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Extension of Foster Care Services

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Learning Objectives

You will learn:

- Why Tennessee extended foster care services to 21
- Who is eligible for Extension Services
- What is available under Extension Services
- How to transition a Custodial case to Extension of Foster Care Services
- How we measure success
- Where to find more information & support

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Overview

- Tennessee opted into the Federal Fostering Connections Act of 2008
- This Act allows our state to extend foster care services to age 21
- DCS has policies that allow us to extend foster care services to age 21

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18 is Not a Magic Number

Think about your own transition to adulthood—what age were you when you were truly "independent?"

What do you think the average age of independence is in the US?

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Parents generally continue to support their own children long past age 18

- Approximately 50% of young adults aged 18-24 lived with their parents at some point;

- About 40% of 2008 college graduates still live with their parents;

- 60% of parents provide financial support to their adult children who are no longer in school. (Forbes, 2011)

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Youth who Age Out of Foster Care

What do you think happens to many youth who age out at 18?

- Incarceration
- Homelessness
- School dropout
- Unemployment
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Uninsured
- Addiction

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Better Outcomes for Youth Who Accept Foster Care Services up to 21

- More than doubles the chances a youth will be working or in school at age 19;

- Young women who remained in care saw a 38% reduction in pregnancy before 20;

- Youth were twice as likely to have completed some post-secondary education.

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Why Implement Extension of Foster Care Services to 21?

- Engage youth as partners and resources
- Improve graduation rates
- Increase educational attainment
- Decrease negative outcomes
- Build forever families
- Draw down additional federal funds so we can broaden the array of services for young adults

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Extension of Foster Care Services to 21

Overview of Extension of Foster Care

1. Who DCS can serve (slightly expanding population)

2. What services young adults get (includes placement support, monthly case mgmt, judicial oversight)

3. How Extension of Foster Care services are funded (Federal IV-E funding)

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Who we can serve 18-21

Youth who turned 18 in Foster Care

(not a YDC or other Hardware Secure Facility)

AND

Who meet 1 of the 3 following criteria:

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Who We Can Serve 18-21

1. Young adults completing high school or HiSET.

2. Young adults who are enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education.

3. Young adults who have a serious disability that prevents them from pursuing education or full-time employment.

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What are the services under Extension of Foster Care Services?

In addition to current IL Services:
- Monthly face to face with FSW
- Court oversight every 6 months
  - One Review is Annual Transition Plan Review (to demonstrate reasonable efforts to finalize the plan)
- Housing support (such as a placement agreed upon by the young adult and team OR the ILA)
- The services a youth receives will depend on what they qualify for & need

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How is this funded?

Federal IV-E Funding:

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

- If a youth was <u>not IV-E eligible as a custodial youth</u> OR if <u>more than 6 months passes</u> 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 is in the young person's best interest

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More on Available IL Services

All youth receiving Extension Services qualify for <u>at least</u>:

- — Monthly Face to Face with FSW
- — Twice-annual participation in Court or Foster Care Review Board
- — Life Skills Instruction
- — Wrap services (details in IL Manual)
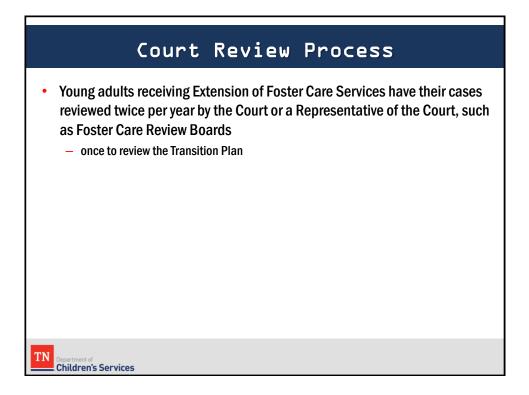- Additional Services will depend on a young person's situation and needs

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Youth Requirements for Extension Services

- Work toward goals on the Transition Plan
- Live by the rules and laws of society
- Maintain monthly contact with Family Service Worker
- Maintain eligibility (i.e., academic eligibility)
- Work with staff and team to identify a place to live that is safe and supports completion of Transition Plan goals.
- Participate in actions to maintain/apply for health insurance

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Other IL Services for Youth 18-21

- Young people who are not eligible for DCS Extension of Foster Care Services, who don't choose services through DCS, or who need extra services and support may be eligible for services through Youth Villages' LifeSet Program
- Youth should be referred to adult services that can help them achieve their goals (Career Centers, DHS, etc.)

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Other Policy Information from the Office of Independent Living

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Transitioning a Case From Custodial to Extension Services

1. Review **Rights & Responsibilities form** (CS-0488) with the youth during the Discharge Planning CFTM.

2. The RA/JJ Coordinator or designee & the IL Director or designee must review and approve Extension of Foster Care. The **Rights & Responsibilities form** must be completed. All signatures must be obtained within ten (10) business days of the youth's signature and form must be in the young adult's case file.

