



Policy: Independent Living Services

ChildNet Number: CN 003.035

Original Approved Date: June 3, 2003

Policy Revised Date(s): October 13, 2004, June 22, 2010, July 9, 2014

Policy Sunset Date:

COA Standard(s): FKC 9.03, 9.04, 9.07, 9.08, 10.05, 10.06, 13.01, 13.02, 13.03, 13.04, 13.05, 13.06

Statement of Policy:

ChildNet oversees a system of Independent Living services designed to enable older children in foster care and young adults exiting the system to transition to self-sufficiency within a comprehensive network of resources and supports. The goals of independent living transition services are to assist this population with obtaining safe and stable housing, developing life skills and competencies including: work readiness, achieving educational and financial growth goals, and establishing healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships. ChildNet has established a continuum of services to help these youth live self-sufficient, healthy, productive, and stable adult lives. ChildNet adheres to the premise that independent living transition services are not an alternative to adoption or permanent placement. Pursuant to this policy, independent living transition services may occur concurrently with continued efforts to locate and achieve placement in families for older children in foster care. This policy sets forth the provisions regarding eligibility and requirements of the Independent Living services as it relates to all staff and designees responsible for providing these services.

As to a child from a tribe covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act ICWA, ChildNet works in conjunction with the tribe in determining who will provide Independent Living services and ensures the child's needs are met while maintaining tribal connections and placements, consistent with Florida law and best practice.

Board Chair's Signature:

Date:

07-29-14



Procedure: Independent Living Services

ChildNet Number: CN 003.035

Original Approved Date: June 3, 2003

Procedure Revised Date(s): October 13, 2004, June 22, 2010, November 17, 2010, August 9, 2012, July 9, 2014, March 8, 2017, March 20, 2018; May 14, 2026

Procedure Sunset Date:

COA Standard(s): FKC 9.03, 9.04, 9.07, 9.08, 10.05, 10.06, 13.01, 13.02, 13.03, 13.04, 13.05, 13.06

Definitions:

Dependency Case Manager (DCM): for purposes of this policy, is an employee of the contracted case management organization with required training, experience and/or child welfare certification who is accountable for service delivery regarding safety, permanency, and well-being for a caseload of children and families under supervision.

Extended Foster Care (EFC): for purposes of this policy refers to jurisdictional status, requirements and services provided to children and young adults who meet the eligibility and qualifications pursuant to Florida Statutes 39.6251, Continuing care for young adults.

Fort Lauderdale Independent Training and Education Center (FLITE): The central resource for young people in Broward County's dependency system offering a single, convenient point of access to a broad range of services and supports as they transition to independence and become successful adults.

Independent Living Services: an array of services to assist and support older children in foster care and young adults who were formerly in foster care obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, employment sustainability, academic achievement, financial security and the nurturance of healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

Outreach Advocacy and Support for Independence and Self-Sufficiency (OASIS) A single point of entry and assessment for young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years old who require assistance in the areas of Housing, Education, Health Care, Life Skills and Employment.



RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

CN 003.001 Case Assignment Policy
CN 003.006 Case Supervision and Service Planning
CN 003.010 Physical Health and Treatment
CN 003.042 Behavioral Health Services
CN 003.056 Educational Needs of Children in Out-of-Home Care
CN 003.062 Termination of Services
CN 003.068 Visitation Development and Implementation Plan
CN 003.069 Supervisory Reviews
CN 004.016 Family Assessment
CN 004.022 Report and Services Involving Indian Children
CN 004.023 Normalcy
CN 007.024 Staffing and Case Reviews
CN 016.001 Professional Development

Statement of Procedure:

In order to ensure Independent Living services are provided to all eligible youth and young adults and such service provision facilitates the manifest best interests of the child in foster care and supports self-sufficiency for those young adults formerly in foster care, the following procedures are performed consistent with, but not limited to, the application of the provisions of Florida Statutes. Youth in care and those who have aged out of care have access to culturally relevant services to increase their overall well being.

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

ChildNet's Independent Living Program is a comprehensive community-based approach designed to support youth in foster care, young adults in licensed care who are transitioning to independent living under Extended Foster Care (EFC); and those young adults who exit licensed care but are eligible for post 18 year old services.

ChildNet engages in proper planning and collaboration with community-based partners to coordinate service delivery and determine the resources, interventions, and supports necessary to meet the needs of this vulnerable population. ChildNet has also formed partnerships with the business community to support internships, apprenticeships, or other work-related opportunities as a means of complementing educational goals. Youth and young adults are also linked to employment services at Career Source Broward and Palm Beach.

ChildNet uses this collaborative method along with youth feedback to guide the development of service planning and implementation. ChildNet and its partners monitor effectiveness of services and program objectives to adapt strategies as necessary and in response to the ever-changing needs of the young people served.



The primary goal of ChildNet's Independent Living program is to assist youth and young adults with attaining the critical skills, resources, and competencies vital to sustaining self-sufficient and productive lives. ChildNet coordinates case management services to ensure that youth and young adults are able to receive support from family members, caregivers, peers, community and staff regarding their personal and social development needs.

RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ChildNet values a community-based approach when providing Independent Living Services as it increases the ability of the organization and community to improve service accessibility and quality and increases opportunities that support young adults who are less prepared to achieve self-sufficiency as young adults. All staff within the Independent Living Department have access to local, regional and state resources and best practice as it relates to serving transitional youth and young adults who have exited foster care.

ChildNet regularly performs community outreach, assesses services that are available or unavailable, and coordinates with providers and private businesses within the community to ensure adequate services including guidance, support, and enriching opportunities are available to meet the needs of all youth and young adults. Resources and options include, but are not limited to, services in the areas of education, employment, health care, housing, and community outreach.

In Broward, the Director of Case Management, or designee participates in quarterly Transitional Independent Living Steering Committee meetings with community providers serving older children in foster care and young adults who have exited the system to enhance services and supports and to address any identified service gaps. During these meetings, ChildNet advocates for any service gaps that have been identified by bringing the needs of the youth and young adults to the providers and funders within the community. Partnerships are also developed in an effort to link youth and young adults to employment and internship opportunities based on their individual interests and abilities.

Employment

Children aging out of foster care and young adults are encouraged to take part-time jobs and save funds for their future. ChildNet ensures that all eligible children and young adults are informed of any employment opportunities specifically designated for young people in foster care or young adults who have exited from the dependency system. EFCA/EFCD and Aftercare Specialists/Life Coaches from community provider agencies ensure youth are provided with the training and guidance related to the development of good work habits and a sense of self awareness in an effort to ensure job sustainability.

ChildNet has established a strong relationship with Career Source in Broward and Palm Beach Counties and other community partners to provide a safe environment for children transitioning out of foster care and young adults to receive the education, training, and



services needed to prepare them for employment and careers. Youth are provided with the opportunity to access and use employment information and job options at the local Career Source, One Stop Centers. Access to employment services and ongoing transition planning helps youth and young adults with identifying future career aspirations.

