps may be taken:

Visit the career center (unemployment office) and register with www.JOBS4TN.org for career opportunities. The young adult can take the Career Readiness Certificate exam to receive the certificate. This allows the employer to determine the level of employability within their career field.

Visit the local Job Corps office to find out hands-on career technical training, education, money, personalized career plans, special programs for single parents and help develop a job and find employment. The young adult should visit www.jobcorps.gov or call 1-800-733-5627.

TRANSITION TO DIDD

If the young adult has an intellectual or developmental disability, no later than six months prior to the student turning 18, the board should ask if the FSW has applied for services through the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD). In order to qualify for DIDD services, appropriate documentation from the physician or the school should be provided and must state there is an intellectual disability.

The board should also ask if a conservator has been appointed to represent the young adult. Once the student turns eighteen years of age they are considered their own legal guardian, and because of this, the school system has to honor any request they make regarding their IEP. The conservator is responsible for making decisions for the young adult related to education, finances, medical needs, etc. If the application has not been submitted or the conservator appointment has not commenced, the board's recommendation should be for the FSW to do so immediately and that they follow DCS Policy 19.8 regarding the DIDD transition process. Schedule an administrative review in one month. If at the administrative review the FSW has not completed the recommendation, proceed with a direct referral to the court for the FSW to explain why the recommendation has not been implemented.

EXTENSION OF FOSTER CARE FOR YOUNG ADULTS COMPLETING HiSET

Question 9.4. Are you taking the HiSET?

This is to determine if the young adult is planning to take the HiSET. Please see the Glossary for definitions.

9.4.1. When do you plan on taking the test?

Indicate the date given. If the young adult does not have a date, then determine when the young adult will be eligible to take the test. Please see the glossary for eligibility requirements.

9.4.2. What help do you need to pass your HiSet? (i.e. accommodations, tutoring, etc.)

Below is a list of assistance that can be provided to aid the young adult with passing the test:

- **TUTORING:** If the young adult has indicated the need for additional HiSET academic support, the board members can recommend the FSW request funds for tutoring. Schedule an administrative review in one (1) month to ensure this has occurred.
- **IEP/504 PLAN ACCOMMODATIONS:** Board members should provide information to the young adult with a disability of the guidelines for requesting accommodations by going to <https://hiset.ets.org/requirements/disabilities>. Board members should recommend that the FSW and DCS Education Specialist assist the young adult with completing necessary forms to request accommodations.
 - As always, to follow up on any recommendation, your board can schedule an administrative review in one (1) month and have the FSW provide documentation of the request for accommodations.

Question 9.5. What problems or issues do you have in your classes or outside of school that may keep you from passing the test? (i.e.: need for tutoring, study skills, transportation, child care, housing security, bullying, etc.)

If the young adult reports they do have challenges, ensure they have the opportunity to report all of them. Below is a list of possible non-academic barriers that may prevent the student from graduating:

TRANSPORTATION

If the young adult has identified transportation concerns, review the Independent Living Plan to see if the concerns have been addressed. If the transportation concerns have not been addressed, then recommend for DCS and the Independent Living Specialist to develop a plan to resolve transportation issues. Schedule an administrative review in one month to ensure this has occurred. If at the administrative review it has not been completed by DCS and the Independent Living Specialist, proceed with a direct referral to explain why the recommendation was not followed.

HOUSING

If the young adult has identified housing concerns, then review the Housing section (Question 5) of the 18-21 Foster Care Review Board Summary Form. If the housing concern has not been addressed, make the recommendation for DCS and the housing specialist on the board (if available) to discuss housing options and develop a plan. Your FCRB can schedule an administrative review in 30 days to ensure this has occurred. If at the administrative review, the housing issues have not been resolved by DCS, you may consider a judicial referral, if the situation before the board meets that criteria.

EMPLOYMENT

If the young adult has identified the need for additional income, the recommendation should be made to explore WIOA or other workforce development programs.

CHILD CARE

If the young adult has identified child care as a concern, encourage the him/her to contact the Office of Student Services or the Department of Human Services for childcare eligibility.

Question 9.6. What are your plans after you get your HiSET? (i.e.: further education, college, vocational training, military, career, etc.)

Below is a list of possible paths for students upon passing the HiSET:

TRANSITIONING TO VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL PATH

If the young adult's plan is to obtain a certificate or diploma, the young adult must be aware of the entry requirements and deadlines for that career path. Students who complete a general high school diploma equivalency like the HiSET before they turn 19 are eligible for the Tennessee Promise program, which can help pay for technical and vocational education, **but they must complete the Tennessee Promise Scholarship application in the TSAC Student Portal by November 1 and the FAFSA by March 1 at www.fafsa.gov (see Question 7.11 for more information).**

Additionally, young adults should contact student services/admission office for admission requirements and fees by the fall/spring during senior year. It is important that preparations be made early for any necessary fees, including application and registration fees, etc. Failure to meet these required deadlines could result in the delay of enrollment and loss of financial assistance. It is recommended that in the junior year, the young adult signs up, prepares for, and takes the ACT. The ACT

meets a Tennessee graduation requirement and is required for some scholarship opportunities.

Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) offer different forms of enrollment which can allow students to begin classes immediately and aren't limited to traditional semesters. Upon completion of the HiSET a student can often immediately enroll in a TCAT program. The FSW should accompany the student to the TCAT to explore immediate enrollment.

TRANSITIONING TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE/FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION

If the young adult's plan is to obtain an associate or bachelor's degree, the young adult must be aware of the entry requirements and deadlines. Failure to meet the required deadlines can result in the delay of enrollment and loss of financial assistance. Prior to the junior year, the young adult must research post-secondary opportunities based on career interests, including understanding the requirements and deadlines for the ACT or SAT.

Application to a community college or a four-year institution should be started in the fall of senior year. It is important that preparations be made early for any necessary fees including application, registration, or housing fees. The FAFSA can be completed beginning on October 1 of the student's senior year, and should be completed prior to application.

If the young adult before your board is completing the HiSET and plans to go to college, recommend the young adult work with the FSW, DCS Education Specialist, and/or the Independent Living Specialist to conduct a CFTM to ensure all fees are paid and applications submitted. Your board can schedule an administrative review in 30 days to ensure this has occurred, and documentation provided to confirm if needed.

TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

If the young adult desires to transition to employment upon passing the HiSET, the following steps may be taken:

Visit the career center (unemployment office) and register with WWW.JOBS4TN.ORG for career opportunities. The young adult should take the Career Readiness Certificate exam to receive the certificate. This allows the employer to determine the level of employability within their career field.

Visit the local Job Corps office to find out hands on career technical training, education, money, personalized career plans, special programs for single parents

and help develop a job and find employment. The young adult should visit www.jobcorps.gov or call 1-800-733-5627.

Questions for young adults enrolled in college

Question 9.7. What challenges are you facing *inside* the classroom that may hinder you from successfully completing your academic goals?

CHALLENGES: SCHEDULING, COURSE SELECTION, MAINTAINING PROGRESS TOWARD GRADUATION OR CERTIFICATE

RELATED SUPPORT: ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advising is a service provided at colleges and universities to ensure the young adult is enrolled in the correct academic program and taking the correct courses under the chosen academic program. Academic advisors can provide assistance creating the class schedule, like the student's school counselor did in high school.

Academic advising is essential to the young adult's success at the institution, which includes (1) enrolling in the correct courses, (2) taking the proper course hours, and (3) graduating in a timeframe that coincides with receipt of EFC services.

Question for young adult: Who is your academic advisor?

