

SUPPORTING TRANSITION AGE YOUTH IN INDEPENDENT LIVING AND EXTENSION OF FOSTER CARE

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What Transition Age Youth Need and Want?



Relate and Connect



DCS Office of Independent Living

Prepare youth in foster care and young adults who age out of foster care for a successful transition to adulthood to become confident and productive individuals in society.

Youth populations

1. 14 to 16 custodial youth, Independent Living Plan
2. 17+ custodial youth, Transition Plan
3. 18 to 21 aged-out youth, Extension of Foster Care

Organization

- DCS Central Office Administration
- Regional Independent Living Coordinators and Specialists



Independent Living and Transition Plans

IL Plan 14-15

1. IL Life Skills
2. IL Social Skills
3. Credit Check

IL Plan 16-17

1. Essential Documents
2. IL Health
3. IL Finances
4. IL Employment
5. IL Transportation
6. IL Education
7. Housing

TL Plan 17 and up

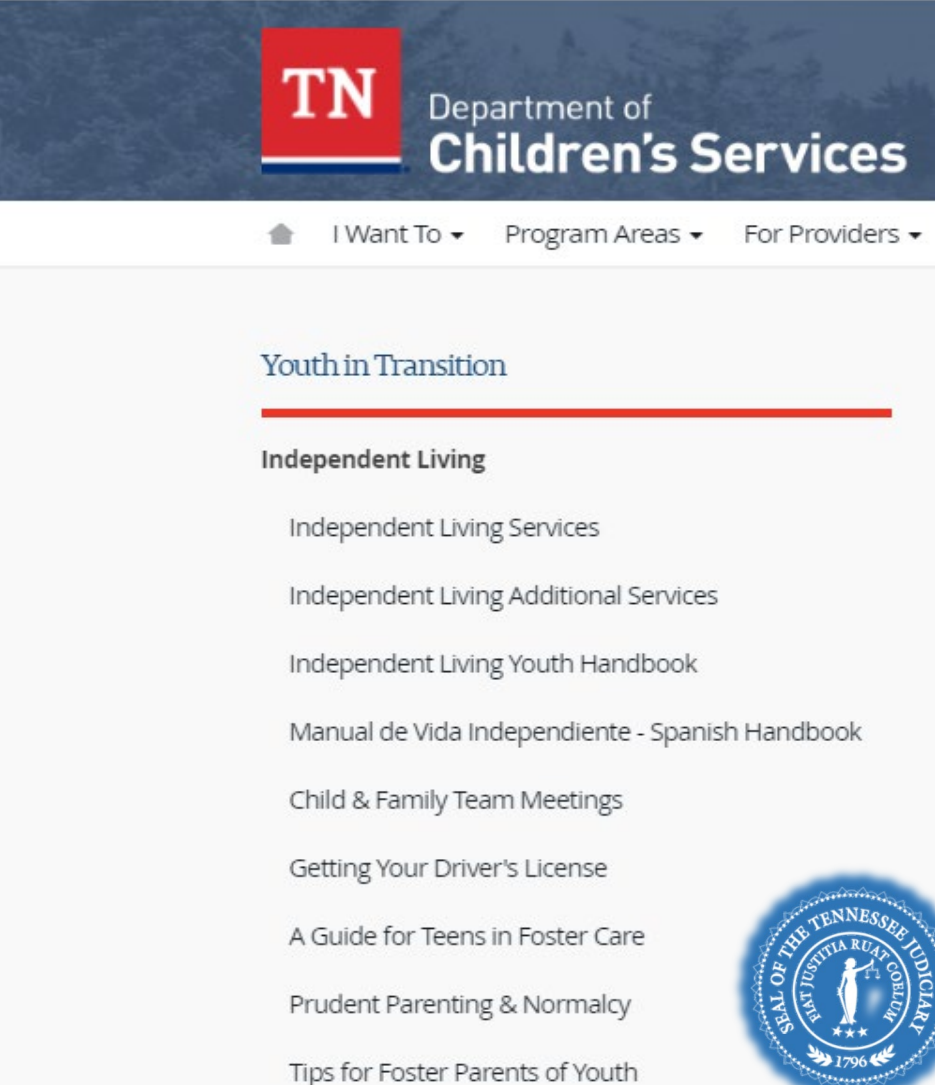
1. IL Life Skills
2. IL Social Skills
3. Essential Documents
4. IL Health
5. IL Finances
6. IL Employment
7. IL Housing
8. IL Transportation
9. IL Education
10. Credit Check
11. Parenting



DCS Independent Living

Eligibility:

- Custodial: All youth in state custody 14 years of age or older.
- EFC: Young adults who age out of foster care at age 18 or older.
- SPG/Adoption: Youth who exited state custody at or after 16 years of age, who are still under a contract for subsidy and need applicable IL Services.



