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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Indiana to extend services for older foster youth

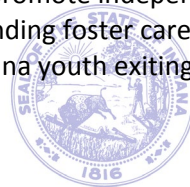
**INDIANAPOLIS** (Jan. 16, 2019) – The Indiana Department of Child Services is using federal dollars to expand services for older youth up to age 23. Gov. Eric Holcomb and the agency’s federal partner – the Children’s Bureau – recently signed a certification allowing the state to tap into federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program funds. The certification follows an agency-wide assessment by the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWG) that recommended DCS extend older youth services.

Last year, President Donald Trump signed the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), legislation that changes the way Title IV-E funds can be spent by the state. The Chafee Program uses those federal dollars to help states offer independent living programs to youth who are aging out of the foster care system but still need assistance. The act extends resources for older youth by two years; the Chafee program was previously limited to foster youth up to age 21. The extension is effective Feb. 18, 2019, and grandfathers in children who turned 21 on or after Feb. 8, 2018, when Trump signed the FFPSA.

“Our older foster youth need all the help they can receive to ensure a smoother start into adulthood, whether that’s to offset living costs or funding their education,” DCS director Terry Stigdon said. “Extending services for two more years ensures they have crucial resources at their disposal as long as we can provide them.”

The Indiana Department of Child Services has been working with its service providers, partners and stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition for older youth currently in the system who are eligible for the extension.

“Most of us still rely on the support of our family after age 18, but without a family, many foster youth struggle to complete school and then become homeless after leaving foster care,” said Brent Kent, Connected by 25 CEO. “These services will promote independence and help Indiana foster youth transition into adulthood successfully. Extending foster care services is a tremendous step toward ensuring the success and well-being of Indiana youth exiting foster care.”

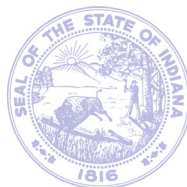


*Indiana children will live in safe, healthy and supportive families and communities.*

There are currently 121 Hoosiers receiving voluntary services through DCS and their partners.

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**About Indiana DCS:** *The Indiana Department of Child Services engages with families and collaborates with state, local and community partners to protect children from abuse and neglect and to provide child support services. Indiana Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 800.800.5556. Child Support Customer Service Kidsline: 800.840.8757 or 317.233.5437. [www.in.gov/dcs](http://www.in.gov/dcs)*



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