1. The first step is to identify if the young adult has an academic advisor and if he/she has met with the advisor. If the young adult has met with the academic advisor, then determine if the advisor has been helpful. If the young adult has not met with the advisor, then identify if the young adult knows how and where to contact the advisor.
2. The student should **communicate their career goals to their advisor**. It is not uncommon for young adults not to have decided upon a career path or to change their career path. Make sure the young adult understands the significance of communicating to the academic advisor their chosen career path or any change. For those young adults who remain undecided, each institution has a career services office which can assist them with identifying the option for career interests and choosing a major.
3. If the young adult does not know who their advisor is, the board can consider recommending that the young adult go to the Academic Advisement Office for a change in advisor and to receive advisement services, and that the DCS Independent Living Office assist.
4. The student should plan to review required coursework with their advisor. The course catalog is the academic contract that states the required courses a young adult must take to complete the degree or program. The required courses within

the program catalog are valid for a set amount of time for that specific institution. In order to determine the amount of time for the specific institution, the young adult should contact the registrar's office. It is important for the young adult to keep a record of the required courses in the program.

Each institution may have additional resources to support the program completion by the young adult, which may include degree maps or academic plans. The degree map or academic plan provides a detailed overview of a young adult's progress related to their program of study. These resources allow a young adult to understand (1) the remaining courses required for graduation, (2) the critical courses necessary to be successful upon completion, and (3) the impact of a potential change in major.

5. The young adult can be encouraged to meet with their advisor to review their degree map or academic plan at the beginning of each semester. The degree maps or academic plan may also be available online for the student to access through his or her personal account login.

Note: Remedial/ Learning support courses will not count as credit towards graduation. However, it is important for the young adult to complete all learning support requirements in order to maintain progress towards graduation. Although the credits do not count toward graduation, the young adult's participation in learning support courses can be necessary to maintain full-time status.

CHALLENGE: ADDING AND DROPPING CLASSES

During the term, the young adult may need to add or drop a course. It is important for the young adult to understand the potential impact of adjusting their course load. The reasons for dropping a course may be related to poor course performance, incorrect course selection, or time conflicts. The reasons for adding a course may be related to meeting minimum eligibility requirements, or satisfying necessary program requirements. However, improperly adding or dropping of a course may result in loss of financial aid, program ineligibility or delayed progress in their program of study.

RELATED SUPPORT: INSTRUCTOR, ACADEMIC ADVISOR, AND DCS OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT LIVING AND EXTENSION OF FOSTER CARE

When the young adult desires to drop a class, it is important to determine the reason why they are doing so, and if they have explored all options to remain in the class. The young adult should first discuss with the instructor their concerns, and seek solutions to avoid dropping the course, such as tutoring, online course completion, study groups, or outside assignments.

The young adult should take the following steps to avoid a negative impact from adding or dropping a course:

- Consult with their academic advisor to discuss the plans to add or drop a course. Before dropping a course, the young adult should be sure that dropping the course won't delay graduation or certificate achievement.
- Discuss with Independent Living Specialist the intent to add or drop a course, and if it will affect EFC eligibility.
- Refer to the student handbook regarding the add/drop process and all deadlines.
- Check with the Bursar's office (payment office) to determine if there are any subsequent fees, charges or refunds that may be associated with adding or dropping a course. The young adult needs to be aware that these costs are their personal responsibility.

CHALLENGE: RESOURCE ISSUES RELATED TO SUPPLIES AND SUPPLEMENTAL NEEDS

In order for the young adult to ensure success in their course of study, it is vital to have the required resources and tools stated in the syllabus or by the instructor. Resources may include: scientific calculators, computer software, or any additional items necessary for class participation and successful completion of the course.

SUPPORT: DCS OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT LIVING.

If the young adult is unable to obtain the needed supplies, consider recommending make the FSW or DCS Education Specialist identify funds to assist the young adult with purchasing the necessary items, and follow up as needed.

CHALLENGE: DISABILITY RELATED ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

SUPPORT: IEP/504 PLAN ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

In post-secondary education, this is referred to as a student with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For any young adult who had an IEP or 504 Plan in secondary education, it is necessary for the young adult to inform the institution of their specific needs. For a young adult who expresses reluctance in registering with the Office of Student Services, help the young adult understand the purpose of registering is to help them achieve the goal of graduating. The reasons for the accommodations and modifications remain confidential. After registering with the Office of Student Services, the young adult has to set up a meeting for the written accommodation plan that is needed in the classroom for the instructor. A delay in establishing an accommodation plan may negatively impact the young adult's academic performance.

When immediately transitioning from secondary to post-secondary education, the young adult will need to present their current 504 Plan or IEP to the Office of Student Services at the new institution.

When transferring between post-secondary institutions, the young adult will need to request that their accommodations plans are sent to the new institution. The young adult should verify the new institution has received the accommodation plan from the previous institution. The young adult should ask if the new institution has additional requirements prior to the meeting to establish the new accommodation plan.

If the young adult encounters issues with establishing an accommodation plan, further assistance may be required.

The board can consider recommending the following:

- The FSW shall accompany the young adult to the appropriate office that is responsible for disabilities to seek assistance in initiating the accommodation plan, or reasons for denial. Please inform the young adult that this may require them to sign HIPPA and FERPA release of information for the FSW.
- The FSW shall assist the young adult with scheduling and obtaining any necessary documentation to support the accommodation plan. This may include talking with the young adult's doctor or therapist regarding the young adult's medical condition, mental health diagnosis and/or medication regimen.
- The FSW shall immediately consult the Education Specialist to discuss the issues related to obtaining the accommodation plan for the young adult.

If an instructor fails to accommodate the plan, the young adult should report this to the Office of Student Disabilities.

SUPPORT: TRIO

As soon as a youth begins their post-secondary education, the FSW or DCS Education Specialist should inquire about the availability of the TRIO Student Support Services program. TRIO is a set of federally-funded college opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. TRIO programs provide direct support services for students, and relevant training for directors and staff. The target populations of the TRIO programs are low income, first generation, and students with disabilities from 6th grade through college graduation. The 3 sections of TRIO are Talent Search (beginning in grade 6), Upward Bound (beginning in grade 9), and Student Support Services (post-secondary). The Student Support Services program provides opportunities for academic development, assists students with basic college requirements, and motivates students toward successful completion of their post-secondary education. The program can provide academic tutoring, counseling services, and assistance with course selection, financial aid application, and career or transfer goals.

The board can recommend that FSW or DCS Education Specialist inquire about the availability of the Student Support Services program at the young adult's institution, and assist the young adult in applying to the program.

CHALLENGE: COURSE MANAGEMENT

SUPPORT: SYLLABUS AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The syllabus is the young adult's contract for the course. It is important for the young adult to review the syllabus and always maintain a record of the document. The syllabus contains the guidelines to be used to successfully pass the course. Poor performance in a course may be the result of challenges with course management. Course management skills include - ability to effectively communicate with the instructor, time management, note-taking skills, test-taking skills, and study skills. If a young adult reports poor performance related to these or other skills, then make the following recommendations:

The young adult should be encouraged to effectively communicate with their instructors. It is necessary to establish a positive outlook and relationship with the instructor. Encourage the young adult to build a rapport with the instructor from the beginning regarding the subject matter. Questions about the syllabus, lectures, projects, exams, deadlines, and additional resources should always be directed to the instructor immediately.

For note-taking skills, test-taking skills and study skills, the young adult should contact the Office of Student Services for tutoring support. The young adult should be encouraged to collaborate with other students in the form of study groups and note-sharing. The young adult should also contact the instructor to identify additional resources to understand the subject matter.

CHALLENGE: CLASSROOM CONFLICTS

The young adult may have concerns about their safety and well-being in class. It is important for the young adult to understand their civil rights within the institution.

SUPPORT: STUDENT HANDBOOK, COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY STUDENT SERVICES, DCS OFFICE OF INDEPENDENT LIVING AND/ OR YOUTH VILLAGES CASE WORKER

The student handbook contains the guidelines and policies for addressing concerns related to harassment, intimidation, discrimination and conflicts of interest that may impair the young adult's performance in class. The handbook also contains the procedures for addressing these concerns.

The board can recommend that the young adult ask the FSW, Youth Villages worker, GAL, CASA or other advocate to assist with the procedures and requirements with the handbook and make a referral to the Office of Student Services.