The screenshot shows the Tennessee Department of Children's Services website. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the TN logo and the text "Department of Children's Services". Below the header, there are navigation links: "I Want To", "Program Areas", and "For Providers". The main content area is titled "Youth in Transition" and features a red horizontal line. Underneath, there is a section for "Independent Living" with a list of resources: "Independent Living Services", "Independent Living Additional Services", "Independent Living Youth Handbook", "Manual de Vida Independiente - Spanish Handbook", "Child & Family Team Meetings", "Getting Your Driver's License", "A Guide for Teens in Foster Care", "Prudent Parenting & Normalcy", and "Tips for Foster Parents of Youth". In the bottom right corner, there is a circular seal for the Tennessee Judiciary, featuring a figure holding scales and the text "SEAL OF THE TENNESSEE JUDICIARY" and "1796".

DCS Independent Living Wraparound services

Independent Living Wraparound services are designed to support a wide range of independent living goals and needs.

Eligibility

- Custodial: All youth in state custody 14 years of age or older.
- EFC: Young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services
- SPG/Adoption: Youth who exited state custody at or after 16 years of age, who are still under a contract for subsidy and need applicable IL Services.



DCS Independent Living Wraparound services

- Independent Living Wraparound Services include funding for things like driver's education, college, tutoring, job training, graduation expenses, transportation, vehicle repairs, car insurance, and childcare.
- For a full list of available services, check out the IL Services Grid at www.tn.gov/youth/fostercare/il/YouthVersionIndependentLivingWraparoundServicesList.pdf.



Paying for College – Education and Training Voucher (ETV)



ETVs are grants awarded to eligible youth and young adults to fund expenses for eligible post-secondary institutions. Youth and young adults may receive up to \$2,500/semester or \$5,000/year, available up to age 23.

The ETV Program is intended to serve

- Young adults who emancipate to adulthood directly from state custody at or after 18 years of age.
- Youth 16 years of age or older in DCS custody.
- Youth 16 years of age or older who exit DCS custody through adoption or Subsidized Permanent Guardianship.
- Youth who lose eligibility for Education and Training Vouchers.



Paying for College – Bright Futures



State-funded Bright Futures Scholarship only: (up to \$2,500/semester or \$5,000/year, available up to age 24)

- Youth who exit to permanency at age 16 or older.
- Youth who have exited state custody from a Youth Development Center or detention after age 16.
- Youth who are in a YDC or detention who are attending a post-secondary program.
- Youth who lose eligibility for Education and Training Vouchers.



Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant

A Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant for a student attending an eligible public postsecondary institution shall be the 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. 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.

- A Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant for a student attending an eligible four-year OR two-year independent postsecondary institution shall not exceed the statewide average tuition and mandatory fees for a public four-year or two-year postsecondary institution.
- Eligibility: Meet minimum HOPE Scholarship eligibility requirements (ACT 21/ GPA 3.0) AND official certification from the Department of Children's Services that the student meets the eligibility requirement for the HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant.



Youth Villages LifeSet

The Youth Villages LifeSet Program employs weekly case management services and engagement of experts in the areas of finance, education, and access to community resources to teach clients the necessary skills to achieve economic self-sufficiency, develop lasting relationships, and succeed independently.

- DCS expanded the LifeSet contract with the program to include case management for Extension of Foster Care Services.

LifeSet – The bridge from foster care to adulthood



Attorney Role: How to Access Services

- 1. Youth 14-16:** The Independent Living Plan as a component of the Family Permanency Plan, based on the youth independent skills assessment in TFACTS and addressed in the CFTM.
 - Attend CFTMs and ask about Independent Living needs and supports for youth older than 14.
 - Advocate for necessary services and supports. Discuss necessary and agreed upon services from case manager and IL Specialist.
 - Attend Permanency Hearings



Attorney Role: How to Access Services

Youth 17+: The Transition Plan must be developed within the context of a CFTM. The focus of the Transition Plan is to assist youth with planning for their lives after they exit custody, and identifying the services, resources and supports needed to be successful.

