

DCFS Transitional Youth Services Program

Transitional Youth Services Program Staff

- Youth's Family Service Worker
- Youth's Transitional Services Coordinator
- Program Assistants
- Health Service Workers
- Financial Coordinators
- Resource Workers and Adoption Specialists
- Community Engagement Specialists
- Crystal Jones, TYS Program Specialist

Transitional Youth Services Program Goals

- Better prepare youth (14-21) in DCFS custody to make a successful transition to adulthood
- Ensure that youth have access to an array of resources
- Ensure that youth take an **ACTIVE** role in planning for his or her future

Information for Youth about TYS

- PUB-49: “Be Your Own Advocate – The Short List”
 - Meets requirement of Act 1038 of 2015 to provide list of their rights while in foster care
 - To be provided within 30 days of entering care if already 14 or older upon entry or within 30 days of 14th birthday if already in care
- CFS-007: Youth Acknowledgement of Rights in Foster Care
 - Also meets requirement of Act 1038 of 2015
 - To be completed and signed after the youth’s FSW or TYS Coordinator has explained PUB-49 to the youth and the youth has had the opportunity to ask any questions they have about the youth’s rights while in foster care
 - Can be ordered in triplicate through print shop
- PUB-50: “Be Your Own Advocate”
 - Also encouraged to be given to youth as a supplement to PUB-49

Transitional Youth Services Referrals

- All youth ages 14-17, regardless of permanency goal, are to be referred to the TYS Program within 30 days of entering care or within 30 days of turning 14 years of age
 - CFS-001: Referral for Transitional Services and Supports
 - Make referral within 30 days of youth entering care or within 30 days of youth's 14th birthday, whichever comes first
- Any youth whose adoption or guardianship is finalized at age 16 but before age 18 continue to be eligible for TYS activities and supports

TYS First Steps

- Ensure youth has and understands PUB-49, CFS-007, and PUB-50
- Complete Casey Life Skills Assessment within 30 days of entering care/30 days of 14th birthday, whichever comes first
- Talk to youth about who they would like to invite to serve on Transitional Team
- Coordinate first Transitional Team Meeting after first case plan is completed but before 90 days of entering care or within 90 days following youth's 14th birthday

Transitional Plan

- Develop initial Transitional Plan within 90 days of entering care or within 90 days of 14th birthday
 - Determine which components of Transitional Plan to complete based on youth's age, maturity, disabilities, goals, etc.
 - All components must be present by the time the youth turns 17.

Life Plan

- CFS-002: Life Plan & Agreement for Youth in Transition can serve as template
- Method to allow youth and Transitional Team to provide more input, map out details/steps to achieving goals
- Life Plan can be updated as often as youth needs to update it

Ongoing Transitional Youth Services

- Casey Ansell Life Skills Assessment
 - Actual assessment is completed annually, but ideally at each Transitional Team meeting there should be an informal assessment of progress youth has made based on most recent Casey Ansell Life Skills Assessment (minimum is informal assessment at six month mark from last Casey Ansell Life Skills Assessment)

Ongoing Transitional Youth Services

- Life Skills Classes

- Encourage participation in Life Skills Classes
- Do not penalize youth who are not able to participate in Life Skills classes due to location, transportation barriers, or work/school conflicts
- Think broadly about how youth may access “life skills” and document accordingly

Ongoing Transitional Youth Services

- Transitional Team Meetings
 - Couple with standard staffings as appropriate depending on case progress, permanency goals, etc.
 - Youth-driven and youth friendly
 - Allow youth to choose up to two team members who are not the FSW or the foster parent
 - All applicable stakeholders need to be invited
 - Law requires that for youth who will not be able to function independently after 18, must make referral/invite Office of Public Guardian and Adult Protective Services no later than six months before youth reaches 18

Ongoing Transitional Youth Services

- Review of and updates to CANS (every three months)
- Update photo in CHRIS at least annually
- Review of and updates to Transitional Plan and Life Plan (every six months)

“Final” Transitional Team Meeting

- Required within 90 days of youth’s planned exit from foster care
 - Best practice: have a “trial run” final Transitional Team Meeting at approximately 90 days before the youth exits care to come up with tangible next steps for prepping for exit and the “true” final Transitional Team Meeting just prior to court date to exit youth from care.
- Review CFS-003: Checklist for Youth Exiting Care
 - Best practice: Many of the items on this list should be discussed and actively pursued throughout the youth’s time in care. The final Transitional Team Meeting (whether the trial run or the true meeting) should not be the first time this checklist is reviewed.