Question 9.8. What challenges are you facing *outside* the classroom that may hinder you from successfully completing your academic goals by your anticipated graduation date?

TRANSPORTATION

RESPONSE: If the young adult has identified transportation concerns, review the Independent Living Plan to see if the concerns have been addressed. If the transportation concerns have not been addressed, consider recommending that the YV / DCS worker and the Independent Living Specialist develop a plan to address transportation issues. Your board can schedule an administrative review in 30 days to assess progress.

HOUSING

RESPONSE: If the young adult has identified housing concerns, then review the Housing section of the 18-21 Foster Care Review Board Summary Form. If the housing concern has not been addressed, consider recommending that the FSW and the DCS Office of Independent Living discuss housing options and develop a plan. Your board can schedule an administrative review in 30 days to assess progress. If at the administrative review the housing issues have not been resolved by the FSW, consider whether the situation meets the criteria for judicial referral.

EMPLOYMENT

RESPONSE: If the young adult has identified the need for income, consider recommending that the worker support the young adult's exploration of work study opportunities with their institution or other workforce development programs.

CHILD CARE

RESPONSE: If the young adult has identified child care as a concern, encourage the young adult to contact the Office of Student Services or the Department of Human Services for childcare eligibility. Consider recommending that the worker on the case connect the young adult to the DCS Office of Independent Living for financial support, if available.

WITHDRAWALS

RESPONSE: During the young adult's post-secondary experience, it may be necessary that they withdraw from an institution for a variety of reasons which include medical, mental health and personal matters. If the young adult needs to leave the institution prior to the end of a term, the decision to withdraw may be a result of unanticipated circumstances that hinder the young adult's ability to continue their studies. Withdrawal from an institution should be considered as a last resort after all resources have been exhausted and the young adult is still unable to continue their academic studies.

The board can consider the following recommendations in the circumstances:

- The FSW shall accompany the young adult to the appropriate office that is responsible for withdrawals and appeals; and assist the young adult with initiating the process. Please inform the young adult that this may require them to sign HIPPA and FERPA release of information for the FSW.
- The FSW shall assist the young adult with scheduling and obtaining any necessary documentation to support the withdrawal or appeals process. This may include talking with the young adult's doctor or therapist regarding the young adult's medical condition, mental health diagnosis and/or medication regimen.
- The FSW shall discuss the young adult's ongoing eligibility for extension of foster care should a withdrawal occur. **As long as the young adult can work at least 80 hours a month, they should retain EFC eligibility.**

Once the young adult is stabilized, it is important for the young adult and DCS to be aware of the conditions of the appeal or withdrawal, which may include course work completion.

Question 9.9. Is there an adult in your support system who is able to assist you with any of the challenges identified in questions in 9.7 and 9.8?

If Yes, proceed to next question.

If No, consider recommending that the FSW and young adult identify a person who is able to assist the young adult with addressing their educational barriers. This person should be incorporated and participate in the development of a revised transitional living plan. Schedule an administrative review in one (1) month to determine the status of identifying this person.

If after one month the young adult has not identified a person to assist with the educational barriers, recommend the following:

To request the assistance of DCS support staff which may include Education Specialist, Independent Living Specialist, nurse, psychologist, TN Care Representative, or EFC FSW. On campus, the young adult should contact the Office of Student Services for assistance.

Question 9.10. What are your plans once you complete your degree or certificate?

The purpose of completing a degree or certificate allows the young adult to successfully pursue their professional and personal goals. There are,

however, many steps prior to graduation that are necessary for successful transition to the next step.

CHANGING INSTITUTIONS PRIOR TO COMPLETING A DEGREE

During the young adult's post-secondary experience, it may be necessary to change institutions for a variety of reasons. Academic reasons may include changes in a field of study, academic course performance, or classroom conflicts. Non-academic reasons may include relocation, financial hardships, medical reasons and personal matters. In spite of the reason for change, the decision may result in unfavorable academic consequences, such as loss of credits, financial disqualifications, and an overall delay of completion.

If a young adult finds it necessary to transfer from one institution to another before completing a degree or certificate, the following steps should be taken:

- 1) The young adult should discuss with the Independent Living Specialist the desire to transfer to another institution and the necessary steps to take to ensure continued eligibility, or options and steps for future eligibility.
- 2) The young adult should obtain the transcripts from all previous post-secondary institutions. Please note that transcripts may not be obtained from an institution if the young adult is not in good standing with any previous institution, due to outstanding fees, academic probation, or other institutional violations.
- 3) Prior to transfer, the young adult must be aware of the transfer requirements, deadlines, and fees.
- 4) The young adult should meet with an admissions advisor at the new institution to discuss the process for enrollment and bring with them all documentation from previous institutions.

TRANSITIONING TO A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION

If the young adult's plan is to obtain a bachelor's degree, then the young adult must transfer and enroll in a four-year institution. The young adult must be aware of the transfer requirements, deadlines, and fees. (It is important to request assistance from DCS with fees as early as possible). Failure to enroll in the required classes at the community college could result in the loss of credits transfer upon enrolling in the four-year institution. Upon entering community college, the young adult should inform their advisor at the first meeting of the intent to transfer to a four-year institution. The semester prior to transferring to the four-year institution, the young adult should contact the four-year institution to obtain information of the necessary requirements for enrollment. To ensure successful transfer of course credits, the young adult should visit www.tntransferpathway.org to view the required courses for their identified major.

TRANSITION TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

If the young adult's plan is to obtain a graduate degree, after completion of their bachelor degree, the young adult must be aware of the entry requirements and deadlines for graduate school. Failure to meet the required deadlines can result in the delay of enrollment. Prior to the junior year, the young adult must research graduate school opportunities based on their career interests, including understanding the requirements and deadlines or enrollment in graduate school. The junior year should be used for studying the graduate school entrance exam. For example, a person wanting to attend law school would have to take the LSAT in order to apply. Most other programs requiring an exam require the GRE. The graduate school entrance exam should be taken no later than the fall of their senior year in order to apply for scholarships and need-based money. Application to graduate school should occur during the senior year. It is important that preparations be made early for any necessary fees. The young adult should continue to apply for FAFSA.

In order to receive additional support, the young adult should contact their advisor, EFC FSW, or mentor.

TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

If the young adult desires to transition to employment upon completion of certificate or degree, the following steps should be taken:

1. Visit the institution's Career Placement Office and inform them of their intent to seek employment upon graduation.
2. Visit the career center (unemployment office) and register with WWW.JOBS4TN.ORG for career opportunities. The young adult, who is on a vocational career path, should take the Career Readiness Certificate Exam to receive the certificate. This allows the employer to determine the level of employability within their career field.
3. Young adults who are on a technical career path should ensure the completion of all certification requirements to become gainfully employed.

EXTENSION OF FOSTER CARE FOR YOUNG ADULTS COMPLETING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OR WORK

Attendance at court or Foster Care Review Board may require the young adult to be absent from a school or work. There is no statutory attendance protection for a young adult enrolled in post-secondary education or employed. An unplanned absence may negatively impact the young adult's performance in school or on the job. It is imperative that the young adult make the necessary preparation for an absence. For young adults enrolled in college, at the beginning of each academic term the young adult should provide documentation regarding the nature of the absence to satisfy requirements for

program eligibility. Young adults who are employed should communicate with their supervisors about the obligations of EFC regarding court appearances.

