



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 16.51

Subject:	Independent Living and Transition Planning
Authority:	TCA 37-2-409; TCA 37-2-417, Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010; Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA). TCA 37-5-105(3),37-5-106; Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999; Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, (ASFA, P.L. 105-89); Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, (P.L. 110-351).
Standards:	COA: PA-CFS 22, PA-JJCM 502-505, PA-JJR 10, 11.
Application:	DCS Employees and Providers with Independent Living Services Responsibilities
Policy Statement:	
The Department of Children's Services provides Independent Living Planning and services to youth in DCS custody from 14 years of age up to 18 years of age. Youth adjudicated delinquent and in DCS custody receive specified Independent Living Services up to age 19, depending on placement status and identified need. A Transition Plan is developed for all youth in state custody age 17 years and older that becomes the ongoing planning document for young adults ages 18-21 receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care Services.	
Purpose:	
The Tennessee Department of Children's Services Independent Living Program (ILP) is designed to assist and prepare foster youth in making the transition from foster care to adulthood by providing opportunities to obtain life skills for self-sufficiency, independence, and permanency.	
Procedures:	
A. The Independent Living Plan as a component of the Family Permanency Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independent Living Planning is focused on helping youth attain life skills needed for a successful transition to adulthood. The Independent Living Plan is completed using IL strength and need categories in TFACTS, and is a section of the Family Permanency Plan. Youth in state custody 14-19 years of age are encouraged to take an active role in planning the activities and services that they need. 2. The Life Skills Assessment in TFACTS is administered to all youth in custody 14 years of age or older prior to the initial Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) by the Family Service Worker (FSW)/Juvenile Service Worker (JSW) and then at least annually thereafter. The Life Skills Assessment is designed to evaluate the youth's strengths and needs, and the results used to develop the Independent Living (IL) section of the permanency plan. Guidance on administration of the life skills assessment is available in the <u>Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Manual</u>.

	<p>3. The core IL strength and need categories required to complete an Independent Living Plan are as follows. Additional categories may be used in addition to those that are mandatory per age group.</p> <p>For youth in custody 14 up to 16 years of age,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ IL Life Skills ◆ IL Social Skills (including an action step that addresses mentoring) ◆ IL Credit Check <p>For youth in custody 16 up to 17 years of age, the above are required along with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ IL Education ◆ IL Physical and Mental Health ◆ IL Employment ◆ IL Finances and money management ◆ IL Essential Documents ◆ IL Transportation <p>4. The <u>Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Manual</u> provides specific guidance on administration of the Life Skills Assessment in TFACTS. The assessment is completed no later than fourteen (14) days after a youth enters custody in order to fully integrate the results into the youth’s Independent Living Plan/Family Permanency Plan.</p> <p>5. The <u>Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide</u> and <u>Permanency Plan Development Guide</u> provide more specific guidance on the development of the Independent Living Plan.</p>
<p>B. Development of the Transition Plan</p>	<p>1. The Transition Plan <u>must be developed</u> with all custodial youth 17 years of age or older, 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.</p> <p>2. The Transition Plan is completed using IL strength and need categories in TFACTS associated with the Family Permanency Plan. The following areas are addressed in the custodial Transition Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ IL Life Skills ◆ IL Social Skills and Supportive Relationships (including an action step that addresses mentoring). ◆ IL Credit Check ◆ IL Essential Documents ◆ IL Education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ IL Physical and Mental Health, including action steps that address development of a Health Care proxy and continuation of health insurance). ◆ IL Employment ◆ IL Housing ◆ IL Finances and Money Management ◆ IL Transportation <p>3. The Transition Plan must be personalized at the direction of the youth, be as detailed as he or she chooses, and include specific action steps with timeframes. The <u>Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide</u> and <u>Permanency Plan Development Guide</u> provide specific guidance on the development of the Transition Plan.</p> <p>4. The Transition Plan/Family Permanency Plan is signed by all parties and copies are provided to the youth and other individuals involved in the development of the plan. The Transition Plan is filed in accordance with filing requirements for the custodial Family Permanency Plan.</p>
<p>C. Development of the Transition Plan for young adults receiving extension or reestablishment of Foster Care Services</p>	<p>1. Emancipated young adults receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care Services will have a Permanency Plan goal in TFACTS that is unique. Transition planning for these emancipated young adults is completed in the context of a CFTM within the specified time frames, using IL strength and need categories. The <u>Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide</u> and <u>Permanency Plan Development Guide</u> provide more specific guidance on the development of the Transition Plan. The following areas addressed must be personalized at the direction of the young adult and be as detailed as he or she chooses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ IL Life Skills ◆ IL Social Skills and Supportive Relationships ◆ IL Essential Documents ◆ IL Education ◆ IL Physical and Mental Health, including action steps that address development of a Health Care proxy and continuation of health insurance). ◆ IL Employment ◆ IL Housing ◆ IL Finances and Money Management ◆ IL Transportation ◆ IL Credit Check (optional) <p>2. The assigned Worker is responsible for ensuring that the Transition Plan is revised at least annually and more often as needed. The Transition Plan is reviewed in a CFTM at least semi-annually. The CFTM is documented in TFACTS as an EFCS - Permanency Plan Revision CFTM. Transition Plans are reviewed by the court or a</p>

	<p>representative of the court annually and by the Foster Care Review Board on a semi-annual basis. The reviews are documented utilizing the applicable documentation functions in TFACTS.</p> <p>3. It is acceptable to utilize the Transition Plan developed just prior to exiting custody for young adults that transition directly to Extension of Foster Care Services, but the plan must be revised to the correct format in TFACTS. Transition Plan revisions occur according to the schedule outlined in the <u>Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide</u>, or more often as needed. Revised Transition Plans reflect the young adult’s current circumstances and needs at the point that they are reviewed by the court or Foster Care Review Board. The Transition Plan for young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services is filed in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the <u>Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide</u>.</p>
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Forms:	None
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Collateral documents:	<p><u>Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide</u> <u>Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Manual</u> <u>Permanency Plan Development Guide</u> <u>CFTM Protocol</u></p>
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Glossary:	
Young Adults:	A person who meets the definition of an “applicable child” according to the federal and state legislation and statutory guidelines for maintenance of federal IV-E Foster Care. Refer to DCS Policy <u>16.52, Extension or Re-establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults</u> .
Family Service Worker (FSW)/ Juvenile Service Worker (JSW):	This person is principally responsible for the case and has the primary responsibility of building, preparing, supporting, and maintaining the Child and Family Team as the youth or young adult moves to permanence and/or independence.
Worker	A term used to identify the position assigned the primary responsibility of building, preparing, supporting, and maintaining the Child and Family Team and coordinating the provision of services, when that position is not within DCS. An example includes provider agency staff assigned to case manage Extension of Foster Care cases.
Extension or Re-establishment of Foster Care Services for Young Adults:	The eligibility criteria and procedures associated with providing Foster Care Services to young adults. These services require a case designation with DCS, and include case management by assigned Workers, Independent Living Services and placement services (as applicable), but are voluntary and require a young adult’s initial and on-going agreement to receive them.