1. The DCM, Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach or designee ensures that referrals to employment providers are made if the need is identified or requested. Local employment providers assist youth and young adults with job development, job placement, on the job training and job coaching experiences. These providers assist youth with understanding data related to job options and clarification related to current and future career aspirations.
2. The DCM, Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach ensures that children in foster care obtain their Florida Identification cards and receive assistance with obtaining a bank account in order to ensure the ability to directly access and manage their personal funds prior to age 17.

Health Care

ChildNet works with Medicaid Health Plans and other community partners to ensure that children have access to community-based medical and behavioral health care services as well as additional support services vital to the overall health and well-being of all children and young adults transitioning out of the dependency system.

1. For youth under eighteen and preparing to transition from the child welfare system, ChildNet partners with Sunshine Health (SH) in planning for enrolled youth's access to health care. In order to most effectively do so, ChildNet:
 - a. Provides Sunshine Health with a copy of the full transition plan for SH enrolled youth, if available, within sixty (60) days following a member's 17th birthday along with any updates while the child remains in the SH Child Welfare Specialty Plan.
 - b. Collaborates with Sunshine Health on transition planning for enrolled youth one (1) year prior to the expected date upon which a youth will age-out of the child welfare system
 - c. Participates in comprehensive treatment team meetings with Sunshine Health Plan for the purposes of transition planning within the ninety (90) day period following an enrolled youth's 17th birthday
2. Youth who have exited the foster care system are eligible for Medicaid services up to the age of 26. When youth exit foster care, ChildNet's Revenue Maximization staff ensures that the young adult's Medicaid remains open.
3. In addition, through the Aftercare Service continuum, ChildNet provides referrals for many needed services and resources which include, but are not limited to the following:



- a. medical services, such as routine care and medication management or monitoring;
- b. dental services;
- c. counseling, behavioral health services, and substance misuse services;
- d. age-appropriate education regarding family planning, HIV/AIDS and STD prevention, and general information about the prevention and treatment of disease; and
- e. insurance coverage, when available.

Housing

ChildNet works diligently to ensure that no youth exits foster care without access to safe and stable housing. The organization continues to engage existing and new community partners in the development of additional housing supports and services to include on site supervised household management Transitional Independent Living housing programs.

The DCM ensures that prior to turning 18, all children are provided with information regarding the array of affordable and supportive Transitional Independent Living (TIL) housing opportunities within the community as well as other options. The CA/DCM or designee arranges on-site visits to the TIL programs and any other possible options and completes the referral process.

Prior to their 18th birthday, during their Transition and Education Plan Staffing(s), youth are made aware of the option to reside with the licensed foster family or group care provider with whom he or she was residing at the time of reaching his or her 18th birthday or to reside in another licensed foster home or with a group care provider arranged by ChildNet. Youth also have the option to reside in supervised living arrangements such as TIL Housing, college dormitory, or apartment in the community.

EFCA/EFC DCM/Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach completes and submits an EFC Placement Inspection for each youth participating in Extended Foster Care. If a youth is residing at a new vendor, the EFCA/EFC DCM/Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach will also complete an Extended Foster Care Vendor Checklist. An updated EFC Placement Inspection form is required if the young adult moves to another placement while in extended foster care.

Youth Community Participation

ChildNet encourages children in foster care, kinship care, and young adults to participate in their communities, state-wide leadership initiatives, and civic and advocacy activities. For example, some youth participate in the local or statewide chapter of Florida Youth Shine, an organization of current and former foster youth who advocate for change in the foster care system.

Youth are provided opportunities to participate in peer group activities where they can meet, lend support, and share positive experiences. These activities take place at their



schools, within their communities, and with community providers who serve this population.

OVERVIEW OF INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES AND REQUIREMENTS

ChildNet's administration is committed to the use of evidence-based strategies to identify the resources and effective services necessary to enhance the lives of the young people served and reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes. Youth are supported in their steps towards maximum independence in the least restrictive environment whenever possible.

The categories of Independent Living case management and related services include but are not limited to: preparation for independent living, life skills assessment and services, transition and education planning, EFC case management, Post-Secondary Education Services and Support (PESS) and a range of Aftercare services.

ChildNet strives to ensure that every youth preparing to transition out of the foster care system is engaged in school and/or work, has a realistic plan for independence, is linked to a network of services, and has access to at least one committed caring adult.

Preparation begins no later than age 13 for those children in foster care with the addition of enhanced educational supports and individually tailored life skills services. Life skills assessments, service provision, and transition planning continues through 18 or for as long as a young adult is under the court's jurisdiction through EFC.

ChildNet's Director of Case Management or designee generates a monthly report of all children in licensed out-of-home care as extracted from Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) in order to identify children eligible for services. The report is used to compile a tracking system that is maintained by the Independent Living Department.

ChildNet's Independent Living Program staff employs a system to assign tasks, create staffing and assessment schedules, and eliminate the need for a referral to be submitted for each child.

ChildNet's Independent Living Program also maintains a tracking system log of young adults that have exited care and are eligible for Independent Living benefits and Aftercare services.

Service Coordination for Youth with Special Needs

Older children in foster care who have disabilities or mental health needs are provided with the same opportunity to participate in the continuum of independent living services. Though a child who has a physical, emotional or learning disability may need additional support, he or she is still eligible for all independent living services from the program.



The DCM identifies those older foster children with disabilities or mental health needs by reviewing all available assessments including but not limited to the youth's Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment, psycho-educational assessment, psychological/psychiatric evaluation and developmental assessments that have been administered to the youth. The DCM ensures that youth with a disability is provided with accommodations to ensure equal participation in the Independent Living Program.

The DCM seeks assistance from appropriate community services providers as needed to ensure all services, assessments and staffings outlined in this policy are provided to youth with special needs.

Staff Requirements and Training

ChildNet requires that staff providing direct services within the Independent Living department and those agencies contracted to provide services have the training, skills, and experience necessary to engage and assist youth with transition planning, promoting self-sufficiency and setting achievable goals. All ChildNet and contracted staff must hold a bachelor's degree in social work or other related fields and have some experience working with young or young adults.

ChildNet provides ongoing specialized training for staff, foster parents, and caregivers to facilitate their work with older children in foster care and their transition to adulthood. These trainings include but are not limited to administering the Ansell Casey Independent Living Assessment, methods of youth engagement, youth development, how to assist youth with special needs in achieving self-sufficiency, accessing and identifying community resources, youth advocacy, high school completion, grant applications, vocational school opportunities, supporting education and employment opportunities, normalcy, legislative updates and the effects of trauma.