The board should consider the following recommendations:

- The board shall provide the FSW with the form letter explaining the eligibility requirements for extension of foster care and the need to attend court and Foster Care Review Board (See Appendix, page 91). The FSW shall complete the letter on DCS letterhead and provide the young adult with the original letter. **This letter must be updated each term or for each new employer.**
- For young adults enrolled in college, the student shall provide the letter to each course instructor and the Dean of Students at the beginning of each term. Should the young adult encounter resistance with an instructor, he/she should request a meeting with the Dean of Students to discuss the need to miss class to attend a court date or meeting related to their eligibility to continue Extension of Foster Care. (In the event there is not a Dean of Students, then the young adult should locate the campus director.)
- The young adult with employment should provide the letter to their employer. The young adult should communicate their work schedule to their DCS case worker, so that FCRB case docketing can occur during non-work times, if possible.
- The board can also consult with the young adult's academic and/or school schedule to schedule board meetings and court dates that minimally interfere with the young adult's efforts to further their education and employment goals.

UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH

An undocumented youth is an immigrant who entered the United States without legal citizenship or lawful immigrant status (green card, visa, passport, etc.). Although the topic of immigration is not directly related to education, it does intersect with education in several ways. Youth under the age of 18 and in care are able to attend United States public schools and despite DCS's lack of federal funding to support these youth, they are able to benefit from DCS services and support.

Undocumented youth cannot legally receive any federally funded student financial aid, including loans, grants, scholarships, or work study money. Undocumented young adults will not qualify for Extension of Foster Care; however, the board should make recommendations to the FSW prior to the youth turning 18 to assist these youth in the transitional planning. If a youth in the custody of DCS comes before the board and it is discovered that the youth does not have legal status, there are several recommendations that the board can consider.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)

Undocumented young people under 21 may be eligible to apply for legal status through a program called Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). The path to SIJS begins in juvenile court with a youth under 18. In order to pursue SIJS, the youth must be abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent. The juvenile court supervising the care of such a youth must issue a **predicate order** before SIJS application.

- A juvenile court in the United States must:
 - Declare the youth under 18 is dependent on the court and legally place the youth in the custody of an agency of a State (i.e., DCS), or an individual or entity appointed by a State or juvenile court.
 - Find that reunification with one or both of the immigrant's parents is not viable due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, or a similar basis found under State law.
 - Determine that it would not be in the youth's best interest to be returned to the youth's or parent's previous country of nationality or country of last habitual residence.
 - Specific findings of fact / details are required.

A legally valid predicate order is crucial for SIJS viability. A youth's advocate or an attorney should seek support from a knowledgeable practitioner at this stage.⁵⁵

Once the predicate order is obtained, the unmarried young person has until they turn 21 to apply for legal status under SIJS. To apply for SIJS, a young person's representative can carefully fill out a petition for status, known as Form I-360, and submit to the United

⁵⁵ 8 USC §1101(a)(27)(J)(2018); *In re Domingo C.L.* (Tenn. App., 2017), *In re Danely C.* (Tenn. App., 2017). 12

States Customs and Immigration Office. There are significant delays in processing, and approval can take a year or longer.⁵⁶

What does SIJS provide?

- Permission to remain in the United States
- Eligibility for a work permit
- Eligibility for a green card order.

Although SIJS is commonly implicated in child welfare, there are other paths to legal status that might be open to immigrant youth before the court. Immigration law can be complicated- fortunately, there are advocates for immigrant children that can help.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

Undocumented young adults over 18 have fewer options for legal status, which is why obtaining an SIJS predicate order from juvenile court prior to the youth's 18th birthday is so critical. Another path to legal status that had been available for young adults who entered the country as children is called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).⁵⁷ At the time of publication, the federal government is prohibited from granting status for any new DACA applicants, although individuals enrolled in the program prior to 2021 are currently eligible for renewal. The current status of DACA may change, so please check a website like the National Immigration Law Center for updates.

DACA allows individuals who meet specific guidelines to request consideration of deferred action from US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Through DACA several benefits are available to a youth such as:

- USA work authorization
- Driver's license / state ID
- Social Security card
- Temporary shield from removal proceedings

See Appendix on page 98 for additional information and guidance.

Recommendations

Consider recommending the following, as appropriate to the specific circumstances of the review:

⁵⁶ Sally M. Joyner, Melissa M. Lopez, and Christina I. Thomas SIJS: From State Court to Green Card. https://www.tncourts.gov/sites/default/files/docs/sijs_-_from_state_court_to_green_card.pdf

⁵⁷ The status of the DACA program was in flux at the time of publication due to litigation and suggested legislation. The information in this section reflects the last approved requirements and procedures for the program.

- FSW should conduct a CFTM and include the DCS Legal/ DCS Independent Living Specialist to determine if the youth can be considered for SIJS.
- The FSW utilize state and local advocacy services (i.e., community-based advocacy groups, pro-bono legal advocacy groups, Justice for Our Neighbors, Center for Refugees and Immigrants of Tennessee, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, Catholic Charities in the East, Legal Aid of Middle Tennessee in Middle Tennessee, and Advocates for Immigrant Rights in West Tennessee) to assist the youth in obtaining appropriate documentation.
- For youth considering college, FSW should ensure a CFTM is held with DCS Independent Living to address the youth's future needs. Some colleges and universities may allow undocumented youth to qualify for in-state tuition rates in order to pay for college.
- If a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) is appointed, they should be included in the conversations about options for legal status.

At the next review, the board should follow up on progress toward the likelihood of status.

Finally, please see our website to review a webinar on the path to legal status for children and youth under 18 and in foster care: <https://www.tncourts.gov/programs/court-improvement/distance-learning>. Click on Immigration Considerations in Tennessee Child Welfare for a primer on immigration advocacy for youth in Tennessee child welfare.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRANSITIONAL PLANNING FOR UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH **(TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TRANSITIONAL PLAN CHECKLIST)**

- **SOCIAL SUPPORT/PERMANENCY:** The youth's support person should be able to advocate for the unique needs as they navigate through the DACA/SIJS process.
- **HOUSING:** The FSW should specifically address the financial barriers and lease requirements for an undocumented youth obtaining and maintaining stable and secure housing. Emergency housing and shelter housing options/list should be exhaustive and should include specific information regarding immigrant and refugee community resources. If DACA/SIJS is approved, the youth will have additional housing options.
- **EMPLOYMENT:** Undocumented youth have a unique barrier to legal employment. The FSW should assist the youth in obtaining apprenticeships while they continue to pursue the DACA/SIJS approval.
- **EDUCATION:** The FSW should inquire about the availability of fast-track options so that the youth can obtain a diploma or HiSET before turning 18. Undocumented youth have post-secondary options, but they may be limited due to lack of access to federal aid and may be required to pay out-of-pocket for all school tuition and related expenses. The FSW should reach out to the community advocacy

programs that may have knowledge of educational institutions that will offer in-state tuition rates for undocumented youth, etc.

- **MANAGING HEALTH ISSUES:** Undocumented youth may have difficulty obtaining health insurance. The FSW should assist the youth in identifying free or low-cost health services through local clinics, community based health programs, emergency rooms, etc.
- **STATE ISSUED ID:** The FSW should immediately begin the DACA/SIJS process in order to obtain this necessary document.
- **ACCESS TO BENEFITS:** Undocumented youth may find it difficult to access benefits. The FSW should direct the youth in locating community resources, programs, and possible grants to assist with expenses.

EDUCATION GLOSSARY

504 Plan - Plan of support and accommodation for a child with a disability whose needs can be met in a general classroom.

Academic Advising - A service provided at each institution to ensure that the student is enrolled in the correct academic program and is taking the correct courses under the chosen academic programs.

Accommodation - The term "accommodation" may be used to describe an alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete assigned tasks. They allow students with disabilities to pursue a regular course of study. Since accommodations do not alter what is being taught, instructors should be able to implement the same grading scale for students with disabilities as they do for students without disabilities.

ACT (Assessment College Test) - A standard-based education test that assesses students' academic readiness for college.

Additional Support - Providing the child with extra help or support so they can get the most out of their education and reach their fullest potential. E.g., tutoring, credit recovery, online courses, materials, study time.