Exiting Care

- Before closing a case, provide:
 - Social Security card
 - Certified birth certificate or verification of birth record
 - Family photos in possession of DHS
 - Juvenile's health and educational records
 - Driver's license or state-issued official ID card
 - Information on Former Foster Care Medicaid (up to age 26 for youth who had Medicaid at the time they aged out of foster care)

Exiting Care

- Within 30 days after youth leaves care, provide a full accounting of funds held by DHS to which youth is entitled, information on how to access the funds, and when the funds will be available.

Exiting Care

- Cannot close a case on an over 18-year-old without a hearing:
 - Must ensure youth knowingly and voluntarily requested to leave; or,
 - Determine youth failed to meet extended care requirements
- Closing a child's case in CHRIS alone does not exit the child from care. There must be a court order ending the court's jurisdiction.

Re-entering Care

- Youth CAN re-enter foster care between 18-21
- Youth must verbally state they want to re-enter care or submit a written request to DCFS staff
- Once request is made, the youth's case will re-open and assigned a FSW and TYS coordinator.

Re-entering Care

- If youth re-enters extended care, within 60 days of re-entering care if youth is not meeting one of the Extended Care Requirements or does not have a viable plan in place to meet one of those requirements, then at that point the agency can file a motion to dismiss youth from Extended Foster Care

Transitional Youth Financial Supports

- Testing fees (SAT, ACT, GED, etc.)
- Test prep courses
- AP high school test fees
- College application fees (up to five colleges)
- Special school supplies (e.g., graphing calculator; standard school supplies are to be covered by board payment)
- Housing application fees
- Driver's education courses
- Membership/activity fees for extra-curricular activities
- Assistance with preparing for arrival of infant of mom in foster care

High School Expenses

- Homecoming (\$200 maximum)
- Prom (\$350.00 maximum)
- Graduation (e.g., cap and gown, invitations, thank you notes, class ring, and senior pictures –(\$800.00 maximum)

Driver's License Program

- Youth 16 and 17 years of age may apply (18 and over do not have to apply for driver's license program – only car insurance reimbursement program)
- Requirements include:
 - Vision test
 - Free of serious accident or conviction of serious traffic violation in the last 12 months
- Driver's education classes encouraged but not required

Car Insurance Reimbursement Program

- Youth approved for driver's license program eligible for car insurance reimbursement program
- Youth 18-21 in extended foster care may also participate
- Youth or foster parents must own vehicle
- Youth must be included on the insurance policy
- Youth or foster parents reimbursed for actual amount of adding specified youth on the insurance policy for a particular vehicle

Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

- Let kids be kids
- Let foster parents make decisions for youth in their home just like they would for their biological kids
- Make sure group homes have someone who can also make these types of decisions for youth living there

Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

Points to consider regarding normal age appropriate activities:

- Child's chronological age, maturity level, physical and behavioral capacities, and cognitive and emotional developmental levels;
- Potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the activity;
- Best interest of the child, based on information known by the caregiver;
- Importance of encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth;
- Importance of providing the child with the most family-like living experience possible;
- Behavioral history of the child and the child's ability to safely participate in the proposed activity.

Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard: Jobs

- Part-time jobs permissible and even encouraged for youth who can maintain school performance and other activities while working.
- Work with youth to encourage savings.
- Any money earned is the youth's money. Does not affect board payment.
- Earnings may effect Medicaid coverage depending on the type of Medicaid a youth has.

Extended Foster Care Requirements

Youth may remain in care until 21 if any of following requirements are met or there is a viable plan in place to meet these requirements:

- Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
- Enrolled in accredited institution providing post-secondary or vocational education;
- Participating in program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment;
- Employed at least 80 hours per month;
- Incapable of doing any of the activities above due to a medical condition.