ChildNet has developed procedures to maximize the authority of foster parents, family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, or other authorized caregivers to approve participation in age-appropriate activities of children in their care allowing youth in care have a sense of normalcy and develop the ability to create and maintain those social connections that are vital to self-sufficiency.

Independent Living Services

ChildNet's Independent Living programming provides an array of services to youth and young adults who are either currently in foster care, EFC or have exited the system and remain eligible for services.

Eligibility

Youth and young adults in licensed care aged 13 and over are eligible to receive Independent Living services irrespective of case plan goal. These services are designed to support the development of skills necessary to lead self-sufficient, healthy, productive and stable adult lives.



The categories of Independent Living case management and related services include but are not limited to: preparation for independent living, Independent Living assessment and life skills services, transition and education planning, EFC case management, Post-Secondary Education Services and Support (PESS) and a range of Aftercare services.

Preparation for Independent Living

ChildNet, along with the support of an extensive network of providers, offers children and young adult's opportunities to participate in life skills activities in their placements and communities which are reasonable and appropriate for their respective ages or for any special needs they may have. Youth and young adults are also provided with services to build life skills and increase their ability to live independently and become self-sufficient.

The needed skills may be taught through instruction and interaction with the out-of-home caregivers or group-care staff, through contracted services, referrals to community providers, one-on-one coaching, and group learning sessions. The child may also be able to learn some of the needed skills in the public-school curriculum.

ChildNet ensures that children in foster care and those transitioning into independent living receive services to facilitate successful transition into adulthood. The services provided include but are not limited to independent living assessments, life skills, education and career planning. The provision of independent living services also includes ensuring the completion of mandatory staffings and other legal requirements.

Independent Living Assessment

Workshops and training opportunities provided to the child take into account the recipient's age and any special needs. The DCM determines the need for specific services to be provided through the use of an independent life skills assessment.

The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment or other assessments approved by ChildNet are strength-based, comprehensive, individualized, and culturally responsive. The assessment process focuses on strengths and needs in various life skill domains including, but not limited to: career planning, communication, daily living, housing, and money management. Staffs and providers administering the Ansell-Casey are trained on proper administration and interpretation of results.

When deciding which assessments to administer several factors are considered such as the child's age, developmental level, any identified disability and primary language spoken. There are also additional assessment supplements available through Casey designed to help young people who have specific needs and challenges. The specific areas are: pregnancy and parenting infants and young children; homelessness; youth values; education; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and intersex youth (LGBTQI); and Native American. There are also assessments that can be completed by the youth's caregiver if they are physically or developmentally unable to complete the assessment.



Case Management Responsibilities

The DCM is required to coordinate with the caregiver or provider to administer the IL assessment to youth in foster care at ages 13, 15 and 17. If a child is 13 years of age or older when placed into foster care, the process to initiate an independent living skills assessment begins within 30 days after the court enters the order placing the child in state custody under ChildNet's supervision.

The DCM or designee discusses the results of the IL assessment with the child and caregiver and uses the results to identify the training and services needed for the child to continue learning skills necessary for a successful transition to adulthood.

The DCM completes the IL assessment process using the results from a standardized independent living assessment tool, review of the file, review of other assessments and evaluations, including educational, psychological and psychiatric evaluations, personal observation, and interviews with any person who is familiar with the child and can be helpful in the assessment process.

The DCM coordinates with other relevant entities such as the local county school board, for children with developmental disabilities, mental health, or other special needs to provide individually tailored services. The results of the assessment process are incorporated in the child's case plan and judicial review social study report (JRSSR) which are filed with the Court.

The DCM works with the youth beginning at age 17, to create and update the Independent Living Transition and Education Plan using the results of the Independent Living assessment process.

The DCM is responsible for ensuring that the child receives all needed life skills training and those life skills services are designed to meet the child's needs as identified in the independent living skills assessment.

The DCM coordinates and documents the provision of life skills training in the Independent Living Life Skills section of CCWIS within 48 hours as well as in the child's case file. This documentation includes but is not limited to: who will assist the child in developing the needed skills and in what timeframe; the occurrence, results and progress toward meeting the established goals of each IL assessment and any additional relevant documentation.

Life Skills Services

ChildNet works with community partners to ensure that the children have access to an array of opportunities for youth develop a comprehensive set of daily living, social, and communications skills, including, but not limited to:



1. Banking, money management, building/buying credit, loans, and budgeting skills;
2. Job searching, application, resume writing assistance, and interviewing skills;
3. Parenting;
4. Time management and organizational skills;
5. Careers and employment training;
6. Individual counseling;
7. Accessing social security benefits, public assistance and other community resources;
8. Essential skills training;
9. Mentoring;
10. Mental health services;
11. Educational supports;
12. Disability services;
13. Workshops relating to self-confidence, personal responsibility, stress management and coping, problem solving, goal-setting, communication, and relationship development;
14. Affordable housing options, tenant rights and responsibilities;
15. Self-sufficiency needs;
16. Health care;
17. Household management;
18. Consumer competence;
19. Nutrition and food preparation;
20. Hygiene, self-care, and personal safety;
21. Exercising legal rights and responsibilities, such as voting;
22. Medication management;
23. Substance abuse;
24. Family planning and sexually transmitted diseases prevention.
25. Ethic, cultural and religious activities

Trainings are provided in the foster home, group home, and/or residential placement. Additional trainings and workshops are made available to youth and young adults through the FLITE Center, Broward County's Transitional Independent Living Resource Center and the OASIS in Palm Beach County. All workshops provided to youth outside of the residence are easily accessible by public transportation and youth are provided monthly bus passes to assist. Transportation may also be provided by the youth's caregiver, DCM, Life Coach or designee.

The DCM documents the youth's attendance in the Life Skills section of CCWIS within 48 hours of being notified of their attendance.

Transition and Education Planning

Transition and Education Plan Staffing

Transition and Education Plan staffings are essential to ensuring that a child is aware of the options available to him or her upon reaching his or her 18th birthday. During the



Transition and Education Plan staffing, the child, DCM and any other parties present develop a Transition and Education Plan together. This plan is tailored to the child's specific needs, strengths, interests, and goals.

The Transition and Education Plan outlines the child's transition to adulthood and is filed with the court and served to all parties. The plan includes the service goals and desired outcomes agreed upon by all parties. Achievable timeframes for service activities consistent with the youth's developmental needs will be identified along with the people responsible for each task. The child will be asked to sign a copy of the plan upon completion along with the DCM and any other parties who participate in the development of the plan.

During the 180-day period after a child reaches 17 years of age, the Independent Living Supervisor or designee facilitates a Transition and Education Plan Staffing to assist the child in developing a Transition and Education plan in collaboration with the DCM, the caregiver, and any other individual whom the child would like to include.

The required Transition and Education plan is in addition to standard case management requirements and must address specific options for the child to obtain services, including housing, health insurance, education, and workforce support and employment services. The Transition and Education plan may be as detailed as the child chooses and must include methods for the child to establish and maintain adult supports.