Alternate Academic Diploma - Beginning with students entering 9th grade in 2018, alternate academic diploma may be awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities at the end of their fourth year of high school who have (1) participated in the high school alternate assessments, (2) earned the prescribed 22 credit minimum, (3) received special education services or supports and made satisfactory progress on the IEP, (4) have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct, and (5) have completed a transition assessment(s) that measures a minimum, post-secondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community involvement. The required credits may be earned either through the state-approved standards or through alternate academic diploma course requirements defined by the Department of Education. A student who earns a alternate academic diploma shall continue to be eligible for special education services under IDEA until the student receives a regular high school diploma or through the school year in which the student turns twenty-two (22). (taken from the Tennessee State Board of Education High School Policy 2.103)

Alternative Education Setting - A setting outside of a traditional school structure that provides the freedom and ability to experience learning in a new way and increases student success. An example could include a school that allows a student to learn at their own pace or one that has non-traditional hours.

Alternative Placement - A student is placed in an alternative learning environment where the student continues to receive their education. This usually occurs after chronic or serious infractions.

ASD (Achievement School District) - A local school district created due to the State's determination that the LEA has not met minimum academic benchmarks for student success. These schools were listed on the bottom 5% for academic achievement. The goal is to take the school's performance to the top 25% within 5 years.

BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan) - A formalized plan that outlines the steps to change specific negative behaviors a student may have.

Block Schedule – a block schedule in which students take four (4) 90-minute classes every day and credit is earned at the end of the semester.

Certification - Certification provides independent verification of a certain level of expertise in a particular area. The primary purpose of a certification program is to assess knowledge, skills, or competencies that candidates are expected to have already mastered prior to applying for the program. Usually, people get certification for different jobs by taking exams, such as real estate, nursing, or contracting exams that will license them to work at a certain level in their chosen profession.

Certificate of Completion - A certificate of completion can mean different things depending upon the program in which a person participates. The intent of a certificate program is to provide instruction and training to aid participants in acquiring specific knowledge, skills, or competencies. Many trade and vocational schools, and a number of junior or community colleges offer training in various fields that do not result in a college degree. In lieu of this degree, people who complete these programs may have a certificate showing that they've fulfilled all of the requirements of the program to certain standards. Some vocational and job training programs have the option of earning college degrees, as well. Some people might earn this certificate and an associate of arts (A.A.) degree at the same time or after taking a few more courses. The way these certificates are treated can very much depend on the way a job in the field in which a person trains is treated.

Course Catalog - The academic contract that states the required courses a student must take to complete the degree or program. The required courses within the program catalog are valid for a set amount of time and for a specific institution.

Course Management - Includes the ability to effectively communicate with the instructor, time management, note-taking skills, test-taking skills, and self-confidence of performance in a class.

Credit Recovery - An opportunity for a student to re-take a course in which they previously were not academically successful in earning a credit, or to improve grades in a course. The courses may be available on-line.

Current School Year - The school in which the child is presently enrolled, or has most recently completed if during the summer.

DCS Education Specialist -The Education Specialist provides expertise to the family, case managers, students, and schools to make sure the educational needs of youth in

the care of DCS are met and provides a seamless transition for students entering new and unfamiliar school environments.

Detention - A form of punishment by which a student is made to stay after regular school hours.

DIDDS (Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) - The agency responsible for providing health and supportive services for qualifying individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities upon turning the age of 18.

Disability – A handicapping condition which meets the state criteria, including intellectual, physical, and mental disabilities, as determined by the appropriate assessment specialist.

Disciplinary Referrals - An infraction of the student code of conduct which results in a referral to the administrator or principal.

Disciplinary Report - A generated report that outlines the disciplinary referral.

Early Head Start - provides early continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low income infants and toddlers and their families and pregnant women.

Early Post-Secondary Opportunities

AP (Advanced Placement) - College level courses that a student can take in high school to potentially receive college credit upon passing an end of course national examination. These courses may be weighted by adding five points to all grades used to calculate the semester average.

Cambridge International Examinations – A division within the University of Cambridge, Cambridge International Examination provides internationally recognized academic programs for students ages 5 to 19. The high school A and AS Level courses, available only through approved Cambridge International Schools, provide students the opportunity to earn postsecondary credit that is accepted by colleges in the U.S. and abroad.

College Level Examination Program - Developed by the College Board, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams are used to assess mastery of postsecondary-level material acquired in a variety of ways - through general academic instructions, significant independent study or extracurricular work. Students can earn credit for postsecondary coursework in a specific subject.

Dual Enrollment - Dual enrollment is a postsecondary course, taught either at the postsecondary institution or at the high school, by postsecondary faculty or credentialed adjunct faculty.

IB (International Baccalaureate) - Supports schools and teachers to provide a rigorous high-quality education offering professional development that improves pedagogy and leadership. Students test at the higher level as these courses receive a more universal credit-awarding by a wide range of colleges and universities. College credit may be awarded upon passing an end of course national examination. These courses may be weighted by adding five points to all grades used to calculate the semester average.

Local Dual Credit - High school course aligned to a local postsecondary institution's course and exam. Students who pass the exam earn credits that are accepted and/or recognized by the local postsecondary institution.

Statewide Dual Credit – A high school level course that qualifies for college level credit upon passing the standardized exam to any Tennessee public post-secondary institution. These courses may be weighted by adding four points to all grades used to calculate the semester average

Student Industry Certification – Industry certifications (IC) are earned through secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs and courses. High school students are encouraged to focus their elective credits on robust, career-aligned learning pathways. Robust learning pathways should culminate with the achievement of nationally recognized industry certifications; meaningful work based learning experiences, and/or attainment of postsecondary credit hours through early postsecondary opportunities. As it pertains to industry certifications, all department-promoted certifications are aligned with postsecondary and employment opportunities and with the competencies and skills that students should have acquired through their chosen programs of study.

Educational Conservator - When a person cannot manage their own affairs, the court can name someone to help. The two ways to do this are called guardianships and conservatorships. Guardianships identify someone who can help with personal needs. Conservatorships are for financial affairs.

Electives - Courses that fall outside the core academic subject area.

Eligibility - Students meeting the state standards of having a disability and requiring special education and/or related services.

Excused Absence - Absences from school or a class for which the student has an allowable excuse pursuant to the compulsory attendance law or rules of the local school board.

Expulsion - When a student has been removed from their current school for up to 180 school days.

Extended Class time (seat time) - The lengthening of regular class time to focus on core academic learning and enrichment activities to obtain required credits and enhance student success.

Extension of Foster Care (EFC) – Services that are available to a young person turning 18 in foster care that offer housing, education, wraparound services, case management, and etc. until the age of 21 in Tennessee.

Extracurricular Activities - Activities falling outside the realm of academics, e.g. school clubs, cheerleading, athletics, chorus, etc.

Fast Track options - Compressed time in classes that meet for the same total number of required hours as a full term class to receive credit.

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) - A federal legislation in the United States that protects the privacy of students' personally identifiable information (PII). The act applies to all educational institutions that receive federal funds.

FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid) - A form required by the government for application to any federal education aid program, used to provide funding for post-secondary education. The FAFSA process should start on October 1 of the senior year of high school and each year thereafter for post-secondary education. The FSA ID number should be requested in October with the final submission of the FAFSA application during the month of October. For help, visit StudentAid.gov/fsaid.

FBA (Functional Behavior Assessment) - A functional behavior assessment (FBA) is a comprehensive screener used to identify the causes and triggers for inappropriate behaviors. The process usually involves documenting the antecedent (what comes before the behavior), behavior, and consequence (what happens after the behavior) over a number of weeks; interviewing teachers, parents, and others who work with the child; evaluating how the child's disability may affect behavior; and manipulating the environment to see if a way can be found to avoid the behavior.

FSW (Family Service Worker) - The DCS case manager assigned to the case.

Head Start - A federally funded educational program that promotes school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development.

High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) - The option in Tennessee for receiving the High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) is the HiSET. The GED is no longer offered in Tennessee.

