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POLICY 1204 – Basic Life Skills Development and Training

A. POLICY

Foster youth are best prepared for adulthood through individualized life skill programming focused on education, employment, self-care and relationships.

B. PROCEDURES

1. Youth age fourteen (14) and older who are deemed eligible for independent living (IL) programming shall receive special assistance and training that will help them achieve and reach their maximum potential.

2. The caseworker will ensure the youth receive training and support in the following areas:
 - Life Skills
 - Transitional Planning Meeting
 - Permanent Personal Connections
 - Social Activities and use of community resources
 - Education
 - Employment/Vocation/Job Skills
 - Health/Mental Health/Family Planning/Nutrition
 - Abuse, Neglect & Violence Awareness
 - Substance Abuse Awareness
 - Housing and transportation
 - Financial Management
 - Credit Management/Identity Theft Prevention
 - Obtaining a State issued identification card
 - Obtaining Important Documents, Birth Certification, Social Security Card
 - Obtaining a Driver's License (see Policy 1012 - Driver's License for Foster Youth)
 - Legal Issues and knowledge of legal rights

3. Skill training and development can occur in a natural and informal manner within the youth's placement. Foster parents, mentors, guidance counselors, and other community partners may be utilized to help deliver life skills training to youth.

4. The caseworker shall consider alternative education plans for youth age sixteen (16) and older who are not on track to graduate by the end of the school year of their eighteenth (18th) birthday. Youth shall be expected to participate in educational programs through the local schools, diploma programs or vocational programs. For those students who graduate, the caseworker, IL provider, placement resource, or guidance counselor shall inform and assist the youth in exploring post-secondary education and available academic and financial supports.

5. The Division of Family Services (DFS) Independent Living Program Manager shall submit a monthly batch report for all youth age 14 and older who are in foster care to the designated community partner in order to obtain a copy of the youth's credit report. The credit report will be sent directly to the assigned DFS worker and supervisor. As a result of submitting the monthly batch report, each youth 14 and older in foster care shall have a credit report annually. Referrals for youth 18-21 will be submitted by the youth with the assistance of the IL provider.
6. Upon receipt of the credit report, the caseworker shall review the report with the youth and address identified instances of identity theft with the community credit repair agency designated on the report. The IL contracted provider will assist all youth 18-21 in reviewing and repairing their credit with the community credit repair agency designated on the report. The caseworker shall give the youth their credit report annually and place a copy in the youth's file. The credit report shall be referenced during the Stairways to Encourage Personal Success-STEPS Meeting. The caseworker shall also document that the above was completed in a FOCUS (For Our Children's Ultimate Success – automated information system) case progress note.
7. The caseworker or IL service provider shall inform youth of opportunities to participate in formal skill development through trainings, workshops and conferences as funds and programs are available.
8. The caseworker or IL services provider shall inform youth who age out of foster care or meet other eligibility criteria for after care services about the opportunity to participate in the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program. This program helps youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment. Funds shall not exceed \$5,000 per youth, per year when available, or as directed by federal rules.
9. The caseworker or IL provider shall assist the youth in completing the application for ETV funds and help the youth submit it to the Office of the Child Advocate for review and approval.

C. FOCUS

Caseworkers complete the IL portion of the Child Plan/Review Event
 Caseworkers enter a credit report status and activities as a case progress note

D. FORMS Use the DFS policy website to access any forms:

<https://kids.delaware.gov/policies/dfs-policies>

Credit Report Referral