For those children with disabilities, the DCM will ensure that all relevant parties, which may include the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, adult and children's mental health services or other programs are invited to attend Transition and Education Plan Staffings. The DCM must also coordinate the Transition and Education plan with the independent living provisions in the case plan and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act transition plan.

The DCM ensures that every Transition and Education Plan staffing meets the following minimum requirements:

1. The child must be in attendance for the Transition and Education Plan staffing to take place and if necessary, arrangements may be made for the child to be present by phone.
2. The Transition and Education Plan staffing must be child-centric and conducted in the child's primary language with the use of translation services as required.
3. The Transition and Education Plan Staffing must be held in a time and place convenient to the child and any individual who the child would like to include, taking into account their respective school and work schedules.
4. The DCM and/or DCMS must attend all Transition and Education Plan staffings and Children Legal Services (CLS), the child's parent, caregiver, Guardian ad Litem, and attorney, must be invited.



The DCM ensures that the child's Transition and Education Plan addresses the following topics at minimum:

1. The child's educational and work goals, including the child's progress and any obstacles;
2. Peer group, community involvement
3. Connection to family and/or other adult supports;
4. Interests and Hobbies
5. The life skills the child needs and the child's progress towards developing already identified skills;
6. The Extended Foster Care Program (EFC) as well as the Post-Secondary Educational Services and Support Program (PESS), including program requirements and benefits, the tuition fee exemption, and the Bright Futures Program;
7. Housing options
8. Physical health and medical care
9. Emotional and social development
10. Permanency arrangements, including the child's wishes regarding adoption;
11. Coping with stress and trauma related to grief and loss transitions
12. Any other identified obstacles and needs the child has with regard to Independent Living.

At each staffing, the DCM ensures that each child is notified in writing of the options available to him or her upon reaching 18 years of age, including, but not limited to, PESS and EFC, continued court jurisdiction to age 19, and the ability to reside in a licensed foster or group home.

The DCM documents each staffing in the Meeting section of CCWIS within 48 hours. In the event that a Transition and Education Plan staffing is scheduled, but does not take place for any reason, the DCM must also document the cancellation in CCWIS within 48 hours.

During each staffing the youth's strengths and needs are reassessed in relationship to the goals, services delivered, and desired outcomes. Adjustments are made to the plan as needed or requested by the child.

The DCM meets with the child in order to develop a case-plan that incorporates the child's individual needs as outlined in the Transition and Education Plan.

The DCM and /DCMS review the status of each child's Transition and Education Plan during quarterly supervisory reviews. During this review the implementation of the plan will be discussed as well as the progress toward achieving identified goals and outcomes. If there is a need to amend the Transition and Education Plan, a Transition and Education Plan staffing will be scheduled with all involved parties.



Transition Planning

ChildNet is proactive in its approach to transition planning to ensure that youth are prepared for young adulthood. It is ChildNet's goal that every young adult have a place to live, and a source of income, whether earned or unearned, that is sufficient enough to meet his or her needs by their 18th birthday.

Transition planning begins for all youth prior to their 18th birthday. Youth are transferred into the EFC Unit and assigned an EFCA/EFC DCM for primary case assignment on or before turning 17 ½ if it is likely that he or she will turn 18 prior to achieving permanency. The EFCA/EFC DCM continues to carry that youth's case post 18 should the youth choose to remain in licensed care through EFC.

For youth who opt out of licensed care at 18 and/or choose to participate PESS, or After care services, an Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach will be assigned prior to dependency case closure to work with the young adult until their 23rd birthday or such time that they are no longer eligible or in need of services.

Beginning at age 17, during the Transition and Education Plan staffings, youth are provided with six (6) months minimum advance notice of the cessation of any health, financial, educational, or other benefits that may occur at transition. Potential obstacles are identified early in the process to avoid disruptions from occurring in the child's education, employment, and social environments.

1. The EFCA/EFC DCM and/or Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach prepares youth for a successful transition by providing youth and collaborating providers:
 - a. Transfer or termination of custody information, as applicable;
 - b. Information about rights and services to which the person may have access as a result of a disability;
 - c. Information on availability of affordable community-based healthcare and counseling;
 - d. Court and public assistance systems information;
 - e. Childcare services information; and
 - f. Support through community volunteers or individuals who have made a successful transition, as appropriate.
2. For youth transitioning to independence, ChildNet ensures that basic resources are in place, including but not limited to:
 - a. A source of income
 - b. An adequate living arrangement is in place;
 - c. Affordable health care;
 - d. Access to at least one committed, caring adult, such as teachers and church members;

- e. And access to positive peer support by encouraging every child to accept a referral for a mentor.
3. The EFCA/EFC DCM ensures that a written plan is in place for children with disabilities who may require continued supported living by the child's 18th birthday to facilitate the transition from foster care to another supported living program.
4. During the transition process, and prior to case closing, the EFCA/EFC DCM explores a range of living situations with the youth and engages them in an evaluation of the options and benefits of various housing options.
5. If the child desires or intends to live with a family member upon reaching his or her 18th birthday, the EFCA/EFC DCM assists the child in planning for a safe and smooth transition. The EFCA/EFC DCM seeks court approval through CLS when necessary and safe to allow contact with family members while the child remains under supervision.
6. The EFCA/EFC DCM assists youth in obtaining or compiling documents necessary to function as an independent adult, including:
 - a. An identification card;
 - b. A social security or social insurance number;
 - c. A resume, when work experience can be described;
 - d. A Florida driver's license, when the ability to drive is a goal;
 - e. Medical records and documentation, including a Medicaid card or other health eligibility documentation;
 - f. An original copy of the youth's birth certificate;
 - g. Religious documents and information, as applicable;
 - h. Documentation of tribal eligibility or membership, immigration, citizenship, or naturalization, when applicable;
 - i. Death certificates when parents are deceased;
 - j. A life book or a compilation of personal history and photographs, as appropriate;
 - k. A list of known relatives, with relationships, addresses, telephone numbers, and permissions of contacting involved parties;
 - l. Previous placement information; and
 - m. Educational records, such as a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and a list of schools attended, when age appropriate.
7. As a continuing source for information, crisis management, referral, and support, ChildNet provides each youth transition to independence with:
 - a. A transition plan summary, including the individual's options;
 - b. A list of emergency contacts, and
 - c. The organization's contact information

Judicial Review Hearings for Children Under 17 Years of Age

ChildNet staff works with CLS to ensure that the court holds a judicial review hearing within 90 days after a child's 17th birthday. During that review the court issues a separate order removing the disability of nonage of the child pursuant to s. 743.045. The court continues to hold timely judicial review hearings and if necessary, the court may review the status of the child more frequently during the year before the child's 18th birthday.

