



Department of
Children's Services

Success Beyond 18

Independent Living & Transition
Planning

Training Goals

- Improve quality of Independent Living (IL) and Transition Planning
- Improve outcomes for young people who age out of Tennessee's foster care system

What does good IL and Transition Planning look like?

- Life Skills Assessments are administered. They are in the youth's file and recorded in TFACTS.
- All youth 14-16 have IL Plans.
- All youth 17+ have Transition Plans.
- There is active youth participation in CFTMs and in the planning process.

What does good IL and Transition Planning look like?

- The youth's individual IL needs are clearly identified and addressed in IL Plans.
- Youth are receiving services to address their needs/concerns.
- IL Wrap funds are used to normalize a youth's experience and to assist in & celebrate achievement of IL goals.
- There is progress towards legal permanency and "relational permanency."

Question:

What is the single biggest predictor of success for youth who age out of foster care?

Answer:

Connection to a Caring Adult



Topics for this Training

1. Assessment for IL Skills
2. Independent Living Planning (14-16): what skills and connections does a youth need to be a successful adult?
3. Transition Planning (17-21): what specific steps does a young person need to take as they transition to adulthood?

All youth in DCS custody ages 14-16, regardless of permanency goals, placement or adjudication, will have an **Independent Living Plan** that is developed with the youth and their Team, and is based on the results of the Casey Life Skills Assessment and the youth's goals. Starting at age 17, this plan increases focus on transition and is called a **Transition Plan**.

Core IL Services and Supports

- Scholarships
- IL Wrap funding
- Housing support through Placement services or Independent Living Allowance (ILA)
- Independent Living & Transition Planning
- Life Skills Instruction
- Leadership Opportunities
- Case Management
- Extension of Foster Care Services for young adults 18-21

Youth Villages LifeSet Services

- Eligible youth* who need extra help transitioning to adulthood, young people who are not eligible for DCS Extension of Foster Care Services (or who don't choose services through DCS), and young people who need extra supports may be eligible for services through Youth Villages' LifeSet Program.
 - Young people receiving DCS Extension of Foster Care Services may also receive services through Youth Villages' LifeSet Program, as needed.
- * Ask an Independent Living Specialist about eligibility

Independent Living

Who is responsible for what?

Key Responsibilities of the Assigned Worker

- The assigned worker may be with DCS (Custody or EFCS) or Youth Villages (EFCS)
- Coordinate with IL Specialist
- Administer Life Skills Assessment annually
- Hold regular CFTMs to review progress and needs of the young person
- Engage the youth as a partner in planning
- Identify resources and action steps to assist youth in meeting IL and Transition Plan goals
- Refer young people needing special assistance to IL Program staff
- Provide IL Specialist 10 days notice of CFTMs they need to attend

Key Responsibilities of the Assigned Worker

- Make referrals for IL Wrap Services
- Assist young people to ensure maintenance of health insurance
- Complete the transfer of items on the Essential Documents List
- Coordinate the referrals for young people that will transition into adult services
- Maintain the young person's case file
- Successfully integrate the youth into the community

Key Responsibilities of the IL Specialist

- ▶ Provide training and technical assistance to regional staff, private providers, resource parents, facilities and young people.
- ▶ Identify opportunities for life skills training and offer classes as needed
- ▶ Assist with interpretation of CLSA results
- ▶ Attend Child & Family Team Meetings and Foster Care Review Board as requested

Key Responsibilities of the IL Specialist

- ▶ Assist regions with File Reviews for IL and Transition Plans
- ▶ Submit paperwork for ILA & scholarships
- ▶ Participate in Discharge planning
- ▶ Data collection and tracking

Be sure to partner with your region's IL Program Specialist! They are there to help.



Independent Living and Transition Plans

Independent Living and Transition Plan

Who?
What?
Where?
When?
Why?
How?



IL and Transition Plans: Who

All youth in DCS custody ages 14-16, regardless of permanency goals, placement or adjudication will have an **Independent Living Plan**.

Transition Plans are required for youth 17 & older, regardless of permanency goals, placement or adjudication.

IL and Transition Plans: What

The **Independent Living Plan** is a part of the permanency plan primarily focused on making sure the youth is gaining the skills needed to live successfully as an adult.

The **Transition Plan** is a part of the permanency plan primarily focused on specific resources needed and steps a youth and the team needs to take as they transition to adulthood.

IL and Transition Plans: Where

- Information is documented on the Permanency Plan Template or CFTM Summary during the CFTM, and then entered into TFACTS.
- The Independent Living or Transition Plan is created by using Independent Living (IL) Strength and Need Indicators in TFACTS.

IL and Transition Plans: Where

- TFACTS ensures that the correct IL Indicators are addressed on the permanency plans based on:
- Permanency Goals (including the “Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA) (Extension of Foster Care” Goals))
- The age of the youth

IL and Transition Plans: When

- **IL Planning** occurs with youth ages 14-16. The IL plan maintains the same review and update schedule as the permanency plan.
- **Transition Plans** start at age 17 and are revised as needed. The Perm plan (which contains the Transition Plan) must be reviewed by the Court within ninety (90) days of the youth exiting DCS custody. (T.C.A. 37-2-409)

IL and Transition Plans: Why

The Permanency Plan in TFACTS aligns DCS practice with federal law:

- Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
- Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (Credit Checks)

And state law:

Transition Plans are required in T.C.A. 37-2-409.

