



**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES  
CHILD WELFARE POLICY**

**Chapter 11:** Older Youth Services

**Section 18:** Eligibility to Participate in Collaborative Care

**Effective Date:** October 1, 2023

**Version:** 6

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**POLICY OVERVIEW**

Collaborative Care (CC) is a voluntary program that allows youth currently or formerly in out-of-home placement under a CHINS or Juvenile Delinquency/Juvenile Status case, who are 18 years and older, to remain under the care and placement of DCS to continue to receive services. CC focuses on youth-adult partnerships, positive youth development, and encourages youth to develop a strong social network and/or social capital.

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**PROCEDURE**

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will make CC available to eligible youth who are currently or were formerly in out-of-home placement (see Older Youth Initiatives website). DCS has determined that a youth is eligible to participate in CC if the youth meet all of the following criteria:

1. Youth who are at least 18 but have not yet reached 21 years of age;

**Note:** In the event the governor declares a state of disaster emergency under IC 10-14-3-12, the DCS Director or designee may extend CC per IC 31-28-5.8-5.

2. Currently in an out-of-home placement under an Indiana court order or was formerly in an out-of-home placement through an Indiana court order on the day of the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday;

**Note:** Older youth placed in the state of Indiana under a court order for an Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) are not eligible for CC. Indiana wards placed out of state and who do not intend to reside in Indiana upon turning 18 are also not eligible for CC.

3. Have signed a Voluntary Collaborative Care Agreement Between Older Youth and the Department of Child Services form that covers the youth's specialized Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood (see policy 11.22 Voluntary Collaborative Care [CC] Agreement); and
4. Continuously meet one (1) of the following:
  - a. Enrolled in a secondary education institution or a program leading to an equivalent credential, or enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education,
  - b. Participating in a program actively designed to promote employment,

- c. Employed for at least 80 hours per month, or
- d. Incapable of performing any of the activities described above due to a medical condition documented in the youth's case plan.

A youth is ineligible to participate in CC:

1. On or after the youth's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday;
2. When the youth fails to continuously maintain eligibility requirements as provided in the policies or rules adopted by DCS; or

**Note:** If the youth does not continue to meet eligibility requirements or voluntarily decides to leave CC, the Older Youth Case Manager (OYCM) Supervisor will consult with the DCS Staff Attorney who may file a motion to dismiss.

3. The youth indicates a desire to withdraw from CC.

If DCS terminates a CC agreement before the expiration date without the agreement of the youth, the court may, upon the request of the youth or a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) participating with the consent of the older youth:

1. Hold a hearing regarding the cause of the termination of the CC agreement; and
2. Enter an order containing findings and conclusions regarding whether DCS properly terminated the agreement for good cause.

#### **IV-E Eligibility**

To be IV-Eligible under CC, the following must be met in addition to the CC eligibility criteria (see policy 15.01 Eligibility Overview for Field and Legal Staff):

1. DCS must have placement and care responsibility;
2. Contrary to the welfare or best interest language must be obtained within a court order within 180 days from the date of placement; and
3. Youth must meet Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) eligibility criteria.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Invite members of the Older Youth Initiatives (OYI) Team to the Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood meeting corresponding to the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday; and
2. Begin preparations for the youth to transfer to CC at 17 ½ years of age or older (see policy 11.21 Collaborative Care Case Transfers).

**Note:** CC is a voluntary program. Not all youth may be interested or eligible (at 18 years of age) to participate in the program. Youth who are interested and eligible to participate in CC will be transferred to a 3CM (see Collaborative Care Fact Sheet). Younger siblings who are not eligible or interested in the program shall remain on the FCM's caseload.

The OYI Team will:

1. Accept referrals from FCMs who have identified a youth who is interested in participating in CC;
2. Have an informational meeting to determine if the youth is eligible for CC;
3. Have a transition meeting with the youth, FCM, 3CM, the youth's child representatives, and any other relevant persons if the youth chooses to participate in CC; and
4. Submit the completed Voluntary Collaborative Care Agreement Between Older Youth and the Department of Child Services form to the DCS Staff Attorney.