HIPPA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability ACT) - A US law designed to provide privacy standards to protect patients' medical records and other health information provided by health plans, doctors, hospitals and other health care providers.

HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) - An alternative to the GED beginning January 2014. It is offered both as computer and paper-based testing. You must be 18 years of age to take the test, or if 17 have a waiver signed by the school system.

Honors Courses – courses that substantially exceed the content standards learning expectations and performance indicators approved by the State Board of Education. These courses may be weighted by adding three points to all grades used to calculate the semester average.

IDEIA or IDEA (Individual Disability Education Improvement Act) - A federal law that requires that Special Education Services be made available for all children starting at age three, who have met the eligibility requirements. Children have to meet state and federal requirements of having a disability. All students eligible for Special Education Services can be served under an IEP (Individual Education Plan) up to the age 21. The IEP is the official document of programs and services offered to the child.

IEP (Individualized Education Plan) - The annually written record of an eligible individual's special education and related services. The IEP describes the unique educational needs of the student and the manner in which those educational needs will be met.

IEP Progress Report - Progress on the short-term objectives of a student's IEP, which should follow the report card cycle.

IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) – The plan for special services for children with developmental delays developed for children between the ages of birth and 3 years.

IHP (Individualized Health Plan) – The plan considers how to deal with what might happen with a student medically while the student is in school. It is designed to address medical issues that do not impact the student's learning. An IHP is a formal agreement that outlines the student's needs and a plan for addressing those needs. Parents or caregivers, the student, the student's health care provider, and a multidisciplinary team of school staff work together to develop the IHP.

Integrated Math - A combination of Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II that is designed to bridge mathematical learning skills. Some schools are choosing to transition to this format of math classes.

ISS (In-School Suspension) - In-school suspension (ISS) is a disciplinary technique which is designed to penalize problem students for their behavior while still ensuring that they participate in the academic community in some way. When a student is put on in-school suspension, he or she is removed from the traditional classroom environment and put into a special suspension classroom, led by a teacher or team of teachers. The suspension may last a few days or weeks, depending on the student's offense, and the student may be warned that future offenses could result in additional suspension or expulsion. For the length of the suspension, the student reports for classes in the

suspension room, and he or she is expected to complete homework assignments, work on projects, engage with other students, and, of course, show up for class.

Job Corps - Job Corps is a free education and training program that helps young people learn a career, earn a high school diploma or HSED, and find and keep a good job. For eligible young people at least 16 years of age that qualify as low income, Job Corps provides the all-around skills needed to succeed in a career and in life.

LEA (Local Education Agency) - A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State to perform a service function for public elementary or secondary schools in the city, county, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties as recognized by the state.

M Team (Multidisciplinary Team) - Group of professionals from diverse disciplines who come together to provide comprehensive assessment and consultation to develop strategies, approaches, and pull together resources.

Manifestation Meeting - This occurs when there is a disciplinary infraction. Its purpose is to determine if the student's behavior was or was not a manifestation of their disability. This must occur if the suspension is 5 or more consecutive days, or if it results in a change of placement for more than 10 consecutive days.

Modifications - The term "modification" may be used to describe a change in the curriculum. Modifications are made for students with disabilities who are unable to comprehend all of the content an instructor is teaching. For example, assignments might be reduced in number and modified significantly for an elementary school student with cognitive impairments that limit his/her ability to understand the content in the general education class in which they are included.

Modified Block Schedule – Sometimes referred to as an A/B schedule in which students take eight (8) 90-minute classes that meet every other day. Some courses earn one-half credit at the end of the semester. Some courses earn a full credit at the end of a year.

National (Student) Industry Certifications – Career and Technical courses that offer national industry certification through a nationally recognized examination. These courses may be weighted by adding three points to all grades used to calculate the semester average.

Online Courses - Classes taken over the internet through an accredited institution to achieve high school course credits that may not be available to the student during the school term.

Occupational Diploma – Diploma awarded to students with disabilities who may not be able to earn a regular high school diploma. Must be determined by the conclusion of the student's 10th grade year, or two academic years prior to the expected graduation date.

Occupational Therapy – Therapeutic treatment to improve learning and behavior such as motor skills, cognitive processing, and visual and perceptual problems.

OSS (Out of School Suspensions) - When the student is temporarily removed from school for a violation of school policies or rules. Suspensions can last up to 10 days.

PACT (Scholastic Assessment Test) - A preliminary version of the ACT, to measure readiness for college and to gain access to scholarships.

Post-Secondary Education - Education beyond high school or college preparatory school.

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test) - A preliminary version of the SAT, to measure readiness for college and to gain access to scholarships. Also called PSAT/NMSQT.

Progress Report (Report Card) - A report of the student's progress throughout the grading cycle.

Report Card - A teacher's written assessment of a student's work and conduct, sent to the student's parent or guardian at the end of the grading cycle.

Residential Placement Change – When a youth has a change in their primary place of residence. This does not dictate that the educational placement should change because there has been a change in where the child resides.

RTI - Response to Intervention – multi-tiered approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs.

SAILS (Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support) - Offers high school remediation in Math and English in replacement of bridge level courses when a young adult has scored below the requirements to begin college level courses. Young adults who successfully complete the course requirements in high school officially test out of the remediation requirements in college.

Saturday School - When the student is required to attend school on a Saturday which is usually a non-school day.

SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) - A standards based educational test that assesses student's academic readiness for college.

S-Team (School Support Team) - The School Support Team (S-Team) is a group of individuals working with the student who is responsible for monitoring his/her progress and/or lack of it in the school setting and makes recommendations for improvement.

School of Origin - The school the youth was attending when they came into custody or school they were attending the last time the youth changed placements.

School of Zone - The local school based on the physical residential address for the youth.

School Support Team Plan - This plan outlines the school improvement program for an individual child. The plan is developed by team members, including teachers, parents, the school counselor and school psychologist to encourage success by the student.

Secondary Education - Education provided by a high school or college preparatory school.

Special Education Definition - IDEIA (Individual Disability Education Improvement Act) - A federal law that requires that Special Education Services be made available for all children starting at age three, who have met the eligibility requirements. Children have to meet state and federal requirements of having a disability. All students eligible for Special Education Services can be served under an IEP (Individual Education Plan) up to the age 21. The IEP is the official document of programs and services offered to the child.

Special Education Support - The programs and the practice of educating students with special needs in a way that addresses their individual differences and needs.

Summary of Performance - Documents a student's academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting their post-secondary goals. It is provided to a child who is eligible for special education and has terminated school due to graduation from a secondary school with a regular diploma or has exceeded the age of eligibility for services. The Summary of Performance enables the student to:

1. Transition seamlessly from secondary to post-secondary or employment.
2. Empower the student to self-advocate in post-secondary.
3. Access disability services and have a record of accommodations.
4. Gather information on strengths and post-secondary goals.
5. Acquire appropriate employment.

Summer School - A session conducted in the summer enabling students to accelerate progress toward a diploma or to make up credits lost through absence or failure, or to improve grades in a course.

Syllabus - An instructor's guideline of the class as it will be taught. A syllabus usually contains specific information about the course, such as information on how, where, and when to contact the lecturer and teaching assistants; an outline of what will be covered in

the course; a schedule of test dates and the due dates for assignments; the grading policy for the course; specific classroom rules; etc.

TEIS (Tennessee Early Intervention System) - A voluntary education program for families with children birth to age three (3), who have disabilities or developmental delays. This is a state program.

Tennessee Hope Scholarships - Applicants must be high school seniors with a GPA of 3.0 or higher and an ACT score of 21 or higher or an SAT score of 1060 or higher. HiSET applicants must score 15 or better.

Tennessee Promise - Offers two years of free tuition to community colleges to Tennessee high school graduates beginning with the Class of 2015. There are three simple steps to get the scholarship and important deadlines. Go to www.TNPromise.gov to apply.