IL and Transition Plans: How

- The Strengths, Needs, and Responsibilities are determined by using Casey Life Skills Assessment results (CLSA)*, and
- Feedback from the youth and Child and Family Team members should be included.

* A new Life Skills Assessment will be available in TFACTS soon.

IL and Transition Plans: How

- The plan must be personal to the youth and detailed, driven by their **hopes, dreams, goals** and specific needs.
- The plan should include specific actions that will help a youth achieve their goals.

Life Skills Assessment

- The Casey Life Skills Assessment is a free online tool
- <https://caseylifeskills.secure.force.com/>
- Use the assessment results to identify strengths and needs
- This website has resources that can be added to the responsibilities
- A Life Skills Assessment is being built into TFACTS (Life Skills 2.0)
- The TFACTS LSA will be required and complement the Casey Life Skills Assessment; both will be recommended

More on Transition Plans Age 17+



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IL Categories: ILP vs. TP

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**

Transition Plan 17+

- 1. IL Life Skills**
- 2. IL Social Skills**
- 3. Credit Check (optional EFCS)**
- 4. Essential Documents**
- 5. IL Health**
- 6. IL Finances**
- 7. IL Employment**
- 8. IL Housing**
- 9. IL Transportation**
- 10. IL Education**
- 11. Pregnant/Expecting**
- 12. Parenting**
- 13. Immigration Status***

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Permanency Plan Development Guide

- The Permanency Plan Development Guide includes more detailed information on the Categories and Indicators that must be included for youth ages 14 and up
- The Permanency Plan Development Guide is located here, or upon request:
<https://files.dcs.tn.gov/policies/chap16/PPDevGuide.pdf>

Essential Documents List

An important aspect of Transition Planning includes ensuring youth receive certain documents when they exit custody.

Essential Documents List

- List of adult relatives and other supportive adults (contained in Genogram documents) and emergency contacts
- State ID, dependent upon youth's age (as applicable)
- Driver's license (as applicable)
- Social Security Card (original, Copy for DCS file)
- TennCare Card: *refer to Protocol for Continuation of TENN CARE Eligibility for Children Exiting Custody*
- Birth Certificate (original to young adult, a copy for the DCS file)
- Any legal documents, including court order indicating family/guardian has custody of the child/youth
- Updated & recent medical health and mental health records and assessments , including immunization records as well as information regarding any special needs and appropriate treatment. Include the names and addresses of child/youth's Primary Care Physician, dentists, specialists and all other providers, including Mobile Crisis contact Information.
- Needed medical, dental, developmental, mental health, substance use treatment services as well as Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, and Speech Language Pathologist
- List of any appointments already scheduled with pertinent details
- Needed medication and any prescriptions, including instructions and potential side effects
- Resume

Essential Documents List

- Bank account access information
- Information regarding Advance Care Plan
- Religious documents and information
- Documentation of Immigration, Naturalization
- Documentation of tribal eligibility or membership
- Death Certificate for deceased parents (as applicable)
- Life Book/ pictures/ personal items
- Previous placement information (printed placement page from the current child welfare information system)
- Educational records including copies of report cards and the most current Individualized Education Plan (IEP); list of schools attended and grades
- Copy of Discharge CFTM that outlines the aftercare plan and includes a written summary of the child/youth's living environments/placements, experiences and growth while separated from their family
- Information on Selective Service; number or proof of registration (as applicable)
- Information on Voter Registration or Voter Registration Card

Transition Plan Tips

Youth should be made aware of supports that may be available to them as adults.

- DCS Extension of Foster Care Services
- Nutritional Supports (Food Stamps, WIC)
- Child Care assistance
- TennCare
- Community Based supports for former foster youth (Youth Villages LifeSet program, Resource Centers, etc.)
- Other Community Based supports

Transition Plan Tips

Ensure youth with intellectual, developmental and/or significant behavioral health disabilities are carefully monitored through the transition to adulthood. Partner closely with specialized staff associated with the:

- DCS Health Division
- DCS IL Specialists
- DCS Network Development
- DCS Legal
- DCS Child Welfare Benefits
- Bureau of TennCare
- TennCare MCOs

Transition Plan Tips

Youth should know that they if they age out of care and refuse Extension of Foster Care Services, they can return to a regional DCS office to request those services before age 21 and may still be eligible.

Transition Plans for EFCS Young Adults

- **The Transition Plan will serve as the ongoing planning tool for youth who are receiving Extension of Foster Care Services.**
- **This plan will continue to be embedded within the Permanency Plan in TFACTS.**

Transition Plans for EFCS Young Adults

The Strength and Need records are linked to a unique permanency plan version in TFACTS by selecting and linking the Permanency Goal versions: “Planned Permanent Living Arrangement/PPLA: (Extension of Foster Care)” that correspond with the young adult’s EFCS eligibility

Steps to a Successful Transition

- Engage youth as a partner in planning
- Engage families and supportive adults
- Engage community partners
- Partner with your IL Specialist
- Work with the team to create IL and Transition Plans that are personalized, with specific steps and resources outlined
- Successfully integrate the young adult into the community

Youth Voices

“We need a safe program where youth are challenged to step up and take their future into their hands, but also with assurance that there will be adults cheering them on and making themselves available to help when needed. **Really, we just need the same thing other young adults need.**”

--Eddy, age 20

More Advice from Young People

- Get to know me as a person
- Show me that you care
- Communicate with me
- Be professional
- Be honest and reliable
- Help me to be my best



**For more
information, please
contact:**

**Your Regional
Independent
Living
Specialist**