

Planning for Independent Living & Transition to Adulthood



DCS Office of Independent Living

- The purpose of the DCS Office of Independent Living is to assist youth in making a successful transition from foster care to adulthood.
- DCS offers supports and services for youth transitioning out of care and those who are likely to remain in care to help them become successful adults

Youth Voices

“I went into foster care at 12. I was very used to things being structured. When I got out at 18 I was very scared because I didn’t have as many people I could count on, and it was scary going out into the world for the first time by yourself.”

--Brittany, age 23

IL Core Services and Supports

- Scholarships: Education & Training Voucher (ETV) & State Funded Scholarship
- IL Wrap funding (assistance with senior expenses, extracurricular activities, etc.)
- Independent Living Allowance (ILA)
- Independent Living & Transition Planning
- Life Skills Instruction
- Leadership Opportunities
- Transitional Living and other Resources

(The services a youth receives will depend on what they qualify for & need)

Casey Life Skills Assessment

- www.caseylifeskills.org
- Paid and FREE resources and activities to assist with achieving IL goals
- Alternate assessments are available for youth who cannot take the Casey Life Skills Assessment

Tools to Develop the IL/Transition Plan

- The Life Skills Assessment results help to guide the youth's plan.
- Feedback from the youth and Child and Family Team members should be included.

Quality IL and Transition Plans

The plan must be personal to the youth and detailed, driven by their hopes, dreams, goals and specific needs.





Independent Living and Transition Plans

What Is an Independent Living Plan?

The Independent Living Plan is a part of the permanency plan primarily focused on making sure the youth is gaining the skills needed to live successfully as an adult.

What Is a Transition Plan?

The Transition Plan is a part of the permanency plan primarily focused on specific resources needed and steps a youth and the team needs to take as they transition to adulthood. Any life skills needed are still addressed in this plan.

Who Gets an Independent Living Plan?

IL Plans: All youth in DCS custody **ages 14-16**, regardless of permanency goals, placement or adjudication

Who Gets a Transition Plan?

Transition Plans: Young people **17 & older**, receiving services from DCS, regardless of permanency goals, placement or adjudication.

SAMPLE	Independent Living Plan 14-16	Transition Plan 17+
Focus	Skills a youth needs to develop or strengths related to Independent Living concern indicators	Specific resources needed and steps a youth needs to take as they transition to adulthood; include any skills still needed
Focus Example Housing	Skills necessary for locating, obtaining and maintaining housing.	Where will the youth live & how will they pay for it? What is the backup housing plan?
Sample Housing Plan	<p>-John's foster parents will use ACLSA "I Can Do it" workbook to teach him housing skills.</p> <p>-John will gain the following skills by 9/30/2010 as evidenced by ACLSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Know how to complete a lease/rental agreement ▶ Understand renter's insurance ▶ Know the legal rights of landlords and tenant 	<p>-John will live at ABC apartment.</p> <p>-His aunt will co-sign the lease.</p> <p>-IL Wrap will assist with the deposit.</p> <p>-John is working at X to pay his rent.</p> <p>-John can live with Aunt as backup if needed—she is on his team.</p> <p>-Foster parent will help John understand renter's insurance</p> <p>-By 10/4/2011, John needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Copy of lease ▶ Housing verification ▶ Cost of Living Budget ▶ Backup plan <p>John's Aunt will assist with these tasks</p>

“Nothing About Us Without Us!”

- The IL & Transition planning process should become increasingly directed by the youth as they get older.
- Youth must be engaged in creating the plan—it is their plan for their future.
- The plan should include specific actions and resources that will help a youth achieve their IL goals.

IL and Transition Plan Topics

1. Life Skills*
2. Social Skills*
3. Communication
4. Health
5. Finances
6. IL Employment
7. IL Housing
8. IL Transportation
9. IL Education

If needed: Parenting and Immigration Status

- *Life Skills and Social Skills required for IL Plan, others should be covered as needed
- All 9 must be addressed in a Transition Plan

The next slides include some things to consider when working with a youth to develop an IL or Transition Plan. Each plan should be personal to the youth. This is not a comprehensive list.

IL Life Skills: Things to Consider

- Cleaning
- Meal Preparation
- Caring for Clothing
- Other skills needed for activities of daily living

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

IL Social Skills: Things to Consider

- Positive adult supports and mentors
 - How are those people involved in the Child and Family Team?
- How to develop healthy relationships
- Extracurricular activities

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

IL Communication: Things to Consider

- Communication skills
- Managing conflict and frustration
- Does youth have all needed Essential Documents when leaving care (birth certificate, state ID, etc.)

