Department of Children's Services

POLICY

16.52, Bright Futures Program for Young Adults	
Application: DCS Employees and Providers with Independent Living Services Responsibilities	
Authority: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351); TCA 37-2-604; John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transitions to Adulthood 42 U.S.C. § 677; Rules of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Social Services Division, Chapter 0250-04-02- Standards for Group Homes and Family Boarding Homes; Rules of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services Standard for Regulated Institutions, Chapter 0250-04-05-Standards for Residential Child Care Agencies.	**Standards: COA:** PA-CFS 21.01 and 21.06
Original Effective Date: DCS 16.51, 09/01/02, 16.53, 11/01/02,16.55, 01/01/05, 16.57, 09/01/05 Current Effective Date: 6/16/2025	Supersedes: 16.52, 01/01/23 Last Review Date: 5/21/2025

Glossary:

- Bright Futures Services for Young Adults:
  - The services formerly recognized as Extension of Foster Care Services. The eligibility criteria and procedures associated with providing a continuation of foster care services to young adults includes an array of services available to eligible persons. These services require case management by the assigned Workers, Independent Living Services staff, and Placement Services staff (as applicable). These services are voluntary and require a young adult's initial and on-going agreement to receive them.
- Young Adult:
  - A person who meets the definition of an "applicable child" according to federal and state legislative and statutory guidelines for maintenance of federal Title IV-E foster care. These criteria are established in Section A of this policy.
- Worker:
  - A term used to identify the position assigned the primary responsibility of building, preparing, supporting, and maintaining the Child and Family Team and coordinating the provision of services, when that position is not within DCS. An example includes provider agency staff assigned to case manage Bright Futures cases.
- Qualified Alien:
  - A qualified alien is a non-citizen who belongs to one of several alien categories established in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Qualified aliens are potentially eligible for Federal benefits just like U.S. citizens.
- Foster Family Home:
  - The home of an individual or family licensed or approved as meeting the standards established by the State licensing or approval authority(ies) (or with respect to foster family homes on or near Indian reservations, by the tribal licensing or approval authority(ies), that provides 24-hour out-of-home care for children. The term may include group homes, agency operated boarding homes or other facilities licensed or approved for the purpose of providing foster care by the State or Tribal agency responsible for approval or licensing of such facilities.
- Child Care Institution:
  - A private childcare institution, or a public childcare institution, which accommodates no more than 25 (twenty-five) children, and is licensed by the appropriate State or Tribal licensing authority as meeting the standards established for such licensing. This definition must not include detention.

Policy Statement:

The Department of Children's Services extends foster care services to young adults aged 18 (eighteen) up to age 23 (twenty-three) who meet established federal and state criteria and voluntarily agree to accept Bright Futures services as a young adult.

Purpose:

To assist young adults, age 18 (eighteen) up to age 23 (twenty-three), with the transition to adulthood with skills, knowledge, experience, and supports necessary for them to obtain education, housing, employment, health services, and permanent supportive relationships.

Procedures:

A. Eligibility for Bright Futures Services for Young Adults

Young adults are eligible to receive Bright Futures Services, on the following basis:

1. Young adults who emancipate to adulthood directly from DCS custody at or after 18 (eighteen) years of age are eligible if the placement setting upon release from custody is an eligible foster care placement.

    a) Youth housed in secure facilities upon attaining 18 (eighteen) years of age must subsequently be placed in an eligible foster care placement prior to release from custody in order to be eligible. Youth Development Centers and detention facilities are not eligible foster care placements.

2. Young adults who exited DCS custody through adoption or subsidized permanent guardianship (SPG) at or after the age of 16 (sixteen).
3. Is a United States citizen or meets certain other guidelines to be considered a qualified alien (young adults who are undocumented residents of the United States are not eligible).
4. Young adults who reside in the State of Tennessee.
5. Young adults who do not have countable assets exceeding $10,000 (ten thousand).
6. Young adults who voluntarily sign an agreement, DCS forms **CS-0488, Rights and Responsibilities to Receive Foster Care Services as an Adult** and **CS-0968, Voluntary Placement Agreement for Transitioning Young Adults**, as applicable, in order to accept Bright Futures services as an adult to include acceptance of a DCS placement option or supervised independent living setting (case management plus an approved living situation).

7. Young adults must also meet one of the following eligibility criteria:
   - Is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential; or
   - Is enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education; or
   - Is employed for at least 80 (eighty) hours per month; or
   - Is participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; or
   - Is not capable of doing any of the activities described in subdivisions of **Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-2-604** due to a medical condition, including a developmental or intellectual condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the Family Permanency Plan of the young adult. In such cases, the young adult complies with a course of treatment as recommended by the CFT.
8. The procedures for establishing approval for Bright Futures Services for young adults are outlined in the ***Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide***. The completion of DCS form **CS-0954, Certification of Eligibility for Title IV-E Fostering Connections; Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults**, to include all applicable signatures, is required when a new IV-E eligibility determination is needed.
9. Young adults eligible according to the criteria outlined above may return and request re-establishment of foster care until their 23rd (twenty third) birthday.

B. Maintenance of Eligibility for Bright Futures Services for Young Adults

1. Young adults may be eligible to receive Bright Futures services until the Family Permanency Plan goals are met, and there is an agreement by the Child and Family Team (CFT) that the young adult is reasonably capable of self-sufficiency. Eligibility must otherwise end upon the young adult's 23rd (twenty third) birthday.
2. Young adults, in conjunction with their CFT, determine the scope and appropriateness of service needs within the overall margins of eligibility as defined in this policy. Refer to DCS Policy ***16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services***, for information on available services. Factors that may jeopardize young adults' continued eligibility for foster care services may include:
   - Conviction of a felony offense;
   - Exhibiting a pattern of behavior that jeopardizes the safety and well-being of self or others; or

- ♦ Consistently refusing to work collaboratively with the CFT or the court to make progress on mutually agreed upon goals, including educational objectives, and making reasonable efforts to increase self-sufficiency.

C. Services Available to Bright Futures Services Eligible Young Adults

Young adults eligible for Bright Futures services receive the following services as needed and applicable based on assessment, decisions made by the young adult and their teams, and continued availability of funding; additional eligibility criteria by category may apply and such criteria are available in the policies and protocols referenced. These include:

1. Independent Living Wraparound Services as described in DCS Policy ***16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services***, Section A, and as outlined in the ***Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Guide***.
2. Housing assistance through placement support or supervised independent living options. The Independent Living Allowance may be provided according to the guidelines listed in DCS Policy ***16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services,*** Sections B and C. Refer to the ***Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Guide*** for details on administration of the Independent Living Allowance.
    a) Bright Futures young adults between the age of 21 (twenty-one) and 23 (twenty-three) and youth who were adopted or exited custody by SPG at or after the age of 16 (sixteen) and choose to participate in Bright Futures services are eligible specifically for the independent living allowance.
3. Case management services as outlined in the ***Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Guide***.
4. Scholarship Services- refer to DCS Policy ***16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services***, Sections D, E, and F, for details regarding eligibility, and the ***Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Guide*** for details on scholarship administration.

Forms:

CS-0488, Rights and Responsibilities to Receive Foster Care Services as an Adult

CS-0968, Voluntary Placement Agreement for Transitioning Young Adults

CS-0761, Independent Living Program Review Request

CS-0954, Certification of Eligibility for Title IV-E Fostering Connections; Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults

Collateral Documents:

16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services

Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide

Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Guide