

WHAT IS EXTENDED FOSTER CARE?

In 2013, a law passed in Florida allowing youth who would normally age-out of licensed care at age 18 to opt to stay in until age 21 (or 22 with a documented disability) while finishing school or gaining work skills and experience.

WHAT IS POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES?

PESS provides a monetary stipend for youth who turned 18 in licensed care after spending at least 6 months in care to attend postsecondary or vocational school until age 23.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

Extended Foster Care (EFC):

- Age 18-21 to enroll or re-enroll
- Turned 18 years old in licensed foster care
- Involved in at least one of the following activities:
 - Finishing high school or completing G.E.D.
 - Enrolled in post-secondary education
 - Working at least 80 hours/month
 - Participating in a job skills program
 - Unable to participate in one of the above full time due to a documented disability
- Participate in transition planning and case planning, agree to meet regularly with IL case manager and grant them access to records and living environment

Postsecondary Educational Support Services (PESS):

- Age 18-22
- Spent 6 months in care prior to turning 18 in care, or adopted or placed in guardianship over the age of 16 after spending 6 of the most recent 12 months in licensed care
- Completed high school diploma or equivalent
- Enrolled full time (9 credit hours) in Bright Futures eligible post-secondary or vocational school



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Extended Foster Care
&
Postsecondary Educational
Support Services



INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Independent Living Program, comprised of both EFC and PESS, is designed to assist youth in the transition from licensed out-of-home care into adulthood and to provide young adults ages 18-23 with assistance in achieving independence.

While in licensed out-of-home care, youth ages 13 and above will be provided the opportunity to learn life skills such as budgeting and money-management, apartment locating, home upkeep, decision-making, personal health care, goal-planning, career planning and educational development. This one-on-one skill development is provided monthly by either the Partner Family or group home staff, depending on the youth's placement.

Case managers specializing in Independent Living services provide case management, support and advocacy for youth age 16 and above participating in the program through phone calls, educational meetings and regular visits.

In order for all of our youth to be successful, it is critical that each young person feel and receive the support of those in their home, school and community environments.

HOW IT WORKS FOR YOUTH IN CARE

When a youth placed in licensed care turns 16, a specialized IL case manager is assigned as secondary to the case to begin helping the youth identify their future career and educational plans. This worker will also provide the youth with some critical documents that they will need prior to turning 18, such as a birth certificate and social security card.

When this youth reaches age 17, this worker will become the primary case manager on the case, responsible for monthly visits, court reports, referrals for services and more. Working with the youth and any individuals the youth wants to involve, a transition plan will be developed. This plan will guide decisions such as where the youth will live and go to school or work after turning 18. This is a living document that can change as often as necessary but must be approved by the court before the youth turns 18.

Youth receive face-to-face visits with their independent living case manager monthly. Case staffings with the youth and all persons involved in the case are conducted as often as needed to address individual progress and to continue permanency planning, even after the youth turns 18 and becomes a participant in Extended Foster Care.

HOW IT WORKS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Young adults ages 18 to 23 who turned 18 in licensed care may qualify for additional supports and services, including Medicaid coverage until 26. The three programs available to these young adults are: Extended Foster Care, Postsecondary Educational Support Services and Aftercare Services.

- EFC affords young adults (18-21 or 22 with a disability) the ability to finish high school or obtain a G.E.D., work at least 80 hours a month or participate in a program to eliminate barriers to employment while still residing with their Partner Family, group home or another approved semi-supervised arrangement. EFC young adults continue to go to court and have access to many supportive services.
- PESS is for young adults who already have their diploma or G.E.D. and are enrolled in postsecondary or vocational school at an eligible institution. Tuition is covered by a waiver, and PESS provides a monthly stipend to cover living costs while the young adult attends school, up until age 23.
- The Aftercare Services program is designed to provide short-term funds for services to prevent homelessness or promote independence to young adults who are not participating in either EFC or PESS.