Tennessee Student Assistance Awards - Applicants must be Tennessee residents who have applied for federal aid and have an Expected Family Contribution of \$2,100 or less. They must be enrolled at least half-time at an eligible Tennessee institution of higher learning and maintain satisfactory academic progress. They may not be in default on a loan or owe a refund on any grant previously received for education.

Transcript - Copy of a student's permanent academic record, which usually includes all courses taken, all grades received, all honors received, and degrees conferred to a student.

Trimester Schedule -A schedule in which students take two (2) or three (3) core courses, with each class meeting daily over three (3) terms in a whole school year and credit is earned at the end of each trimester.

TRIO - A set of federally-funded college opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. TRIO programs provide direct support services for students, and relevant training for directors and staff.

Truancy - Occurs when a child has 5 or more days of unexcused absences.

Tutoring - An opportunity for a student to receive additional or remedial instruction to receive additional support in academic classes.

Traditional Schedule – a 6-7-hour school day consisting of 7-9 courses of about 50 minutes each. The class meets every day and credit is earned at the end of the whole school year.

Unexcused Absence - Absence from school or a class for which the student does not have an allowable excuse pursuant to the compulsory attendance law or rules of the local school board.

University Bound - Any student that plans on going directly to a four-year college program.

Vocational Rehabilitation - A federal and state-funded program that provides services to help individuals with disabilities enter or return to employment.

Wilder-Naifeh Technical Skills Grant - Applicants cannot be prior recipients of the Wilder-Naifeh Grant or the Tennessee HOPE Scholarship. Students must be Tennessee residents for at least one year prior to the beginning of the school term. A list of Tennessee Technology Centers is available online.

WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - The Department of Labor (DOL), in coordination with the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS), has worked to prepare everyone for the implementation of WIOA. The WIOA Resource Page provides information and resources for States, local areas, non-profits and other grantees, and other stakeholders to assist with implementation of the Act.

Work Study – College program that enables students to work part-time on campus while attending school.

Zero Tolerance – A policy of discipline for an infraction of school rule, regardless of accidental mistakes, ignorance, or extenuating circumstances. Common zero tolerance policies concern possession or use of illicit drugs or weapons which could last up to 365 days.

DETENTION – When a student is retained beyond the regular school schedule.

SATURDAY SCHOOL – When the student is required to attend school on a Saturday which is usually a non-school day.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS (ISS) – When a student is removed from the traditional classroom environment and put into a special suspension classroom, led by a teacher or team of teachers.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS (OSS) – When the student is temporarily removed from school for a violation of school policies or rules. Suspensions can last up to 10 days.

ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT – When a student is placed in an alternative learning environment where the student continues to receive their education. This usually occurs after chronic or serious infractions.

EXPULSION – When a student has been removed from their current school for up to 180 school days.

Education Supplemental Worksheet

To be completed by FCRB board member and not directly asked to the youth

Transcript review (transcript required) Date student started 9th grade year: _____

Indicate the courses in which the student has received credit (as verified on a high school transcript).

English I	.5		1.0	Biology	.5		1.0
English II	.5		1.0	Biology IA (SPED or Elective credit)	.5		1.0
English III	.5		1.0	Biology IB (SPED or Elective Credit)	.5		1.0
English IV	.5		1.0	Chemistry or Physics	.5		1.0
English A/B is a SPED credit				Another Science:	.5		1.0
Algebra I/Integrated Math I	.5		1.0	Another Science:	.5		1.0
Algebra IA/ Integrated Math IA (SPED or Elective credit)	.5		1.0				
Algebra IB/ Integrated Math IB (SPED or Elective Credit)	.5		1.0	World History with World Geography	.5		1.0
Geometry / Integrated Math II	.5		1.0	U.S History with World Geography	.5		1.0
Geometry IA / Integrated Math IA (SPED or Elective credit)	.5		1.0	Economics	.5		1.0
Geometry IB / Integrated Math IB (SPED or Elective credit)	.5		1.0	Government	.5		1.0
Algebra II / Integrated Math III	.5		1.0	Elective Focus Area			
4 th Math (For Non SPED)	.5		1.0		.5		1.0
					.5		1.0
Personal Finance	.5		1.0		.5		1.0
Lifetime Wellness	.5		1.0		.5		1.0
Physical Education	.5		1.0	Other Courses			
					.5		1.0
Fine Arts Class (Visual Arts, Music, Theater, etc.)	.5		1.0		.5		1.0
Foreign Language #1	.5		1.0		.5		1.0
Foreign Language #2	.5		1.0		.5		1.0

Courses with a Lett A&B behind the course name can equal 1 elective credit for the A Course and 1 academic credit for the B course for regular education students. The credits are counted as 2 academic credits for Special Education students.

Course work in English as a Second Language may satisfy up to 2 credits for the English course credits.

NOTE: EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT VARIES ON BLOCK, MODIFIED BLOCK, AND TRADITIONAL SCHEDULE. CLASSES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS ONLY (STUDENTS IN REGULAR CLASSES WHO RECEIVE ADDED SUPPORT SERVICES WILL HAVE THE LETTER A OR B BEHIND THE CLASS, E.G. BIOLOGY 1A). VERIFY WITH FSW/Ed SPECIALIST IF THE STUDENT HAS ALL REQUIREMENTS TO GRADUATE.

Total credits in any other classes (electives) _____ Total credits in all classes _____

Transcript should reflect grades for all classes/each semester completed from each high school placement. What class(s) or semester(s) are missing, if any?

What credits/classes are needed to graduate?

Which of the following have been completed:

Date completed:

State ID obtained	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
FAFSA (preferred completion by October 31 of the Senior year)	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
ACT/SAT	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
College Applications (most universities have deadline by November of senior year) (most universities have deadline by November of senior year)	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
College acceptance letter (to maintain EFC eligibility)	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
Tennessee Promise (application deadline is November 1 of senior year)	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
Entrance exams (ASVAB, Nursing entrance exams, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
Dorm Deposit	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
Transportation to/from college arranged	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a	Date: _____
Referral to DIDD/S/Voc Rehab	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> na	Date: _____
Conservatorship	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> na	Date: _____
HiSet exam fees	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> na	Date: _____
Job Corps	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> na	Date: _____

Education Recommendations:

Post-Secondary Court/FCRB Attendance Letter

This form letter explaining the eligibility requirements for extension of foster care and the need to attend court and foster care review board should be placed on DCS letterhead and completed by the EFC FSW. The highlighted areas must be personalized for the young adult. Please provide the young adult meeting the post-secondary education criteria for EFC eligibility with the original letter and attach a copy to be included with the documentation packet submitted to the foster care review board. **This letter must be updated each term and provided to the young adult at the beginning of each school term.**

[Your Name]

[Street Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]

[Date]

[Recipient Name]

[Title]

[Company Name]

[Street Address]

[City, ST ZIP Code]

To Whom it may concern:

Please allow this letter to serve as a formal request for (students name) to be present at court hearings during the term. (Students name) is enrolled in Extension of Foster Care with the State of Tennessee Department of Children’s Services. In order to be eligible for this program, (student) was in foster care prior to turning 18 years old and aged out of foster care. This essential program provides funding for academics and housing as well as case management services. In order to remain eligible, [student’s name] must either be enrolled in an educational program in good academic standing or be employed 80 hours a month. _____’s eligibility is also attending required court hearings. These hearings may include one to two appearances during each term. While the Department of Children’s Services and the Courts strive to give sufficient notice, there may be times when notice will be limited to seven to ten calendar days . [Student’s name] will notify you as soon as [he or she] has notice of the hearing, and will be responsible for completing any missed academic work.

The student will provide this letter to all course instructors and the Dean of Students each term. We ask for your full cooperation and support of [student’s name] in meeting the requirements to remain eligible. In doing so, you have made it possible for [student’s name] to achieve [his or her] academic success, goals, and aspirations, which are vital to the state’s completion agenda.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [telephone number]

[FSW Name]

Job Corps

- Offers hands-on career training and education at no cost to students.
- Serves low-income young people ages 16 through 24.
- Has 126 locations across the country.
- Helps change lives!