The DCS Staff Attorney will submit the completed Voluntary Collaborative Care Agreement Between Older Youth and the Department of Child Services form and petition to open a CC case to the court immediately after the CHINS Case is closed.

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## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### Definitions

#### Collaborative Care (CC)

CC is a voluntary program that DCS youth are allowed to begin transferring to CC at 17 ½ years of age. The program is for DCS and JD youth 18 to 21 years of age and allows them to remain in the care and placement of DCS in order to continue to receive services.

#### Legal Permanency

Permanency, as defined by Child Welfare Systems, is a safe, stable, secure home, and family. There are five (5) federal Permanency Goals:

1. Reunification;
2. Adoption;
3. Guardianship;
4. Fit & Willing Relative; and
5. Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA).

**Note:** APPLA is only an option for youth 16 years of age and older. DCS must document why every other permanency plan option is not in the best interest of the child, as well as, document continuous diligent efforts made to locate adult relatives of the youth.

#### Relational Permanency

In *A Reason, A Season, A Lifetime: Relational Permanence Among Young Adults with Foster Care Backgrounds* (2008), G. Samuels defined relational permanency as a concept that defines familial relationships in ways that extend beyond biological connections, including familial ties formed during care and after exiting out-of-home placement. "The role of the biological family must be extended beyond that family's official or legal status in a child's permanency plan" (p. 5).

#### Voluntary Collaborative Care Agreement

The Voluntary Collaborative Care Agreement Between Older Youth and the Department of Child Services form documents an arrangement between the potential youth in CC and DCS. The agreement outlines CC as well as the youth's rights and responsibilities once the youth has transferred into CC.

### Forms and Tools

- [Collaborative Care Fact Sheet](#)
- [Older Youth Initiatives DCS website](#)
- [OYS Protocol](#)
- [OYS Service Standards](#)
- [Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood \(SF 55166\)](#)
- [Voluntary Collaborative Care Agreement between Older Youth and the Department of Child Services \(SF 55159\)](#)

## Related Policies

- [11.21 Collaborative Care \(CC\) Case Transfers](#)
- [11.22 Voluntary Collaborative Care \(CC\) Agreement](#)
- [15.01 Title IV-E Eligibility Overview for Field & Legal Staff](#)

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## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 10-14-3-12: Disaster emergency; emergency gubernatorial powers](#)
- [IC 31-28-5.8-4: "Older youth"](#)
- [IC 31-28-5.8-5: Eligibility; petitions](#)
- [IC 31-28-5.8-8: Closing collaborative care cases](#)

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## PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 11.18

*Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.*

### **Importance of Youth-Adult Partnerships**

In an authentic youth-adult partnership, each individual acknowledges learning from the other. Both partners have equal opportunities to utilize skills, make decisions, and independently carry out tasks to reach shared goals. Emphasis should be placed on providing opportunities for the youth to have positive interactions with family, peers, caring adults, and community members. The building of youth-adult partnerships with the guidance of an Older Youth Case Manager (OYCM) and the older youth's team provides an opportunity to achieve relational permanency and a chance at a higher level of success after leaving out-of-home care or Collaborative Care (CC).

Building the capacity of existing relationships to offer more empathetic and insightful emotional support may provide important resources for older youth transitioning from out-of-home placement to help them continue to deal with the emotions and questions raised by their experiences prior to, and during, placement. While youth and young adults are still in out-of-home placement related programs, efforts should be made to enhance and develop existing relationships with adults whom the youth trusts or with whom trust may be strengthened.

### **Older Youth Services Protocol**

The Older Youth Initiatives (OYI) program encompasses Older Youth Services (OYS), CC, and Voluntary Services. Youth participating in these services should be provided instruction, experiential learning, coaching, mentoring, and monitoring in services that include, but are not limited to (see OYS Protocol and OYS Service Standards):

1. Education;
2. Employment;
3. Financial and Asset Management;
4. Physical and Mental Health;
5. Housing;
6. Activities of Daily Living; and
7. Youth Engagement

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