



Tennessee Department of Children's Services Protocol for Educational Programs and Resources

Supplemental to DCS Policy: 21.14

Contact your Education Specialist for additional information.

Ages birth to four:

- Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS) - Tennessee Department of Education: For children in custody and any child believed to be experiencing a disability or other medical condition, ages birth through 2, make a referral to a TEIS regional office. TEIS will develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). At age 3, ensure a timely transition to public school special education services.

Note: A TEIS referral is required in every CPS investigation classified as substantiated, and every CPS Assessment classified as Services Needed and Services Needed-Court Ordered. (See CPS Policy [14.6, Child Protective Services Case Tasks and Responsibilities](#))

- Special education services are provided by public school systems beginning at age 3 (3).
- Early Head Start- Pre-natal to age 3 if family is economically qualified.
- Books from Birth- One (1) free book per month for children under the age of 5 regardless of income.
- Even Start: An education program for economically qualified families that is designed to improve the academic achievement of young children and their parents, especially in the area of reading. Serves children through age 7.
- Pre Kindergarten programs- Voluntary public school programs serving four year olds. DCS has priority status for child placement in these programs.
- Tennessee Head Start- School readiness program for children age four through age five. DCS has priority status for child placement in these programs.

Ages five to eighteen:

- Public School settings: Excluding youth placed at youth development centers, all children and youth in DCS custody will be educated in local public schools, except for those children/youth that have an identified treatment need that would justify services at a provider agency in-house school.
- Special Education/Section 504 Services: If a disability is suspected and the child/youth has not been previously identified, the Family Service Worker (FSW)/Juvenile Service Worker (JSW) will make an immediate written referral to the school for an evaluation for special education eligibility. A referral form may be obtained from the school.
- Tutoring Services: If needed, tutoring will first be sought from the school where the child is enrolled. Available community resources must be utilized to reinforce and support the child/youth's appropriate placement. The child's school may provide after school supplemental educational programs, after school programs (LEAPS), and/or 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Consult with the regional Education Specialist for a list of educational services provided by local public school systems.

- Non-Traditional educational settings: Children/youth who are not attending public school are enrolled in other educational settings using the guidelines established in DCS Policy [21.20, Non-Traditional Educational Settings](#)

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