

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 11: Older Youth Services	Effective Date: July 1, 2012
	Section 6: Independent Living/Transition Plan	Version: 7

POLICY [REVISED]

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will ensure that an [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) is developed for all youth in out-of-home placement at age 15 years and six (6) months and should continue until the youth leaves care. The plan shall be:

1. **[REVISED]** Youth-focused and developed with the assistance of the Family Case Manager (FCM) or Collaborative Care Case Manager (3CM) and members of the youth's Child and Family Team (CFT);
2. As detailed as the youth elects;
3. **[REVISED]** An outline of the Older Youth Services the youth will receive;
4. Focused on short-term and long-term achievable and measureable goals;
5. Updated every six (6) months until the youth's case is closed; and
6. Given to the youth at each update (see [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) and Related Information for more information).

Note: A Transitional Services Plan must be completed 90 days before the youth turns 18. See the Transitional Services Plan section of the [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#). If the youth enters out-of-home placement after 90 days before the youth's 18th birthday, a Transitional Services Plan will be developed within 60 days of the out-of-home placement.

Probation Officers are responsible for completing the [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) for probation youth.

[REVISED] If the youth refuses to participate in the CFT Meeting process, the FCM or the 3CM must document that a Case Plan Conference was held with the youth.

[REVISED] DCS will ensure that a referral for Older Youth Services is completed for youth in the following placements at the following times, if appropriate:

1. Youth placed in DCS foster homes, unlicensed relative placement, non-licensed court approved placements, or on a Trial Home Visit (THV) at age 16;
2. Youth placed in Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA) foster homes, group homes, or residential facilities will be referred at age 17 years and six (6) months OR six (6) months prior to case closure;
3. Youth placed in Shared Housing, Own Apartment, or Staff Supported Housing through Collaborative Care (CC) at the time of placement; or
4. Host Home or College Dorm, when appropriate, as determined by the 3CM and youth.

Code References

1. [42 USC 677: Chafee Foster Care Independence Program](#)
2. [IC 31-25-2-21: Transitional Services Plan](#)
3. [42 USC 675\(5\)\(H\): Transition Plan for Children Aging Out of Foster Care](#)
4. [IC 21-12-6: Twenty-first Century Scholars Program; Tuition Grants](#)

5. [IC 31-28-5.8-6 Updating case plans; transitional services plan; visitation with family case manager](#)

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. **[REVISED]** Convene an IL/Transition Plan Meeting, which includes the youth beginning at age 15 years and six (6) months, to develop the [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#);

Note: The [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) should take place in the form of a CFT Meeting. The FCM will review the composition of the current CFT with the youth prior to each meeting to determine the appropriateness of that team continuing as the youth's CFT. If it is determined that the existing CFT should not serve this role, a new CFT will be developed with input from the youth regarding the team's membership.

2. **[REVISED]** Ensure that eligible youth in out-of-home placement as a "ward of another state" are receiving Older Youth services as requested by the sending state of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) and an [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) is prepared following the schedule outlined below.

[REVISED] The FCM or 3CM will:

1. Hold follow-up meetings every six (6) months until case closure to review and update the [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#). See below for a list of required items to be discussed at each CFT Meeting; and
2. Hold a Case Plan Conference with the youth if he or she refuses to participate in the CFT process.

[REVISED] Independent Living/Transition Plan Schedule

At age 15 years and six (6) months, the FCM will:

1. Assist the youth in applying for the 21st Century Scholars Program if the youth is not already enrolled. See separate policy, [11.15 Post-Secondary Education](#);
2. Make a referral to Vocational Rehabilitation Services for all youth with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP); and
3. Engage the CFT to develop the [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#). This initial plan shall:
 - a. Address the youth's current level of independent living skills mastery,
 - b. Identify independent living skills to work on,
 - c. Set goals in identified areas of need, and
 - d. Determine methods to achieve these goals.

At age 16, the FCM will:

1. **[REVISED]** Convene an IL/Transition Plan meeting to review the initial [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) and update the goals as needed;
2. **[REVISED]** Make a referral for Older Youth Services for youth placed in a DCS licensed foster home, unlicensed relative placements, or non-licensed court approved placements; and

Note: If the youth has been referred to the Bureau of Developmental Disabilities, a referral for Older Youth Services should be staffed with a member of the Older Youth Initiatives Team to determine if a referral for Older Youth Services is appropriate.

3. Assist the youth in developing a Lifebook. See Practice Guidance for more information about Lifebooks.

At age 17, the FCM will:

1. **[REVISED]** Convene an IL/Transition Plan meeting to focus on goals to be achieved before the youth leaves out-of-home placement, including post-secondary options, employment, and housing;
2. **[REVISED]** Invite a member of the Older Youth Initiatives Team to attend the IL/Transition Plan meeting/Case Plan Conference to present information regarding CC;
3. Provide the youth with information regarding post-secondary financial aid, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), federal aid such as Pell grants, the Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) grant, and the Indiana Commission of Higher Education, the Division of Student Financial Aid. See separate policies, [11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program](#) and [11.15 Post-Secondary Education](#) for further information; and

Note: This information can be provided earlier if the youth is applying to colleges before age 17 or is pursuing a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

4. Ensure that the youth and the caregiver have signed the [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(ACRCPT070901FRM\)](#). Give the youth and caregiver a copy and place the original in the child's case file.

[NEW] At age 17, a member of the Older Youth Initiatives Team will:

1. Attend the youth's IL/Transition Plan meeting/Case Plan Conference to present information regarding CC; and
2. Complete the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Youth Outcomes Survey, as applicable.