The Transition Plan is revised as needed and reviewed by the court within ninety (90) days of planned exit from custody.

- Attend CFTMs and ask about Independent Living needs and supports for youth older than 14.
- Advocate for necessary services and supports: Talk to your client and request necessary services from case manager and IL Specialist.
- Attend Transition Plan Hearing.



Attorney Role: How to Access Services



DCS has Independent Living Program Specialists (ILPS) within each region across the state.

- The DCS ILPS work directly and collaboratively with Family Service Workers, foster parents, contracted providers and youth.
- They are responsible for local program coordination, service delivery, community resource development, and on-going consultation to agency staff, foster parents and youth.
- Although the primary function of the ILPs is to provide support and technical assistance to staff and resource adults, they also provide direct services and support to youth and young adults through life skills training classes, coordinating the establishment and tracking of Extension of Foster Care Services, provisions of the Independent Living Allowance, assistance with financial aid and college aid.



Tennessee Department of Children's Services Independent Living Staff - By Region and County

IL Specialists & Coordinators	Region/Counties		IL Specialists & Coordinators	Region/Counties
Stephanie Bosson Program Coordinator C: 865-712-5426 Stephanie.Bosson@tn.gov	Grand East Region		Dana Eskridge Program Coordinator C: 615-289-6243 Dana.Eskridge@tn.gov	Grand Middle Region
Katie Butler Program Specialist O: 865-425-4557 C: 865-253-1338 Katie.Butler@tn.gov	East: Anderson, Campbell, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Union, Roane, Scott		Neil Lowe Program Specialist O: 831-480-8079 C: 615-289-2736 Neil.Lowe@tn.gov	South Central: Hickman, Lewis, Maury, Marshall, Bedford, Coffee, Moore, Lincoln, Giles, Lawrence, Grundy, Franklin
Rikki Eichler Program Specialist C: 865-712-2199 Rikki.Eichler@tn.gov	Smoky Mountain Claiborne, Cooke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Sevier		Lela Pirtle Program Specialist O: 615-360-4336 C: 615-477-1137 Lela.Pirtle@tn.gov	Davidson
Natalie Seabolt Program Specialist C: 423-202-6971 Natalie.Seabolt@tn.gov	Northeast: Washington, Carter, Unicoi, Johnson, Sullivan, Greene, Hawkins, Hancock		Kelly Steele Program Specialist O: 615-360-4362 C: 615-961-6275 Kelly.R.Steele@tn.gov	Davidson
Tara Deer Program Specialist O: 865-594-0668 C: 615-483-6101 Tara.Deer@tn.gov	Knox		Dan Rees Program Specialist O: 615-360-4356 C: 615-483-0175 Dan.Rees@tn.gov	Mid-Cumberland: Cheatham, Robertson, Sumner, Montgomery
Cynthia (Cindy) Ashburn Program Specialist O: 423-728-7969 C: 615-289-4519 Cynthia.J.Ashburn@tn.gov	TN Valley: Blount (Smoky Mtn. Region), Bradley, Polk, McMinn, Rhea, Meigs		Geneva Thomas Program Specialist O: 615-360-4354 C: 615-210-2462 Geneva.D.Thomas@tn.gov	Mid-Cumberland: Wilson, Trousdale, Rutherford, Williamson
Sandra Farrington* Program Specialist O: 423-634-6765	TN Valley: Hamilton, Bledsoe, Marion, Sequatchie		Sherry Cowan Program Specialist O: 831-646-3073	Upper Cumberland: Cannon, Warren, Van Buren, Cumberland

Extension of Foster Care



Beginning January 1, 2023, eligible young adults must meet one of the five following EFC criteria:

- a) the young person is enrolled in secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential,
- b) the young person is enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education,
- c) the young person is employed for at least eighty (80) hours per month,**
- d) the young person is participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; or**
- e) the young person is incapable of doing any of the above activities due to a medical condition, including a developmental or intellectual condition (incapability is supported by regularly updated information in TP).