At each review hearing, in addition to any information or report provided to the court by the foster parent, legal custodian, or guardian ad litem, the child is given the opportunity to address the court with any information relevant to the child's best interest, particularly in relation to independent living transition services.

The CA/DCM must include in the social study report for judicial review that the child has:

1. A current Medicaid card and all necessary information concerning the Medicaid program sufficient to prepare the child to apply for coverage upon reaching the age of 18, if such application is appropriate.
2. A certified copy of the child's birth certificate and, if the child does not have a valid driver's license, a Florida identification card issued under s. 322.051.
3. A social security card and information relating to social security insurance benefits if the child is eligible for those benefits. If the child has received such benefits and they are being held in trust for the child, a full accounting of these funds must be provided, and the child must be informed as to how to access those funds.
4. All relevant information related to the EFC, PESS and Aftercare Services, including, but not limited to, eligibility requirements, information on participation, and assistance in gaining admission to the program. If the child is eligible for the EFC, he or she must be advised that he or she may continue to reside with the licensed family home or group care provider with whom the child was residing at the time the child attained his or her 18th birthday, in another licensed family home, or with a group care provider arranged by the department.
5. An open bank account or the identification necessary to open a bank account and to acquire essential banking and budgeting skills.
6. Information on public assistance and how to apply for public assistance.
7. A clear understanding of where he or she will be living on his or her 18th birthday, how living expenses will be paid, and the educational program or school in which he or she will be enrolled.
8. Information related to the ability of the child to remain in care until he or she reaches 21 years of age under s. 39.013.
9. A letter providing the dates that the child is under the jurisdiction of the court.
10. A letter stating that the child is in compliance with financial aid documentation requirements.
11. The child's educational records.

12. The child's entire health and mental health records.
13. The process for accessing his or her case file.
14. A statement encouraging the child to attend all judicial review hearings occurring after the child's 17th birthday.

At the first judicial review hearing held subsequent to the child's 17th birthday, the DCM and DCF shall provide the court with an updated case plan that includes specific information related to the independent living skills that the child has acquired since the child's 13th birthday, or since the date the child came into foster care, whichever came later.

At the last review hearing before the child reaches 18 years of age, and in addition to the requirements stated above the DCM should have documented in the child's file that the court has:

1. Addressed whether the child plans to remain in foster care, and, if so, ensure that the child's transition plan includes a plan for meeting one or more of the criteria specified in s. 39.6251.
2. Ensured that the transition plan includes a supervised living arrangement under s. 39.6251.
3. Ensured the child has been informed of:
 - a. The right to continued support and services from the department and the community-based care lead agency.
 - b. The right to request termination of dependency jurisdiction and be discharged from foster care.
 - c. The opportunity to reenter foster care pursuant to s. 39.6251.
4. Ensured that the young adult, if he or she requests termination of dependency jurisdiction and discharge from foster care, has been informed of:
 - a. Services or benefits for which the young adult may be eligible based on his or her former placement in foster care;
 - b. Services or benefits that may be lost through termination of dependency jurisdiction; and
 - c. Other federal, state, local, or community-based services or supports available to him or her.

Extended Foster Care (EFC)

The Extended Foster Care program allows young adults to remain in foster care past the age of 18 up to the age of 21 or 22 if the youth has a documented disability. While under extended foster care the young adult receives case management services and judicial oversight.



Eligibility

1. A youth is eligible for EFC if at the age of 18 he or she was residing in licensed foster care and are:
 - a. Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential; or
 - b. Enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary or vocational education; or
 - c. Employed at least 80 hours per month; or
 - d. Participating in a program designed to promote or eliminate barriers to employment.; or
 - e. Have a diagnosed and documented disability that would prevent the young adult from participating in any of the activities listed above.
2. The young adult must reside in a supervised living environment that is approved by ChildNet's Independent Living Supervisor and Director or Designee. The young adult lives independently, but in an environment in which he or she is provided supervision, case management, and supportive services by the department or lead agency.
3. The ChildNet approved setting must offer developmentally appropriate freedom and responsibility to prepare the young adult for adulthood. For EFC purposes, a supervised living arrangement may include a licensed foster home, licensed group home, college dormitory, shared housing, apartment, or another housing arrangement if the arrangement is approved by ChildNet and is acceptable to the young adult, with first choice being a licensed foster home.
4. A young adult may continue to reside with the same licensed foster family or group care provider with whom he or she was residing at the time he or she reached the age of 18 years.

Before approving the residential setting in which the young adult will live, ChildNet's Independent Living Supervisor and assigned Director or designee must ensure that:

- a. The young adult will be supervised at a level consistent with his or her individual education, health care needs, permanency plan, and independent living goals as assessed by the EFCA/EFC DCM with input from the young adult. Twenty-four hour onsite supervision is not required; however, 24-hour crisis intervention and support must be available.
- b. The young adult must live in an independent living environment that offers, at a minimum, life skills instruction, counseling, educational support, employment preparation and placement, and development of support networks. The determination of the type and duration of services is based on the young adult's assessed needs, interests, and input and must be consistent with the goals set in the young adult's Transition and Education Plan and case plan.



5. Where services are not provided to the young adult at their place of residence, than it is the EFCA/EFC DCM's responsibility to ensure any services identified are provided to the young adult. Documentation of services is to be included in the case file and in CCWIS within 48 hours.
6. Eligibility for a young adult to remain in extended foster care ends on the earliest of the dates that the young adult:
 - a. Reaches 21 years of age or, in the case of young adults with a disability, reach 22 years of age;
 - b. Leaves care to live in a permanent home consistent with his or her permanency plan; or
 - c. Knowingly and voluntarily withdraws his or her consent to participate in extended care. The EFCA/EFC DCM must ensure that any withdrawal of consent to participate in extended care is verified by the court pursuant to s. 39.701, unless the young adult refuses to participate in any further court proceeding.
7. A young adult who is between the ages of 18 and 21 and who has left care may return to care by applying to ChildNet's Independent Living Department for readmission. ChildNet must readmit the young adult if he or she continues to meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

Within 30 days after the young adult has been readmitted to care, ChildNet will assign an EFCA/EFC DCM to update the case plan and the transition plan and to arrange for the required services. Such activities are to be completed in consultation with the young adult.

Upon approval for readmission, ChildNet staff provides OAG/CLS with documentation so that the department can petition the court to reinstate jurisdiction over the young adult. Notwithstanding s. 39.013(2), the court shall resume jurisdiction over the young adult if the department establishes that he or she continues to meet the eligibility requirements in this section.

8. During each period of time that a young adult is in care, ChildNet or its contracted provider provides regular case management reviews that must include at least monthly contact with the case manager. If a young adult lives outside the ChildNet's service area monthly contact may occur by telephone.
9. During the time that a young adult is in care, the court maintains jurisdiction to ensure that the department and ChildNet are providing services and coordinate with, and maintain oversight of, other agencies involved in implementing the young adult's case plan, individual Transition and Education plan, and transition plan.

