

# Turning 18 in Foster Care

As you approach 18, you will have many new choices and opportunities. You will be making decisions concerning your life as an independent adult. Community Partnership for Children and Children's Home Society Independent Living (IL) staff provide services to eligible young adults formerly in foster care from their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday until they turn 23. This letter is to provide you with basic information about these services.

## **Road to Independence (RTI) Program\***

The Road to Independence is an educational program, the amount to equal full time work at minimum wage *after considering other grants and scholarships that are in excess of the educational institutions' fees and costs*, and contingent upon available funds.

- It is reported to the Department of Education as part of the financial aid package.
- Continued Medicaid coverage until the age of 21.

The following are the ***required minimum qualifying criteria***:

- You were in the legal *custody of the State of Florida DCF* and in a licensed placement or Subsidized Independent Living on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- You lived in foster care for at least *six months before reaching your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday*.
- You are a *resident* of the State of Florida.
- You *apply for RTI before your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday*.

***AND you have ONE of the following:***

- *Enrolled* full time in an accredited high school or GED program **or**
- *Obtained* a high school diploma or GED and are enrolled as a full time student in an accredited college or vocational program.

## **Transitional Support Services \***

Transitional Support Services are **short-term** services to assist you in achieving self-sufficiency. The services available to you may include; financial support, housing, counseling, employment/job training, education counseling/tutoring or other identified services.

The following are the ***required minimum qualifying criteria***:

- You were in the legal *custody of the State of Florida DCF* and in a licensed placement or Subsidized Independent Living on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- You lived in foster care for at least *six months before reaching your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday*.
- You are a *resident* of the State of Florida.
- You *apply for transitional services before your 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday*

## **Aftercare Services \***

Aftercare services are emergency services available to prevent homelessness. These services may include referrals to community agencies and short-term financial support if funds are available.

The following are the ***required minimum qualifying criteria***:

- You were in the legal *custody of the State of Florida DCF* and in a licensed placement or Subsidized Independent Living on your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- You are a *resident* of the State of Florida.
- You apply for after care services before your 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

***\*NOTE: All IL Services, including the Road to Independence Program, are offered based on available funding***

## Extending Jurisdiction

At the age of 18 you are no longer a dependent child by law and will no longer be under the supervision of the Department and the jurisdiction of the dependency court. You have the right to ask the Court to stay involved in your case past the age of 18 for the purpose of making sure that you are provided ongoing Independent Living Services this is known as your *right to petition the court for continuing jurisdiction*. This right continues until your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday at which time, you are no longer able to petition for this extension. Please use the attached form if you wish to do this

### Extending Jurisdiction ***will***

- Set additional court hearings where you must be present after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Let the dependency court monitor your continued progress and monitor how we are providing IL services.
- End at your 19<sup>th</sup> birthday unless you are in the midst of applying for immigration status.

### Extending Jurisdiction ***will not***

- Extend supervision of the Department. Your case manager will not be handling your case any longer.
- Guarantee you a bed in a licensed foster care placement beyond the age of 18.
- Change your eligibility requirements for IL services. Those are set by law and cannot change. In other words, if you do not meet the qualifying criteria, the dependency court cannot change this.
- Any appeal of any decision regarding IL services award is only conducted in what is referred to as a chapter 120 administrative law hearing. This cannot be addressed in the dependency court.

## Medicaid

Young adults who exit foster care at age 18 continue to be eligible for Medicaid until they reach the age of 21 without regard to any other income, assets or categorical requirements, if they are eligible for independent living services for Young Adults Formerly in Foster Care. You will be provided your Medicaid card at 17 1/2 and your coverage is automatically be extended. *You do not need to do anything.*

If you have any questions, or need additional information about any of your ILS options, please contact the Independent Living Services program at 386-304-7605 for CHS/386-238-4846 for Community Partnership for Children.

- I have reviewed the information on the services available to me when I turn 18**
- I have reviewed the information on my right to petition the court for continued jurisdiction.**
- Yes, I want to petition the court to extend Jurisdiction**
- No, I do not wish to petition the court to extend Jurisdiction at this time.  
I understand that until I reach 19 years of age, I may change my mind and petition the court to extend Jurisdiction.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
ILP Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date