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

Essential Documents List

- State Issued Photo Identification
- Driver's License (if applicable)
- Social Security Card
- Resume (when work experience can be described)
- Medical records (to include immunization record)
- TennCare Card
- Birth Certificate
- Religious Documents and Information (if applicable)
- Documentation of Immigration, or Naturalization (if applicable)
- Death Certificate (if parents are deceased)
- List of adult relatives and other supportive adults
- Previous placement information
- Education records
- Proof of foster care placement
- Health Care Proxy/power of Attorney

IL Health: Things to Consider

- Understanding of medical needs & medications
- Ongoing treatment, counseling or medication management as an adult
- Reproductive health and pregnancy prevention
- Adult services (DMH, DIDDs, Voc Rehab)
- TennCare and health insurance

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

IL Finances: Things to Consider

- Financial literacy skills needed
- Developing & maintaining a budget
- Checking/savings account
- Pitfalls of check cashing / Tote the Note / Credit Cards
- Will youth access DCS voluntary extension of foster care services 18-21?
- Steps to access public assistance if needed

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

IL Employment: Things to Consider

- Work, job shadowing & volunteer history
- Career goals
- Job search, interview & resume writing skills
- Photo ID, resume, Social Security card
- Steps to assist youth in getting a job
- SSI application for youth unable to work

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

IL Housing: Things to Consider

- Skills around obtaining housing, including completing a lease or rental agreement
- Legal rights of landlords and tenants
- Housing plan and a backup housing plan for 18-21 year olds
- Start-up costs for housing (deposits, furniture, linens, other housing essentials)

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

IL Transportation: Things to Consider

- Use of public transportation
- Driver's education
- Skills and money to buy maintain a vehicle
- Driver's license and Insurance
- Plan for safe & stable transportation as an adult

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

IL Education: Things to Consider

- Credits—on track to graduate?
- Special Ed/IEP: area of disability
- GED
- Postsecondary & career Goals
- Extracurricular activities
- Campuses/programs visited
- Application, scholarship, testing deadlines
- Extension of Foster Care Services
- Involvement of IL Specialist

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

Parenting: Things to Consider

- Custody issues
- Parenting Support
- Well-Child Checks
- Home Visiting programs
- Families First or WIC if needed
- Child care
- Impact of parenting on other IL goals

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

Immigration: Things to Consider

- What are the young person's goals regarding their immigration status?
- Legal issues?
- What cultural connections does the youth have?

What resources and people will assist the youth in achieving these goals?

Transition Planning Tips



Transition Planning Tips

- Extension of Foster Care Services and scholarships which the youth may be eligible for should be explained to the youth
- Youth should know that they if they age out of care and refuse Extension of Foster Care Services, they can return to a regional DCS office to request those services before age 21 and may still be eligible.

Services for Young Adults 18-21

- DCS offers Voluntary Extension of Foster Care Services for youth 18-21
- Educational and Training Voucher (ETV): up to \$2500/semester, \$5000/year
- Independent Living Allowance or placement support
- DCS Case Management & Court oversight
- IL Wrap Services
- Life Skills Instruction

The services a youth receives will depend on what they qualify for & need

Other Services for Young Adults 18-21

- Young people who are not eligible for DCS Extension of Foster Care Services (or who don't choose services through DCS) may be eligible for:
 - Youth Villages' Transitional Living Program
 - Jim Casey Foundation Resource Centers
 - Adult services that can help them achieve their goals (Career Centers, Human Services, etc.)

Eligibility for Services for Young Adults 18-21

- Young people must be finishing high school, a GED or be enrolled in an educational program (or be unable to do so due to a serious special need.)
- Young people must sign a Rights and Responsibilities Agreement.
- Youth who turn 18 in a Youth Development Center are not eligible.
- Must be a U.S. citizen
- Other requirements regarding grades, assets, criminal activity, residence, etc.

Independent Living



Roles & Responsibilities

Key Responsibilities: Family Service Worker

- Coordinate with the Regional IL Specialist
- Administer Life Skills Assessment annually
- Hold regular CFTMs to review progress and needs
- Identify resources and action steps to assist youth in meeting IL and Transition Plan goals
- Refer youth needing special assistance to IL staff
- Make referrals for IL Wrap Services
- Assist young people with TennCare reapplication
- Complete transfer of Essential Documents

Key Responsibilities: IL Specialist

- Provide training and technical assistance to regional staff, private providers, resource parents, facilities and young people.
- Identify & coordinate life skills training classes
- Assist with interpretation of Life Skills Assessment results
- Attend Child & Family Team meetings and Foster Care Review Boards as requested
- Submit paperwork for Independent Living Allowance & scholarships
- Participate in Discharge planning

Steps to a Successful Transition

- Engage youth in planning
- Engage families and supportive adults
- Engage community partners
- Partner with the Regional IL Specialist
- Work with the team to create IL and Transition Plans that are personalized, with specific steps and resources outlined
- Successfully integrate the young adult into the community

Youth Voice



“We need a safe program where youth are challenged to step up and take their future into their hands, but also with assurance that there will be adults cheering them on and making themselves available to help when needed.

Really, we just need the same thing other young adults need.”

-Eddy, age 20