10. The EFCA/EFC DCM works with the assigned CLS attorney to ensure that the court reviews the status of the young adult at least every 6 months and holds a permanency review hearing at least annually.
11. The court may appoint a guardian ad litem or continue the appointment of a guardian ad litem with the young adult's consent. The young adult or any other party to the dependency case may request an additional hearing or review.

Review Hearings for Young Adults In Extended Foster Care

During each period of time that a young adult remains in foster care, the court shall review the status of the young adult at least every 6 months and must hold a permanency review hearing at least annually. The EFCA/EFC DCM or designee shall prepare and submit to the court a judicial review report, developed in collaboration with the young adult, which addresses the young adult's progress in meeting the goals in the case plan. The report must include progress information related to the young adult's independent living plan and transition plan, if applicable, and shall propose modifications as necessary to further the young adult's goals.

In all permanency hearings or hearings regarding the transition of the young adult from care to independent living, the court shall consult with the young adult regarding the proposed permanency plan, case plan, and individual education plan for the young adult and ensure that he or she has understood the conversation.

The permanency goal for young adults in Extended Foster Care is Transition from Licensed Care to Independent Living.

If a young adult has chosen to remain in Extended Foster Care after he or she has reached 18 years of age, the case cannot be closed until the court finds that following criteria have been met:

1. Attendance of the young adult at the hearing; or
2. Findings by the court that:
 - a. The young adult has been informed by their EFC Advocate/DCM of his or her right to attend the hearing and has provided written consent to waive this right; and
 - b. The young adult has been informed of the potential negative effects of early termination of care, the option to reenter care before reaching 21 years of age, the procedure for, and limitations on, reentering care, and the availability of alternative services, and has signed a document attesting that he or she has been so informed and understands these provisions; or
 - c. The young adult has voluntarily left the program, has not signed the document in sub-subparagraph b., and is unwilling to participate in any further court proceeding.

Post-Secondary Education Services and Support (PESS)

The PESS program provides young adults monthly financial assistance and educational support for college or post-secondary vocational school. This program is available to up to their 23rd birthday.

A youth is eligible for PESS if at the age of 18 was living in licensed care or is currently living in licensed care; or was at least 16 years of age and was adopted from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least 6 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding such placement or adoption and;

- a. Spent at least 6 months in licensed care before reaching his or her 18th birthday
- b. Earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent pursuant to s. 1003.428, s. 1003.4281, 2s. 1003.429, s. 1003.435, or s. 1003.438;
- c. Has been admitted for enrollment as a full-time student or its equivalent in an eligible postsecondary educational institution as provided in s. 1009.533. For purposes of this section, the term "full-time" means 9 credit hours or the vocational school equivalent. A student may enroll part-time if he or she has a recognized disability or is faced with another challenge or circumstance that would prevent full-time attendance. A student needing to enroll part-time for any reason other than having a recognized disability must get approval from his or her academic advisor;
- d. Has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of age
- e. Has applied, with assistance from the young adult's caregiver and ChildNet or its contracted provider, for any other grants and scholarships for which he or she may qualify
- f. Submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid which is complete and error free; and
- g. Signed an agreement to allow the department, ChildNet or its contracted provider, access to school records.

PESS Financial Award

1. For a young adult who does not remain in foster care and is attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, the amount is \$1,256 monthly.
2. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is attending a postsecondary school, as provided in s. 1009.533, and continues to reside in a licensed foster home, the amount is the established room and board rate for foster parents.
3. For a young adult who remains in foster care but temporarily resides away from a licensed foster home for purposes of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, the amount is \$1,256 monthly.
4. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, and continues to reside in a licensed group home, the amount



is negotiated between the community-based care lead agency and the licensed group home provider.

5. For a young adult who remains in foster care but temporarily resides away from a licensed group home for purposes of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, the amount is \$1,256 monthly. This takes the place of a negotiated room and board rate.
6. The amount of the award may be disregarded for purposes of determining the eligibility for, or the amount of, any other federal or federally supported assistance.
7. A young adult is eligible to receive financial assistance during the months when enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution.
8. Payment for a young adult who has chosen not to remain in foster care and is attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, shall be made to ChildNet in order to secure housing and utilities, with the balance being paid directly to the young adult until such time that assigned ChildNet staff and the young adult determine that the young adult can successfully manage the full amount of the assistance.
9. Having remained in foster care under s. 39.6251 and who is attending postsecondary school as provided in s. 1009.533, shall be made directly to the foster parent or group home provider.
10. If the award recipient transfers from one eligible institution to another and continues to meet eligibility requirements, the award shall be transferred with the recipient.
11. The Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach shall evaluate each PESS award for renewal eligibility on an annual basis. In order to be eligible for a renewal award for the subsequent year, the young adult must:
 - a. Be enrolled for or have completed the number of hours, or the equivalent, to be considered a full-time student, unless the young adult qualifies for an exception.
 - b. Maintain standards of academic progress as defined by the education institution, except that if the young adult's progress is insufficient to renew the award at any time during the eligibility period, the young adult may continue to be enrolled for additional terms while attempting to restore eligibility as long as progress towards the required level is maintained.
12. Funds may be terminated during the interim between an award and the evaluation for a renewal award if the department, or an agency under contract with the department, determines that the award recipient is no longer enrolled in an educational institution or is no longer a resident of this state.

- a. Appropriate ChildNet staff shall notify a recipient who is terminated and inform the recipient of his or her right to appeal.
- b. An award recipient who does not qualify for a renewal award or who chooses not to renew the award may apply for reinstatement. An application for reinstatement must be made before the young adult reaches 23 years of age. In order to be eligible for reinstatement, the young adult must meet the eligibility criteria and the criteria for award renewal for the program.

Aftercare Support Services and Follow-up

ChildNet believes that transition planning begins long before a young adult leaves foster care. ChildNet's Independent Living program provides services to young adults formerly in foster care to support their successful transition to independent living by making service referrals in the community to assist in developing the skills and abilities necessary for independent living. ChildNet takes a proactive approach in engaging youth in aftercare planning. Proactive approaches are described through the policy but more specifically in the staffing and assessment sections. Young adults who exit foster care at age 18, but request services prior to his or her 23rd birthday, are eligible for aftercare support services and funding.