**Success Lasts
A Lifetime!**



TRAIN for a career.

Job Corps staff works with each student to create individualized personal and career development plans that put and keep students on the track to success. The most successful students stay in the program between 1 and 2 years.

LIVE on center and make new friends.

Most students live on campus in dormitories. While enrolled in the program, students receive meals, basic medical care, and a living allowance.

LEARN the necessary academic and real-world skills to be successful.

Job Corps offers hands-on training in more than 100 career technical training areas, including Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair, Carpentry, Office Administration, and Welding. All career technical training areas are aligned with industry credentials and are designed to meet the requirements of today's careers. Job Corps also offers Advanced Training for students who want to take their education to the next level.

CONNECT with resources before and after graduation.

Job Corps graduates have the support they need to start a successful career, go to community college, or join the military. Counselors assist students with their resumes and job search, and connect them with housing and transportation options and child care services.



(800) 733-JOBS [5627]

¡Llámenos, nosotros hablamos español!

www.recruiting.jobcorps.gov



doljobcorps



doljobcorps

Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, Job Corps is the nation's largest career technical training and education program for low-income young people ages 16 through 24. Job Corps is a U.S. Department of Labor Equal Opportunity Employer Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD/TTY telephone number is (877) 889-5627.

50-398 8.15

Wondering
Who's Eligible
for **Job
Corps?**

**For 16- to
24-year-olds*
ready to work
toward a
successful future,
Job Corps' free
education and
career training
program is a
great place to
start.**

**The maximum age limit may be waived if the applicant is a person with a documented disability.*

Young people who are school dropouts, runaways, foster youth, parents, or homeless are welcome to apply.



Because Job Corps is a voluntary program, students choose to enroll in the program and may exit at any time.

A person is eligible for Job Corps if he or she meets the following criteria:

- Is a legal U.S. resident; lawfully admitted permanent resident alien, refugee, asylee, or parolee, or other immigrant who has been authorized by the U.S. attorney general to work in the United States; or resident of a U.S. territory
- Meets low-income criteria
- Is in need of additional technical training, education, counseling, or related assistance to complete schoolwork or to find and keep a job
- Has signed consent from a parent or guardian if he or she is a minor
- Has a child care plan if he or she is the parent of a dependent child
- Does not exhibit behavioral problems that could keep him, her, or others from experiencing Job Corps' full benefits
- Does not require any face-to-face court or institutional supervision or court-imposed fines while enrolled in Job Corps
- Does not use drugs illegally



Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, Job Corps is the nation's largest career technical training and education program for low-income young people ages 16 through 24. Job Corps is a U.S. Department of Labor Equal Opportunity Employer Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD/TTY telephone number is (877) 889-5627.

Connect with us online:
www.recruiting.jobcorps.gov www.jobcorps.gov  [doljobcorps](https://www.facebook.com/doljobcorps)  [doljobcorps](https://www.youtube.com/doljobcorps)

REQUIREMENTS FOR JOINING THE MILITARY

A youth in foster care may be interest in joining a branch of the military. Listed below are the basic requirements for branch of the military.

The information below should not deter a young adult from pursuing a career in the military. The FSW and the IL Specialist should assist the youth in contacting a local recruiter for additional information.



Age Requirements:	18 years old, or 17 years old with parental consent.
Education Requirements:	Education requirements may vary on the branch of service. Contact the local recruiting office for additional information.
Citizenship Requirements:	US Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident, with a valid Green Card.
Physical Requirements:	<p>Pass the Military Entrance Processing Station physical exam.</p> <p>Every individual who enlists in the Military must meet certain physical requirements. This is to make sure potential recruits can safely make it through Basic Training and meet the daily demands of service. Each applicant will meet with a physician for an exam, similar to a yearly checkup with a family doctor. It is important to disclose any prior health issues at this time: Remember, these won't necessarily be grounds for disqualification, and answers are generally confidential.</p>
Additional Testing:	<p>The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is a multiple-aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success in the military.</p> <p>Each branch has different criteria on a passing score for the test. Sample ASVAB tests are available on the website for each branch of the military.</p>
Additional Requirements:	Each branch may have additional requirements and rules for items such as the types of jobs available, additional education requirements, number of dependents (children/family), visible body art, etc.
Websites:	<p>U.S. Army: www.army.mil</p> <p>U.S. Marine Corps: www.marines.mil</p> <p>U.S. Navy: www.navy.mil</p> <p>U.S. Air Force: www.af.mil</p> <p>U.S. Coast Guard: www.uscg.mil</p>



The Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) are the state’s premier providers of technical training for workers to obtain the technical skills and professional training necessary for advancement in today’s job market.

There are 27 TCAT locations across Tennessee:

West TN Locations		Middle TN Locations		East TN Locations	
Covington	Memphis	Dickson	Murfreesboro	Athens	Knoxville
Crump	Paris	Hartsville	Nashville	Chattanooga	McMinnville
Jackson	Ripley	Hohenwald	Pulaski	Crossville	Morristown
McKenzie	Whiteville	Livingston	Shelbyville	Elizabethton	Newbern
				Harriman	Oneida
				Jacksboro	

The complete list of TCAT schools can be found at: <https://www.tbr.edu/institutions/colleges-applied-technology> with links to the website for each school.

TCATs offer a variety of courses of study. This list shows some of the available courses, average length of time to complete the course if you attend classes full time, the possible salary range upon completion of the course, and the regions in Tennessee where the course is offered. Contact the TCAT of your choice for current course information and availability.

Course Name	Average Time to Complete A Course	Possible Salary Ranges (Beginner through Experienced)	Regions of TN this course is offered in:		
			West	Middle	East
Administrative Office Technology	12 months	\$24, 000 to \$39,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Barbering	12 - 14 months	\$18,000 to \$33,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Automotive Technology	20 months	\$29,000 to \$57,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Collision Repair Technology	16 months	\$32,000 to \$50,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Computer Information Technology	20 months	\$27,000 to \$60,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cosmetology	20 months	\$18,000 to \$33,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dental Assistant	12 months	\$28,000 to \$46,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Diesel Powered Equipment Technology	20 months	\$36,000 to \$54,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Digital Graphic Design	18 months	\$43,000 to \$59,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Early Childhood Education	12 months	\$20,000 to \$30,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Electronic Technology	18 months	\$41,000 to \$58,000	Yes	Yes	Yes

Course Name	Average Time to Complete A Course	Possible Salary Ranges (Beginner through Experienced)	Regions of TN this course is offered in:		
			West	Middle	East
Health Information Technology	12 months	\$38,000 to \$46,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technology)	16 months	\$40,000 to \$52,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industrial Electricity	12 months	\$48,000 to \$60,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industrial Maintenance /Mechatronics	12 months – 20 months	\$40,000 to \$56,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Machine Tool Technology	16 months	\$33,000 to \$42,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Medical Assisting	12 months	\$26,000 to \$38,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pharmacy Technology	12 months	\$30,000 to \$37,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Practical Nursing	12 months	\$37,000 to \$45,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Retail Hospitality and Tourism Technology	12 months	\$42,000 to \$55,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Surgical Technology	12 months	\$44,000 to \$56,000	Yes	Yes	Yes
Welding Technology	12 months	\$35,000 to \$45,000	Yes	Yes	Yes

DCS Policies:

[21.14: Serving the Educational Needs of the Child/Youth](#)

[Supplement to 21.14: DCS Educational Stability Plan](#)

[21.19: Education Passport](#)

[16.51: Independent Living and Transition Planning](#)

[DCS Manual for Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services](#)

Special thanks to the educational and court professionals from across Tennessee who contributed to the development of this manual.

This manual is produced under the auspices of the Tennessee Court Improvement Program of the Tennessee Supreme Court, Administrative Office of the Courts, and the provisions of Section 13712 of Subchapter C, Part I of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993: Grants for State Courts.