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July 3, 2008

To: Regional Managers  
Directors, Local Offices, Department of Child Services

From: James W. Payne, Director  
Angela Green, Deputy Director of Practice Support  
Department of Child Services

Subject: Older Youth Foster Care  
DCS-08-09

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) continues to work to ensure that all older foster youth have a successful transition into adulthood. Recent Legislative changes have been enacted to increase the resources available to youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood.

This administrative letter outlines legislative changes that have created a new program, Older Youth Foster Care (OYFC) that will provide services to former foster youth between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21). Below is a summary of the changes effective July 1, 2008.

According to IC 31-28-5.7, DCS must offer a new program, Older Youth Foster Care, to individuals meeting the following criteria:

1. At least eighteen (18) but less than twenty-one (21) years of age;
2. Received foster care through an Indiana court order the month prior to their eighteenth (18<sup>th</sup>) birthday; and
3. Are employed (at least 35 hours per week) or are attending a full time vocational or educational certification or degree program.

Youth meeting program eligibility requirements may contact their DCS local office for an OYFC application any time after turning seventeen (17) years and six (6) months of age. After a youth completes an application, a FCM supervisor will guide them through the Eligibility Assessment process.



*Protecting our children, families and future*

Youth who are approved entry into the program will be placed with a foster family and will be assigned to an Independent Living (IL) provider who will implement the program and monitor the youth's participation. Youth who do not meet program eligibility requirements will be encouraged to utilize other DCS services available to them (e.g. Voluntary IL Services, Chafee Room and Board Services).

A youth's participation in the OYFC program may be terminated by DCS without further court involvement if the youth does not follow all guidelines and rules of the OYFC program.

A new section is being added to Chapter 11: Independent Living of the DCS Policy Manual to reflect these recent changes. Please review this new policy carefully as it describes specific procedure steps to ensure the effective delivery of this new program.

If you have any questions regarding this change please address them to the DCS policy mailbox.

Sincerely,

James W. Payne, Director  
Department of Child Services