1. The services and funding available to the individual young adults include:
 - a. Aftercare support services
 - b. Aftercare Funding
 - c. Extended Foster Care
 - d. Post-Secondary Education Services and Support
 - e. Road to Independence Program if enrolled in the program as of December 31, 2013.
2. Depending on the jurisdiction of service, youth are assigned an EFCA/EFC DCM, Aftercare Specialist, and/or a Life Coach on or before turning 18 and are encouraged to accept a referral for a Mentor and or a Future Prep - Life Coach from one of the community provider agencies. Future Prep - Life Coaches are able to provide more intensive services and one-on-one support to current and former foster youth.
3. ChildNet Independent Living Aftercare Unit in Broward is co-located at the Broward County's Transitional Independent Living resource center, the FLITE Center and ChildNet's Independent Living staff in Palm Beach are regularly on-site at the contracted provider's offices to facilitate service provision and accessibility for the clients served.
4. The assigned ChildNet and or subcontracted staff assist young adults with any outstanding needs that are identified in their transition plan(s) prior to exiting care. If a young adult identifies any new supports or services that are needed, the plan is



amended. Staff will be assigned and ensure appropriate follow up according to the timeframes set forth in the plan.

5. The assigned ChildNet and or subcontracted staff will provide appropriate follow up on the Independent Living Transition and Education Plan with the participation and involvement of the young adult.
6. The assigned ChildNet and/or subcontracted staff will provide support through home visits, office visits, and other types of contact. The frequency of such contact is determined through consultation with the young adult. The contact for youth participating in extended foster care is monthly.
7. The assigned ChildNet and/or subcontracted staff assists with the transition plan requirements for all recipients of RTI, EFC, PESS and/or Aftercare Support funds.
8. The assigned ChildNet and/or subcontracted staff provides young adults with developmental disabilities, mental health needs, and/or other special needs increased levels of contact, as necessary, to support his or her ability to successfully transition to independent living.
9. There is no formal written application required to receive aftercare support service referrals.

Aftercare Support Services

Aftercare support services are available to assist young adults who were formerly in foster care in their efforts to continue to develop the skills and abilities necessary for independent living.

1. The aftercare support services available include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Referrals for mentoring, tutoring, crisis intervention, mental health services and substance abuse counseling.
 - b. Referrals to life skills workshops, including, but not limited to: credit management and preventive health activities, parenting education, family supports, job and career skills training, and financial literacy skills training.
 - c. Temporary financial assistance to prevent homelessness is provided as expeditiously as possible and within the limitations defined by the department.

Application Process for Aftercare Support Cash Assistance

The assigned ChildNet and/or subcontracted staff assists young adults in receiving cash assistance for housing, electric, water, gas, sewer service, food, and any other provisions permitted under law. Young adults participating in RTI, EFC or PESS programs are not eligible for Aftercare funds.



1. The assigned ChildNet and/or subcontracted staff will explore the feasibility agreements with community providers to waive fees, contacting relatives, and other such options prior to arranging for the provision of cash assistance.
2. The assigned ChildNet and/or subcontracted staff will assist the young adult with the completion of the "Aftercare Support Services Cash Assistance Application."

Road to Independence Program

The Road to Independence (RTI) Program is only available to young adults who entered this program on or before December 31, 2013. It is intended to help eligible young adults who are former foster youth with funds and services to help them receive the educational and vocational training needed to become independent and self-supporting. The amount of the award is based on the living and educational needs of the young adult and may be up to, but may not exceed, the amount of earnings that the student would have been eligible to earn working a 40-hour-a-week, federal minimum wage job.

1. A young adult who has earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent, a special diploma or special certificate of completion, or has reached 18 years of age (but is not yet 21 years of age) was eligible for the initial award, and a young adult under 23 years of age is eligible for renewal awards, if he or she:
 - a. Was a dependent child, under FS Chapter 39, and was living in licensed foster care or in Subsidized Independent Living at the time of his or her 18th birthday or is currently living in licensed foster care or Subsidized Independent Living, or, after reaching the age of 16, was adopted from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian and has spent a minimum of (6) months in foster care immediately preceding such placement or adoption;
 - b. Spent at least (6) six months living in foster care before reaching his or her 18th birthday;
 - c. Is a resident of the state of Florida as defined in Florida Statute 1009.40; and
 - d. Meets one of the following qualifications:
 - I. Has earned a standard high school diploma or its equivalent or has earned a special diploma or special certificate of completion and has been admitted for full-time enrollment in an eligible post-secondary educational institution.
 - II. Is enrolled full time in an accredited high school.
 - III. Is enrolled full time in an accredited adult education program designed to provide the student with a high school diploma or its equivalent
2. An award is available to a young adult who is considered a full-time student or its equivalent by the educational institution in which he or she is enrolled, unless that young adult has a recognized disability preventing full-time attendance.
3. The amount of the award, whether it is being used by a young adult working toward completion of a high school diploma or its equivalent or working toward completion of



a post-secondary educational program, will be based on an assessment of the funding needs of the young adult.

4. This assessment is completed by the Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach and the young adult and considers the young adult's living and educational costs and other grants, scholarships, waivers, earnings, and other income to be received. The state-wide Needs Assessment tool is used to determine the award amount received by the youth.
5. ChildNet issues awards from the program for each young adult who meets all of the requirements of the program to the extent funding is available. An initial award would have been issued at the time the eligible young adult reached 18 years of age.
6. The RTI funds terminate when the young adult has attained a post-secondary goal or reaches 23 years of age, whichever occurs earlier.
7. In order to initiate post-secondary education, to allow for a change in career goal, or to obtain additional skills in the same educational or vocational area, a young adult may earn no more than two (2) diplomas, certificates, or credentials.
8. A young adult attaining an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree is permitted to work toward completion of a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree or an equivalent undergraduate degree.
9. RTI Program funds may not be used for education or training after a young adult has attained a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree or an equivalent undergraduate degree.
10. ChildNet evaluates and renews each award annually as required by statute. In order to be eligible for a renewal award for the subsequent year, the young adult must:
 - a. Complete the number of hours, or the equivalent considered full-time by the educational institution, unless that young adult has a recognized disability preventing full-time attendance, in the last academic year in which the young adult earned an award; and
 - b. Maintain appropriate progress as required by the educational institution, except that, if the young adult's progress is insufficient to renew the award at any time during the eligibility period, the young adult may restore eligibility by improving his or her progress to the required level.
11. Funds may be terminated during the interim between an award and the evaluation for a renewal award if ChildNet determines that the award recipient is no longer enrolled in an educational institution or is no longer a resident of the State of Florida.



12. ChildNet must notify a recipient who is terminated in writing and inform the recipient of his or her right to appeal. Notification letters are delivered in person or sent by certified mail.