3. If the youth does NOT want Extension of Foster Care, the FSW must ensure form CS-0759, **Refusal of Extension of Foster Care** is completed with all signatures. Every effort must be made to encourage young adults to consider the available service options, and youth should be informed about their ability to return to care.
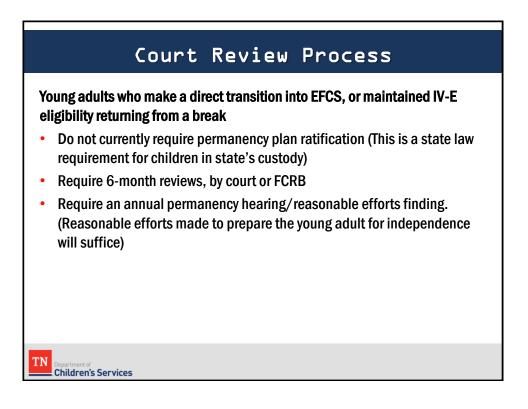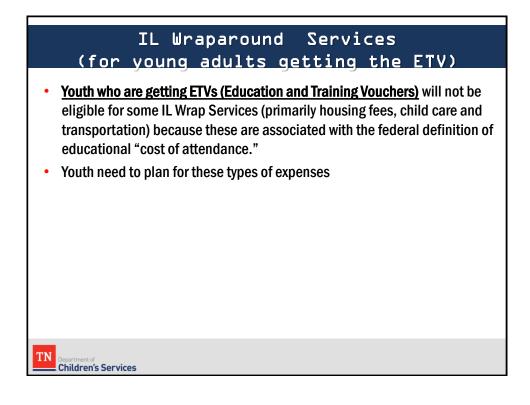
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Transitioning a Case From Custodial to Extension Services

4. All youth must receive a standard packet of information, which includes their *Essential Documents* and information on community resources.

5. The transition of young adults with special needs (Intellectual Disability or Serious Psychiatric Disorders) is addressed per DCS Policies 19.7 & 19.8, and the youth's Transition Plan.

6. Discharge Planning CFTM and other documentation must be entered into TFACTS.

7. Upon exit from custody, the Transitional Survey (Type=Custodial 17 to 19) must be completed and approved in **TFACTS**.

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Transitioning a Case From Custodial to Extension Services

8. Update all Court related system records and Juvenile Justice related system records (as applicable).

9. **Contact the regional IL Program Specialist.** IL Staff will provide support to update the TFACTS records.

10. IL Staff will create and approve the IL Eligibility record.

11. The Assigned EFCS Worker will revise the Transition Plan to reflect a version appropriate for Extension of Foster Care Services, with a new permanency goal for Extension of Foster Care Services

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Program Entry Types: Extension of Foster Care Services

The IL Program Specialists are very involved in coordinating the transitions and establishment of services.

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

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Program Entry Types: Extension of Foster Care Services

Young adults who are Non IV-E Eligible sign a Voluntary Placement Agreement and have their statuses re-evaluated based on their own income and countable resources

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Court Review Process

- Young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services have their cases reviewed twice per year by the Court or a Representative of the Court, such as Foster Care Review Boards
  - once to review the Transition Plan

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Court Review Process

Young adults who signed a Voluntary Placement Agreement

- Must have a finding that the voluntary placement of the young adult is in their best interest within 180 days of the voluntary placement agreement being signed.
- Do not currently require permanency plan ratification (This is a state law requirement for children in state's custody)
- Require 6-month reviews, by court or FCRB
- Require an annual permanency hearing/reasonable efforts finding. (Reasonable efforts made to prepare the young adult for independence will suffice)

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Court Review Process

Young adults who make a direct transition into EFCS, or maintained IV-E eligibility returning from a break

- Do not currently require permanency plan ratification (This is a state law requirement for children in state's custody)
- Require 6-month reviews, by court or FCRB
- Require an annual permanency hearing/reasonable efforts finding. (Reasonable efforts made to prepare the young adult for independence will suffice)

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IL Wraparound Services
(for young adults getting the ETV)

- <u>**Youth who are getting ETVs (Education and Training Vouchers)**</u> will not be eligible for some IL Wrap Services (primarily housing fees, child care and transportation) because these are associated with the federal definition of educational "cost of attendance."
- Youth need to plan for these types of expenses

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Eligibility for Out of State Youth 18-21

- Young adults who aged out in another state will be eligible for limited services only in TN (such as YV LifeSet)
- Young adults who aged out in Tennessee and move to another state will not be eligible for TN Extension of Foster Care Services. They may still be eligible for ETV. It is the responsibility of the receiving state to provide services.