At age 17 years and six (6) months, the FCM will:

1. **[REVISED]** Convene an IL/Transition Plan meeting to focus on preparing the youth for transitioning to CC (see policy [11.21 Collaborative Care Case Transfers](#)) or transitioning out of out-of-home placement;
2. Continue to assist the youth in identifying his or her interests, possible career options, post-secondary education possibilities, and employment possibilities;
3. **[REVISED]** Make a referral for Older Youth Services for a youth who will have his or her DCS case dismissed at age 18 if he or she is placed in a LCPA foster home, group home, residential facility, or at home on a THV; and
4. **[REVISED]** If the youth leaves care at age 18 or older, send an e-mail to the Medicaid Enrollment Unit (MEU) informing them that the youth will need to be enrolled in the Medicaid Foster Care Independence Program, Category MA14.

[NEW] At age 17 years and six (6) months, the 3CM will:

1. Attend the youth's IL/Transition Plan meeting/Case Plan Conference to focus on preparing the youth for transitioning to CC (see policy [11.21 Collaborative Care Case Transfers](#)), if joining CC.

[REVISED] 90 days before age 18, the FCM or 3CM will:

1. Convene an IL/Transition Plan meeting/Case Plan Conference to complete the Transitional Services Plan portion of the [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#); and

2. Ensure the youth is provided information and education regarding the importance of designating a health representative to make health decisions and the importance of executing a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document recognized under State law.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

[REVISED] Legal Advice

The FCM/3CM cannot give legal advice. The FCM/3CM shall not be the health care legal representative for any youth known to DCS unless the FCM/3CM is given advance approval of this arrangement by the Regional Manager for FCMs or Older Youth Initiatives Manager for 3CMs or his/her designee.

[REVISED] Lifebooks

At age 16, at the CFT Meeting, each youth should begin developing an Independent Living Lifebook. The Lifebook should provide information to assist the youth as he or she becomes independent and should include space to store important documents as well as other personal items the youth may want to keep. The youth's FCM, therapist, resource parent(s), IL Specialist, or Older Youth Services provider may assist the youth, if necessary, in locating items for completing the Lifebook. There is no pre-set format for a Lifebook. The Lifebook should be individualized and tailored to fit the youth's needs. The Lifebook may contain, but is not limited to:

1. Photographs of the youth;
2. Photographs of persons and places that were significant in the youth's life prior to and while being placed in out-of-home placement;
3. Items related to school and extracurricular activities, (e.g. report cards, certificates, art work, awards, etc.);
4. Important documents the youth may need as he or she exits the foster care system (e.g., birth certificate, Social Security card, medical record, vaccination record, etc.); and
5. Short summaries of significant events that have occurred in the child's life.

Note: Lifebooks are the property of the youth and should remain with the youth through any placement changes.

Permanency Plan of Reunification or Adoption

In certain cases, a youth's permanency plan at age 15 years and six (6) months will be reunification or adoption with an alternative plan (or Plan B) of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). In these cases, a youth's [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) may be focused on the skills the youth will need to live successfully at home with his or her parent(s) or adoptive family. However, as the youth gets closer to 18 years of age, the team should ensure that the youth is prepared for potentially living on his or her own.

FORMS AND TOOLS **[REVISED]**

1. [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#)
2. [Chafee IL Voluntary Services Application and Service Agreement \(SF 52692/ CW 2114\)](#)
3. [Tool 11.A: Budget Worksheet](#)
4. [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(ACRCPT070901FRM\)](#)
5. [Advance Directives packet](#)- Available in hard copy
6. [IL Timeline](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Independent Living/Transition Plan

The [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) and its Transitional Services Plan component is a comprehensive, written plan that is personalized for each youth and is to be used at each meeting with the youth and at the CFT Meeting to guide the transition planning process with the youth.

The [Independent Living/Transition Plan](#) must include information and specific options relating to the following:

1. Education and training;
2. Employment services and work force supports;
3. Housing;
4. Health care, including prevention and treatment services and referral information;
5. Health insurance availability and options;
6. Local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, including development of lifelong adult relationships and informal continuing supports;
7. Identification and development of daily living and problem-solving skills;
8. Procedures available under Indiana law for, and the importance of, stating in advance an individual's desires concerning:
 - a. Health care treatment decisions for an individual who is unable to make those decisions when required, and
 - b. Designation of another person to make health care treatment decisions for an individual who is unable to make those decisions when required
9. Availability of local, state, and federal resources including financial assistance, relating to any parts of the plan described above; and
10. **[REVISED]** Older Youth Services, which may include any of the following kinds of services that are intended to prepare the youth for self-support and living arrangements that are self-sufficient and not subject to supervision by another individual or institution:
 - a. **[REVISED]** Arrangements for the youth to participate in CC for a youth who is seventeen (17) and six (6) months of age or older, if appropriate;
 - b. Activities of daily living and social skills training;
 - c. Opportunities for social, cultural, recreational, or spiritual activities that are designed to expand life experiences in a manner appropriate to the youth's cultural heritage and needs and any other special needs; and
 - d. Matching of a youth on a voluntary basis with caring adults to act as mentors and assist the youth to establish lifelong connections with caring adults.

[REVISED] The Transitional Service Plan (90 days before the youth's 18th birthday) may include information and specific options relating any additional older youth service that is approved by the department and are appropriately tailored to the needs of the youth.