Extension of Foster Care

Verification of education and employment

- school letter confirming enrollment
- letter of acceptance to post-secondary or vocational education program
- employment letter on company letterhead
- weekly or monthly check stubs
- letter of acceptance to employment readiness program
- ongoing monthly verification



Housing Options For Young Adults In EFC

- Licensed or approved foster home;
- Supervised Independent Living (This housing option can be an apartment with or without a roommate or a room-and-board living arrangement, such as a dorm. Such a placement will need to be approved, and you may be able to receive an Independent Living Allowance directly if you choose this living arrangement);
- Home of a relative or non-related supportive adult. Additional steps will need to be taken in order to qualify for placement support;
- Certain group home settings.



Young Adults In EFC : Responsibilities

- Signing an agreement to participate
- Work with the Child and Family Team to create and update a Transition Plan.
- Work with the team to reach Transition Plan goals
- Meet monthly with the Family Service Worker to track the plan, identify any needed supports, and discuss how to achieve the Transition Plan goals
- Attend a court hearing or FCRB every six months



Reconnecting a young adult to EFC

- Contact the regional DCS Independent Living Specialist
- Contact the Youth Villages LifeSet program
- Young adults may visit any local DCS office to obtain a EFC application
- Call the DCS Independent Living toll-free number 844-887-7277
- Visit the DCS Independent Living website: [Youth in Transition \(tn.gov\)](http://Youth in Transition (tn.gov))



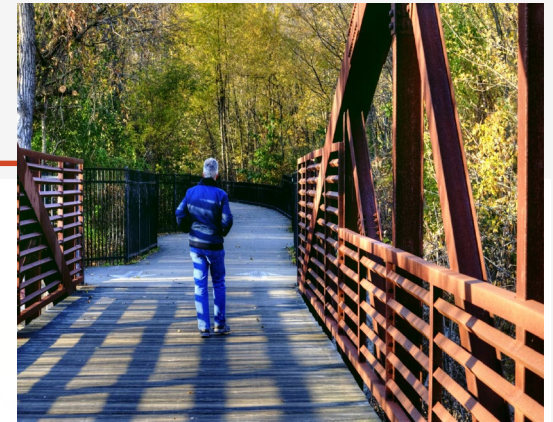
EFC Court Engagement

- **Establishing EFC**
- **Annual Reviews**
- **Periodic Review or Foster Care Review Board**



Federal IV-E Funding

If a youth was IV-E Eligible as a custodial youth and transitions directly to Extension of Foster Care, no additional steps are needed for IV-E.



- If a youth was not IV-E eligible as a custodial youth OR if more than 6 months passes between a youth's exit and return to DCS, DCS will need:
 - New Title IV-E Foster Care eligibility determination
 - Court order determining Extension of Foster Care services are in the young person's best interest
 - Young adults who are non IV-E eligible sign a Voluntary Placement Agreement and have their statuses reevaluated based on their own assets and countable resources.



Establishing Extension of Foster Care

1. Direct Transition for Custody- IV-E Eligible
2. Direct Transition for Custody- Non IV-E Eligible
3. Re-Establishment-IV-E Eligible
4. Re-Establishment-Non IV-E Eligible



Best Interest Hearings and Court Orders

‘Best Interest Hearings and Court Orders are recorded for young adults who receive EFC under the following circumstances:

- When a young adult transitions from Custody to EFC non IV-E Eligible, and a Voluntary Placement Agreement is obtained
- When a young adult exited custody non IV-E Eligible and returns from a break in service to receive EFC, and a Voluntary Placement Agreement is obtained
- When any young adult returns from a Break in Service to receive EFC in excess of 6 months from exiting custody, and a Voluntary Placement Agreement is obtained
- **The ‘Best Interest’ order must be issued by the court of jurisdiction within 179 days of the Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) date (the VPA date counts as day one).**

If the order is not obtained within that time frame, the young adult becomes ineligible for IV-E on the 181st day from the Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) date, for the rest of the Extension of Foster Care episode



Ongoing Court Engagement in Extension of Foster Care



- Require 6-month reviews, by court or FCRB.
- Require an annual transition plan hearing/ reasonable efforts finding.
- Reasonable efforts made to prepare the youth person for independence will suffice.



Tennessee EFC Video



Questions?