Payment of Aftercare, RTI, EFC or PESS Funds

1. The Independent Living Supervisor and Director of Case Management or designee must approve requests for Aftercare, RTI, EFC or PESS support funds prior to payment.
2. The Program Officer of Case Management, or designee must approve Aftercare funding requests exceeding \$500. The Executive Director or designee and Deputy Chief Financial Officer or designee must approve Aftercare funding requests over \$1,000. Aftercare funds may be paid directly to the young adult or to the vendor.
3. The Program Officer of Case Management or designee, Deputy Chief Financial Officer or designee and the Executive Director or designee must approve all EFC monthly budgets (payments) exceeding \$1256 per month.
4. Upon approval, ChildNet tenders payment directly to the provider for young adults participating in EFC. Monthly allowance may be paid directly to the young adult.
5. Young adults participating in the PESS Program may have their full monthly award paid directly to them if it has been determined by ChildNet.
6. RTI payments will be paid to the recipient unless the recipient requests in writing that the payments or a portion of the payments be made directly on the recipient's behalf in order to secure services such as housing, counseling, education, or employment training as part of the young adult's own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. Payments may also be made by direct deposit into the young adult's bank account or debit card if requested by the young adult in writing.

General Post-18 Documentation Requirements

1. ChildNet's Independent Living program maintains an active case and case file for each young adult receiving funding from the RTI, EFC and PESS Programs, , and/or Aftercare support services. At a minimum, the post 18 files contain:
 - a. A document that contains demographic information on the student such as: name, address, date of birth, social security number, school attending, etc.
 - b. Completed funding applications signed by the young adult and review and approval authorities.
 - c. Follow-up renewal applications
 - d. Completed Needs Assessments for RTI cases, when applicable.
 - e. Documentation to support eligibility requirements for the services provided.
 - f. Education information



- g. Mental Health evaluations
- h. Independent Living Transition and Education Plans

Documentation Requirements for Aftercare Support Services

1. The Independent Living program records all referrals for Aftercare Support and Request for Aftercare support cash assistance in the case file and maintains the hard copy of the application as well.
2. The Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach verifies the young adult is in need of services through an eviction notice, utility cut-off notice or similar document, estimate of move-in costs, or by assessing the situation through an interview with the young adult.
3. The Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach identified resources in the community for the youth when possible.

Documentation Requirements for Road to Independence Program

The Independent Living program maintains the following documentation in the case file of each young adult receiving the RTI Scholarship to verify the young adult's eligibility for the initial application, ongoing eligibility (at renewal).

1. The Independent Living program maintains the following documentation in the young adult's case file as documentation of application(s) for the RTI Scholarship, including the initial, renewal and reinstatement applications:
 - a. Renewal checklists;
 - b. All completed scholarship applications, including as appropriate, the initial, and renewal,
 - c. A log of financial disbursements will be maintained in CCWIS.
 - d. Any other pertinent supporting documentation.
2. The Independent Living Program maintains the following documentation in the young adult's case file for eligibility requirements.
 - a. RTI Application;
 - b. Proof of Adjudication Dependency;
 - c. Documentation that the student was living in licensed foster care at age 18;
 - d. Documentation that the student spent at least six (6) months in foster care before reaching his or her 18th birthday; and
 - e. Documentation that the student is a Florida resident.
3. The Independent Living program maintains the following documentation in the young adult's case file for educational requirements:
 - a. Full-time enrollment by the student in university, college, or community college.
 - b. Full-time enrollment by the student in vocational school, high school, or GED.

- c. Students must be able to periodically prove that they continue to be enrolled and attending school full-time. Sources of proof include a progress report from the school or document in case notes that a school official has been contacted and has verified continued full-time enrollment of the student. The name, title, school and phone number for the school official who has been contacted is included in the case note.
- d. The Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach ensure that at the end of each semester the student provides both a report card showing completion of classes registered for previously; and an enrollment form or letter from the educational institution showing full-time enrollment for the following semester. A hard copy is maintained in the young adult's case file.

Independent Living Due Process Notification and Appeals Process-Actions Requiring Due Process Notification

ChildNet ensures that every young adult participating in the Independent Living Program is treated fairly and afforded due process. A young adult applying for or receiving Independent Living benefits has the right to receive adequate written notice of adverse actions by ChildNet, to present grievances about adverse actions by ChildNet, and to resolve issues about eligibility by meeting informally with representatives of ChildNet or the Department of Children and Families or through a fair hearing process.

If a decision to partially approve or deny an Aftercare, EFC or PESS, application is contested, the young adult's EFC Advocate/DCM or Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach assists with the request for a fair hearing. ChildNet Independent Living staff use the Fair Hearing Request forms which have been provided by the Department of Children and Families. ChildNet will comply with due process notification requirements provided by The Department of Children and Families.

Determination of Service Denial

1. The ChildNet EFCA /EFC DCM or Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach renders determinations regarding eligibility or continued eligibility for Independent Living benefits. The EFCA Supervisor/Independent Living Supervisor/Independent Living Aftercare Supervisor reviews the determination prior to issuance of a letter denying, terminating, reducing, or suspending an Independent Living benefit.
2. Before a letter is issued that denies, terminates, or reduces an Independent Living benefit request, the supervisor conducts a review of all documents relied upon in denying, reducing, or terminating the service request to ensure that the necessary documentation is present and to ensure that the decision to deny the service is supported by documentation.
3. The purpose of the supervisory review is to ensure that the correct decision has been made with respect to the request for services. If the Supervisor determines that an incorrect decision has been made, the service is approved. If the supervisor



determines that the denial was appropriate, the Supervisor documents the occurrence of the supervisory review.

4. After the supervisory review is successfully completed and a determination is made by the Supervisor that the denial is appropriate, the due process notification letter regarding denial, reduction, or termination of Independent Living benefits is issued.
5. All denials, reductions, or terminations of benefits must be reviewed and approved by the Director of Case Management Services or designee, who is also responsible for initialing all letters prior to them being sent to the youth. Notification letters are delivered in person or sent by certified mail.
6. Young adults are noticed in writing regarding any of the actions listed in the subsection above and in accordance with applicable rules.
7. The young adults are advised of their right to request a fair hearing. ChildNet notifies the young adult of the adverse action and the date he or she can expect that action to be implemented.

Notification of Adverse Action

Upon receipt of a response to a Notice of Adverse action, ChildNet will comply with time frames for notification of adverse action and any other timeframe noted.

Termination upon Failure to Renew the RTI Scholarship

ChildNet's Aftercare Specialist/Vita Nova's Life Coach makes diligent efforts to assist clients with completing their annual renewal application.

1. If the Aftercare Specialist/Life Coach is unable to update a young adult's RTI Scholarship during the three (3) months prior to the young adult's birthday due to an inability to either locate or gain the cooperation of the young adult, all actions of 'due diligence' in trying to locate or secure the cooperation of the young adult to update his or her continued eligibility for the RTI Scholarship are documented in the case file.
2. If after 30 days, there has been no contact by the young adult or if it has been verified that the young adult has been terminated from the rolls of the post-secondary school, a letter providing notification of termination is sent by Certified Mail with return receipt to the last known address to notify the young adult that he or she is terminated from the program.

President's Signature: _____

Date: _____