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Young Adult's File

- Youth in Extension of Foster Care Services will continue to have documents uploaded to the electronic case file
- This is the responsibility of the EFCS Worker
- Follow the EFCS file index in the IL Guide.

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Addition to Essential Documents: Health Care Proxy Form

- 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- Young people aging out of foster care should have information and education about the importance of having a health care proxy/power of attorney
- Young people should be given the option to execute a health care proxy/power of attorney
- A blank health care proxy form can be found on the DCS Forms page

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The Role of IL

IL Program Specialist Role

1. TFACTS responsibilities
   - IL staff create, approve and end IL Eligibility Records for Extension of Foster Care
2. IL Specialists partner with Child Welfare Benefits Counselors on young adult IV-E eligibility

Note: FSW responsible for calling CFTMs, partnering with legal to file motions and obtain orders for IV-E, and for filing IV-E and all other Extension paperwork in the case file

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What does success look like?

Measures of Success

- Percentage of youth who age out accept Extension of Foster Care Services
- Transitional Surveys completed on time
- Life Skills Assessments are completed on time
- Number of youth achieving educational goals
- Achievement of permanency for older youth
- Quality of IL and Transition Planning and Casework as evidenced by File Reviews
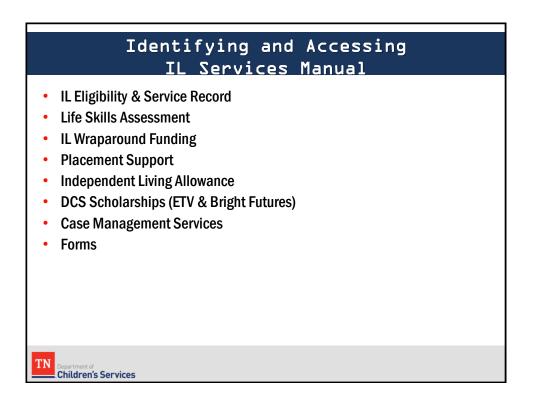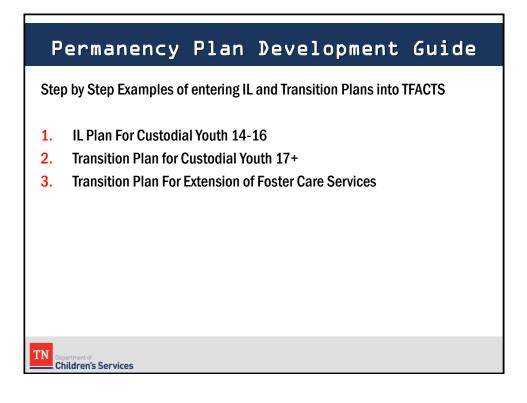
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Tools and Resources

IL Resources

- **IL Program Specialists**
- DCS Policy 16.51-16.53
- IL and Transition Planning Guide
- Identifying and Accessing IL Services Manual
- (3) IL and Transition Planning Guides
- IL Tipsheets
- IL Section of DCS Website

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Policies: 16.51-16.53

- 16.51: Independent Living & Transition Planning
- 16.52: Extension or Re-establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults
- 16.53: Eligibility for Independent Living Services

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Key EFCS Forms

- CS-0488, Rights and Responsibilities to Receive Foster Care Services as an Adult
- CS-0968, Voluntary Placement Agreement
- CS-0953, Application for Title IV-E Eligibility for Young Adults Requesting Extension or Re-establishment of Foster Care Services
- CS-0759, Refusal of Extension of Foster Care Notification- Youth Leaving Custody
- CS-0778, Application for Re-Establishment of Foster Care Services

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Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide

IL Guide: a set of protocols to guide

- The process of developing Independent Living and Transition Plans
- Roles and responsibilities of the participants and documentation in TFACTS
- Procedures for establishing Extension of Foster Care Services
- Extension of Foster Care file maintenance
- Maintenance of Health Insurance
- Includes IL Forms

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Identifying and Accessing
IL Services Manual

- IL Eligibility & Service Record
- Life Skills Assessment
- IL Wraparound Funding
- Placement Support
- Independent Living Allowance
- DCS Scholarships (ETV & Bright Futures)
- Case Management Services
- Forms

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Permanency Plan Development Guide

Step by Step Examples of entering IL and Transition Plans into TFACTS

1. IL Plan For Custodial Youth 14-16
2. Transition Plan for Custodial Youth 17+
3. Transition Plan For Extension of Foster Care Services

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Consider this:

- Can you think of a young person you worked with in the past who could have benefited from Extension of Foster Care Services to 21?
- How might this have changed their life?

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Consider this:

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

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Review of Learning Objectives

What we learned…

1. Why TN extends foster care services to 21?
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5. How we measure success?
6. Where to find more information & support?

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For more information, please contact:

Your Regional Independent Living Specialist