

Extension of Foster Care Services: for young people who cannot attend work or school due to serious mental and/or physical health needs or an intellectual disability

Foster care services may be extended for some young people aging out of foster care who have been identified with an intellectual disability, a mental health diagnosis, or are medically indicated, and who are unable to continue education or attain employment due to their condition. Foster care extension is authorized in three month (quarterly) periods, with a goal of transitioning the young person to greater independence.

Purpose of Extension of Foster Care Services:

The extension of foster care services for these young people are intended to coordinate and support the young person's transition to adulthood, specifically addressing the challenges presented by intellectual disabilities and mental/physical health needs. While receiving foster care extension, it is expected that young person will explore supported employment and/or be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation, public housing or other appropriate housing options, and to community based case management services and supports.

1) Young People with Intellectual Disabilities

- Young people who meet DIDD waiver criteria only qualify for limited transition time period while moving to DIDD
- Young people with Borderline Intellectual Functioning (IQ of 71-84) may qualify

2) Young People with Serious Mental Health Needs

- Young people who meet criteria for behavioral health supported housing only qualify for limited transition time period while transitioning to supported housing
- Young people with psychological or psychiatric needs served in Level 3 or higher continuum settings may qualify

3) Young People with Serious Physical/Medical Health needs

- Young people who are medically indicated and have been receiving services to support their activities of daily living, who meet or are expected to meet requirements for Supplemental Security Income and are TennCare eligible, may qualify for foster care extension *only* for the purposes of completing transition to housing and community-based TennCare services.

Who is not eligible?

- Young people who turn 18 in a YDC or other secure facility
- Young people who are not U.S. citizens or legal residents, or who do not live in the state of Tennessee

Clinical Authorization and Consultation

Qualification for the extension of foster care for these young people must be reviewed and approved by the regional DCS Well Being team, with clinical determinations by the psychologist or the nurse, as applicable to the young person's condition. Consideration could be given to COE consultation or case review whenever applicable to clarify eligibility for extension of foster care, or to support the development of transition plans while receiving the extension of foster care. Steps in the approval process include:

- 1) FSW identifies youth as possibly eligible, engages the IL Specialist and requests approval from regional DCS psychologist or nurse
- 2) Nurse or psychologist reviews the case and enters information in TFACTS Care Coordination notes to explain the justification for the services.
- 3) All documents related to extension of foster care approval for these youth **MUST** be reviewed and signed by the Regional Administrator
- 4) The Director of Independent Living applies the final review/approval signatures to all documents related to extension of foster care approval for these youth
- 5) All documents related to extension of foster care approval are provided to the IL Specialist to upload to TFACTS
- 6) All other procedures to establish extension of foster care are followed (see the Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide and Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Manual)

Review of Transition Services

Extension of foster care services for youth meeting the qualifications based on intellectual disability, mental health, or physical health needs will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by a Regional/Central Office cross-functional team. The review will focus on progress toward independent living needs, technical assistance, and problem solving for these young people with special needs .