Extended Foster Care Budget

- Typically up to \$750/month board payment paid to youth's TYS Sponsor. Consider:
 - Youth's income
 - Any shared expenses
- Housing start-up costs provided in the amount of \$1,000
- Up to \$200 to go toward the cost of a phone and/or minutes
- Up to \$500 for car repairs (two estimates required)

Extended Foster Care Budget

- Encourage savings
- Monitor budget
 - Talk regularly with sponsor and youth
 - Ask questions about expenditures, any personal loans, credit cards
 - Discourage personal loans and credit cards

Transitional Youth Sponsors

- Has an existing, positive connection with the youth
- Must clear State Police and Child Maltreatment Central Registry background checks
- Is responsible for :
 - Serving as member of youth's Transitional Team
 - Providing support and guidance to youth (e.g., assisting with decision-making regarding education, employment, housing, etc.)
 - Assisting youth with budgeting
 - Helping to ensure youth meets at least one extended foster care requirement or has a viable to plan in place to do so

Transitional Youth Sponsors

- Youth 18 and older may live with the sponsor provided:
 - State Police and Child Maltreatment Central Registry checks are clear and up to date
 - Visual inspection of sponsor's home is conducted by FSW caseworker prior to youth living there
 - Ad litem is consulted
 - Area Director approves living arrangement with sponsor
 - Staffing/Transitional Team Meeting is held to ensure sponsor understands his/her role **and** that individualized guidelines and expectations are established
 - FSW caseworker continues to make monthly visits

Transitional Youth Sponsors

- Should be on TYS Supervisor OR Resource Supervisor workload

Supervised Independent Living Programs

- * Immerse Arkansas – Little Rock
- * A1. U.S. Company- Little Rock
- * Timothy Hill Children’s Ranch- Sercery
- * Fostering Change- Fort Smith
- * Get Real 24 – Fort Smith
- * Compact – Hot Springs
- * Vera Lloyd Presbyterian- Monticello
- * United Methodist- Fayetteville

Educational and Training Vouchers

- Provides up to \$5,000 per state fiscal year to students making satisfactory progress in the program
- Is available for current youth in care as well as youth who were adopted or entered a guardianship at age 16 or older
- May be accessed until age 26 but youth may not access ETV for more than five years
- Must be enrolled in an Institution of Higher Education
- Must apply for Pell Grant prior to applying for ETV
- Must reapply each semester

Educational and Training Vouchers

- Eligible ETV expenses include:
 - Tuition/fees
 - Books and related school supplies
 - Room and board costs
 - Computer and other required equipment
 - Transportation

Other Financial Aid Information

- Any youth in foster care at age 13 or older will qualify as an independent student on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), including those adopted or who entered into a guardianship at 13 or older, and therefore qualify for federal Pell Grants
- Parents information not required for independent students

Other Financial Aid Information

Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship

	Four Year School	Two Year School
Year 1	\$1000	\$1000
Year 2	\$4000	\$3000
Year 3	\$4000	
Year 4	\$5000	

After Care Services

- Available to youth between the ages of 18 and 21 not participating in Extended Foster Care
 - Can prorate for youth who initially elect to participate in Extended Foster Care, but then leave
- Budget and plan regarding education, employment, etc. required
- Up to \$2,000 per youth with a max of \$500 per month
- After care support does not include amounts available through ETV

After Care Services

- Paid directly to approved vendor
- Eligible after care expenses include:
 - Education/training
 - Housing
 - Housing set-up
 - Groceries
- Reimbursement available if appropriate documentation provided

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

- Collects demographic and outcome data for youth who have aged out of foster care starting in 2010
 - Financial self-sufficiency
 - Experience with homelessness
 - Educational attainment
 - Positive connections with adults
 - High-risk behavior
 - Access to health insurance

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

- Online survey related to outcomes to be completed by youth in foster care at age 17 (baseline population) (paper copies of survey are available)
- Youth who complete the survey at age 17 will be contacted at ages 19 and 21 to take the survey again (follow up population)... even if they are not in foster care at 19
- Youth who complete survey at ages 19 and/or 21 get \$25 gift card

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

- Youth can access survey through email link or can answer questions over the phone, but responses must be youth's responses
- If youth in follow-up population does not submit survey, staff still must go into NYTD screen in CHRIS and document why the youth did not submit
- Incur financial penalty if percentage of eligible youth who take survey does not meet national standards

Youth Advisory Board

- The Arkansas Youth Advisory Board advocates on behalf of the children and young adults served by DCFS, foster parents and service providers, by assuring that services incorporate youth voice. The Youth Advisory Board members will provide peer to peer support and guidance to youth in care while advising DCFS on policy, normalcy, and authentic youth engagement.

Thank you!

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